

# THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN *JOSEP D'ABARIMATIE* AND *DEMANDA DEL SANTO GRIAL*: CONVERSION AND CHARITY THROUGH DIALOGUE

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## ABSTRACT

The 13<sup>th</sup> century French Arthurian novels sometimes deliver a religious message intended to convert the public. The success of this kind of message, its reception, can be measured through its translation and adaptation to other languages. The adaptation of *l'Estoire del Saint Graal* in Castilian shows that the Iberian text assumes and amplifies the Christian ideals conveyed by the original. By studying the modifications, changes and suppressions by the translator, the reader can realize that in *Josep d'Abarimatia*, both the forms of violence and the role of miracles in the diffusion of the message of conversion are largely reduced in favour of the initiation of dialogue. In addition, the adaptation of the Post-Vulgate *Queste* in Castilian under the name of *Demanda del Santo Grial* places the Christian ideals of charity and kindness at the centre, unlike the Vulgate *Queste*, which grants more importance to purity.

## KEY WORDS

Arthurians, Iberian, Conversion, Dialogue, Traduction.

## CAPITALIA VERBA

Arthurici, Ibericus, Conuersio, Dialogus, Translatio.

Thirteenth-century Arthurian literature is generally thought to be a vehicle for religious messages, aimed at converting the audience and readers, or at strengthening their faith. The texts deploy conversion strategies based on persuasion. One of the main strategies employed is that of speech, which seems in any case to be the most valued, but one which was systematically abandoned in favour of another, based on force, which could be a miracle of punishment, a very short miracle or a fight.<sup>1</sup> This is perhaps the result of a change in Christian pastoral care in the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the appearance of the mendicant orders. From the beginning Franciscans and Dominicans turned to discussion, practising the idea of preaching the faith by means of persuasive speech. The crusade, which comes under increasing criticism,<sup>2</sup> was no more than a way of accessing the Muslim world more easily and increasing contact with the pagans who had to be converted.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the friars developed a more radical attitude, which tended towards abandoning speech as inefficient, targeting conversion at all cost.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this article<sup>5</sup> is to examine the reception of the Arthurian religious message in the Iberian world through some Castilian amendments. The French romances quickly became known in Spain and in Portugal, where they were first circulated amongst nobles and princes, before spreading to the other social classes. They probably reached the Peninsula through the *Historia Regum Britanniae* from the 12<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of Alfonso VIII or Henry I.<sup>6</sup> According to other studies, the subject of Britain was already familiar at the beginning of the century, since a sculpture in the cathedral of Modena probably represents scenes from the Tristan legend.<sup>7</sup> In the Iberian world, these romances were circulated, cultivated and translated for their picaresque, their dynamic and their sense of adventure, but also for

1. Girbea, Catalina. "Discours persuasifs et conscience religieuse dans les romans arthuriens du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle", *Convaincre et persuader. Communication et propagande aux XI<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, Martin Aurell, ed. Poitiers: Collection Civilisation Médiévale, 2007: 153-189; Girbea, Catalina. "Quelques éléments sur la réception du message religieux arthurien à travers les enluminures (XIII<sup>e</sup>-XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)", *Comunicazione e propaganda nei secoli XII e XIII. Atti del convegno internazionale (Messina 24-26 maggio 2007)*, Rossana Castano, Fortunata Latella, Tania Sorrenti, dirs. Roma: Viella, 2007: 299-324.

2. Vones, Ludwig. "Mission et frontière dans l'espace Méditerranéen", *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, Guyda Armstrong, Ian Wood, dirs. Turnhout: Brepols, 2000: 212. Also see Throop, Palmer A. *Criticism of the Crusade. A Study of Public Opinion and Crusade Propaganda*. Amsterdam: Swets and Zietlinger, 1940.

3. Vones, Ludwig. "Mission...": 212.

4. Cohen, Jeremy. *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism*. Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1982: 32.

5. Special thanks go to Martin Aurell for his notes on this article. Gratitude goes equally to Mianda Cioba for her corrections, and to Francisco Crosas, who provided the author access to the ancient edition of the *Demanda del sancto Grial*. Flocel Sabaté has kindly offered to publish this article in this journal, for which the author thanks him sincerely.

6. Entwistle, William. *The Arthurian Legends in the Literatures of the Spanish Peninsula*. New York: Phaeton Press, 1975: 226.

7. For details about the forms of oral dissemination of these motives along the pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, see Aurell, Martin. *La légende du roi Arthur*. Paris: Perrin, 2007: 210-250. See also Stanesco Michel. *La légende du Graal dans les littératures européennes*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 2006: 113.

the message of Christian morality that they transmitted<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, romances like the *Libro del Cavallero de Dios Zifar* or *Amadis de Gaula*, which, despite being partially inspired by the Arthurian material, are not translations but rather authentic Iberian creations, allow us to perceive the phenomenon of contamination between the fabulous and the moral tract.<sup>9</sup>

## 1. The message of conversion in the Iberian context

Before delving into the reception of the Arthurian religious message in the Peninsula, we must take a detour through the Iberian tradition of evangelization and individual conversion, which deploys discussion, dialogue and *disputatio* on both theoretical and practical levels. This was a common problem for a region constantly torn apart by three different religions, each claiming both land and religious supremacy, and where the members of the three denominations systematically tried to understand one another and live together.

We owe the establishment of the concept of medieval dialogue in the Iberian area to the work of the German researcher Roger Friedlein, who explains the ancient origins of the practice and its diffusion during the Middle Ages. He essentially supports the thesis of Paul Zumthor concerning oral character, exposing dialogue as an intermediate form between written and verbal forms,<sup>10</sup> and he stresses that the ancient tradition shows partiality to religious and theological writing, such as the Judeo-Christian dialogues of Abélard, Pierre Alphonse, Anselm of Canterbury, etc.<sup>11</sup> The aim of this research is to contextualise written dialogue in the work of an author like Ramon Llull, who has greatly influenced the medieval panorama in this respect.<sup>12</sup>

However, if the use of dialogue and the enactment of discussion were effective in the work of this Catalan author, it was because the medieval Iberian world already had a strong penchant for argumentary debate, which originated in the specific nature of a region where three competing religions co-existed. Real debates between

8. Thus, the writings of Ramon Llull were influenced by the Grail romances; Galahad became the model of a constable from Portugal, Nuño Alavares Pereira; scenes from the *Queste del saint Graal* appeared in the tapestries made during the reign of Peter the Ceremonious, etc. See Stanesco, Michel. *La légende...*: 115-116.

9. See Cioba, Mianda. "El Libro de las armas de Juan Manuel: caballería y realce a finales de la Alta Edad Media Castellana". *Studii de lingvistică și filologie romanică. Hommages offerts à Sanda Rîpeanu-Reinheimer*, Alexandra Cunita, Constantin Lupu, Lucia Tasmowski, eds. Bucharest: Editura Universității din București, 2007: 113-131. The author uses the propitious expression of "hybridization", page 113.

10. Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog bei Ramon Llull*. Tübingen: M. Niemeyer Verlag, 2004: 15.

11. "Um ein operatives Dialogkonzept für das Mittelalter und insbesondere für Llull abzustecken, läßt sich der Kernbereich der Gattung in Nachfolge der spätantiken Traditionen zunächst im Gebiet der religiösen und theologischen Texte vermuten – ein Bereich, dem freilich ohnehin das Gros der überlieferten Texte angehört", Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 20.

12. Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 27.



the representatives of Christians, Jews and Muslims were organised from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>13</sup> These debates resembled jousts between knights, except that the conflict was transferred to the level of speech, taking place in public as a kind of show, in the presence of supporters of one tradition or another.<sup>14</sup> The controversies in Paris in 1240, Barcelona in 1263 and Majorca in 1286,<sup>15</sup> the debate between Ramban and Pablo Christiani in Girona,<sup>16</sup> or the later one in Tortosa in 1415, about which we know thanks to the reports or agreements that were recorded afterwards, were held in the same way.<sup>17</sup> An interesting element regarding the Barcelona controversy is that James I attended in person and promised Nahmanide, the representative of the Jews, that he would allow him to freely set out his arguments.<sup>18</sup>

The theoretical texts borrow this spirit of controversy. Thus, the first Iberian controversial text, of Arab origin, is that by Ibn Hazm from the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>19</sup> His writings were followed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in strict dialogue forms, by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. An interesting example of these, often quoted in the Middle Ages, is that of Pedro Alfonso, a converted Jew who constructed a dialogue between two characters representing two different sides of the same face, his Jewish self and his Christian self.<sup>20</sup>

Since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the preaching and legitimacy of the preacher had been seen as essential in the Peninsula.<sup>21</sup> In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the missionary spirit developed considerably and also played an important role in the writing of texts that place representatives of different religions face to face. Thus, as well as Ramon Lull,<sup>22</sup> medieval Spain also had other very active missionary figures: Ramon Martí, who focused on the conversion of Jews,<sup>23</sup> and Ramon de Penyafort.<sup>24</sup> The Mendicant Orders developed an argumentary system based on logical syllogism.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Wolfram

13. Sugranyes de Franch, Ramon. "Le Livre du Gentil et des trois sages", *Juifs et judaïsme de Languedoc (Cahiers de Farjeux, 12)*. Toulouse: Édouard Privat, éditeur, 1997: 332.

14. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures ibériques entre dialogue et polémique", *Chrétiens, musulmans et juifs dans l'Espagne médiévale. De la convergence à l'expulsion*, Ron Barkai, dir. Paris: Cerf, 1994: 228-229. The author recalls that the common point between these three religions is monotheism and the pre-eminence of one sole book: for example Arabs call Christians and Jews *ahl al-kitab*, "people of the Book".

15. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 243.

16. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 242.

17. Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 61.

18. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 242.

19. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 233. Moreover, Roger Friedlein recalls that Arabic literature is filled with the spirit of rational controversy between the religions and that it must have influenced writings in the Peninsula during the Middle Ages (Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 64).

20. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 236.

21. As proven, for example, by certain hagiographical works, such as the life of Bishop Oleguer, see Aurell, Martin. "Prédication, croisade et religion civique. Vie et miracles d'Oleguer (mort en 1137), évêque de Barcelone". *Revue Mabillon*, 10 (1999): 113-168.

22. Strongly influenced by Roger Bacon, Jacques de Vitry and Guillaume de Tripolis, see Vones, Ludwig. « Missions... »: 218.

23. Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 48.

24. Friedlein, Roger. *Der Dialog...*: 62.

25. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures...": 246.

Schleicher's study on the influence of preaching among the Dominicans and the Franciscans in Lull's *Libre de Evast e Blaqueria* aims to demonstrate that the Catalan author consciously combined dramatic elements with popular pastoral elements in his romance.<sup>26</sup> Wolfram Schleicher divides the chapters of the romance into several categories, in terms of their connection to preaching, and thereby establishes forms of pure preaching, forms that combine dialogue and preaching, and finally *exempla*.<sup>27</sup> What initially interests us here is the second type of writing, inspired not only by the tradition of theological argument, but also by the monastic discussions which took place in the afternoon and which were called *collations*.<sup>28</sup>

The *Libre de Evast e Blanqueria*<sup>29</sup> includes several passages about the way in which Christians should view Jews and Muslims, and what they should preach to them. Thus, in chapter 71, a canon goes past a synagogue and starts to lament the lot of the Jews who do not know the true faith.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, the canon travels the world as God's bishop, following Saint Francis's example, in order to teach and preach to the people, dances with the debauched, and suffers because of the fate of these three divided religions.<sup>31</sup> While he was bishop, Blanqueria went to preach to the Jews every Saturday. In his opinion, a single religion would have avoided the misunderstandings, aggression and violence that constantly took place before his eyes.<sup>32</sup> The message of the Julian romance is similarly that dialogue between the religions must be held in peace and without ill feeling.<sup>33</sup> During the period when Blanqueria was Pope, he sent his cardinal to appease the differences of opinion between the members of the different faiths. In Rome, there were a Jew and a Christian who argued every day about the differences between their beliefs, but they did so with hate and aggression. The cardinal managed to pacify and reconcile them.<sup>34</sup>

However, in his study of the evolution of dialogue between the religions, Ron Barkai states that from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the relation-

26. Schleicher, Wolfram. *Ramon Lull's Libre de Evast e Blanqueria. Eine Untersuchung über den Einfluß der Franziskanisch-Dominikanischen Predigt auf die Prosawerke des katalanischen Dichters*. Geneva: Droz, 1958.

27. Schleicher, Wolfram. *Ramon Lull's*...: 106.

28. Or *Nachmittagspredigten* in German, which means that in spite of their dialogue form they are still perceived as sermons: Schleicher, Wolfram. *Ramon Lull's*...: 113. The author recalls the very well-known *collationes* by Jean Cassian, which have been preserved in writing.

29. Which we quote through its translation into Ancient French, not currently having access to the original version, Lull, Ramon. *Livre d'Evast et Blanqueria*, ed. Armand Llinarès. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1970. The translation is true to the original, and the editor indicates all the places where there are variations.

30. Lull, Ramon. *Livre d'Evast*...: 197.

31. Lull, Ramon. *Livre d'Evast*...: 209: "Le chanoine aloit par la vile en guise de fol si come il avoit acoustumé et disoit aucunes foles paroles porce que par celes peüst amener les gens a bones oeuvres."

32. Lull, Ramon. *Livre d'Evast*...: 204: "L'evesque pensa que se les Juys et les crestiens eussent une creance, entreus n'eust point de male volenté, et por ce aloit l'evesque touz les samediz preeschier et desputer aus Juys en leur sinagogue, porce que il se crestiennassent et loassent et beneissent Dieu Jhesucrist, et qu'il eussent pès aus crestiens." See also Wolfram Schleicher. *Ramon Lull's*...: 91.

33. See also Schleicher, Wolfram. *Ramon Lull's*...: 85.

34. Lull, Ramon. *Livre d'Evast*...: 225.



ships intensified, dialogue was silenced, laymen called to alleviate, the debates disappeared, and both Jews and Muslims begin to appear as poorly thought-of elements, who must be expelled.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, this change could already be seen in the development of the thought of Ramon Llull, who showed himself to be very open to dialogue in his earlier writings, and increasingly assertive towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, even going so far, in the years 1294-1296, as to recommend force as the foremost method of conversion. He asks King James II of Aragon to make it compulsory for Jews and Muslims to attend sermons.<sup>36</sup> However, this is not necessarily proof of the radicalisation of his thinking, but of a change of strategy. Furthermore, his request to King James II was not in itself new, it was rather the demand for him to respect an already traditional royal attitude, since Alfonso X also had the custom of making it compulsory for Jews and Muslims to attend sermons, recommending strength and not violence.<sup>37</sup> This change in attitude probably took place following the Fall of Acre in 1291 and the attacks of the Merinides conquering the Strait of Gibraltar.<sup>38</sup>

## 2. The French *Estoire* and the Castilian *Josep*: the Franciscan influence and its revival through translation

It is in this context of estrangement, between the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, that the Spanish translations of the French romances of the Arthurian *Vulgate* were produced. *Josep d'Abarimatie*<sup>39</sup> was probably translated around 1313<sup>40</sup>, after the *Demanda del sancto Grial*,<sup>41</sup> and is quite close to its French original, which is not the *Joseph* by Robert de Boron, but the *Estoire del saint Graal* (around 1230) from the *Vulgate* cycle.<sup>42</sup> The Spanish romance survives in two

35. Barkai, Ron. "Les trois cultures" ...: 247.

36. Vones, Ludwig. "Mission...": 216.

37. Tolan, John. *Saracens. Islam in the Medieval European Imagination*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002: 174, 179.

38. Tolan, John. *Saracens*...: 218.

39. Which will henceforth be quoted from the edition included in *Spanish Grail Fragments: El Libro de Josep Abarimatie. La Estoria de Merlin. Lançarotte*, ed. Karl Pietsch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924: I.

40. Most researchers agree on dating *Josep* to 1313, because of two significant elements, the first being the statement of one Dr. Manuel Alvarez who said, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, that he transcribed the text from a two-hundred-year-old original. The scribe dedicated it to John III, who reigned from 1521 to 1557, which establishes 1321 as the *terminus ante quo* for the text. On the other hand, Juan Sánchez, a cleric from León, states that he requested the production of this book five years after the founding of the University of Coimbra, in 1308. This fixes the date at 1313. (See Entwistle, William. *Arthurian Legends*...: 135-136; see also *Spanish Grail: Fragments*... I, XIX).

41. Which we quote from the edition of 1535 from Seville, *La Demanda del sancto Grial, con los maravillosos fechos de Galaz et de Lançarotte, su hijo*.

42. We quote the *Estoire* according to the edition "Joseph d'Arimatee", *Le Livre du Graal*, eds. Daniel Poirion, Philippe Walter. Paris: Gallimard, 2001. In order to avoid any possible confusion with the *Joseph*

manuscripts, MS 2-G-5 in the Royal Library of Madrid today in Salamanca and produced in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the Alcobaça manuscript, n° 643, in the Torre do Tombo.<sup>43</sup>

**The Franciscan influence.** A direct Franciscan influence can be perceived, which is already evident in the French text, and which probably partially explains the desire to translate the text at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Spain. Furthermore, the Franciscan spirit is not completely alien to the Arthurian material of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although it is not direct: the spirit of evangelization and the ideal of poverty are very often present, and some concrete references to the Mendicants in the *Continuation* by Gerbert de Montreuil, found by Martin Aurell,<sup>44</sup> are proof of this. Although Joseph and his companions evoke the model of the original Christian communities, the narrative norm recalls that in the *Acts of the Apostles*, the reader can, on more careful reading, recognise in our characters young mendicant friars.

A first essential trait is poverty. When Joseph goes to preach, God orders him to divest himself of all his assets<sup>45</sup>. This poverty is also what strikes King Evelake while he watches them attentively,

*Et quant li rois les vit tous nus piés, si en ot molt grant pitié selonc sa creance. Si les apela et lor demanda pourcoi il suffroient tele penitence d'aller nus piés et d'estre tant povrement et si vilainement vestu. Lors respondi li fix Joseph: «Rois, fist il, nous souffrons ceste painne pour le Sauveur del monde, qui soufrit mort pour nous, et angoisse si grant qu'il en ot les piés perciés et les paumes (...). Et quel service li porrons nous faire qui vaille tel service, se nous ne souffrons a estre crucefié aussi com il fu pour nous?»<sup>46</sup>*

The Castilian version recounts the episode almost identically,

*E vidolos tan desnudos e tan pobremente vestidos que ovo dellos grand piedat. E preguntolos por que sofrian tan penitencia de andar descalços e tan mal vestidos e tan villanamente. E entonçe rrespondio Josaphas, el fijo de Josep: "Rrey, nos sofrimos esta penitencia por el Salvador del mundo que sofrio tan grand coyta por nos que ovo les piés et las manos foradadas con grandes fierros. (...) E qual servicio le podriamos nos fazer a este si otrosi nos non sofriesemos e marteriasemos por el como el fizo por nos?"<sup>47</sup>*

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by Robert de Boron, throughout this article, in the text and in the notes, this romance is called *Estoire del Saint Graal*.

43. See Entwistle, William, *Arthurians Legends...*: 133. The edition by Karl Pietsch that we follow is the one from the 2-G-5 version in Madrid.

44. Aurell, Martin. *La légende...*: 369 sq. In Gerbert, the life of the Franciscans was already perceived as ideal, since the text (v. 8692-8697) refers to those who were badly considered because they did not behave like the Observants.

45. *Estoire del Saint Graal...*: 35.

46. *Estoire del Saint Graal...*: 51. Also see Girbea, Catalina. "Discours...": 188. In this article we had not yet perceived the influence of the Franciscans on the romance.

47. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia...*: 27.



The only modification introduced by the translator concerns Evelake: he removes the detail that the king took pity on the missionaries "because of his faith". This omission was probably not a mistake. It served to place the pagans and the Christians on the same level, recalling that as human beings they had, globally, the same effects and the same feelings, which were not obvious facts in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> We will return to Evelake's ability to be charitable in the two versions.

As well as an image that recalls the way in which the Mendicant friars went through the world<sup>49</sup> we also recognise the penitentiary tendencies of the Franciscans, since Joseph explains to the king that it is in order to atone for the sufferings of Christ that they go through the world barefoot. This is Dolorism, which began to enter attitudes with the Mendicants in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Finally, we must state the enormous, almost obsessive, space taken up by preaching in this work. The *Estoire* is a series of conversions and the account of the journey by Joseph's companions through the world, some copied from the biblical model, but also well anchored in the spirit of the time. Above all, we must not forget who Joseph and his people address: they preach systematically before kings and pagan sovereigns. It is certainly Francis of Assisi's project first to convert the crowned heads, and thus to reach their people. He therefore tried three times to meet the Muslim leaders in the east. He failed in 1212 during his voyage to the east, and in 1214 on the journey to Morocco, but in 1220, he managed to meet Sultan Melek al-Kamil in Damiette. He argued publicly with him, an undertaking that was not very successful.<sup>50</sup> The public argument between Joseph and Josephé and King Evelake well recalls this venture of Saint Francis, which was famous in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and which the author of the *Estoire* was unable to ignore. Furthermore, legends began to form around the Franciscan missions in the east, and there are also the accounts that circulated about the martyrdom of five young monks executed in Morocco in 1220,<sup>51</sup> while in 1228, two Italian Franciscans were killed in Valencia, also for attempting to preach publicly.<sup>52</sup>

We cannot ignore the obvious parallels between these accounts and the episodes in the *Estoire*. The most important detail that impressed the sultan, according to Thomas de Celano's account, is that Francis refused all his gifts and maintained his desire for poverty.<sup>53</sup> As shown above, it was always poverty that attracted Evelake's attention. It is true that the king of Sarraz converted to Christianity, unlike Saint Francis's sultan, but the undertaking was long and it was not just Joseph's speech

48. On this subject see the article by Elukin, Johnatan M. "From Jew to Christian. Conversion and Immutability in Medieval Europe", *Varieties of Religious Conversion in the Middle Ages*, James Muldoon, James, ed. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997: 171-189.

49. Barefoot, and stripped of all material assets, Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 215.

50. Vones, Ludwig, "Mission...": 209.

51. Vones, Ludwig, "Mission..." The author points out that the source, *Passio sanctorum martyrum in Marochio martyrizatorum* cannot be ascertained.

52. Vones, Ludwig. "Mission...". See also Feld, Helmut. *Franziskus von Assisi und seine Bewegung*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994: 296.

53. Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 215.



that convinced him, but also above all the numerous miracles that accompanied it, and the king's nocturnal discovery.<sup>54</sup> This detail reminds us of the account by Jacques de Vitry about the end of the meeting between Saint Francis and the sultan, the latter asking the monk to pray for him so that the Christian God would send him a revelation.<sup>55</sup>

However, other attempts at conversion in the French text ended less well, and in many episodes some of Joseph's companions were killed or imprisoned by particularly tough kings, like Crudel or Agrestes, which perhaps echoed the misadventures of the friars preachers in Muslim countries. In addition to the aura created by martyrdom, which, after all, may simply be borrowed by the hagiographical narratives, the heroes of the *Estoire* had the same sense of family as the Franciscans, and seemed to be filled by the same missionary zeal.

Two essential nuances regarding the differences that are established between the friars preachers and our heroes ought to be pointed out all the same. In first place, there was the desire for martyrdom. Certain Franciscans, inspired by Saint Francis, who fervently wished to die for Christ, sought to be martyrs more than to convert the infidel. It was this, first and foremost, that Roger Bacon reproached them for at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the five monks executed in Marrakech in 1220 deliberately provoked the Saracens by publicly insulting Mohammed, with the precise aim of being killed. Pardoned once, they returned and ended up being executed. More or less the same thing happened to the monks who were executed in Ceuta in 1227, and in Marrakech in 1232.<sup>56</sup> Although this type of death became the source of legends and occasionally inspired conversions, in the eyes of the church it may have appeared immoderate and questionable, and in a bull, Pope Honorius III reminded the Franciscans that living humbly amongst the pagans was a good thing.<sup>57</sup> Thus, the martyrs of 1220 were not canonised until 1481.<sup>58</sup> It must also be stressed that the immoderate zeal of certain monks was not necessarily representative of the whole Order.<sup>59</sup> On this point, the heroes of the *Estoire* do not resemble the Franciscan martyrs very closely, and prove to be far wiser. When twelve of the companions are martyred by King Agrestes in Camelot, Josephé shows great sadness on hearing the news,<sup>60</sup> which does not tally with the words of Saint Francis upon learning of the death of his five companions in 1220, "now I can truly say

54. See Girbea, Catalina. "Discours...": 169.

55. Tolan, John, "Saracens...": 215.

56. Tolan, John, "Saracens...": 215-218.

57. Tolan, John, "Saracens...": 218.

58. Tolan, John, "Saracens...": 231-232.

59. As shown by the research by Schleicher, Wolfram. *Ramon Llull Libre...* In addition, Franciscan theology theorizes about the conversion of others at the same time as the conversion of the self, and the manner of reconciling them. A Franciscan friar is supposed to improve himself steadily and systematically. (See Roest, Bert. "Converting the Other and Converting the Self: Double Objectives in Franciscan Educational Writings", *Cristianizing Peoples and converting individuals*, Guyda Armstrong, Ian N. Wood, eds. Leeds-Turnhout: The Institute for Medieval Studies-Brepols Publishers, 2000: 295-302.

60. "Et quant il le sot, si en fu mout dolans, et i vint o plours et o larmes; et fist prendre le cors des martirs qui devant la crois estoient et les fist tous.XII. metre en une chapele.", *Estoire del Saint Grial...*: 479.



that I have five brothers".<sup>61</sup> Even so, when Josephé finds himself in King Crudel's prison, the other Christians do not seem to want him to be martyred at all, all of them encouraging Mordrain to attack the city to save him.<sup>62</sup> It is the conversion of the non-believers, and not martyrdom, which is most important for Joseph and his people. This problem reminds us that the author of the romance associated himself more closely with the more moderate Franciscan thinkers, who embraced rational conversion strategies and lacked any real desire to die for the cause.

A second aspect concerns the insults against Mohammed occasionally uttered by the monks, and their verbal violence aimed at provoking the Muslims and at making them determined to give them the palm of martyrdom.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, this attitude was particularly counterproductive in the context of evangelization, since several sources say that the pagans listened peacefully to the friars talking about Christ, but drove them away when they started to speak badly about their prophet.<sup>64</sup>

Josephé carries out a fantastic exorcizing of corruption: he drags the devil through the town, violently destroys the idols of Sarraz, invokes all kinds of curses, and seems to go beyond the necessary means.<sup>65</sup> This was an attitude which earned him the praise of certain Franciscans missionaries, but the author of the *Estoire* proves to be more subtle and adheres to a rational strategy of evangelization: Josephé carries out these forms of verbal and physical violence only after having converted the king, or in any case after having nearly converted him to the Christian cause and being assured of his support and his protection.

Furthermore, the author makes sure that he stops to condemn Josephé's abuses, and particularly his pride. God interrupts him in the middle of binding the devil, and an angel pierces his thigh with a lance. This punishment, which leaves him with a limp for the rest of his life, was inflicted because, instead of baptising people, he attempted to bind up the devil that harmed the non-believers.<sup>66</sup> The meaning of this episode is biased and a little obscure, but its lesson remains clear: Josephé's role is first and foremost to baptise and convert, and he can only exercise his power against the demon in the context of evangelization. This is thus further proof that the author of the *Estoire* placed evangelization above all types of martyrdom, and the conversion of the non-believer before his destruction. In this way, the *Estoire* reconciles the two tendencies of the Franciscans, the desire to convert through a reasoned strategy, and the zeal of preaching with no systematic target.

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61. Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 216.

62. *Estoire del Saint Grial...*: 468.

63. Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 216.

64. Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 215.

65. *Estoire del Saint Graal...*: 150.

66. *Estoire del Saint Graal...*: 152: "Ce est, dit li angles, en ramenbrance de ce que tu laissas a baptizier les gens pour rescourre les despiseurs de ma loy: tout ce te parra jusques en la fin de ta vie".

## 2.1 The contributions of the Castilian translator: additions and omissions

To evaluate the reception of the Arthurian religious message in the Peninsula through the translation of the *Estoire*, we will try to examine the differences between the French<sup>67</sup> and the Castilian versions. This undertaking is obviously risky, given that we do not know which French manuscript was the source of the translation, or even if our translator directly followed the French original or a later Castilian (or even Portuguese) version. However, there is an indication in the text that refers us to a French manuscript tradition. When Vespasian asks that an object that had been touched by the Lord should be brought from Judea so that he may be healed, we have a different version of the name of Veronica: the Spanish translator confuses her with Mary the Egyptian; this confusion exists in the manuscript S 526 in Bonn University Library, as well as in the manuscript Royal 19. C. XII in London.<sup>68</sup> It is therefore probable that our translation followed this manuscript tradition. However, when Vespasian and Titus make their entrance on the stage, the translator gives a name to the character who tells them of Jesus' miracle-working powers: he is called Barfano, while in the *Estoire* he is a "man come from Capernaum". This detail may be a mistake of the Castilian translator, or even proof that he was using a different translation.<sup>69</sup> Likewise, Joseph is presented as coming from Arimathea, in Aromate. This is a contribution by the *Estoire*, which we find in neither Robert, nor the *Evangile de Nicodème*.<sup>70</sup>

**The prologue.** The first part follows the French version quite faithfully. However, there is one interesting modification in the prologue. The *Estoire* tells the story of the death of Christ, after having explained how the hermit author of the book received the inspiration to write the new Bible of the Grail. It follows the appearance of Joseph of Arimathea and the account of his request to Pilate for the body of the Lord.<sup>71</sup> The *Josep* begins directly with the story of the Passion and of Joseph,

67. The edition by Philippe Walter and Daniel Poirion is based on the manuscript S 526 in Bonn University Library.

68. According to Philippe Walter, page 1685 of the edition of the *Estoire*.

69. See also the account given by Entwistle, William, in the edition by Karl Pietsch, in *Modern Languages Review*, 20/3 (1925): 357-359.

70. "A tant i vint uns riche hom: / Joseph, issi l'appelout hom: / Prodom ert et de bone vie / Et si ert nez d'Arimathie...", *Trois versions rimées de l'Evangile de Nicodème par Chrétien, André de Coutances et un anonyme publiées d'après les manuscrits de Florence et de Londres*, ed. Alphonse Blos, Gaston Paris. Paris: Librairie Firmin Didot, 1877: 27, v. 845-848; "La vint uns preudom et loiaux, Joseph d'Arimachie, une cité en Judée", *L'Evangile de Nicodème. Les versions courtes en ancien français et en prose*. Geneva: Droz, 1973: 88.

71. "Au jour que li Sauverres del monde souffri mort fu nostre mors destruite, et nostre joie restorree. A icel jour estoient mout poi de gent qui en lui creissent fors si desciple; et s'il avoit avec aus de creans, mout en i avoit poi. Et quant Nostre Sires fu en la crois, si douta li hom la mort com hom morteus. Car il dist: "Biaus Peres, ne souffre pas ceste Passion se je ne garantis les miens de la mort. "Car il n'estoit pas si coureciés encore de l'angoisse del cors, com il estoit de ce que il veoit qu'il ne ravoit encore conquis fors le larron qui li cria merci en la crois. Et ce dist Jhesucrist en l'Ecriture, aussi com cil qui cueille l'estuelle el tans de messon —c'est-à-dire qu'il n'avoit rachaté a sa mort que le larron qui n'estoit riens envers les autres gens." : *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 22



omitting everything related to the sources of the book.<sup>72</sup> In both cases, the start of the account is a pretext to remind the listener of the meaning of the Passion and the sacrifice of Christ. However, the Castilian version removes a whole section of the *Estoire*,

*En la ora que el Nuestre Sennor Jesu Cristo rrescebio muerte, e la nuestra muerte fue destruyda, e nuestra vida fue rreparada, non avya entonce ningunos que en El creyesen fuera sus discipulos. E quando Nuestro Sennor fue puesto en la cruz, dudo la muerte commo omne mortal. E dixo: Padre si podiese ser que yo non sofriese esta pasion. Pero non ovo tan grand coyta porque El quiesiese escusar de la muerte. E muchos estavan y que avyan començamiento de lo creer, que dudaron.*<sup>73</sup>

Unlike the original, the translation cuts the phrase spoken by Christ on the cross in half, and omits the slightly questionable explanation given by the author of the *Estoire*, namely that the Saviour feared that he might not save everybody. The Castilian translator preferred to adhere to an interpretation that is closer to the Gospels, and above all to highlight Christ's human weakness. By keeping only the image of the Crucified Christ, suffering and consumed by fear, he created a representation that conformed to 13<sup>th</sup> century Dolorism, aimed above all at arousing pity and understanding when confronted with the Passion.

**Santiago.** The young Josephé is baptised by Saint "James the Lesser" in the *Estoire*,<sup>74</sup> a detail that the Spanish translator recalls precisely: "*E ovieron rescebido baptismo de Santiago el menor que fue obispo de Jerusalem grand tienpo despues de la muerte de Jesu Cristo*".<sup>75</sup>

James the Lesser, who died a martyr, is considered in the Bible to be the son of Mary the sister of the Virgin and of Alpheus, and is called the "brother of the Lord" (Mt., 27, 56; Lk, VI, 16, etc). He seems to have an important role in the Gospels and speaks out about a series of problems which face Paul, Peter and other Apostles (Acts, 15, 13-21). Certain authors such as Eusebius and Saint Epiphane stated that he was the first bishop of Jerusalem,<sup>76</sup> although this information is never directly confirmed in the Bible. Authors like Eusebius and Jean Chrystostome even maintained that the Lord himself consecrated him. And yet, let us not forget that in the *Estoire* this favour is transferred to Josephé, who is crowned by Christ during a long, detailed ceremony, which takes up several pages. This proves that the author of the *Estoire* probably knew the writings of the thinkers who recounted the anointing of James. The additional detail introduced by the Castilian translator probably aimed

72. Standard procedure for translations and adaptations in the Peninsula (I thank Mianda Cioba for this information). However, the removal of the beginning on the divine sources of the book is only valid for manuscript 2-G-5 in Madrid; in the manuscript in Torre do Tombo, this introduction is also translated (see Entwistle, William. *Arthurian Legends...*: 134).

73. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia...*: 3.

74. *Estoire del Saint Graal...*: 27.

75. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia...*: 6.

76. Gerard, André-Marie, ed. *Dictionnaire de la Bible*. Paris: Le Grand livre du mois, 1998: 1084-1087.

to clear up the confusion between James the Lesser and James the Greater, worship of the latter being particularly widespread in Spain.

According to the *Acts of the Apostles* (12, 2-3), James the Greater, brother of John and disciple of Christ, was martyred under Herod Agrippa in 44. This saint is much debated in the Peninsula. Thus, during the high Middle Ages, he was considered to be the first evangelist in Spain. Isidore of Seville was the first to suggest this in the *Breviarium apostolorum* and the *De ortu et obitu patrum*, an idea which is found again later in Béatus de Liebana<sup>77</sup>. However, there was some controversy surrounding this question: Notger of St Gall expressed doubts at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>78</sup> while in the 10<sup>th</sup> century the metropolitan archbishop of Narbonne said, during an argument with Césaire de Montserrat, that Saint James only came to Spain when he was already deceased.<sup>79</sup> Since then, a whole series of sources have claimed that Torquat evangelized the Peninsula, with several companions. The *Codex calixtinus* combines the action of Saints Paul and Peter with that of James in recounting the transfer of the relics of the Apostle from Jerusalem to Spain.<sup>80</sup> In 829, there is a mention of the relics of Saint James in Compostela.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, Lucas de Tuy preferred to leave the question of the preaching of Saint James in Spain open, focusing instead on his tomb in the Peninsula.<sup>82</sup> He also put great emphasis on his his bellicose side, since the taking of Coimbra by Ferdinand I was due to his intercession,<sup>83</sup> while the expression "Santiago y cierra Espana" became a war cry for the Hispanics.<sup>84</sup>

In any case, whichever saint the text refers to, whether it was James the Greater, the possible evangelist, or even James the Lesser, the first bishop, the two figures correspond perfectly as protecting images of our Josephé, simultaneously evangelist and first bishop anointed directly by God. Furthermore, the additional detail about James's episcopacy, which is lacking in the French text, perhaps served to reinforce the episcopal authority itself, and the legitimacy of the bishops in the minds of the readers, at a time of conversions and reconquest.

77. Henriët, Patrick. "L'espace et le temps hispanique vu et construit par les clercs", *A la recherche de légitimités chrétiennes. Représentations de l'espace et du temps dans l'Espagne médiévale (IXe-XIIIe siècles)*, Patrick Henriët, dir. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2003: 96.

78. Herbers, Klaus. "Le culte de saint Jacques et le souvenir carolingien chez Lucas de Tuy. Indices d'une conception historiographique (début XIIIe siècle)", *A la recherche de légitimités chrétiennes. Représentations de l'espace et du temps dans l'Espagne médiévale (IXe-XIIIe siècles)*. Lyon: ENS Editions – Casa de Velázquez, 2003: 152.

79. Henriët, Patrick. "L'espace...": 96.

80. Henriët, Patrick. "L'espace...": 97.

81. Aurell, Martin. "Guerriers, moines et pèlerins. Les royaumes ibériques et saint Jacques de Compostelle", *Approches du pèlerinage de Compostelle, 1<sup>er</sup> cycle de Conférences (1998-1999)*. Dordogne: Associations des amis de saint Jacques et d'études compostellanes de Dordogne, 1999: 38.

82. Klaus Herbers. "Le culte...": 154.

83. Klaus Herbers. "Le culte...": 157. See also Dehoux, Esther. "«Con avés non, vasa! al ceval blanc?» Sur quelques apparitions des saints guerriers lors de combats, notamment dans la *Chanson d'Aspremont*", *L'Épopée normanna et il territorio*. Reggio Calabria: Associazione Nuovo Umanesimo, 2007: 32-39.

84. Aurell, Martin. "Guerriers...": 47.



**Perception of preaching.** Preaching and the missionary spirit were already at the heart of the problem of *l'Estoire*. The Castilian version intensified this even further, by accentuating with central additions the aspects linked to the act of evangelization, seen above all as the work of God. Thus, the death of Christ is told in different ways in the *Estoire* and in the Castilian version. When a pilgrim from Capernaum comes to Vespasian and tells him of his healing by Christ, he says,

*Certes, sire, par un prophete que li mescreant ocisent a molt grant tort.*<sup>85</sup>

The Spanish version, although it shortens several passages, adds a whole paragraph,

*E Vespasiano le pregunto por que lo mataron. E el cavallero le respondio: Porque predicava la verdat e mostrava a los judios sus maldades.*<sup>86</sup>

We can therefore see that, for the Spanish translator, it was the act of preaching which was the most important element in the condemnation of the Lord, that is to say with all the importance that sermons seemed to have had at the time in the Peninsula. On the other hand, the insistence on the crime of the Jews is equally revealing of the estrangement that had begun to grow between the members of the different religions, and the anti-Jewish wave that was beginning to rise. Moreover, this passage also shows a more open face of Vespasian than the French version. For the author of the *Estoire*, the emperor's son was interested in the method of healing and all he wanted to know about Christ at the beginning was the effectiveness of his miracle-working power. The effectiveness of Christianity is the standard element that operates in the *Estoire*, the *captatio benevolentiae* of the pagan listeners.<sup>87</sup> This perspective was turned completely upside down by the Castilian translator: Vespasian does not show himself ready for dialogue only because he envisaged a possibility of healing, but also through pure curiosity about the reason behind the death of the prophet, a curiosity that is completely absent at this stage in the *Estoire*: the emperor's son would not begin to be interested in the life of Christ until he had concrete proof of his power to heal.

The Castilian translator made another addition at a significant point in the romance, namely when God orders Joseph to go and preach His name in the city of Sarraç.<sup>88</sup> Joseph feels overwhelmed by his mission and fears that he will not find the right words to convince the pagans. God reassures him saying that he must count on the favour of the Holy Spirit rather than on any logical argument. However, the divine response is clearly longer in the Castilian version,

85. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 28.

86. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 8.

87. Girbea, Catalina. "Discours...": 164.

88. An important city, since it is given in the two versions, French (p.39) and Castilian (p.17), as the origin of the Saracens.

*Or ne t'esmaier, dist Nostres Sires: car tu ne feras fors que la bouche ouvrir.<sup>89</sup>*

*Non te espantes de ninguna cosa; que non faras si non abrir la boca. Ca yo metre y grand partida de mis palabras que nunca fallaras omne atan sesudo que pueda contrariar a lo que yo te dire. E non te espantes de ninguna cosa; ca te yo guardare doquier que tu seas.<sup>90</sup>*

In the *Josep*, it therefore becomes explicit that it was God who was speaking through the words of the preacher, which gives his speech a messianic dimension.

**Knowledge of the pagan world.** The Castilian translator demonstrates a better knowledge of, or in any case greater tolerance towards, the infidels. An interesting passage is that which follows the vengeance of the Lord by Vespasian. The author of the *Estoire* comments,

*Car cil qui le plus l'avoient tenu chier ce furent les sarrasin et plus firent pour lui que cil qu'il apeloit ses fix: car li felon juis le pendirent en crois et li paiien le vengierent.<sup>91</sup>*

While the Castilian author says,

*E aquellos que el llamava canes eran paganos quel fazian mas onrra que aquellos que llamava fijos. E estos fueron los judios quel posieron en la cruz. E el paganos lo vengaron asi como oystes.<sup>92</sup>*

In a word, the Saracens of the original text are replaced by pagans. The French author demonstrates total ignorance of the distinction between Muslims and Romans, since he calls all pagans "Saracens". Thus, Vespasian is questioned by a canon under the walls of Jerusalem and called "Vaspasiens sarrasins desloiaus"<sup>93</sup>, and even the people of Northumberland, a region evangelized by Josephé and his companions, are called "Saracens".<sup>94</sup> This ignorance goes alongside the fact that the author of the *Estoire* insists at length on the demonstration made by Josephé on the conception of Christ, which Evelake deeply rejects, refusing to believe in it from the outset. And yet, in the Middle Ages, Muslims did not deny the idea that Jesus was born of a Virgin. This shows that, despite his missionary zeal, the author of our romance was not really familiar with the east, or with Muslim attitudes. This is not at all surprising in the context of Franciscan influence, since certain missionaries, whose thoughts we find in the writings of Saint Bonaventure, considered that there was no point in knowing the nature of the error of Islam, and that the infidel would not be converted by rational arguments, but by the favour of the Holy Spirit that

89. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 40.

90. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 17.

91. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 35.

92. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 13.

93. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 37.

94. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 429.



inhabits the preacher.<sup>95</sup> Other Franciscan thinkers, particularly in Spain, tackled the problem from another side: ignorance of another's faith was an obstacle to convincing them to renounce it, since the preacher could find no good arguments. This was why they strongly recommended the creation of schools and institutions, teaching the Koran and Muslim laws to missionaries.<sup>96</sup> In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, certain members of the clergy translated works about the life of Mohammed and the Muslim view of heaven in order to combat the Arab religion more effectively.<sup>97</sup>

In this context, the Castilian translator placed himself somewhere in the middle, in no way removing the importance of the favour bestowed by God on the preacher, but, on the contrary, adding elements to reinforce its importance as we have seen above, he displayed a better knowledge of the Muslims than the author whose work he translated. Thus he removed the ambiguity and the confusion between Romans and Saracens, in calling them pagans; keen to illustrate the Gospels even more than the French author, he added the detail about the pagans called 'dogs' by Christ, a reference to the curing of the daughter of a Syrian-Phoenician woman (*Mk*, 7, 24-30). However, this addition may come from an incorrect understanding of the word "*chier*", taken as "*chiens*" rather than as "*cher*". Oddly, the translator did not delete the passages about the conception of Christ. It is difficult for us to imagine that he was unaware of what Muslims believed on this subject, given the close proximity between them and the Christians. This is presumably why he chose to keep these passages, because they were concerned less with Muslims than with Jews, who were already perceived as a threat and as a people to convert at any cost, even at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the 14<sup>th</sup> century was a particularly anti-Jewish period, with an unprecedented series of pogroms, as Martin Aurell has shown.<sup>98</sup>

**Violence and speech.** On the whole, both the *Estoire* and the *Josep* display deeply anti-Jewish and anti-Islamic traits. The two begin with an attempt at dialogue, and end up with forms of violence. There is also the miracle of punishment reserved for the pagan cleric who stands up to Josephé in the *Estoire* and who explains the rational inconsistencies of the Trinity.<sup>99</sup>

However, in the *Josep* it is noteworthy that the place of the miracle of punishment is reduced. In the *Estoire*, Evelake brings all his wise men together so that they can debate with Josephé in order to defend their belief. One of the clerics gets up to demonstrate the logical problems with the idea of the Trinity, and Josephé invokes a miracle of punishment on him in response. The Spanish translator introduced

95. Tolan, John. *Saracens...*: 220-221, who recalls that Islam was fairly unknown to the Franciscan authors of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

96. Vones, Ludwig. "Missions...": 217.

97. Cioba, Mianda. "El Libro de la Escala de Mahoma: Contextos del diálogo -contextos de la exclusión", *Concepte trans- si intercultural*, Ruxandra Visan, Camelia Geambasu, eds. Bucharest: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2006: 312 – 332. The author recalls nevertheless that Arab culture was not aimed only at being fought, and emphasises the real admiration of certain thinkers, such as Roger Bacon, for Arabic science and philosophy.

98. Aurell, Martin. "Le pogrom ibérique de 1391 et l'eschatologie chrétienne", *Tolérance et intolérance (XIIe-XIVe siècles)*, Mianda Cioba, dir. Bucharest: Editions of the University of Bucharest, forthcoming.

99. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...:85. Also see Girbea, Catalina. "Discours...": 166.



some significant modifications to this episode. The passage is described at length in the *Estoire*,

*Si tost com Josephé ot ce dit, si perdi cil la parole. Et quant il vult parler, si senti dedens sa bouche une main qui li tenoit la langue, mais il ne le pooit veoir; et il se drecha por plus fort efforcier de parler, mais si tost com il fu levés si ne vit goute des ex. Et quant il senti ce, si commencha si durement a muire que on le pot oïr d'autre part plus loing qu'on ne pourroit traire d'un arc: et si estoit avis a tous ciaux qui l'ooient que ce fust une toriaus.<sup>100</sup>*

The scene is greatly dramatised, and the suffering of the unfortunate man is described at length, along with the stages of his torture. The miracle of punishment aims to impress the reader by arousing fear and horror in order to prevent blasphemy. This scene, which awakens the anger of the other Saracens against Josephé and encourages them to want to stone him, were it not for his protection by Evelake, presents the preacher to us as quite unkind, violent and lacking in charitable feeling. Furthermore, the miracle of punishment takes place at a decisive moment: the new bishop has to respond to the arguments of the cleric against the Trinity, and the text says very clearly that he invokes divine punishment on the head of the scholar because he was short of arguments,

*Et quant cil ot tant parlé encontre la Sainte Trinité, si fu Joseph mout esbahis des fauses prouvances que cil li avoit traites, si ne sot mie de maintenant respondre a fauser ce que cil avoit maintenant dit, que a Nostre Seigneur ne plaisoit mie.<sup>101</sup>*

The same episode was clearly softened in the Castilian version. Thus, the translator removed the sentence about Josephé's lack of arguments and left in only his astonishment, and the pain of having heard the pagan cleric blaspheming against the Trinity, even though it was a question of blasphemy in the context of argumentary dialogue between religions,

*Quando Josafas oyo aquel fablar tan fuertemente contra la Trinidat, fue mucho espantado de aquella falsa prueva que dixiera. Entonce se levanto Josafas e començo de fablar alto que todos lo oyeron.<sup>102</sup>*

In addition, the colourful description of the punishment of the cleric also disappears in the Castilian version. The translator kept the event itself, but removed the details that triggered fear or pity for the man's fate,

100. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 86.

101. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 83. The italics are the author's.

102. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 50.



*En esto perdio el clerigo del rrey la fabla e el veer en tal manera que los que alli estavan fueron muy maravillados e muy sannudos.*<sup>103</sup>

As we can see, the miracle of punishment is really reduced to the basic economy of the narration, and treated as an uncomfortable episode, probably maintained out of respect for the initial source, but dealt with in two lines. Afterwards, the translator also abridged the entire part concerning the immediate reaction of Evelake. In the French version, the king, far from being interested in the fate of his cleric, shows himself to be very curious to know how Josephé might have performed this miracle, and asks him if he could help him in the same way against his enemy Tholome in the war. Finally, after several retorts between the preacher and the king, Evelake eventually decides to ask whether his scholar will be alright.<sup>104</sup> The pagan monarch therefore seems to have no more capacity for charity than Josephé and he treats the cleric, who was, after all, there out of loyalty to him and to their religion, as an instrument he cares about purely for curiosity's sake. There is none of this in the Castilian version: the translator completely removed the whole passage of dialogue between Josephé and Evelake about the methods and effectiveness of the miracle, and after the attempt at stoning, the scene returns immediately to the words of the king,

*E fueron contra Josafas e quesieronlo despedaçar si non fuera por el rrey Evolat que se levanto con una espada en la mano e juro por el poder de Jupiter que mataria a todos quantos en el metiesen las manos; ca seria grand trayçion mandarlo venir ante e matarlo. Entonces dixo el rrey a Josafas si podria el clerigo cobrar la fabla e el ver.*<sup>105</sup>

The *Josep* ends with Evelake's victory over Tholome, but without any descriptions of the battle and with no reference to the marvellous shield that Joseph entrusts to the king before the fight in the *Estoire*. And yet, in the French romance, this shield puts the finishing touches to Evelake's conversion, since in the middle of the battle, fearing death, the pagan sovereign asks for the help of the Christian God and sees a crucified, suffering Christ appear on his shield. There is no mention of this in the Castilian translation. The king listens to a last sermon from Josephé before the battle, and promises him to convert if he comes out alive, essentially out of friendship for the bishop.<sup>106</sup> We therefore see that the space given to the miracle is considerably reduced in comparison with the French original, and that the speeches and personality of the preacher acquire importance.

In the French version, there are further conversions made by force. Once Evelake has been baptised, the author lingers on those of his kingdom who refuse to believe,

103. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 51.

104. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 87-88.

105. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 51.

106. *El libro de Josep Abarimatia*...: 54: "Josafas, ya te he dicho qu non puedo fazer las cosas que tu me has dicho. Pues que asy dizes que tanto cunplen a mí, yre este viage. E de venida que venga yo te prometo que creere en ese Dios que tu predicas. E tomare su crehença e rrescibire el santo batismo porque anbos seamos hermanos en una fe".

and who are either killed on the spot by a divine thunderbolt, or carried off by the devil. The translator ends with the conversion of Evelake. In any case, he seems to carefully avoid any kind of exaggerated violence against the non-believers, and considerably smoothes over the excessive emphasis of the *Estoire*, in spite of the Peninsula's rather tense context at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. This is perhaps due to the fact that, despite the reconquest, the three religions could coexist there peacefully, and recent research stresses that they maintained fruitful economic and business relationships and that they could therefore work together and respect one another.<sup>107</sup>

Despite the apparent fidelity to the French source, it can therefore be stated that the Castilian translator contributed a series of interesting elements, which better enable us to evaluate his own perception and to have an idea, as far as possible, of the way in which the Arthurian message of conversion had been received in Spain. At times, it shows a better knowledge of the Bible, or in any case greater concern for the similarity with the evangelical accounts. But what is important is the dialogue style at the beginning, which is less contorted, more direct and more operational than in the *Estoire*. Even though it is certain that the miracles, or the concrete and pragmatic concerns of the other, are a necessary basis, a trigger for the act of communication, just as in the French romance their place is subtly reduced in comparison with the original source. The pagan king is presented as being more charitable, more rational. The forms of violence are minimised, as is the importance of the miracles, to the advantage of the dialogue, which was controversial. The act of preaching increases in importance, being presented as the first of the activities of Christ that made the preacher his direct substitute on Earth, but Josephé and his people do not rely solely on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but also on their ability to explain Christianity and make it acceptable. Finally, both the preacher and the infidel display a greater aptitude for dialogue.

### 3. The *Demanda del Sancto Grial* and the chivalrous ideal of charity in the arthurian Spanish translation

The *Demanda del sancto Grial* is part of a huge body of romances containing the *Merlin*, the *Prophécies de Merlin*, the *Demanda*, and part of the *Mort Artu*, which has not been entirely preserved in any one manuscript. The author of this huge translation was probably a monk, Juan Bivas, who undertook the work in 1291 and dedicated it to King Sancho IV.<sup>108</sup> We will not carry out a systematic comparison of the French and Spanish versions to evaluate the nature of the reception of the

107. See the proceedings of the symposium on *Minorités et régulations sociales en Méditerranée occidentale*, held in Fontevault, 7-9 June 2007, eds. Stéphane Boisselier, John Tolan, François Clément, forthcoming from Brepols, in particular that of Ana Echevaria on the Muslims in Castile. In the conclusions of this symposium, Martin Aurell rightly insisted on the efforts of conversion made by Christians, even in a context of co-habitation and harmony.

108. Entwistle, William. *Arthurian Legends...*: 143, 181, 227.



Arthurian religious message in the *Demandas*, as this approach would not provide reliable results, given that there are three major problems that cannot be ignored. First, the Castilian *Demanda* is thought to be a translation from the Portuguese and not directly from the French.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, the basic French source for both the Castilian and Portuguese *Demandas* is not the Vulgate *Queste del Saint Graal* (around 1225), but rather the *Queste Post-Vulgate* (post 1230), which Fanni Bogdanow has attempted to reconstruct accurately with the help of the Iberian translations,<sup>110</sup> since this post-vulgate version is not preserved as a whole in any one manuscript. Since there is no complete French original available, no comparison of the versions can really tell us anything about the contribution of the Hispanic translator, as it is not known which manuscript he used.

Unlike the *Josep*, the *Demanda* does not appear unduly concerned about evangelization, but rather about the charity that ought to lead to a more active engagement in the world. Just like the primary model, namely the *Queste*, or its source, the *Queste Post-Vulgate*, the *Demanda* is particularly concerned with the individual conversion of its characters and with their inner development.

The romance is nothing less than a reflection of chivalry, where the fictional anecdotal detail is combined with fantastic Christian elements, and it serves as a vehicle for the propagation of Christian ideas. Unlike the Vulgate *Queste*, and closer to the spirit of the Post-Vulgate, particularly *Tristan en prose* (around 1230), the quest for the Grail has slightly lost its sacred aura, and Galahad, the paragon of holy chivalry, steadily becomes involved in the often worldly adventures.<sup>111</sup> However, in the Post-Vulgate, and therefore later in the *Demanda* with which we are directly concerned here, there is a greater and more sustained polarisation between the good and bad knights.<sup>112</sup>

The Arthurian court appears to be a place of sin, despite the visit of the Holy Grail and the good knights who live there. Thus, from the beginning of the section, an Irish knight who finds himself at Arthur's court, and who was even one of its famous and valued members, suddenly bursts into flames, with no explicit reason, while holding a letter in his hand.<sup>113</sup> This spectacular death, incendiary in the literal sense of the word, recalls the Vulgate with the death of Moyse, son of Symeu, buried in a tomb that burns for eternity. Things have barely calmed down when the king and knights decide to go to dine: it is interesting to see how the text quickly

109. Bogdanow, Fanni. "Introduction", *La version post-vulgate de la Queste del saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 1991: I, 24. For all the passages from the Post-Vulgate this edition is quoted.

110. The Post-Vulgate *Queste* is reconstructed from its Portuguese and Castilian evidence, but also through the part of the *Queste* called "Tristram", included in the manuscripts containing *Tristan en prose*.

111. Ménard, Philippe. "Introduction", *Le roman de Tristan en prose. VIII. De la quête de Galaad à la destruction du château de la lépreuse*, eds. Philippe Ménard Bernard Guidot, Jean Subrenat. Geneva: Droz, 1995: 9; Zink, Michel. *Poésie et conversion au Moyen Age*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2003: 252; Van Coillput, Colette. *Aspects de la réception des premiers romans du Graal cycliques dans le Tristan en prose*. Louvain. Leuven University Press, 1986: 89.

112. Also see Stanesco, Michel. *La légende...*: 1135.

113. *La Demanda...*: fol. 98.

passes over their distress and the cruel indifference that is attributed to the Arthurian *mesnie*.<sup>114</sup> While the knights suffer, cry and lament when one of their number dies or disappears without a trace in the French romances,<sup>115</sup> in the *Demanda*, the episode has the air of a somewhat unfortunate, banal incident, which needs to be covered up quickly in order to avoid tarnishing the influence of the royal celebration. The Round Table sinks little by little into the reign of hypocritical appearances and a type of superficial etiquette. The solidarity of the brotherhood of arms and religion which constitute the Round Table seem long gone. In addition, no knight is irreplaceable: they all have the air of being interchangeable pawns. At least this is the impression that is given after the death of the Irishman, when another name, that of Erec, appears immediately and miraculously on his empty chair at the table, destined to replace him.<sup>116</sup> Instead of making them the chosen ones, God converts the knights of the Round Table into serial characters, without any real substance.

**Charity and knightly honour.** The death of the Irishman is followed closely by another incident, just as consequential for a global view of the Arthurian court: a foreign knight comes to challenge Galahad to a binding sacrifice. Once the latter gives him his word, the stranger tells him that he wants to be beheaded because he has dreamed of being killed by a brave knight. Deliriously he announces that, in any case, he must die the following day, and that he would prefer to choose how. Galahad refuses, at the risk of being seen as dishonourable for having gone back on his word, and distraught, the knight commits suicide publicly, an act followed again by the cleaning of the place by the king's squires, who, almost mechanically, remove the body from the room!<sup>117</sup>

These two sequences present us with a caricatured view of Arthur's court, where adventures take place in a rather "surrealist" way, without being structured in any sense, in an obvious parody of previous romances. The meeting between Galahad and the unknown knight is very original because it unites the prototype of Don Quixote, before he had been created, and an Arthurian figure still anchored in the world of real chivalry. If the suicidal person in the story operates within the fictional paradigm of windmills, Galahad remains in the paradigm of the Grail. These are not two characters who stand face to face, but two worlds or even two types of narrative. However, the chosen knight is different to his French prototype; he no longer represents one chosen by God for the mysteries of the Grail, but a figure more aware of his responsibilities, less selfish, looking less precisely towards the world of

114. *La Demanda*...: fol. 98r: "Y quando el Rey vio que era ya muerto mando a que lo llevaste fuera del palacio que no quiso que su corte fuesse tornada por el: estoce lo llevaron fuera a muy gran trabajo (...) y pues fue fuera del palacio començaron la alegría como ante...". The text says that the knights are for all that sad because of the death of their companion, but that they try to keep up appearances to continue the feast.

115. For example in the *Lancelot en prose* the love of the knights for one another is so much integrated into the spirit of the texts, that quests are often organised because of the disappearance of some of them.

116. *La Demanda*...: fol. 99.

117. *La Demanda*...: fol. 104v.



adventure.<sup>118</sup> The notion of honour loses the absolute value that it had in the Arthurian tradition, and is modelled on the needs of others. The incident with the knight is there precisely to prove the complete absurdity of the binding oath. Discovering that his word would lead to a human being's death, Galahad experiences no existential dilemma. His response is immediate, a categorical, firm refusal,

*No vos ha pro cavallero, dixo Galaz, de tal ruego me rogar: ca no ha cosa en el mundo por que vos mate.*<sup>119</sup>

Furthermore, this incident takes place just at the start of Galahad's career of arms, precisely at the time of his dubbing. At the same time, it is revealing about the evolution of a character who no longer comes under the banner of knightly honour, or even under the sign of the quest for the Grail, but under the influence of reason and simple wisdom, aimed at charity. This is all the more visible since the unknown knight clearly threatens Galahad with a bad reputation from his entrance into the knighthood, rendering the dubbing practically worthless. Furthermore, a reputation as a "bad knight" is one of the worst spectres of the Arthurian world, and is exactly what the unknown knight predicts for Galahad,

*Ay senor cavallero esto no hagades en comienço de vostra cavalleria que no me tengades lo que me prometistes, ca estonce seriades vos el peor cavallero y el mas mentiroso del mundo si assi començastes a fazer de fallecer lo que prometedes.*<sup>120</sup>

We can therefore observe that the pressure that Galahad is under at the start of his adventures is immense, and tends to tarnish his further development in a system of values based on the logic of honour and mechanical, blind respect for the given word. However, he refuses to carry out the murderous act, resolvedly placing himself in a parallel system of values, founded on the logic of charity. In the French romances, this type of dilemma appears occasionally, and certain knights choose the same course of action as Galahad, but after a series of hesitations. In Chrétien de Troyes the principle of two competitive worlds, honour and love is already felt when the hero has to get back on the infamous cart in order to find Guinevere again. He does so, but after having had the famous second of hesitation which earned him the queen's hatred and which has been the subject of much writing. In a similar scenario, Lancelot finds himself, in the *Lancelot en prose*, faced with a dilemma. King Arthur is in the process of dubbing him when a knight tortured by a spearhead stuck in his body calls him, asking him to remove it and give him relief. Lancelot abandons the ceremony right in the middle and rushes to help the injured

118. Moreover, in the *Tristan en prose* Galahad also proves his wisdom and prefers to reject combat several times, shaming himself, rather than harming another human being.

119. *La Demanda*...: fol. 104v.

120. *La Demanda*...: fol. 104v.

man<sup>121</sup>. These two examples remind us that the Arthurian subject is no stranger to the "charity/honour" conflict, which may arise in various forms, but in fragments. But the most striking scenario for our purpose is found in the 14<sup>th</sup> century English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. An unknown knight arrives at Arthur's court and asks that someone should cut off his head, also taking advantage of the binding oath. Gawain accepts the challenge and carries out the action, however as ill luck would have it the knight is a *faé*, capable of picking up his head and calmly setting off with it. He demands the same thing from Gawain in return; a year later, Arthur's nephew is supposed to find the Green Knight again and accept execution. This episode largely proves the contrast between the two attitudes and the decision taken by the author of the *Demanda* to make the Arthurian protagonist a responsible and charitable character before being courageous.

**Charity and chastity.** The *Demanda* presents Galahad with a dilemma that the Vulgate *Queste* would never have implied; arriving with Bors at the castle of a king who gives them shelter for the night, Galahad becomes the object of his host's daughter's lust. In the middle of the night, she slips into the room where the two knights are staying and declares her passion to Galahad, who refuses her love. Distraught, the girl threatens to harm him, then to commit suicide. Galahad's monologue is particularly balanced: he realises that this suicide might weigh on his conscience, but does not want to betray the promise he has made to God to remain chaste until the end of his days. Following a series of arguments, the girl takes his sword and reiterates her threat. Horrified, Galahad jumps out of bed to stop her, promising her without a moment's hesitation that he will do whatever she wants. The girl, however, is not fooled, and finally succeeds in her deadly deed, adding to the long list of people with suicidal tendencies in this romance.<sup>122</sup> The Galahad of the Vulgate *Queste* was a figure so purged of all human weakness that this type of episode was inconceivable. As for the other knights, young ladies sent by the devil, figures without consistency, functioning as signs rather than as characters, are sent to tempt them. The suicidal person in the *Demanda* is, moreover, a mirror image of the young lady sent by the devil to put Bors, not Galahad, to the test in the Vulgate *Queste*, since the latter's simple presence made the devil flee. A short parallel examination of the two sequences shows the gulf that divides the representations of holy chivalry. In the Vulgate *Queste*, the young lady climbs up to a window with twelve of her servants, and they all threaten Bors that they will jump from it. In the *Demanda*, the King's daughter grasps Galahad's sword. The similarities end there and the reactions triggered in the two knights are completely contrasting. In the *Queste*, we have the following reasoning,

Et il (Bohort) les esgarde et cuide vraiment que ce soient gentilz fames et hautes dames; si l'em prent grant pitié. Et neporquant il n'est pas conseiliez qu'il ne vueille

121. *Lancelot. Roman en prose du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. VII, Du début du roman jusqu'à la capture de Lancelot par la dame de Malohaut*, ed. Alexandre Micha. Geneva: Droz, 1980: 268.

122. *La Demanda*....: fol. 116.



*mielz qu'eles toutes perdent lor ames qu' il seuls perdist la soe: si lor dit qu'il n'en fera riens, ne por lor mort ne por lor vie.*<sup>123</sup>

There is nothing of this in the *Demanda*:

*"Y quando Galaz vio alla donzella que tenia la espada en la mano que se queria matar con ella, salio del lecho todo espandado y dixo: Ay, buena donzella, sufrid vos un poco y no vos mateys assi que yo fare todo vostro plazer."*<sup>124</sup>

This variation is more elegant than the shifting of tones in the system of values of the heavenly chivalry from the Post-Vulgate and its derivatives, in this instance the *Demanda*. Galahad's reaction does not at all mean that the author tries to make him a weaker figure or to make him "more profane". The suicide of the king's daughter, despite his efforts to prevent it, clearly shows that it is a trap and that, in any case, he was at no time really threatened with losing his chastity. The question of the health of the soul, moreover, is not called upon. In this case, as at other times in the *Demanda*, Galahad displays a speed of reaction proportionate to the context, and does not lose himself in abstract issues. He shows an absolute flexibility where the supreme value is not purity, but rather charity. The passage about the suicidal girl is not, moreover, an incident on the journey, but it is highly revealing of what Galahad should become, since he calls the adventure "*la mayor maravilla que nunca oystes que esta donzella se mato con mi espada*".<sup>125</sup> A greater marvel perhaps, it is implied, than the Grail itself. On the other hand, the king's daughter reminds us of the tragedy of the Demoiselle d'Escalot who ends her life because of her love for Lancelot. She does not acquire a demonic side, but on the contrary, as Bors suggests, is herself a victim of the devil.<sup>126</sup>

Galahad therefore, once again, spontaneously follows charity and not honour. Just as he had betrayed his word with regard to the suicidal knight, risking dishonour as a knight, he declares himself ready, at least virtually, to betray his promise to God Himself. He is ready to debase himself as a knight, and even as a Christian or Chosen one, in order to save the life of a human being, a supreme value, which was obviously more important than the Grail.

**Charity and conversion.** The *Demanda* has very little information on the subject of evangelization. However, there is an interesting character whose path crosses that of Galahad, and whose development gives us the view of conversion held by the author of the *Demanda*, clearly influenced by the French Post-Vulgate. This character is Palamedes,<sup>127</sup> the pagan knight in love with Iseult, who spends his life tracking the Questing Beast. The son of a Saracen converted to Christianity,

123. *Queste del Saint Graal: roaam du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Albert Pauphilet. Paris: Champion, 1921: 181. The italics are the author's.

124. *La Demanda*...: fol. 116.

125. *La Demanda*...: fol. 116.

126. *La Demanda*...: fol. 116.

127. Palamedes is one of the protagonists of *Tristan en prose* and of the *Compilation* by Rusticiano of Pisa.



Esclabor the Unknown, he refuses baptism throughout the romance. In the *Tristan en prose*, his friendship with Galahad becomes proverbial. He accompanies him in a series of fights, and never, at any time, does the Good Knight attack him, or attempt to force him to convert.<sup>128</sup>

The conversion of this knight varies amongst the versions of the Post-Vulgate. Thus, in the *Tristan* variation we see him become Christian solely because of the prayers of King Arthur and in order to join the Round Table.<sup>129</sup> The affair is dealt with in a few lines, and no persuasive strategy or exchange of dialogue is entered into.

In one version of the Post-Vulgate, followed very closely by the *Demanda*, the episode is radically changed. Palamedes accepts being baptised after a series of complicated adventures, which we can summarise as follows. Gawain challenges Palamedes, they fight, and the Saracen knocks him off his horse. Furious, Gawain complains to Galahad, accusing Palamedes of murdering Lionel,<sup>130</sup> which persuades the Chosen One of the Grail to challenge the guilty party. The battle is reported because of the injuries to the latter who was unable to defend himself well. Having returned to his father's home, Palamedes is forced to confess to him that he went to confront Galahad, the best knight in the world, and that he risked being killed. The dialogue between the father and son constitutes the first stage of the conversion of the hero. Esclabor explains the meaning of his battle to him, which he it puts down to his greatest sin, that of having constantly refused to accept the Christian religion,

*Hijo, dixo el padre, Jesu Christo que es padre de piedad y de misericordia te fue fasta aqui amigo y tu le fueste siempre enemigo: y el te dio tan fermosa grande cavalleria y tan buena andança que segun el pecado en que estavas nunca vi tal cavalleria que yo supiesse; ca el te mostro atan hermoso amor, atan buen talante como no mostro a otro pecador; ca siempre te libro de todos los peligros y a tu honra y el fizo a tanto que fue mucho: y tu nunca nada feziste por el.*<sup>131</sup>

The strategy of persuasion scarcely differs from what we can see in other Arthurian romances, the attention of the receiver is retained by the call to an affect, in this instance the father uses his son's fear and his real concern. The mechanics of this exhortation concern the *do ut des* exchange: Palamedes having received constant protection and many qualities from God is supposed to answer Him with powerful faith

128. We have discussed Palamedes's vocation for the saintliness as it is described in the *Tristan en prose*: Girbea, Catalina. *La couronne ou l'auréole. Royauté terrestre et chevalerie celestielle à travers la légende arthurienne (XIIe-XIIIe siècles)*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2007: 148.

129. *Le Roman de Tristan en prose*. IX, *La fin des aventures de Tristan et de Galaad*, Philippe Ménard, Laurence Harf-Lancner, eds. Geneva: Droz, 1997: 250.

130. Lancelot's cousin and therefore a close relative of Galahad.

131. *La Demanda*...: fol. 166r. In the Post-Vulgate *Queste* the passage was more or less the same: "Fils dit li peres, sez tu comment il est? Yhesu Crist, li debonaires Sires et li pitieux, t'a esté dusqu'a cest point pere et amis, et tu Li as toute voies esté ennemis. Il t'a doné plus belle grace de chevalerie et meilleur, selonc le pechié ou tu estoies, qu'a nul eutre chevalier que je sache. Que te diroie? Il t'a montré greignor amor et greignor bonaireté qu'a nul autre povre chevalier, car Il t'a délivré de touz perils a honor de ton cors et de chevalerie. Il a tant fait por toi, et tu, que as-tu fait por Lui? Noient." (*La version post-vulgate de la Queste del saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*, ed. Fanni Bogdanow. Paris: Société des anciens textes français, 2000: III, 273).



and obedience. Esclabor advises his son to have himself baptised urgently, in order to preserve him from the certain death that fighting Galahad would mean. It is more or less the same demand that Joseph makes of King Evelake in the *Josep*. But, just as Evelake refuses to convert before the battle against Tholome, so Palamedes refuses to be baptised before facing Galahad. He promises, on the other hand, to become Christian if he comes out of the fight alive.<sup>132</sup> The two promises, that of the young knight and that of the King of Sarras, are similar.

When the day comes, he is defeated and knocked down by Galahad, so injured that he is unable to defend himself and, just like Evelake in the *Estoire*, he calls upon God's help,<sup>133</sup> asking for Christ's aid,<sup>134</sup> an indication that he had already begun to accept the Christian faith following his father's speech. Without knowing the vows taken by Palamedes, Galahad decides to ask him for a sacrifice when he sees him fall to the ground. Rather than killing him, he decides to ask him to embrace Christianity, and in exchange promises him his help and eternal friendship.<sup>135</sup> Palamedes accepts willingly, both to please his father and to win Galahad's friendship, another similarity with the conversion of Evelake in the *Josep*, since the king had, amongst others, embraced the Christian faith in order to become Joseph's brother in faith.<sup>136</sup>

Three times, therefore, Galahad goes back on his word to save a life and do something for the Christian community. He goes back on his word as a knight dubbed at the Round Table when he refuses to behead the person who asks it of him. He goes back on his word to God as a Christian when he attempts to save the young lady in love with him. And finally, he goes back on what he has done as a blood relative of Lionel, when he abandons the opportunity of avenging the latter's death and makes Palamedes a Christian instead of killing him.

**Charity, kindness, commitment to others.** It is also in the sense of a heightened responsibility that Galahad's involvement in helping Arthur against the armies of Mark of Cornwall should be understood, (an episode shortened again in the *Tristram Queste*), and not as a development of the holy knight towards profane adventures.

132. *La Demanda*...: 166r, "E yo prometo agora, dixo Palomades, a Jesu Cristo que si de esta batalla me fera salir con honra y con bien, que luego reciba baptismo, y dende adelante que siempre sea leal cavallero dela Santa Yglesia.". Also see the almost identical version of the *Post-Vulgate*: "Et je fais orendroit, fait il, un veu a Nostre Seigneur Yhesu Criz que se Il de ceste bataille me lesse partir a la sauveté de mon cors, que je maintenant recevrai crestienté et que je des lors en avant serai loiaux chevalier de Sainte Eglise", *La version post-vulgate de la Queste del saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 274. For the case of Evelake, see note 106.

133. *Estoire del Saint Graal*...: 121.

134. *La version post-vulgate de la Queste del saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 282: "Ha! Yhesu Crist, ne me lessez ci morir, me lessez m'en partir a honor"; *La Demanda*...: fol. 167r: "Ay! Jesu Cristo, padre de piedad, no me dexes aqui morir mas faze me de aqi salir con honra."

135. *La Demanda*...: 168: "Yo os lo dire, dixo Galaz: que si vos quisierdes dechar vostra ley y recibir bautismo yo os perdonare u os terne lo que vos prometi: y tornar me he vostro vasallo quito assi que en todos lugares que de adelante me fallardes me podreys aver en toda cosa que menester me ayays para vos ayudar y para vostro servicio"; *La version post-vulgate de la Queste saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 285: "Je vos di, fait Galahaz, se vos vostre loi volez lessier et recevoir baptioisme et venir a la loi crestiane, je vos clamerai quite de toutes les quereles qui entre moi et vos sunt et devendrai vostre chevalier lige en tel maniere que en toz les leux ou vos me troveroiz de ci en avant, vos me porroiz metre en touz perils pour vostre cors deffendre".

136. *La version post-vulgate de la Queste saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 285.

In spite of his greater involvement in the world and in society, the Chosen One of the Grail is nonetheless perceived as a saint. When he enters the Castle of the Grail, the king's magician loses his powers. He explains that his powers come from the devil and that Galahad's mere presence, surrounded by angels, makes these powers disappear.<sup>137</sup> It is true that while he is in the Castle of the Grail he fights the son of King Pelles, which might tarnish his saintly aura. However, it is not he who seeks the fight, but Eleazar. Galahad contents himself with inflicting just punishment on him by unseating him, then he asks him to leave him in peace to continue his journey.<sup>138</sup> Finally, at the end of the *Demanda*, Galahad is crowned King of Sarraz,<sup>139</sup> an episode which also exists in the Vulgate *Queste* but which is dispatched by the narrator in a few lines.<sup>140</sup> The essential difference in comparison with the Vulgate is that, whereas in the *Queste*, Galahad accepts the kingship reluctantly, in the *Demanda* he quickly finds consolation, telling himself that he could better honour the Grail. A decisive detail, which proves that, at least for the Castilian version, involvement in the world is a premise for improving it, and then to find God at the end of the journey. This is, moreover, the project in several stages constructed in *Evast et Blaqueria*, and it is not surprising that the Castilian translator preferred to maintain this view of things rather than the one given by the Vulgate.

All told, Saint Galahad, portrayed in the Vulgate *Queste* for his ability to communicate with God, is here portrayed for his openness towards others. Furthermore, kindness seems to be the essential virtue for the Arthurian knights, ahead of courage or even faith or the grace of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the term is used again repeatedly to designate a higher virtue. When Galahad takes pity on Palamedes, hurt and practically defeated, the author says,

Quando Galaz vio que Palomades no tenia poder por se defender, de el ovo piedad por la buena cavalleria qu en el avia y por la gran bondad que en el vio<sup>141</sup>

On this point, the French version does not speak of kindness, but of prowess.<sup>142</sup> Even so, in the *Demanda*, Arthur speaks to Elyan the White in the following way, "*Hijo, soys muy fermoso, mas de vostra bondad no se nada*".<sup>143</sup> Kindness, probably a synonym for charity in this case, becomes the virtue competing with courage, and makes

137. *Demanda*...: 139. The episode is borrowed in *Le roman de Tristan en prose*. VIII, *De la quête de Galaad à la destruction du château de la lépreuse*, eds. Philippe Ménard, Bernard Guidot, Jean Subrenat. Geneva: Droz, 1995: 237.

138. *La Demanda*...: fol. 140.

139. *La Demanda*...: fol. 178v.

140. *La version post-vulgate de la Queste saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 277.

141. *La Demanda*...: fol. 167v.

142. *La version post-vulgate de la Queste saint Graal et de la Mort Artu*. III...: 283: "*Quant Galahaz voit que ce stoit oltree chouse de lui et il conoist que il n'a mes pooir de lui deffendre, il li en prent pitié trop grant por la bone chevalerie qu'il savoit en lui et por la tres grant prouesse*".

143. *La Demanda*...: fol. 99.



the Arthurian world turn. It characterises two of the greatest knights in the world, Palamedes and Galahad.

In the *Demanda*, the figure of Galahad acquires dimensions that are not more profane, but more human. In the Vulgate *Queste*, he only interacts with God, in comparison with whom one can measure his evolution. From the start, his path was clear of obstacles. Starting with *Tristan en prose* and culminating with the Iberian amendments, our character starts to interact with various other figures, in different contexts, initiating issues linked not to his purity but to his charity. In place of the love/honour dialectic, or even earthly honour/heavenly honour, the honour/charity dialectic is implicit in the *Demanda*. This binomial is nothing new in Arthurian material. The very first Arthurian lesson connected to the Grail, in Chrétien de Troyes, was charity, as the prologue of the *Conte du Graal* invites us to think. The cycle of the Vulgate puts this aspect aside, it forgets it en route, in order to focus on the revelations of the Grail and on the mystical elevation, containing the ideal of heavenly chivalry in a theological crystal ball and by placing it outside the world.<sup>144</sup> In the Castilian *Demanda*, charity finds its place of honour once again. One of the original aspects of the romance consists of the form of writing through which the issue of charity is introduced, namely dialogue. It is in the discussions, taken from life, that Galahad's virtues are reviewed. In the three representative episodes that we have analysed, the verbal exchanges turn out to be decisive both for the subsequent attitude of the characters, and for the narrative economy. They render perceptible the unprecedented flexibility of the Grail's Chosen One. Speech is enough to allow several values onto the stage, and to implement changes of attitude. Our scenario shows a clear separation between the norm and its review, and removes any value from the idea of an absolute value, uncovered under a fossilised day. The reader is reminded that in the *Conte du Graal* by Chrétien de Troyes, Perceval lost the Grail because, instead of asking the right question, he stayed silent, blindly following the advice of Gornemant, who had told him to speak little. Obviously, the authors of the Post-Vulgate and the *Demanda* have retained this lesson better than their predecessors: no advice, no vow, no value exists outside its context, and this context is most often given through dialogue.

The discussion is therefore central to the Arthurian amendments in the Iberian context, and at various stages it gives measure to the reception of the Christian conversion message delivered by the French romances. The confrontations, openness to others, charity and updated speech are as much persuasive operators in the *Josep* as in the *Demanda*. The sermons are contaminated by passages of dialogue that become privileged persuasive strategies, a phenomenon which may lead us towards a better understanding of the world of Iberian expectation.

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144. Girbea, Catalina. *La couronne...*: 530.