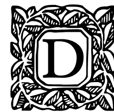
THE USE OF THE PILGRIM DISGUISE IN THE *ROMAN DE HORN*, *BOEVE DE HAUMTONE* AND THEIR MIDDLE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS[1]

Abstract: The figure of the pilgrim has been considered one of the leitmotifs of vernacular insular literature. In the *Roman de Horn*, *Boeve de Haumtone*, and their Middle English translations, *King Horn* and the Auchinleck *Bevis,* the heroes repeatedly exchange clothes with pilgrims, since the "esclavine" and the "bourdon" grant them complete immunity to encroach on their enemies' territory and test the loyalty of their lovers. However, the pilgrim disguise may prove useful in yet another way, providing the poets with a convenient figure in which to mirror their own role as storytellers. The purpose of this paper is to examine to what extent the authors of these romances make use of the figure of the pilgrim in order to foreground their authorial role and draw attention to their own poetic activity. **Keywords:** Anglo-Norman romance, Middle English romance, translation, pilgrim, disguise.

Resumen: La figura del peregrino ha sido considerada uno de los motivos más recurrentes en la literatura vernácula insular. En el *Roman de Horn*, *Boeve de Haumtone* y sus traducciones al inglés medio, *King Horn* y la versión de *Bevis* del manuscrito Auchinleck, los héroes cambian con frecuencia sus ropas con peregrinos, ya que la esclavina y el bordón les confieren total inmunidad para penetrar el territorio enemigo y probar la lealtad de sus amantes. Sin embargo, el disfraz de peregrino también puede resultar útil en otro sentido, en la medida en que proporciona a los poetas una figura conveniente en la cual reflejar su rol como narradores. El propósito de este artículo es examinar hasta qué punto los autores de estas obras hacen uso de la figura del peregrino a fin de poner en primer plano su función autoral y llamar la atención acerca de su propia actividad poética. **Palabras clave:** romance anglonormando, romance en inglés medio, traducción, peregrino, disfraz.

ISGUISE IS A UBIQUITOUS TOPIC IN INSULAR ROMANCES, both Anglo-Norman and Middle English. The authors of these romances, which are often based on the exile-and-return tale-type,[2] frequently use disguise in nearly identical

[1] I am grateful to the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD) for financial support in the preparation of this article, and to Prof. Dr. Wolfram Keller for his careful reading of a previous version of this paper.

[2] See Crane 1986. While recognizing that tales of exile and return are not uniquely insular, Susan Crane acknowledges its frequent occurrence in Anglo-Norman and Middle English romance and suggests that this narrative pattern proved highly functional for the articulation of specifically insular baronial concerns, namely,

narrative contexts. Disguise appears almost invariably as a central feature to stage the return of a dispossessed king from exile. In the struggle of the displaced heroes to regain their dynastic rights, the concealment of identity becomes an invaluable strategy to test the fidelity of a lover or the loyalty of a servant.[3] Scholars have acknowledged the frequent and similar use of disguise throughout the insular *corpus*, mainly focusing on theoretical issues stemming from these scenes, such as the nature and the integrity of a knight's or, more importantly, a king's identity (Burrow 1994, Dickson 2000, Snell 2000). If under the clothes of a fool, a minstrel, a leper, or a pilgrim the king is no longer recognizable, how is his identity defined? To what extent is his identity merely dependent

landholding and the defense of dynastic rights by law rather than by war. Judith Weiss has contested this view, pointing out that "such concerns do not appear solely in insular romance: they are evident in French *chansons de geste*, such as *Raoul de Cambrai*, *Aiol*, and *Mainet*, and romances such as *Ille et Galeron*, which use the 'exile and return' theme" (Weiss 2004: 40). Rosalind Field has also analyzed the exile-and-return tales found in Anglo-Norman romances of the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, underscoring their intrinsically insular features (e.g., the return by water) and calling the attention to the particular cultural and historical context which could have motivated the recurring choice of this tale-type by romance writers. According to Field, the popularity of the exile-and-return narrative in insular literature may be explained by its "chiming with contemporary concerns and the perception of the same motif in the English political scene from Henry II to Henry IV and beyond" (Field 2005: 53).

[3] Disguised heroes and heroines are traceable throughout the different genres of medieval literature. However, in combination with exile-and-return narratives, such as in insular romances, this topic achieves a remarkable specificity: often associated with episodes of recognition and reunion, it yields highly dramatic scenes, hardly discernible in other texts which make use of this narrative device. Studies focused on roughly contemporary Continental *chansons de geste*—with which these romances share numerous features—have suggested that the topic of disguise would often introduce a comic register. Unlike insular romances, *chansons* such as *Charroi de Nîmes* and *Prise d'Orange* present disguise as a playful game devised by the conquering hero to deceive his enemy and make fun of him. See Gallé 2005 and Suard 1994.

on his physical appearance or his social insignia? These studies have yielded interesting results regarding the tight connections between the interior self and the exterior appearance in feudal society. Morgan Dickson (2000) has emphasized that the efficacy of the hero's disguise normally depends on the lowering of his social status as he assumes the role either of a fool, a minstrel, a leper or a pilgrim. However, besides noting the shared efficacy of these lower-class masks, it is equally interesting to examine their peculiarities, since the hero's choice to impersonate one or another of these socially inferior types might have important implications for the understanding of both the disguise episodes and the works as a whole. This is at least the case in the texts I examine. The Anglo-Norman *Boeve de Haumtone* and the *Roman de Horn*, as well as their Middle English rewritings, *Sir Bevis of Hampton* and *King Horn*, include several disguise episodes. Given their similar and thus easily comparable outline, I shall focus on those scenes in which the hero, coming back from exile, assumes the appearance of a pilgrim in order to gain access to his lover and test her loyalty. According to Neil Cartlidge (2005), the figure of the *peregrinus ignotus* represents one of the leitmotifs of vernacular insular romance. Helen Cooper (2004) has likewise identified pilgrimage as one of the most enduring motifs of English romance.[4] This pervading presence of pilgrims in romance may be perhaps better apprehended following Judith Weiss's distinction between serious, penitential pilgrims, such as Guiac in *Waldef,* Gui de Warewic, or Sir Isumbras, on the one hand, and, on the other, less pious knights, such as Tristan, Horn and Boeve/Bevis, who temporarily use the guise of the penitent pilgrim "to accomplish their own secular ends" (Weiss 2010: 50). Indeed, in the romances I consider the adoption of the "esclavine" and the "bourdon" entails no piety and serves,

[4] In the *Motif Index of Folk Literature*, Stith Thompson (1995) classifies the pilgrim disguise under two headings: K1817.2, "Disguise as palmer (pilgrim)" where he mentions *King Horn*, and K1837.2, "Woman disguised as pilgrim engages lover in conversation and learns of his faithlessness".

thus, no didactic purposes. Instead, it is highly functional in secular terms, not only on the diegetic level, granting the heroes complete immunity to encroach on their enemies' territory, but also on the extra-diegetic level, providing the poets with a convenient figure in which to mirror their own role as storytellers. In her study on the role of pilgrims in Continental *chansons de geste*, Valérie Galent-Fasseur (1997) shows that pilgrims do not appear only as penitents, walking tirelessly to Holy Land in search of redemption, but also as carriers of information, that is, as storytellers. Galent-Fasseur focuses mainly on pilgrims' varying relationship with truth as the genre evolves, but it would similarly be interesting to explore how poets made use of these alternative storytellers in order to represent their own poetics.

The texts I examine do not utilize the character of the pilgrim in the same way. The author of the *Roman de Horn* shows a clear interest in associating his role to that of the pilgrim, with the purpose of drawing attention to and reflecting on his own poetic activity. By contrast, in *Boeve de Haumtone* this association is only faintly suggested. I shall analyze if the Middle English adapters exploited this meta-narrative procedure available in their ultimate sources, and if so, how and to what extent. I hope it will become evident that far from simply reproducing their models in a servile way, in the process of translation, the Middle English redactors of *Sir Bevis of Hampton*[5] and of *King Horn* reshaped the disguise episodes, making different use of their meta-narrative potential according to their own interest in foregrounding their authorial role and asserting their conceptions of poetry. In this sense,

[5] The textual tradition of the Middle English *Bevis* is extremely complex. It survives in six manuscripts and several printed editions (see Fellows 2008). All these versions have been studied in order to assess whether their redactors made any use of the meta-narrative potential of this episode. As a result, I have found that only the Auchinleck poet consistently did. In the *Boeve/Bevis* section, this will be shown in the main body of the article, while references to the relevant passages in the alternative manuscripts and printed editions will be provided in notes.

the pilgrim-disguise episodes will prove to be of much value to examine the different models of authorship embedded in each text. Interestingly, these models do not seem to be linguistically arranged. In fact, as will become evident, similarities may be traced in the authorial stance adopted by the poets of *King Horn* and the Anglo-Norman *Boeve*, while the Auchinleck *Bevis* redactor shares much more with Thomas than with the author of his source. Rosalind Field has stated that "there are [...] few valid generalizations to be made about relations between Anglo-Norman and Middle English versions of the same material" (1999: 166). Authorship, I will argue, cannot be counted among them.

Studies on translation theory and practice carried out mainly during the last two decades have been pivotal for the examination of the links between Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances, and ultimately, for the scholarly reassessment of the latter.[6] Although the close interdependence of Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances has long been established by scholars, studies published in the early and mid twentieth century tend to simplify this relationship, considering Middle

[6] Since the 1980s and during the 1990s, several scholars have claimed the importance of translation as technique of composition in the specific contexts of medieval literature (Kelly 1978; Zumthor 1980; Buridant 1983; Copeland 1991; Beer 1989, 1997). However, in the insular context, research on translation appears as particularly relevant, since it is affected by the complex interactions between the two main vernaculars of post-Conquest England, i.e., French and English. For a thorough survey of the shifting relationship between French and English from the eleventh to the fifteenth century, see Crane 1999, and for a more recent and encompassing reassessment of the role of the "French of England" and of its connections with English and Anglo-Latin in fields not as well-established as literature (e.g. devotional or medical writing), see Wogan-Browne 2009. During the past two decades, important studies on insular translation practice have been published (see, for instance, the surveys by Field 2008b and Warren 2007). However, especially noteworthy is the work of Ivana Djordjević, who made a highly valuable contribution providing scholars with a useful theoretical framework within which vernacular translation and, specifically, romance translation from Anglo-Norman to Middle English may be studied (Djordjević 2000, 2002, 2008).

English translations as coarser popularizations of their courtly and refined French predecessors (Ker 1912; Pearsall 1965; Diekstra 1975).[7] This hypothesis, which assumes that translation inevitably implies a change in the intended audience, has been more recently contested by a number of scholars. In their re-investigations of the romances (Crane 1986, 1999; Field 1999, 2008a, 2009; Calin 1994) and their contextualization within manuscripts, inventories, and records (Meale 1994), they have argued that there is no reason to assume that the audience of Middle English works was different in terms of class status or any less sophisticated in its tastes than that of Anglo-Norman romances. The alleged popularization resulting from the process of translation has equally shaped the scholarly appraisal of the authorship of Middle English romances (McDonald 2004; Reichl 2009). Translation would have inexorably substituted a clerical and learned French author for a crude hack writer. This "stigmatization" of Middle English poets, as Mc Donald puts it (2004: 9), is most blatantly exposed in Loomis's description of the Auchinleck romances' authors: "If these, for the most part, unoriginal and ungifted translator-versifiers were not what we should call literature hacks, what were they?" (1942: 608). In what follows, overlooking the biased and rhetorical nature of this question and further extending it to the Anglo-Norman romancers, I intend to describe the different ways through which the authors of the *Roman de Horn*, *Boeve de Haumtone* and their Middle English analogues appear in their narratives, such as it becomes apparent from their varying interest in guiding the readers' attention to their poetics in the pilgrim-disguise episodes.

[7] In her "polemical introduction", Mc Donald 2004 has sufficiently shown to what extent the scholarly labeling of Middle English romance as "popular" usually entails, as it is above implied, a negative appraisal of its aesthetic value and an assumption that these debased literary products would appeal to a lower-class audience.

1 From the *Roman de Horn* to *King Horn*

In the Anglo-Norman *Roman de Horn*, the narrative context for the hero's adoption of the pilgrim disguise may be briefly summarized in the following terms: due to Wikele's slanders, Horn is forced to leave Brittany, where he had grown up after the Saracens invaded his own kingdom, Suddene, and killed his father. Exiled from Brittany, Horn goes to Ireland where, under the pseudonym Gudmond, he helps the king to defeat the Saracens and avenges his father's death. After some years, he hears from a pilgrim that his lover, Rigmel, daughter of the king of Brittany, is forced to marry King Modin. Backed by a powerful army, Horn goes back to Brittany to stop the wedding. But before engaging in battle, he changes his clothes with a pilgrim, he verbally confronts his rival and then goes into court—still in disguise—in order to test Rigmel's loyalty.

In view of my present concerns, this encounter with the pilgrim deserves special attention. It is noteworthy that before exchanging their garments, Horn asks the pilgrim about the situation in the country. The pilgrim gives a full account of the recent events regarding Rigmel's wedding, providing Horn with strategic information for the fulfillment of his plans (3954–3964). This account of events, however, is not only useful and necessary on the diegetic level; it turns out to be as informative for Horn as it is for the audience, who is equally unaware of the situation in Brittany, since until this point, the narrative focus has remained exclusively directed to the description of Horn's activities. The pilgrim, thus, slips into the narrator's role, supplementing the events left out of his reach. Interestingly, this is not the first time that, by means of the figure of the pilgrim, the narrative voice is split in order to render simultaneous events. After Horn's exile, the narrator follows his hero to Ireland, leaving Rigmel's affairs in darkness. In this case, it is also a pilgrim, Joceran, who widens the narrative scope, disclosing simultaneously to Horn and the audience what the narrator has been omitting: the desperate situation of Herland,

Horn's tutor, in Brittany, Wikele's treacherous actions, and Rigmel's imminent wedding. Mestre Thomas evidently takes full advantage of the storytelling skills associated with pilgrims, relying heavily on these characters to complement his limited narrative perspective.

Besides these contributions to the narration of the story, pilgrims are of much use for the poet in yet another way. When Horn assumes his disguise, together with the "esclavine," the "burdun" and the "paulme," he also takes hold of the pilgrim's narrative ability, which has just been demonstrated. Above all, he becomes a storyteller. His first chance to display his skills ensues right away. King Modin, intrigued by the contrast between the alleged pilgrim's beauty and his poverty, sets Horn a series of questions, which prompt his first story. In response to his rival's demands, the hero gives a rather oblique account of his life at the end of which he explicitly defines himself as a teller of tales: "Tiele vïe demein cum vus sui cunteör. / S'en volz plus oïr, querez *autre ditor*" (4053–4054), ("I lead such a life as I tell you. If you want to hear more, ask *another storyteller*," 117).[8] In the following *laisses*, until Horn finally drops his mask, the story will not be about a knight, not even about a pilgrim, but about a storyteller. Through the pilgrim's persona, the narrator takes the stage and displays his own narrative ability.

Twice in this episode, the disguised hero, mimicking Mestre Thomas, sets himself to the task of telling his own story. Both times, however, he does it in an obscure way. Horn, whose language is usually plain and straightforward, is suddenly possessed by a conspicuous inclination to use figurative speech. Just as he disguises his appearance with the pilgrim's cloak, he disguises his intentions with words, too. Morgan Dickson has noted that Horn's riddles are "a form of verbal disguise" (2000: 47). He tells King Modin that he is a fisherman who has put his

[8] All references to the text of the *Roman de Horn* are by line number to Pope 1955 and 1964, and English translations are quoted from Weiss 2009. Emphasis mine.

net into the water seven years ago and is now coming back to see if it caught a fish. A few lines below, he says to Rigmel that seven years ago he tamed and put into mew a goshawk and that now he wants to know "s'il est si entier, cum il fud a ces dis / quant joe turnai de ci" (4263–4264) ("if it is unblemished, as it was in the days when I left," 121). Horn is telling the truth about his intentions by lying. This veiled use of language does not seem to be just a useful subterfuge employed by the disguised hero to make fun of his rival or test his lover's virginity. Horn's truthful lies go far beyond their immediate narrative purpose. In fact, they may be construed as meta-narrative comments on the author's own poetical program: in the *Roman de Horn*, fiction, just as Horn's riddles, is primarily a way of conveying truth, and it is up to the reader to be able to grasp it. This becomes evident from the different responses of King Modin and Rigmel to Horn's fictions. On the one hand, King Modin sticks with the literal meaning of the hero's discourse and, hence, considers it a "grant folur" (4055), "great nonsense" (117) and the speaker, a "gabeör" (4056), "joker" (117). Rigmel, on the other hand, is insightful enough to remove the veil imposed by Horn's words and, thus, recognize their true meaning and the pilgrim's real identity: "Amis Horn, c'estes vus! bien conois vostre vis [...] Li ostur dont parlez, ja mar séëz pensis: / Par tut est bien gardé si cum joe vus pramis" (4271, 4274–4275), "Horn, my friend, it's you! Of course I know your face [...] Have no doubts about the goshawk you speak of; I promise it is well guarded in every way," (12). The impersonation of his hero as a pilgrim, thus, allows the *Horn*-author to voice his claim to the validity of fiction as a disguised form of truth and, more importantly, to lay on the reader the responsibility for removing this disguise in the appropriate way. [9] This situation in

[9] The importance of the audience's disposition for the correct interpretation of the story is also highlighted in the abovementioned episode in which Horn, under the pseudonym of Gudmond, is informed by the palmer-narrator about the situation in Brittany. Although Joceran is telling the truth, Horn, whose primary

which the author attracts the attention to his own literary project is described by Michel Zink as typical of romance composition. Indeed, in romance, by contrast to *chanson de geste*, "la subjectivité de l'auteur s'impose [...] à travers la définition d'un projet ou d'un démarche dans l'ordre de la création littéraire" (Zink 1981: 8).

As M. K. Pope, *Horn*'s editor, acknowledges in his introduction to the poem, Mestre Thomas is noticeably a clerk. This is apparent, Pope argues, in the title he accords himself in the prologue, in his conspicuous Biblical knowledge, in his acquaintance with Ovid, in his strongly Latin-influenced vocabulary, in his frequent remarks on women's fickleness, and, I would add, in his idea of

intention is to preserve his disguise in Ireland, levels serious accusations against the pilgrim, questioning his credibility: "Bien diz cum[e] paumer, mençonges vas trovant; / Lei est de pelerin, nul ne mentira taunt; / Ja ne dirront taunt veir ke je·s seie creant" (3730–3732) "You talk like a palmer, inventing lies. No one lies so much as pilgrims, who are used to it. They can never speak truly enough for me to believe them" (111–112). In medieval literary imagination pilgrims were traditionally represented as God's spokesmen and instruments of divine Providence. However, by the twelfth century, the association of these figures with the disguise *topos* yields, according to Valerie Galent-Fasseur, "une angoisse liée à la notion de vérité", since "le signe qui révèle la vérité peut aussi être utilisé comme véhicule du mensonge" (Galent-Fasseur 1997: 204, 210). Therefore, alongside Providence-ordained pilgrims, such as Saboath in *Boeve de Haumtone* (see Galent-Fasseur 1998) or the mysterious palmer who rebukes Guiac's ambition in *Waldef* (see Cartlidge 2005), pilgrims accused of being liars eventually became commonplace in *chanson de geste* (Galent-Faseur 1997) and insular romance (Weiss 2010). However, it is noteworthy that this accusation of mendacity is also traditionally directed to poets ever since they were first exiled by Plato from his Republic. Green 2003 identifies three reasons why poets are often charged with being liars both in Antiquity and the Middle Ages: first, the refusal of rigorist critics to recognize any kind of truth under the mendacious veil of fiction, regardless of intention, effect or context. Second, rivalry among authors, and finally "the absence of a specific term and a theoretical home for the new genre of the romance and the fictionality that characterized it" (12–13). It is against this accusation that Thomas appears to be reacting as he forwards in meta-narrative terms his idea of poetry, which, as I argue below, he may have borrowed from scholarly commentaries and rhetorical treatises.

poetry.[10] Indeed, in the pilgrim episode Thomas may be echoing a view of poetry prevalent in late classic and medieval grammatical commentaries on the *auctores*. Equally interested in coming to terms with their pagan heritage, Late-antique Christian commentators, such as Servius, Lactantius or Fulgentius, show a recurring concern for explaining poetic language and assessing its validity.[11] For this purpose, they draw largely on rhetorical theories of figuration. Martin Irvine and David Thomson highlight that "the conception of metaphor and figure found in the *artes grammaticae* provided a foundation for literary theory for over a thousand years" (2005: 35). According to Nicolette Zeeman, these texts and commentaries present a relational definition of poetry, which distinguishes itself from other discourses, such as philosophy, theology, ethics or natural sciences, in terms of its "special potential for obliquity, inexplicitness, evasiveness and obscurity" (1996: 155). In the early fourth century, Lactantius states that "officium poetae [est] in eo, ut ea, quae gesta sunt vere, in alias species *obliquis figurationibus* cum decore aliquot conversa traducant" ("it is the business of poets elegantly and *with oblique figures* to turn and transfer things which have really occurred into other representations," Zeeman 1996: 156; emphasis added). His description of the poet's role would become commonplace among later clerics in their efforts to defend poetry as a veiled form of truth. In the twelfth century, Bernard of Chartres

[10] Rosalind Field also underscores the clerical status of Thomas among other Anglo-Norman romancers, drawing the attention to a distinctive feature of insular *clergie*: whereas in Continental romances, as noted by Peter Haidu, the cleric often maintains an ironic distance towards his narrative, in the insular context there seems to be no disagreement between clerical and baronial concerns. In fact, she argues that both literary and historical evidence (i. e., the issuing of Magna Carta) show that the two groups were jointly engaged in "defining and supporting good rule" (Field 2011: 187).

[11] For a full account of the study of classical authors in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, and of the implications of these readings for medieval literary theory, see Wetherbee 2005.

and, especially, William of Conches would further explore the potential scope of this philosophical view of poetry, introducing the concept of *integumentum* or *involucrum* in their readings of Plato, Macrobius and Boethius.[12] This figural conception of poetry is certainly discernible in the pilgrim's slanting way of telling his *vere gesta*. But it can also be traced in Thomas's own way of conveying meaning throughout his work. His idea of love, for instance, is not stated directly by means of authorial interventions. On the contrary, it is suggested through the careful structuring of the narrative in a pattern of doubling and repetition. The analogical relationship weaved between Rigmel and Lenburc allows the author to articulate in a disguised way his view of love, namely, that sexual desire is only acceptable when constraint by marriage and as a means of recovering the hero's inheritance rights.[13] It could be, thus, argued that in appropriating this academic view of poetry, originally conceived for reading the classical *auctores*, Thomas may be seeking to authorize and enhance the value of his own vernacular project, a strategy equally noticeable in the roughly contemporary works of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France, who definitively share Thomas's literary awareness.[14]

[12] *Integumentum* is defined in the Martianus Capella commentary, possibly authored by Bernard Silvester, as "a mode of discourse which covers a true meaning under a fictitious narrative" (Westra 1986: 24). For discussions on the twelfth century theory of *integumentum*, see the bibliography in Copeland 1991: 247, n. 57.

[13] For the use of analogy to express authorial intention as a characteristic trait of romance composition, see Kelly 1992, particularly pages 217–222 and 306–308. The romance author would carry out a rhetorical or critical reading of his *matière* governed by a preconceived idea (the *sans* or *antancion*), which is subsequently entangled in the plot to construct a meaningful structure; in Chrétien's terms, a "moult bele conjointure" (*Erec et Enide*, v. 14). For the use of doubling patterns in the *Roman de Horn*, see Dickson 2002.

[14] For this argument, I am indebted to the insightful framework provided by Copeland 1991 for understanding the interrelations between academic and vernacular cultures throughout the Middle Ages. In the context of this essay, it is

If we consider the Middle English reworking of Horn's story in *King Horn*, it is evident that the adapter did not make as much of the meta-narrative potential of the pilgrim-disguise episode. To begin with, the role of pilgrims as storytellers is considerably reduced. It is not a pilgrim but a "knave" (949) who informs Horn about the recent events in Brittany, with which the readers, by the way, are already acquainted because they have just been described by a much more encompassing narrator. When Horn comes back from Ireland, he does meet a pilgrim who informs both him and the audience about Rymenhild's situation in an eloquent way, which enhances the suspense of the episode. In assuming the identity of the pilgrim, however, the Middle English Horn does not make much use of his storytelling skills. The encounter with King Modi is deleted, and with it, the hero's first veiled account of his life and his self-identification as a storyteller. The episode is therefore substantially shortened, and there is a significant reorganization of the narrative components found in the Anglo-Norman version. The story about the fisherman that Horn had told to King Modin is relocated so as to be included in his dialogue with Rymenhild, replacing the goshawk allegory. And, more importantly, unlike the Anglo-Norman text, this is not the first time the fishing image appears in the romance: before Horn is betrayed by Fikenhild, Rymenhild dreams that she casts a net to the sea and a big fish breaks it. The meaning of this dream is interpreted by Horn, who understands it as a prediction of the sufferings they will have to endure. A few lines on, Horn is exiled and his hermeneutical competence is demonstrated: "Lemman, derling, / Nu havestu þi swevening. / Þe fiss þat þi net rente, fram þe me he sente" (Allen 1984: 737–740). Thus, when disguised as a pilgrim Horn brings up this story, his main purpose is to refresh Rymenhild's memory

particularly relevant her study of Chaucer's and Gower's appropriation of academic exegetical practices with the purpose of authorizing vernacular writing (Chapter 7). For Chrétien de Troyes's and Marie de France's literary awareness, see Zink 1981 and Stanesco 1991.

recalling her dream, which is known to the two of them only, in order to prompt recognition. As a clue to Horn's real identity, then, the fishing story has a clear function within the narrative. It works in a similar way as the ring he drops in the horn. This narrative function is hardly recognizable in the Anglo-Norman version: the story is not told to Rigmel but to King Modin and, anyway, there is no dream to recall. Although almost completely gratuitous on the level of the narrative, the fishing story, as I argued before, achieves full significance in its meta-narrative dimension, drawing attention to Horn's veiled use of language as a mirror of fiction-making. The Middle English adaptor, not recognizing or not interested in exploiting its meta-narrative potential, deletes the encounter with King Modi and relocates the story, providing it a clear function within the narrative. In *King Horn* the fishing riddle serves, thus, a different but equally functional purpose: the repetition of this among other themes, such as the sea voyages, provides the work with a high degree of cohesion (Hynes-Berry 1975). Rosalind Wadsworth argues that "the conciseness of the Middle English renders this repetition effective and indeed necessary, and it accentuates significant verbal repetition" (1972: 222). This is specially noticeable in the use of the ring motif: whereas in the Anglo-Norman romance it is mentioned only once (3166), in the Middle English the inspirational power of the ring is frequently recalled in almost identical terms throughout the work (613–314; 873–874; 1483–1484). These kinds of verbal repetitions may only succeed in establishing thematic unity in the Middle English text: even if Thomas would have likewise insisted on the ring's magical qualities, in his detailed and expanded romance, Field suggests, these repetitions would not have proved as effective as in the highly condensed narrative of *King Horn*.

It should be noted that the wedding scene is not the only instance in which the Middle English narrator disregards the possibility, available in the Anglo-Norman version, to step into the narrative and stage his practice in a self-reflective way. In the

Roman de Horn, during his stay in Ireland, the hero also conceals his identity: this time he keeps his status as a knight, but he disguises his name, assuming the pseudonym Gudmond. Under this disguise, in a musical meeting in Lady Lenburc's chambers, he sings a *lai* about the love story between himself and Rigmel, delighting his audience, of course, just as Mestre Thomas hopes to do. This episode is, not surprisingly, deleted by the author of *King Horn*, who, furthermore, does not seem to grasp the use of the pseudonym, since both he and characters such as King Thurston constantly forget it, calling the hero sometimes Horn and others by the name he falsely assumes, Cutberd. In this way, unlike the author of the *Roman de Horn*, who is evidently inclined to comment on his own activity by way of these meta-textual procedures, the Middle English rewriter, dismissing these opportunities to foreground his authorial role, disappears behind his story. As Spearing puts it, "the story is told, but there is no indication of anyone telling it" (2005: 40). This withdrawal of the poet from his narrative is noticeable —other than in his indifference for the meta-textual procedures— in two other aspects identified by Spearing, that is, in the lack of narratorial explanations for changes in the focus of attention, on the one hand, and, on the other, in the almost exclusive use of the past tense, which "is felt to be the vehicle of objective discourse, from which all traces of speaker subjectivity have been eradicated" (Spearing 2005: 41, citing Fleischman). The poet's withdrawal has long been recognized by Grimm and Hegel as characteristic of the epic narrative, which "donne l'impression de se chanter de lui-même, d'une façon autonome, et sans être guidé par un auteur" (cited by Jauss 1963: 74). Jauss expands on this idea examining the Old French *chanson de geste* and contrasts the impersonal distance of the epic *jongleur* with the often overwhelming intermediary presence of the romance poet (1963: 75). Although focused on continental narrative, his insights turn out to be quite illuminating for describing the differences between the authorial stances adopted by the authors of the *Romance of Horn* and of *King Horn*, but also,

as will be seen in what follows, by the poets of the Auchinleck *Bevis* and *Boeve de Haumtone*.

2 Translating *Boeve de Haumtone*

The context for the pilgrim-disguise episode in the Boeve/Bevis-story is very similar to that of Horn. As a boy, the hero is sold to Saracen merchants after the Emperor of Germany kills his father, the earl of Hampton, to marry his mother, who planned his murder. He grows up at the Saracen court of King Hermine and after some years, he has a love affair with his daughter, Josiane. He is betrayed by two knights, however, and confined to a prison in Damascus for seven years. When he manages to escape, he searches for Josiane, who, although married to King Yvori of Monbrant, has preserved her virginity by means of a magic belt. Disguised as a pilgrim, Boeve/Bevis tests Josiane's love and, following the suggestion of her squire, deceives his rival in order to run away from the city.

Although in both versions of the Boeve/Bevis story the outline of the episode is almost identical, significant differences can be seen at this point. In the Anglo-Norman *Boeve*, the choice of the pilgrim disguise is not explicitly motivated and, as it is the case in many other episodes of the narrative, the appearance of the fake pilgrim must be taken for granted. After Boeve sees Josiane complaining about him, the reader is simply informed that he felt pity and "en paleis entre en guise de palmer" (1394; "He entered the palace dressed like a palmer," 52).[15] Further on, she asks the question that triggers his first fictitious narrative. Motivation, thus, is merely suggested by the paratactic arrangement of two narrative elements (Boeve's disguise and Josian's question) which appear to work as cause and effect. In translating his source, the Middle English Auchinleck poet completely dismisses this paratactic style borrowed

[15] All references to the text of *Boeve de Haumtone* are by line number to Stimming 1899 and English translations are quoted from Weiss 2008.

from the *chanson de geste* tradition by the Anglo-Norman author. His insinuations are replaced by overt explanations of the hero's motivations: becoming a pilgrim allows him, first, to go unnoticed and obtain information about the situation at court. This could have certainly been achieved with any kind of disguise that would conceal his social status. Only under the pilgrim's cloak, though, can he attract Josian's attention, which is exclusively directed to pilgrims' storytelling skills. In fact, one of the palmers gathered at the castle's gate explains that Josian expects nothing from them but stories about Bevis and that she would reward them for these: "To a riche man ȝe wolde him bringe, / Þat kouþe telle of him [Bevis] tiding!" (102).[16] Not long afterwards this requirement is voiced by Josian herself in the following terms:

> Herde ever eni of ȝow telle
> in eni lede or eni spelle,
> or in feld oþer in toun,
> of a kniȝt, Beves of Hamtoun? (104)

These two statements sufficiently explain Bevis's reasons for using the pilgrim disguise. But they have another purpose as well: at the same time they underscore the pilgrims' narrative role, clarifying thus the hero's motivations, they enhance the association between their figure and that of the narrator. Just as these pilgrims, the narrative persona of the Auchinleck *Bevis* expects to receive rewards for telling stories about Bevis (particularly in the form of beverage: "Ac er þan we be-ginne fiȝe / Ful vs þe koppe anon riȝe!," 194) and, just like Josian, he also refers to the narrative he is voicing as

[16] All references to the Auchinleck (A) text of *Bevis* are by page number to Köbling 1885–1894. References to other manuscrips and printed versions of *Bevis* are by line number to Fellows 1980. I use Fellows' abbreviations for manuscripts and printed texts. This reward promise voiced by the palmer in A is attributed to Josian in N, S, C (2794–2795), M (1902–1903), and the printed versions (1881–1882).

a "spelle."[17] Josian appears to be summoning the narrator himself, who, in the same way as Mestre Thomas, steps into the narrative by means of his hero's pilgrim disguise.

Unlike Horn, however, the disguised Bevis will not tell truthful—though veiled—stories of his life; he will tell only lies. This is especially evident when, already recognized by Josian, he uses his pilgrim disguise once again to trick King Yvori. On account of this ruse (devised by Josian's squire, Bonefas), the audience is invited to witness the process by which a fictitious story is constructed. Therefore, the means used by the narrator to guarantee his credibility are bluntly exposed and can be easily identified. In the first place, Bevis draws his authority from his pilgrim cloak. A pilgrim, as Valérie Galent-Fasseur points out, "instaurait avec Dieu un rapport privilégié qui lui conférait une puissance sur la parole porté par le texte, et sur les auditeurs" (1997: 54). Given this tight association between storytelling and truth embedded in the character of pilgrims, it is not hard to envision the benefits for Bevis to impersonate a pilgrim. In his effort to make his story believable, the "sclavyne" would grant his narrative the same unquestionable and God-sanctioned credibility as that attached to the pilgrims' discourse. Interestingly, this authorizing gesture, which is here enacted in a meta-narrative fashion, is later uttered by the narrator in much more straightforward terms.

[17] The word *spelle* is not used by Josian in S, N or the printed versions. It can be found, other than in A, in C and M, but only in the first two manuscripts does the narrator use the term "spelle" to refer either to his work ("Of þat feste ne lich namor telle, / for to hiȝe wiþ our spelle," 78) or to the activity he is performing ("Nomore of þis Erle wyll y telle / But of hys sone wyll y spelle," C: 316/317). Nevertheless, in C the pilgrim's tale is not otherwise associated to the narrator's work; see below. As stated by Paul Strohm, the term *spelle* offers valuable information about the generic nature of the works thus defined. In his analysis of the terminology used by Middle English writers for describing narrative genres, he called the attention to the strong "identification of *spelle* with what we think of today as metrical romance" (1971: 353), such as it becomes especially evident from Chaucer's use of this word to describe his parodic *Sir Thopas*.

When the poet, in an episode interpolated in the Middle English translation, has to assert the truthfulness of a dragon's dreadful and questionable properties, he equally resorts to the authority of pilgrims:

> And who þat nel nouȝt leve me,
> Wite at pilgrimes þat þer haþ be,
> For þai can telle ȝow, iwis,
> Of þat dragoun how it is. (125; M, 2301–2302)[18]

This is not the only instance in the work in which the poet appeals to an external source of authorization and disclaims responsibility for the truth of the events narrated. In the same way as Bevis borrows the pilgrim's authority to make his lies believable, the poet usurps the authority of the "French bok" to provide credibility to his fiction.

In second place, in the process of construction of the counterfeit story, it becomes evident that Bevis grounds his credibility on his rhetorical skills, which he displays fully to compose a convincing narrative. The storyline is provided to him by Bonefas:

> Sai, þat þow havest wide i-went,
> And þow come be Dabilent,
> Þat is hennes four jurné:
> Sai, men wile þer the king sle,
> Boute him come help of sum oþer. (109)

The hero amplifies it substantially, however, to spin an elaborate "tale", as King Yvori calls it:

> Sire, ich come fro Jurisalem
> Fro Nazareþ & fro Bedlem,

[18] This commentary appears only in A and Ma (the intervening portion of M). Interestingly, Fellows indicates that "given that Ma is generally much closer to the later texts of *Bevis*, it seems likely that where it agrees with A against other manuscripts, the features in question are original" (Fellows 2008: 94). Therefore, the identification between the disguised hero and the narrator, both appealing to the authority of pilgrims to authorize their discourse, could have already been suggested in the original Middle English translation of *Boeve*.

Emauns castel & Synaie;
Ynde, Erop, and Asie,
Egippte, Grese, and Babiloine,
Tars, Sesile and Sesaoine,
In Fris, in Sodeine and in Tire,
In Aufrik and in mani empire,
Ac al is pes þar ichave went,
Save in þe lond of Dabilent.
In pes mai no man come þare,
Þar is werre, sorwe & care.
Þre kinges and dukes five
His chevalrie adoun ginneþ drive,
And meche oþer peple ischent,
Cites itake and tounes i-brent;
Him to a castel þai han idrive,
Þat stant be þe se upon a clive,
And al þe ost liþ him aboute,
Be this to daie a is in doute. (110)

The exhaustive enumeration of cities or territories and the detailed account of the alleged siege by the armies of three kings and five dukes are not usual in this narrative which is generally more succinct in its descriptions.[19] Drawing on his eloquence and showing off his rhetorical mastery, Bevis makes his story plausible. In addition to the pilgrim's cloak, then, it is this verbal profusion, this "rhétorique de l'excès" (Gallé 2005: 260) that warrants the credibility of the fictitious story. It is noteworthy that the economy of the narration is also subverted by a lengthy and eloquent description in another episode, which, due to its questionable nature, requires further endorsement: the battle with the dragon. Here, the poet offers

[19] Although in the Anglo-Norman version the alleged pilgrim also enumerates the places he visited and describes the siege of Dabilent (1519–1527), in the A redaction of the Middle English poem (as well as in S and N) this passage is considerably amplified: the number of place names is doubled and more precise details about the siege are included to confer further credibility to the pilgrim's account. In C, M, and the printed versions, instead, Bevis's tales as a traveller are omitted and Bonefas's speech is, in varying degrees, amplified.

a very detailed account of the characteristics of this dubitable creature, including, for example, the length of the dragon's tusks:

> His eren were rowe & ek long,
> His frount be-fore hard & strong;
> Eiȝte toskes at is mouþ stod out,
> Þe leste was seventene ench about,
> Þe her, þe cholle under þe chin,
> He was boþe leiþ and grim;
> A was i-maned ase a stede;
> Þe heved a bar wiþ meche pride,
> Be-twene þe scholder and þe taile
> Foure and twenti fot,saunfaile.
> His taile was of gret stringeþe,
> Sextene fot a was a lingþe;
> His bodi ase a wintonne.
> Whan hit schon þe briȝte sonne,
> His wingges schon so þe glas.
> His sides wer hard ase eni bras.
> His brest was hard ase eni ston;
> A foulere þing nas never non. (125)[20]

The description of the dragon provides an eloquent example of this use of hyperbolic language as an authorizing strategy, which the narrator had previously underscored in his fictitious account of the siege of Dabilent.

Consequently, exploiting the meta-narrative possibilities of the pilgrim-disguise episode available in his source, the Auchinleck *Bevis*-poet suggests different and quite contradictory forms of narrative authorization: on the one hand, he draws his credibility from external sources, either a pilgrim or the "Frensch bok", whose stories he claims to reproduce or translate. On the other hand, however, he emphatically asserts the value of his own eloquence as a comparable source of credibility, moving away from the *humilitas*-

[20] This long and "excessive" description appears only in A. In NSEC (3497–3501), M (2372–2376), and the printed versions (2340–2344) a much more concise depiction is provided when Bevis encounters the dragon, and this is correspondingly omitted in A.

topos which translators generally use to describe the relationship between source and translation, even when they consciously subvert their sources.[21]

3 Conclusions

In the past decade, scholars have argued that *Boeve de Haumtone* and the *Roman de Horn* share numerous features with Continental *chansons de geste* and could, in fact, be considered peculiar insular developments of this genre (Ailes 2006, 2008, 2011; Furrow 2010). A common practice has been to read these texts in the light of the critical models which describe and explain the Continental genre in order to ascertain their suitability when applied to the insular *corpus*. If one follows this approach regarding the ways in which poets represent themselves and their poetics within their own works, one reaches interesting conclusions. In his seminal work on medieval poetics, Paul Zumthor (2000 [1972]: 399) states:

> quelle que soit la rigueur avec laquelle il applique les règles propres de son texte, jamais le chanteur de geste (bien différent en cela du trouvère) n'imposa à ses auditeurs sa propre conscience artistique; il subordonne, à l'accomplissement d'une tâche qui est de raconter une fois encore une fable héritée, le dessein particulier de sa parole.

While this fittingly describes the poet of *Boeve de Haumtone*, who appears to be exclusively focused to the task of telling a story, the author of the *Roman de Horn* can hardly be described in terms of Zumthor's *chanteurs*. The meta-narrative procedures presented above show a poet with a clear artistic conscience, eager to showcase and assert his poetics and, therefore, at least concerning this aspect, closer to romance authors such as Chrétien de Troyes or Hue de

[21] For a survey on medieval translation as an essentially hermeneutical practice, see Copeland 1991.

Rotelande.[22] Interestingly, when these narratives are rewritten in Middle English, the case is the opposite: Mestre Thomas's overt displays of authorial consciousness cannot be traced in *King Horn* but are definitely visible in the Auchinleck *Bevis*. Jennifer Fellows has in fact suggested that "the Auchinleck *Bevis* clearly represents a systematic reworking of the romance—what in short may reasonably be termed 'authorial revision'" (1998: 21).

The texts we have looked at show two different authorship models. The poets of both *Boeve de Haumtone* and *King Horn* appear to adopt the traditionally epic authorial stance: they are simply vehicles of a tradition they inherit. As Michel Stanesco puts it, "ce n'est pas l'individu qui a ici la parole, mais la tradition embrassant toutes les dimensions de l'être, y compris le dit poétique" (1991: 8). In this context, Zumthor certainly had it right when he proclaimed the author's disappearance, in whose place "reste le sujet de l'énonciation, une instance locutrice intégrée au texte et indissociable de son fonctionnement: 'ça' parle" (Zumthor 2000 [1972]: 89). But the authors of the *Roman de Horn* and the Auchinleck *Bevis* refuse to disappear. Advertising their authorial status, the Auchinleck scribe and Mestre Thomas insistently drive the reader's attention to their role in the individual reworking of a traditional story. The development of literary conscience is, therefore, not linear and, as becomes evident from the works analyzed above, the vernacular employed would not represent a significantly determining factor in the evolution of authorial consciousness in medieval England.

These conclusions may be supported by recent critical work on other Anglo-Norman and Middle English romances. A. C. Spearing, for instance, offers an insightful reading on the literary awareness of the *Havelok* poet (2005) and Rosalind Field, in her study on the translation of *Gui de Warewic* into Middle English

[22] For the role of twelfth-century romance and, in particular, Chrétien de Troyes's work in the development of authorial consciousness, see Zink 1981.

(2008a), has demonstrated that the Anglo-Norman author may be described in terms similar to those usually employed to refer to Middle English popular writers. These essays have contributed greatly to qualify previous generalizations on the authorial modes commonly associated either to Anglo-Norman or to Middle English romances. However, much remains to be done. According to Field's recent assessment of Anglo-Norman critical practice (2011), scholars have long been focused on the intended audiences of these romances, neglecting the authorship question. This essay has thus been intended to partially make up for this uneven distribution of scholarly attention, extending the study of this problem also to the Middle English period.

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