

Codex and Consumption: Adaptation and Lifestyle Aspiration in the
Burgundian *Fille du comte de Pontieu*

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In the decades since the term was coined, scholars have increasingly acknowledged the importance of visual display in the construction of the fifteenth-century Burgundian ‘Theatre State’.¹ Following Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, critics have addressed the role of ceremony and ostentatious self-projection in both the political process of state-building and the more personal concern of identity-formation in the Burgundian Netherlands under Duke Philip the Good (1419-67). Studies have tended to focus on grander-scale events like glorious entries or lavish banquets,² while smaller-scale articulations of display have been rarely discussed. One particular gap stands out. Despite Burgundy’s buoyant literary scene, the role of book culture in manifesting and fostering luxury has gone largely unacknowledged.³ In particular, the important part played in this regard by the Burgundian literary genre *par excellence*, the so-called *mise en prose*, has been relatively neglected.⁴ Yet these prose reworkings of earlier Francophone texts are essential to an understanding of the function of literary production for this status-oriented court, from perspectives both narrative and material. In the following pages I offer a case-study of this, using the Burgundian *Fille du comte de Pontieu* as it is presented in one manuscript to underline how literary adaptation communicates lifestyle aspiration in the Burgundian Netherlands under Duke Philip the Good.

La Fille du comte de Pontieu survives in two manuscript witnesses: Paris, Arsenal, MS 5208, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 12572 [subsequently: BnF 12572], of which only the second will concern me here.⁵ We must assume that this manuscript dates from some time before 1467 as it features in the inventory of the Burgundian library taken after Philip the Good’s death; and though it bears no precise date, or indication of patron or provenance, it is clearly a product of the Lille workshop of the artist known as the Wavrin Master.⁶ At 299 mm x

¹ W. Blockmans and W. Prevenier, *The Burgundian Netherlands* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also A. Brown, ‘Bruges and the Burgundian Theatre State: Charles the Bold and Our Lady of the Snow’, *History* 84 (1999), 277-99, and G. Small, ‘When *Indiciaires* Meet *Rederijkers*: A Contribution to the History of the Burgundian “Theatre State”’, in *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede. Literatuur in Brugge tussen Middeleeuwen en Rederijkerstijd*, ed. by J. Oosterman (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), pp. 133-61.

² See, for example, A. Brown, ‘Ritual and State-Building: Ceremonies in Late Medieval Bruges’, in *Symbolic Communication in Late Medieval Towns*, ed. by J. Van Leeuwen (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), pp. 1-26; E. Dhanens, ‘De blijde inkomst van Filips de Goede in 1458 en de plastische kunsten te Gent’, *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België*, 48 (1987), 53-89; B. Ramakers, ‘Veelzijdig en meerduidig. De tableaux vivants in de Brugse intrede van 1440’, in *Stad van koopmanschap en vrede*, pp. 97-132; and A. Lafortune-Martel, *Fête noble en Bourgogne au XV^e siècle: le Banquet du Faisan* (Paris/Montreal: Vrin, 1984).

³ Important work in this direction has however been done by H. Wijsman, *Luxury Bound. The Production of Illustrated Manuscripts and Noble Book Ownership in the Burgundian Netherlands (1400-1550)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

⁴ The classic work on the *misés en prose* as a literary genre remains G. Doutrepont, *Les misés en prose des épopées et des romans chevaleresques du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles* (Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1939). See also *Mettre en prose aux XIV^e-XVI^e siècles*, ed. by M. C. Timelli, B. Ferrari and A. Schoysman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010). On the *misés en prose* and luxury lifestyle aspiration, see R. Dixon, *A Romance Spectacular: Misés en Prose, Cultural Consumption, and Lifestyle Aspiration in Burgundy (1445-67)*, forthcoming.

⁵ The Arsenal manuscript contains just three miniatures and reduced versions of the texts. On this codex, see *La Fille du comte de Pontieu. Conte en prose. Versions du XIII^e et du XV^e siècles*, ed. by C. Brunel (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1923), pp. xlix-lii, and *L’histoire de tres vaillans princez monseigneur Jehan d’Avennes*, ed. by D. Quéruel (Villeneuve-d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1997), p. 8.

⁶ See J. Barrois, *Bibliothèque prototypographique: ou, librairies des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean de Berri, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1830), nos 1279 and 1877. The manuscript contains no arms to indicate the identity of the nobleman who commissioned it, though the internal evidence suggests a connection to the noted bibliophile Jean, bastard of Wavrin, with the manuscript passing into the possession of Philip the Good at some point before 1467. See A. Naber, ‘Jean de Wavrin, un bibliophile du XV^e siècle’, *Revue du Nord*, 69 (1987), 281-93, and eadem, ‘Les manuscrits d’un bibliophile bourguignon du XV^e siècle, Jean de Wavrin’, *Revue du Nord*, 72 (1990), 23-48. On the

210 mm, it is comparable in size with most books in the *mise en prose* corpus;⁷ and like an appreciable number of these books, and all of the Wavrin Master's output, the manuscript is on paper. BnF 12572 contains *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* (fols 123^r-165^r) as well as two other *mises en prose* with which *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* is made (somewhat tenuously) to dovetail through a creative authorial re-imagining of Burgundian genealogy. These are the *Istoire de Jehan d'Avennes* (fols 1^r-123^r), and a version of the *Saladin* legend (fols 165^r-262^r). All three texts are illustrated in the Wavrin Master's characteristic pen-and-wash style, with a total of twenty-seven miniatures of variable sizes within the range 120 mm x 47-93 mm. *Jehan d'Avennes* and *Saladin* contain eighteen and ten miniatures respectively, while *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* has nine.⁸

The fifteenth-century reworking of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* is a rare thing among the *mises en prose*: it derives from a thirteenth-century prose, rather than verse, text.⁹ It is the story of a marriage, of loss and of reconciliation, the later version explicitly linking these events to the foregoing *Jehan d'Avennes*, and to the *Saladin* text which follows it. Having married the comtesse d'Artois, Jehan d'Avennes produces a son who grows up to father the comte de Pontieu. This count has a daughter who marries one Thibault de Dommart, with whom she fell in love the instant he arrived at her father's court. Thibault and *filie* (the heroine is never named) are happy following their wedding, save in one key respect: they remain childless, even after five years. To atone for whatever wrong is preventing God and/or Mother Nature from looking favourably upon them, Thibault elects to go on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella. He intends to make the journey alone but, after receiving her father's blessing, *filie* accompanies him.

On the way to Santiago they are set upon by a group of brigands. Thibault fights valiantly, and kills three of them. Out of respect for his skill the men spare him but, desiring revenge, drag *filie* into the forest and rape her. Once back in Pontieu, having completed the pilgrimage, Thibault and *filie* discuss their trip with the lady's father, ascribing their fate in the forest to another unfortunate couple. But Pontieu eventually wheedles the truth out of his son-in-law. He has his daughter sealed into a barrel he has made for the purpose, and casts her out to sea as punishment. Buffeted by the waves, *filie* is eventually picked up by Christian merchants who take her with them to Almería and the court of the sultan; she and the sultan marry and live reasonably happily. Six years later, the count realizes that he might have acted a little harshly towards his daughter, so he, his son, and Thibault go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Mission accomplished, they arrive in Almería where, after a period of imprisonment, they are reunited with *filie*. They all sail back to Pontieu via Rome; *filie* and Thibault's union is blessed both by the pope and with two sons. All live happily ever after, even the jilted sultan and his daughter, who (the fifteenth-century text is unique in informing us) goes on to give birth to the great Saladin.

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it is the rape episode and its consequences that have most preoccupied critics of both the thirteenth-century text and the fifteenth-century *Fille du comte de*

Wavrin Master, see especially P. Schandel, 'Le Maître de Wavrin et les miniaturistes lillois à l'époque de Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire', 3 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Strasbourg-Marc Bloch, 1997). See also R. Crone, 'Neue Studien zum "Maître de Wavrin"', *Scriptorium*, 23 (1969), 320-32, M. Gil, 'Deux nouveaux manuscrits exécutés pour Jean, bâtard de Wavrin, chevalier et écrivain bourguignon, et la question de l'enluminure sur parchemin à Lille dans la seconde moitié du XV^e siècle', *Le Musée Condé*, 58 (2001), 35-45, and F. Johan, 'Le Maître de Wavrin: Étude codicologique et stylistique', 3 vols (unpublished *mémoire de licence*, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1999).

⁷ For an indication of the content of this corpus, see Doutrepon's comprehensive *bilan* in *Les mises en prose*.

⁸ See Schandel, 'Le Maître de Wavrin', II, p. 151.

⁹ The source text exists in a short and long redaction, dating from the mid- to late thirteenth century respectively. Both were attested in the Burgundian library at the time of the 1467 inventory. See Barrois, *Bibliothèque prototypographique*, nos 1300 (lost short version) and 1532 (long redaction, now Paris, BnF, MS fr. 12203). Critics have long debated which of the two earlier versions served as the source for the Burgundian *Fille du comte de Pontieu*, with no suggestion of a consensus. Where it is necessary in this chapter to refer to the earlier text, I quote from the long redaction.

Pontieu.¹⁰ Often, however, the Burgundian text is treated not as a meaningful work in its own right, but as a minor adjunct to the chivalric exploits of Jehan d’Avennes in his text, or as a prelude to the ‘coming-to-Burgundianness’ of Saladin whom it engenders. But there is more to it than both of these approaches suggest. In this piece, I illustrate the point by focussing solely on *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* as presented in BnF 12572, and by applying to it aspects of Linda Hutcheon’s recent wide-ranging study of adaptation – a study which, importantly, deals with both product and process. In so doing, I suggest ways in which textual and visual transformation in the Burgundian manuscript invite reflection on the role of the whole artefact in shaping identity in this profoundly self-conscious, display-oriented milieu.

The ‘multilaminated’ phenomenon of adaptation that Hutcheon describes has three parts. Firstly, it views the resultant product as ‘a *formal entity* [...], an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works’. Secondly, adaptation is considered as a ‘process of creation’, involving engagement with and re-imagining of the source, which admits, thirdly, of a ‘process of reception’ grounded in an intertextual apprehension.¹¹ In what follows, I look at each aspect of adaptation in turn, examining first the sense in which the *mise en prose* heralds its becoming a product – both a transposed text and a manuscript book –, and the processes by which certain themes in the thirteenth-century version are re-imagined in the expanded fifteenth-century text and in the Wavrin Master’s watercolours. This allows me, subsequently, to consider the reworked product’s courtly reception as an instance of intertextual engagement not with the source as semiotic structure, as in Hutcheon’s model, but as a material book forming part of the Burgundian library which houses and mediates luxury.

The status of the *mise en prose* as ‘transposition’ is consistently advertised in the texts’ prologues. But what is especially interesting about this initial acknowledgement of provenance is the way in which it divorces the text from an attestable, tangible source actually present in the ducal library, while continuing to underline that the formal entity has its roots in a prior text. This absolves the Burgundian adaptation of any obligation towards a verifiably faithful rendering of a known story. In so doing, it marks the *mise en prose* as a derivative yet innovative product whose meaning stretches beyond the confines of the reworked text. The opening of *Jehan d’Avennes* (which also serves as a prologue to *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*) underlines how this functions:

Ainsi comme par adventure, pour passer le temps, je m’estoie naguerez trouvé *en l’estude d’un tres noble seigneur*, garny a planté de *plusieurs biaux livres* desquels je m’aproçay et en commençay lirre, comme je trouvasse livrez a souhait, je quis finalement tant que je m’arrestay a *ung ancien livre en latin* qui contenoit plusieurs hystoriez; et pour ce qu’il estoit comme mis en nonchalloir, je lisi dedens. Et *entre les aultrez hystoriez, j’en trouvai une* qui pou estoit en usaige, pour laquelle lirre je eslevay lez yeulz de mon entendement. Et pour ce que je l’ay trouvé digne de grand recommandation [...] *deliberai de le translatter*.¹²

(And so as if by chance, and to while away the time, I recently found myself in *the study of a most noble gentleman* which was lined with *numerous handsome books* which I examined and began to read. There were so many books that I was spoilt for choice, but eventually I alighted on *an old book written in Latin* which contained a number of stories; and since it seemed to have fallen out of favour I looked inside. *Among all the other stories I found one which was very little known*, which I began to read with not inconsiderable attention. And since I felt it highly praiseworthy [...] *I elected to translate it.*)

¹⁰ See D. Rieger, ‘Fiction littéraire et violence. Le Cas de la *Fille du comte de Pontieu*’, *Romania*, 113 (1992-95), 92-117; E. B. Vitz, ‘Rereading Rape in Medieval Literature: Literary, Historical, and Theoretical Reflections’, *Romanic Review*, 88 (1997), 1-26; N. Virtue, ‘Rereading Rape in Two Versions of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*’, *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 27 (2002), 256-72.

¹¹ L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 7-9. All italics are Hutcheon’s own.

¹² *Jehan d’Avennes*, ed. by Quérueu, pp. 41-42. Italics mine.

Here, in common with other *mise en prose* prologues,¹³ the Burgundian author's narrativizing of his compositional practice underlines the text's status as an adaptation of a carefully selected work contained in the richly stocked library of a bibliophile, and one which is derived from a prior work. But that prior work is not the *Dit du Prunier* (the attested source of *Jehan d'Avennes*), or the thirteenth-century *Fille du comte de Pontieu*; rather, it is ostensibly 'an old book written in Latin'.¹⁴ Appealing to this (albeit fictional) Latin derivation for his text allows the Burgundian author to frame his reworking with the authority of the past, but not simply the relatively recent French past of only a few centuries ago as betokened by the actual provenance of his text. Invoking a distant past speaks, more crucially, to the contemporary courtly taste for grounding their illustrious future in the appropriation of former Byzantine (Carolingian, Castilian...) glories. The nobleman who commissioned the adaptation would presumably have no knowledge of the work's source-text, even if it was in his library, as the language in which it was written would have been incomprehensible to him,¹⁵ and would certainly not be poring over, comparing and contrasting, the reworked text and its source. What matters in the adapted product, for its ultimate contemporary receiver, is its status *as an adaptation* – of a work with proclaimed connections to an authoritative past source, and of one garnered from a luxurious library. What matters, further, is less absolute fidelity to a given story than the role of this product and the processes to which it attests in the shaping of a material object, and of a cultural and social construct.

In order to produce the formal entity that is the adaptation, of course, the Burgundian author must engage creatively with the actual precursor text and subject it to a reshaping likely to appeal to his patron; the prologues' framing of the text with the authority of the past is the most explicit means by which this can be achieved, but the endeavour goes further. While the patron of the reworking would be aware only of the product presented to him, the fifteenth-century author would need to be familiar with the thirteenth-century source, and to make a number of 'behind-the-scenes' decisions related to his treatment of the narrative, in order to arrive at that palatable finished product. Despite the prologues' stated aims to simplify and shorten the source material,¹⁶ these adaptive processes centre in fact on the expansion of the precursor. Re-engagement with an earlier text in this milieu involves carefully selecting elements from that source-text and developing them in a way that would appeal to the new audience, through what Jane Taylor has called 'acculturation': 'a process whereby the socio-culturally unfamiliar is recast in familiar terms, so that the reader can understand systems and phenomena in a source-text corresponding to his own ideologies, preconceptions and behaviour-patterns'.¹⁷

Taylor's notion implicitly encourages reflection, further, on how thematic concerns in the prior text take on renewed importance in the *mise en prose*. Here, certain themes – notably travel,

¹³ A detailed discussion of the Burgundian authors' prologues, and the set patterns to which they conform, is largely outside the scope of this chapter. A thorough account of linguistic aspects of the prologue-writers' art in Burgundy is provided by R. Brown-Grant, 'Narrative Style in Burgundian Prose Romances of the Later Middle Ages', forthcoming, while the practices and formulations adopted in two different compositional milieus, surrounding the Wavrin Master and David Aubert (one of the main 'prosificateurs' and translators at court) respectively, are given in Schandel, 'Le Maître de Wavrin', I, pp. 186-218, and R. Straub, *David Aubert, escriptvain et clerc* (Amsterdam/Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 277-310.

¹⁴ The Burgundian adaptation's derivation, and consequent translation, from non-French sources is a common conceit of the prologues: for example, like *Jehan d'Avennes*, *Olivier de Castille* and the *Roman de Florimont* claim to be translations from Latin; *Gerard de Nevers* and *Paris et Vienne* are ostensibly derived from 'Provençal' (i.e. Occitan?) texts, while the *Histoire des Seigneurs de Gavre* alleges Italian provenance.

¹⁵ The source-text would have been written in Old French, which was current in evolving varieties from the ninth century to the early fourteenth. By the mid-fifteenth century, Middle French was the language used. See M. Huchon, *Histoire de la langue française* (Paris: Lettres gothiques, 2002)

¹⁶ See, for example, J. Wauquelin, *La Belle Hélène de Constantinople. Mise en prose d'une chanson de geste*, ed. by M.-C. de Crécy (Geneva: Droz, 2002), p. 14.

¹⁷ See J.H.M. Taylor, 'The significance of the insignificant: reading reception in the Burgundian *Erec* and *Cligès*', *Fifteenth-Century Studies*, 24 (1998), 183-97 (p. 183).

combat, and the ceremonial – are recast and expanded for the courtly audience; and by their very appropriation, the themes and events narrated in the *mises en prose* assume a significance that exceeds their role in the source. They continue to have value for the work’s plot, but the greater importance placed on them bolsters the culture of excess so central to this court. And when thematic accretion in the text is mirrored by a similar investment in the work’s illustrative programme and material presentation, we see the ‘multilaminated’ creative processes of Burgundian scribes and artists in their fullest sense. The adaptation of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* demonstrates these processes in text and image in a delightfully accessible and typical way. In what follows, I examine thematic re-imagining in the narrative – in the order ceremonial, travel, and combat – before looking at the Wavrin Master’s treatment of these three phenomena in his miniatures, in order to show how these means of adaptation ensured a particular reception of the reworked text at court, and allowed it to function intertextually and intermodally with other works in the *mise en prose* corpus.

When I talk of ‘the ceremonial’ in these reworkings, I refer not only to large-scale articulations of the *fastes de la cour* in the narrative – descriptions of joyous entries, lavish dinners, wedding ceremonies, or funeral processions – but also to the clothes worn to celebrate them and the settings in which they are enacted. While the *mises en prose*’s sources abounded in such episodes, what it is valuable to note here, in respect of the culture of aspiration and ostentatious display in which the Burgundian texts are implicated, is the prose version’s particular treatment of familiar-seeming notions. Ceremonial is brought to a reworked version either through expansion of an already-present motif in the source, or through authorial interpretation of the source and a perceived need for an addition. Both of these processes are used in *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*. Returning from their ill-fated pilgrimage to Santiago, Thibault and his wife are welcomed back with much celebration in a scene which the Burgundian author has greatly expanded from his thirteenth-century source:

Au jour que Thibault et sa dame revindrent, ilz trouverent en leur hostel de Dommarc le conte de Pontieu, le conte de Saint Pol avec plusieurs barons et chevaliers qui celle par estoient convenus pour conjoïr et bienvignier Thibault aiant fait assavoir sa revenue. Aussy y estoient plenté de damez et damoisellez qui reçurent a grant honneur la dame, et ainsi tant a l’un comme a l’autre furent fais et donnés plusieurs salutz et plusieurs rices et nobles presens.¹⁸

Il revint en sa tiere. Mout fist on grant joie de lui et de sa dame. Il i fu li quens de Pontiu, peres de la dame, et i fu li quens de Saint Pol, ki oncles fu a monseigneur Thiebaut. Molt i ot de boines gens et de vaillans a lor revenue. La dame fu molt honoree des dames et damoiseles.¹⁹

(On their return, Thibault and his good lady found the comte de Pontieu and the comte de Saint Pol in their lodgings, along with many other lords and knights who had assembled there to fête and to welcome Thibault, whose return had been broadcast. There were also many ladies and maidens there who welcomed the lady with much ceremony; they all greeted one another, and many lavish and noble gifts were exchanged.)

As we see, the reworked text develops the episode, in order not simply to ensure that it occupies much more narrative space – though this is important – but also to permit the inclusion of detail

¹⁸ *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, pp. 86-87. References will hereafter be supplied in parentheses in the body of my text for both versions of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*. The fifteenth-century text is on the left, while the thirteenth-century version appears on the right. Translations are my own.

¹⁹ *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, p. 14. I supply the quotations from the source text to underline the greater spatio-narrative, rather than linguistic, reinvestment in its themes on the part of the Burgundian author; as such, and as the events recounted in the later excerpt are largely the same, I leave these quotations untranslated.

on court etiquette and the requirement for gifting, which would reflect glory back onto the Duke and his intimates as they read the text.

Further examples support this, though the homecoming scene is unique in *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* in presenting the ceremonial without narratorial intervention. Other episodes, whether expansions of events present in the source or out-and-out authorial inventions, are accompanied with tags suggesting that they will not be discussed, the inference being that their inclusion might spoil the flow of the story, as at the wedding ceremony:

Si y convindrent le conte de Saint Pol, oncle de Thybault, et plusieurs seigneurs et barons qui furent moult joyeulz de ce mariage. Et pour ce que ce seroit trop longue chose a racompter de descripre les honneurz, pompez, beubancez, dansez et esbatemens qui y furent fais, je m'en tais et briefement m'en passe.(p. 73)

Li mariage fu fais. Li quens de Pontiu et li quens de Saint Pol i furent et maint autre preudome. A grant joie furent assamblé, et a grant seigneurie et a grant deduit. (pp. 3-4)

(There gathered the comte de Saint Pol, Thibault's uncle, and many other knights and barons who were overjoyed at this union. And because it would be too lengthy a process to recount a description of the honourable events, the pomp and ceremony, the dances and games that took place there, I will say nothing of them, and pass over them in short order.)

Having claimed, however, that his intention was not to engage with such events, in this and comparable episodes the author proceeds to enumerate the precise nature of the ceremonial experienced by his characters. In a narrative which recounts events in a rather prolix way, the *praeteritio* implies that the dances danced or games played require an account that exceeds the already generous norm, hence encouraging audiences to imagine events that in their lavishness push at the limits of the expressible. Such creative adaptation, to borrow Hutcheon's terminology, of the source material permits the Burgundian author to let his readership see themselves reflected in the text, imagine themselves as participants in the universe it sketches, in ways highlighting and developing the spectacular culture endemic in courtly behaviours. Consumption and aspiration figure in the text, in other words, that eventually serves as their representative.

The theme of travel in the *mises en prose* in general, and in *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* in particular, is re-engaged with via adaptive processes similar to those undergone by the ceremonial: either the Burgundian author expands material already suggested by the source, or invents episodes based on a creative re-imagining of aspects of that source. In all the reworked texts, travel offers a way of getting a character from A to B, an opportunity for adventure and atonement of various kinds, and/or (in a clear departure from the source-texts) a means by which the author can inject 'Burgundianness' into his text by having a character pass through what appears to be a roll-call of Duke Philip's territories.²⁰ In *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, while elements of most of these are discernible, it is the penitential function of travel that most preoccupies the author as he expands his text. Even when a journey appears straightforwardly teleological, as when Thibault and *fille* set out from Pontieu for Santiago, other factors are in play:

Ilz prindrent congié et, *a brief parler*, au jour qu'ilz avoit prins, se mirent a chemin. Si trespasserent tellement montaignez, champaignez, falloisez, chemins, sentez et sentiers qu'ilz vindrent a deux journees près de Galice. (p. 77; italics mine)

Il s'apareillent et murent a grant joie, et vont par lor jornees tant k'il aprocierent de monseigneur saint Jakeme a mains de .ij. jornees. (p. 6)

²⁰ The reworked *Gérard de Nevers* offers an excellent example of this. For a discussion, see *Gérard de Nevers. Prose version of the 'Roman de la Violette'*, ed. by L. F. Lowe (Princeton, NJ/Paris: Princeton University Press/Presses Universitaires de France, 1928), pp. xxv-xxix.

(They took their leave and, *to cut a long story short*, on the agreed day they set out. They crossed many mountains, fields, cliffs, roads, lanes and tracks, and they came within two day's journey of Galicia.)

As with ceremonial, travel here is expanded via *praeteritio*: the author wishes to cut down his narrative, ostensibly, but he in fact does the opposite, invoking the many topographical features experienced by the journeying Burgundians, none of which were encountered by the thirteenth-century travellers. Again, this narrative expansion appeals to the particularly Burgundian love of excess and to the articulation of aspiration through one-upmanship, increasing the textual space accorded to an event in the material book while highlighting an episode in the reworked tale and introducing the thematic importance of travel as trial or tribulation. We see this last thematic development in expanded narrative moments in *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* when husband and wife reach a fork in the forest path and – inevitably – choose the wrong one (p. 78), or when Thibault, Pontieu and his son make their pilgrimage to Jerusalem (p. 99); but it receives its most striking treatment in an extensive episode which has no directly comparable scene in the source. When, as a shocking punishment for her role in the rape and its aftermath, the count seals his daughter into a barrel and casts her out to sea, the thirteenth-century version supplies just this information; we hear nothing from *fille* throughout the whole episode. In the prose reworking, however, things are quite different. In a bravura piece of textual expansion occupying some three manuscript folios, the Burgundian author has *fille* lament – in direct speech, and with appeals to God and to personifications – her sorry fate (pp. 94-96). Not only does this episode impute a moral charge of the kind discussed by recent scholars to the event in the *mise en prose*,²¹ but the author's creative adaptation of the source expands the narratological and hence textual space occupied by the journeys undertaken. And this in turn underlines their importance not only for the narrative and its density, but also for the material book in which they figure, and the court for which it was produced. This will be outlined more fully below.

But it is in his treatment of the theme of combat in *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* that the Burgundian author's re-engagement with his source emerges most strongly, and in ways that underline the ideological importance of strategies of adaptation in this milieu. This largely bears out the evidence of the corpus as a whole, in which combat (whether pitched battles, single combat, crusade, or tournament) figures heavily. Much more so than in the thirteenth-century precursor text, combat is massively present in the later version of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, and receives a treatment that has much in common with, while differing in certain respects from, the adaptation of ceremonial and travel. Most significantly, the author seems to feel no (real or feigned) compunction at describing battles at length, and hence has no need for recourse to the *praeteritio* of the other thematic expansions. Further, only one episode of combat in the entire reworking – Thibault's encounter with the brigands in the forest that occasions his wife's rape (pp. 78-79) – finds its source in the thirteenth-century text. All the other scenes of combat are invented by the Burgundian author, either wholesale or as a consequence of a tiny event in the source. The fifteenth-century text supplements his narrative with accounts of tournament and naval battle against Saracen hordes to fulfil a particular function: the glorification of Burgundy and the celebration of the rightness of her might.

The political context in which the *mises en prose* were produced was a period of some uncertainty for Philip the Good and his intimates; the signing of the Treaty of Arras in 1435 marked the beginning of a breakdown in relations between Burgundy, France, and England, while 1454 saw the Duke making firm, but ultimately aborted, plans to go on crusade.²² Against

²¹ See for example R. Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages: Gender, Morality, and Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²² On these two events in Philip's career, see R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good. The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2002), pp. 98-126 and 334-72 respectively.

this backdrop, it is not difficult to imagine how episodes in which Burgundians get the upper hand in combat situations would have been good for courtly morale: far from being merely a *Bumper Book of Battles* for the court, reworkings like *La Fille du comte de Pontieu* would have pleased the Duke, and the other Burgundian bibliophiles who commissioned and consumed such works, for the particular ideological charge they carried. What must surely have appealed in these texts were episodes in which doughty proto-Burgundians (protagonists who, through their behaviour and allegiance to moral or political rectitude, reflect Burgundian ideology) fought expeditiously and stamped out threats to their person and to their political integrity; and the adaptation is careful to present these in a doubled sense with Thibault de Dommart. With skilful circularity, Thibault is depicted in tournaments at the beginning and end of the romance as fighting to ensure both his own personal renown and his worthiness to take *fille* from another man, be it her father or the sultan (p. 121):

Thybault, qui veult acquerre honneur et qui voit le pere de sa dame estre homme de grant vertu, fiert et rue a dexte et a sensestre, en telle guise que chascun en est emerveillié. (p. 57)

(Thibault, who wanted to garner honour and who saw that his lady's father was a man of great worth, felled men left and right with such alacrity that everyone was amazed.)

As well as fighting to feather his own nest, though, Thibault reveals himself capable of weighing in to defend another man's name and political interests:

Et ainsi le duc de Clocestre obtint la victoire dez trois journees du tournoy moiennant la bonne aide du conte de Ponthieu et principalement du gentil chevalier Thibauld. (p. 66; see also p. 123)

(And so the Duke of Gloucester was declared the winner of the three days of the tournament, through the good offices of the comte de Pontieu and especially the good knight Thibault.)

The greater narrative investment in combat reflects contemporary political concerns, in particular the abortive plan to embark on a crusade to Constantinople against Saracen threat; and the consequent increase in the space it occupies in the manuscript further attests to the importance of ideological issues of consumption and lifestyle aspiration mediated by the book. But this is only part of the story.

In order more fully to appreciate the role of adaptation as a creative, re-imaginative process – and hence to apprehend its importance for courtly identity – we need to ally the altered linguistic codes employed by the Burgundian author with the particular visual codes in the Wavrin Master's interpretation of the story in BnF 12572's illustrative programme. As Hutcheon suggests, being 'shown' a story by visual means is not the same as being told it: while verbal and non-verbal communicative methods partake of some of the same narrative strategies, it is undeniable that the telling and the showing modes have their own particularities.²³ This is why I deal with textual and visual adaptation separately in the *mises en prose*. It is vital to acknowledge the specificity of the miniatures in a manuscript, their role as images and adaptations in their own right, rather than seeing them simply as adjuncts to or renderings of the text they illustrate. This is especially important when dealing with the Wavrin Master's artistic output. Unlike the more 'traditional' productions of court artists such as Loyset Liédet, the Lille artist's work, with its schematic treatment of figures and fittings, flora and fauna, appears almost wilfully anti-mimetic; but because of this, it elicits much closer deciphering from the viewer and takes on a meaning in excess of the few lines that create it. As does the narrative they accompany, the Wavrin Master's images provide a creative re-imagining of a source-text, in this instance the reworked version rather than its source, which comments on and helps shape courtly values.

²³ Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, pp. 23-24.

At first glance, the simplicity of these watercolours seems to run counter to the Burgundian aspirational project: surely a court circle wishing to see itself reflected in the codex would want gold leaf and acanthus, saturated colour and identifiable trappings? What could the Wavrin Master possibly offer with these little sketches? To understand his work, though, we need to think differently about the creative process of adaptation practised by the artist, and the value of the distinct visual codes he employs. Borrowing the notion of modality from social semiotics, and the idea of ‘abstract modality’ from Theo van Leeuwen, allows us a way into this.²⁴ Visual modality is concerned not with the absolute representational truth of an image, but rather with the semiotic resources used in its expression; and the degree of modality – arrived at through a consideration of expressive means such as colour saturation and range, or quality of the line – depends on the visual truth desired. Images like the Wavrin Master’s miniatures assume an ‘abstract modality’ because they mediate truth in a schematic way. Using the example of images with reduced articulation in children’s books, van Leeuwen underlines how pared-down illustrations which represent a general pattern have a greater modality because they express the specificity of what they purport to represent. So in the Wavrin Master’s output, a lack of detail, of colour saturation or of background articulation in the miniatures invoke the essential truth of the scene they contain and the context they mediate. Their mediation of perceptual information through abstract modality and its specific visual coding is akin to the narrative tropes of *praeteritio* and expansion or invention deployed in the textual reworking; like the author before him, the Wavrin Master deploys details with a heightened semiotic density in adapting aspects of a story for a new Burgundian audience with particular tastes and aspirations. In his re-imagining of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, the artist does this by refiguring in his nine miniatures those same thematic concerns – ceremonial, travel, and combat – as seen in the text in ways that foster courtly ideologies as mediated by the story. And in so doing, he points forward, through intertextuality and intermodality, to a broader significance of the manuscript book.

Figure 1

Paris, BnF, MS fr. 12572, fol. 141^r

Image © Bibliothèque nationale de France

Ceremonial is featured in four miniatures in BnF 12572’s version of *La Fille du comte de Pontieu*, all invoking in the Wavrin Master’s minimalist, abstract style the *fastes de la cour*, notably through the depiction of court etiquette and sartorial norms in interviews between noblemen and ladies (fols 123^r and 131^v), and in dealings with Saracen sultans (fol. 155^v). It is, however, especially strongly encoded in the image on fol. 141^r (Figure 1), showing the meeting between Thibault de Dommart and the comte de Pontieu on the younger man’s return from Santiago. The Wavrin Master’s reinterpretation of the textual episode displays typical reduced articulation in the representation of the characters, rendering their facial expressions through simple but highly meaningful lines, and employs his familiar limited watercolour palette to paint their clothing and furniture. As noted above, far from rendering the image drab or insignificant, these aspects of abstract modality call attention more strongly to luxurious ceremonial trappings. The interior is reduced to a canopied divan, but its bright red contrasts starkly with the colourless background; it draws the eye, and so calls the viewer’s imagination via a visual *praeteritio* to the sort of lavish interior common in Burgundian circles and in which ‘real’ interviews of this kind would take place. Similarly, the clothes worn by the noblemen in this grouping appear at first to be a far cry from the luxurious garb depicted in the work of a Liédet or a Vrelant,²⁵ but look further and we

²⁴ See Th. van Leeuwen, *Introducing Social Semiotics* (London/New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 165-71.

²⁵ On these artists, mentioned as examples of more ‘traditional’ or mimetic Burgundian court art, see I. Hans-Collas and P. Schandel, *Manuscrits enluminés des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux*, Vol. I: *Louis de Bruges* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2009), T. Kren and S. McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance. The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe* (Los Angeles/London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2003), and B. Bousmanne, *Item a Guillaume Wyelant*

realize that in their rendering of certain details – the puffed leg-of-mutton sleeves, the deep sable trim of the gowns – lies a heightened awareness of those lavish outfits which the Wavrin Master makes his audience imagine bigger, better, dearer, softer than anything available in reality. Finally, the image further corroborates and mediates the role of ceremonial in Burgundian aspirational practice: its composition, featuring a central noble figure and kneeling subordinate, invokes intertextually the lavish presentation miniatures found elsewhere in the corpus.²⁶

Figure 2

Paris, BnF, MS fr. 12572, fol. 144^r
Image © Bibliothèque nationale de France

Though it appears explicitly in just two illustrations in BnF 12572 (fols 144^r and 163^v), the theme of travel as adapted by the Wavrin Master offers similar points of reference linking the diegetic space of the narrative and the miniature with aspects of Burgundian ideology. Figure 2, showing *filles*' tribulations on the high seas, is the strongest articulation of this. The image responds to the textual expansion of travel and reaffirms its significance in the codex as a test or trial. While indicating the means by which *filles* got out to sea (the boat on the right), the Wavrin Master centralizes and magnifies the barrel, creatively engaging as he does so with the narrative amplification of this episode through the lengthy lament the heroine issues from inside the cask. The apparently insignificant detail of the little oarsman at the top of the miniature is made meaningful through the artist's rendering of his facial expression: in just a couple of strokes his consternation is suggested, providing a visual echo of the shock experienced by the reader of the adapted version at the harshness of *filles*' punishment. Further, the artistic skill with which the Wavrin Master evokes the maritime scene – the craggy rocks, the choppy sea, the strong wind caught in the boat's sail – offers an intertextual reference point between this codex and others by his hand in which, through a similar process of abstract modality, he depicts seascapes in ways not seen in any other contemporary artist.²⁷

Figure 3

Paris, BnF, MS fr. 12572, fol. 159^r
Image © Bibliothèque nationale de France

Just as combat was given a narrative repurposing that brought thematic concerns into line with political imperatives, so the Wavrin Master's adaptation of the theme in BnF 12572 refocuses attention on these notions in complementary ways. Of the three miniatures explicitly depicting combat in the manuscript, none shows a tournament scene, despite the textual expansion granted to this area. In his adaptation of the work, the Wavrin Master chooses to illustrate aspects of battle concerned with the moral or the ideological, whether on a personal level in Thibault's tussle with the brigands (fol. 135^v) or with wider political import in the naval (fol. 148^v) or pitched (fol. 159^r) battles with the Saracens. The artist selects aspects of the author's expanded theme and subjects them to a treatment that again (re-)engages creatively with issues of Burgundian might and right. As Figure 3 shows, the Wavrin Master's combat scenes are unashamed evocations of excess – the ranks of soldiers, the bright trappings of battle, the

aussi enlumineur: Willem Vrelant. *Un aspect de l'enluminure dans les Pays-Bas sous le mécénat des Ducs de Bourgogne Philippe le Bon et Charles le Téméraire* (Turnhout: Brepols/Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert 1^{er}, 1997).

²⁶ Only one such presentation miniature is found in the Wavrin Master's output, on the mutilated first folio of the *Roman de Buscalus* (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 9343-44); they are more common in the work of artists such as Liédet. On this see C. Stroo, 'Bourgondische presentatietafelen: boeken en politiek ten tijde van Filips de Goede en Karel de Stoute', in *Boeken in de late Middeleeuwen*, ed. by J. M. M. Hermans and K. van der Hoek (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1994), pp. 285-99.

²⁷ See especially the *Roman de Florimont*, Paris, BnF, MS fr. 12566, fols 7^r, 187^r, and 188^v.

violence of wounding. Seemingly contrary to his pared-down miniatures featuring ceremonial or travel, these images are a mass of overlapping limbs and crossed weapons; and there is initially so much visual noise in the rendering that it is difficult to process it into an ordered whole. But, once again, look more closely and familiar aspects of the Wavrin Master's style – the reduced articulation of the abstract modality he deploys – emerge and permit interpretation. Via the strong lines of the lances, the eye is drawn to the centre of the scene, where in a skilful *mise en abyme* two men fight in single combat, and to the top where two gold-coloured figures enact the ideology of this textual moment as adapted by the Wavrin Master. These two figures play out the battle between right and wrong, Burgundian and Saracen: the one point of real detail, the shining gold Saracen helmet, gives it away. Through a visual refocusing of the verbal codes of the *mise en prose*, through the dazzling and explicatory accretion of figures, the artist reappropriates his source to ensure that his codex speaks adequately and appealingly to its audience.

What we have seen, then, is how adaptation in the *mise en prose* produces a formal entity (the reworked text in book form), and how it functions as a creative process in complementary ways in both text and image. But, in the model developed by Hutcheon as outlined above, adaptation is also a process of reception; and this is what allows the *mise en prose* to become greater than the sum of its parts (the reworked text, illustrative programme, and the material codex). In Hutcheon's thinking, the reception of an adaptation depends on the intertextual relationship between the re-imagined text and the work from which it is adapted; where the *misés en prose* are concerned, what matters is an intertextual (and intermodal) dialogue, but in a different direction and on a larger scale. The process here is focused less on the thirteenth-century source-text and its relationship to the adaptation than on the interaction between text and image; their respective semiotisation of events in the reworking, and the connections between these and the socio-historical context of the material codex that houses them. Episodes in text and image speak to one another, and to the book which contains them, as the articulation of Burgundian wealth; further, content and container here dialogue with others in the *mise en prose* corpus; and these in turn speak to the vast acquisitive project that is the rich ducal library which houses them. Only by viewing Burgundian adaptation in text and image as a multilaminated process resulting in a tangible, valuable product – the book as *objet d'art* in its own right – can we begin to understand fully the role of literary production in articulating consumption patterns and lifestyle aspiration at this most palimpsestic of courts.