

A CHRONICLER KING: REWRITING HISTORY AND THE QUEST FOR IMAGE IN THE CATALAN CHRONICLE OF PETER III (1319-1336/ 1387)

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we study the treatment and writing of history in the Chronicle of King Peter III. Following the example of James I, the Ceremonious wrote or had written the most important events of his reign. Thus, the king —thanks to rigorous and highly elaborated rhetoric— had the invaluable occasion to present the readers with a revised and corrected version of what happened to him. It is chiefly a possibility to construct an image that would be bequeathed to posterity.

KEY WORDS

Peter III, Historiography, 14th Century, Writing, Image.

CAPITALIA VERBA

Petrus Tertius, Rerum Scriptura, Quartum decimum saeculum, Scriptura, Imago.

The *Chronicle* of Peter III is a relatively unknown medieval work¹. However, nothing justifies it being so unfairly overlooked. Indeed, this work, written in around 1386 in Catalan, is very rich and provides proof of originality in a genre, i.e. historiography, which, truly, does not seek to be original. One of the peculiarities of this chronicle is that the author is the king himself, Peter III, called the *Ceremonious*, a sovereign with a passion for history and an avid reader of the *Chronicle* of one of his illustrious predecessors, James I, who was his model on both literary and personal levels.

Careful analysis of Peter III's work shows that, for the Catalan sovereign, writing history was, above all, a way of justifying personal action by means of rigorous argument and rhetorical processes, with the aim of demonstrating his good reason. Indeed, history and writing become instrumental, as both were placed at the service of the king². Peter III considered them to be tools that enabled him to legitimise a political action that might be open to criticism. It is for this reason that, in his work, he earns recognition as a skilful king, even *subtle* in the pejorative sense of the 13th century, his prose being far less spontaneous and much more elaborate than that of previous Catalan chroniclers, giving the impression of a more accomplished chronicle. He even begins to project the image of a wily and calculating Renaissance prince with a highly-developed political conscience³.

In this sense, his discourse is really that of a victor or, to be more precise, of a man seeking to present himself as a victor. The main effect on the *Chronicle* is that history, from then onwards, is not precisely written, but rather *rewritten* because the historian, simultaneously judge and protagonist, is, in this case, personally involved in the story.

The present study will enable us to tackle the questions of rewriting history and the quest for image, which are closely connected in this case. This will be done in two parts. The first part will examine Peter III's view of himself as well as some biblical allusions in his chronicle. The second part will focus on the place of the vanquished, particularly through the discourse dealing with this subject.

1. The edition used as a reference is: "Crònica de Pere el Cerimoniós", *Les quatre grans Cròniques*, ed. Ferran Soldevila. Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1983: 1001-1225. Henceforth, *CPC*. We can also benefit from consulting the work of Tasis i Marca, Rafael. *Pere el Cerimoniós i els seus fills*. Barcelona: Editorial Vicens Vives, 1994: on Peter III and his *Chronicle*.

2. The same can be done —as we had begun to argue in our PhD thesis *L'écriture de l'Histoire dans les Chroniques de Pierre Ier et de Pierre III*— with another great chronicler of the 14th century, Jean Froissart, who contributed to the evolution of writing in the chronicle genre. On his *Chronicles*, see Zink, Michel. *Froissart et le temps*. Paris: Presses Universitaires France, 1998: 1-223; Ainsworth, Peter F. *Jean Froissart and the fabric of history: truth, myth and fiction in the Chroniques*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990: 1-329.

3. On historiography, see Guenée, Bernard. *Histoire et culture historique dans l'Occident médiéval*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980.

1. The biblical image of a victor: Peter III as seen by himself

From the prologue of the *Chronicle* onwards, Peter III reveals his devoutness. All-powerful as he is, he shows himself to be a good Christian and submits himself to God. Hence the references, particularly to Genesis⁴. But above all, the sovereign fully identifies himself and his deeds with emblematic biblical characters, such as David (“E açò, si guardam los grans fets qui són estats en lo regne d’Aragó en temps nostre, com així com altre David”⁵) and Lot: “E així com altre Lot, contra lo qual cinc reis eren convenguts, e ell fon delliurat per Abraham e la sua substància, “sicut habetur Genesi, XIV^o cap^o”, així nós de la mà del rei de Castella”⁶. These two explicit comparisons are not insignificant: Lot, the only righteous man in a town of sinners, escapes the destruction brought down on Sodom, Gomorrah and their surroundings⁷, and David is the king chosen by God⁸, victor over the giant Goliath⁹, courageous, magnanimous and very pious. We can therefore see very clearly the advantage that Peter III draws from using these biblical images. The tone is determined from the outset.

Peter III then devotes several lines to the objective which he himself assigns to his *Chronicle*. This objective —and in this sense he follows in the footsteps of earlier chroniclers, whether connected to the Crown of Aragon or not— is that of setting himself up as a model king. In this way, the sovereign declares that he is not seeking to boast of his actions but to edify his readers, preferably royal, through his behaviour as a Christian king beyond reproach¹⁰.

4. “La raó de la veritat és com Déus és omnipotent, “unde Gen. XVII^o: Ego”, inquit, “Déus sum omnipotens”, e, per tal com ha infinit poder ha Ell creat lo món, “unde Genesis I^o: In principio creavit Deus coelum et terram”; e no solament nos ha creats, mas conservats, car si no era la conservació sua, tots tornariem en no ésser, com tot ço qui és creat ha dependència del Creador.” (The reason for truth is that God is omnipotent, and because his power is infinite he created the world, and not only did He create it, but He also maintains it because were it not for his care we would cease to exist, because all creation depends on the Creator) CPC: 1003-1004 (prologue, paragraphs 2, 3, 4).

5. “And thus, if we follow the great events that have occurred in the kingdom of Aragon in our times, like another David” CPC: 1003-1004 (prologue, paragraphs 2, 3, 4). Author’s emphasis.

6. “And like another Lot, against whom five kings allied, he was saved by Abraham and his substance, “sicut habetur Genesi, XIV^o cap^o”, as we were from the hands of the king of Castile.” CPC: 1003-1004 (prologue, paragraphs 2, 3, 4). Author’s emphasis.

7. Genesis, 19, 1-29.

8. First Book of Samuel, 16, 11-13.

9. First Book of Samuel, 17, 40-54. The implicit allusion to Goliath - Peter I of Castile seems clear.

10. “Nós, doncs, rei, per la sua gran e llarga pietat, regnant en lo regne d’Aragó, qui havem reebudes diverses gràcies, e multiplicades en nostra vida, de la bondat infinita del nostre Creador, havem pensat e proposat que aquelles hajam o dejam en escrit posar e fer-ne llibre, no pas a jactància nostra ne llaor, mas per tal que els reis, succeïdors nostres, lligent en lo dit llibre, oint que diverses perills e multiplicades guerres de poderosos enemics nostres, per ferma esperança e fe, ab paciència ensems, que havem haüda en la gran bondat e misericòrdia del nostre Creador, havem passats e som-ne estats delliurats ab gran honor e victòria, prenguen eiximpli, que, en llurs tribulacions, deuen esperar e confiar en lo llur Creador, de qui vénen tots béns, victòries e gràcies, e suportar e soferir les dites tribulacions ab gran paciència que fa, segons mossèn sent Jacme en la sua Canònica, la obra acabada e perfeta”, “We, the king, through God’s great and long piety ruling the kingdom of Aragon and have received various graces from God’s infinite goodness, multiplied various times throughout our lives, have thought and proposed that these have to and ought to be written and placed in a book, not as a boast nor praise but rather so that our future kings, reading in

Consequently, his past actions—which imply, without exception, being worthy of being remembered—are not meant to serve him, but are useful to other people, that is to say that they are intended to fulfil the role of royal models. That in itself is the definition of the medieval mirror¹¹.

To this description it is safe to add that Peter III, like a painter who is working on a self-portrait, seeks to examine himself, admiring the image he is painting of himself. On this canvas, the pen serves as a brush¹². It is even reasonable to ask whether, through writing, the author may not even be changing his identity, by a reverse process of *transfer*: by ridding himself of his physical identity, the sovereign acquires another identity of paper and ink. In fact, the chronicler goes beyond his human status to reach a literary dimension of his person, even a fictional one, despite the fact that, essentially, a historiographical story cannot be fictitious. Consequently, the writer traverses the page, which becomes, in the space of a few words, a distorting mirror. Peter III constructs his own character which is more than an *alter ego*: Peter III gives birth to Peter III.

The arrival of a fictional being at the heart of a historiographical story is not free from certain difficulty because, and this is where the ambiguity lies, such a story cannot be fiction. Nevertheless, at times we get the impression that Peter III does not write himself as he really was, or does not write what he really did, but rather as he *would have liked* to be or as he *wished* to be *represented*. We do not necessarily see political design here. It is obvious that representing himself as favourably as possible places the author in a more comfortable position. We here appreciate the effort made by the sovereign to recall certain passages of his life and mend his ways. This leads us to distinguish a dual writing process in Peter III which, to our eyes, is fundamental between writing and rewriting. Behind the writing of the *Chronicle* of Peter III, a veritable search for identity is hidden. To talk of an identity crisis would

the above book, listening to various dangers and many wars with powerful enemies of ours which have been overcome with great hope and faith and patience that we together have had in the great goodness and mercy of our Lord, take example in their tribulations to trust in our Creator from whom all the goods, victories and graces come, and bear and suffer these tribulations with great patience according to Saint James in his chronicle, the finished and perfect work." *CPC: 1005* (prologue, paragraph 5).

11. Le Goff, Jacques. "Roi". *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'Occident médiéval*, Jacques Le Goff, Jean-Claude Schmitt, eds. Paris: Fayard, 1999: 985-1004, especially page 991.

12. In a previous work, we have tried to analyse the relationship which the work maintains with the self-portrait. We made the connection with Albrecht Dürer's tableau, the first composition of this genre. The painter is shown at the age of 22. His face is serious and he is holding a thistle in his hand, which is an allusion to the crown of thorns carried by Christ during the Passion. There is an inscription on the tableau — "Things happen to me as it is written in heaven" — which recalls the self-portrait from 1500 where Dürer appeared in *Salvator Mundi*, as basking in the glow of God's glory.

In this tableau, which is the common point shared with Peter III's work, two *Is* are side by side. The first is included with the sole intention of drawing the viewer's eye towards the handsome man: the brush strokes are precise, and the colours are well chosen. The second is symbolic: our eye is quickly drawn to the thistle, and we have to interpret the painter's intention. There are therefore two Dürers: the real and the ideal. These are also the two dimensions of Peter III. See Alchalabi, Frédéric. "La plume et le pinceau: la technique de l'autportrait dans la *Chronique* de Pierre III (représentation et mise en scène)", *Colloque Ecrire sur soi en Catalogne au Moyen Age, organisé le 14 décembre 2000 au Centre d'Etudes Catalanes à Paris*, Christian Camps, ed. Montpellier: R.E.C., Université de Montpellier III, in forthcoming.

perhaps be a little exaggerated: the sovereign is not looking for himself, he does not need to find himself, rather he tries to capture his image as best as he can in order to convey it to the reader. Peter III therefore starts to look into himself, since for him, writing is the ideal means of achieving this introspection.

However, this self re-examination soon reveals its limitations. Indeed, if the author is honest with himself, this process of atonement by words implies painting an objective portrait of his person. And yet, Peter III is again satisfied with bringing to light only the most flattering aspects of his personality. The reason for this inner search is easily understood: Peter III's objective is not to achieve his own image, but that of a king occupied with the affairs of his kingdom. Consequently, it could be argued that the writing process of the *Chronicle* of Peter III corresponds to that of guided introspection: the king is not seeking his true self, but rather his image. This is what we are now going to demonstrate.

There are two formulae that best characterise a Christian king: *rex imago dei* and *Christus rex*. The king is the image of God on Earth and has a special relationship with Christ¹³. We have to appreciate the extent to which these traits are found in Peter III and, in this sense, confirm, in their own way, the legitimacy of the king.

The medieval king developed a special relationship with Christ. This means that the sovereign shared or, more precisely, dreamed of sharing and wished to cultivate, the principal Christ-like virtues. The intentions and ambitions of the kings are very clear: this enabled them to award themselves a messianic role. Peter III was no exception and, whilst he wrote, did not prevent himself from referring, implicitly, to several passages from the New Testament. Thus, his entrance into Lleida evokes that of Christ into Jerusalem¹⁴: Christ, seated on a donkey, enters the town and receives a triumphant welcome from the townspeople. This episode is found again, in a different form, in the *Chronicle* of Peter III, to be precise in Chapter II, where the sovereign relates his own entrance into the town of Lleida, the first place where he legitimises himself after having been crowned king. He writes: «*e com entram en la*

13. Le Goff, Jacques. "Roi"...: 986.

14. "E nós depuis, a cap d'alguns dies, partim de la dita ciutat de Saragossa, e venguem-nos-en a Lleida, e com entram en la dita ciutat de Lleida, fom aquí reebuts ab gran alegria e gran festa, e gran honor qui ens hi fo feta per tots aquells qui eren en la dita ciutat." ("and we, after several days, left the city of Saragossa and went to Lleida, and when we entered the city of Lleida, we were received with great happiness and celebrations and great honours from everybody in the city"), *CPC*: 1028 (chapter II, paragraph 23); The Gospel according to Saint Luke reveals, "After he had said this (the parable of the mines), he proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem. As he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying, "Go into the village opposite you and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. And if anyone should ask you, "Why are you untying it?" you will answer, "The Master has need of it". So those who had been sent went off and found everything just as he had told them. And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying this colt?" They answered, "The Master has need of it." / So they brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks over the colt, and helped Jesus to mount. As he rode along, people were spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was approaching the downward slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the miracles they had seen. They proclaimed: / "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! / Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!", The Gospel according to Saint Luke, 19, 28-38.



dita ciutat de Lleida, fom aquí reebuts ab gran alegria e gran festa, e gran honor qui ens hi fo feta per tots aquells qui eren en la dita ciutat" (...and when we entered the city of Lleida, we were received with great happiness and celebrations and great honour from everybody in the city). A parallel may therefore be drawn between the figure of Christ the King and that of Peter III. The enthusiasm of the crowd does not disappoint the reader: the sovereign is, in his turn, welcomed as the Messiah. The comparison, flattering though it may be, successfully conveys Peter III's ambition.

Peter III granted himself a second image of Christ, namely that of Christ the miracle worker. Because of this, the king wishes to be seen as a healer king, even, if we take the title of the famous study by Marc Bloch, a *thaumaturgical* king¹⁵. The Gospels relate the several healings performed by Christ: that of Simon's mother-in-law¹⁶, that of a leper and a paralytic¹⁷, the healing of a centurion's servant¹⁸ and, of course, the resurrection of Lazarus¹⁹. Peter III himself, although he is not blessed with the same ability to heal, tries to promote this image of the healing king. Thus, finding himself in Majorca, he declares what some consider a declaration of principles: "*no érem venguts per destrouir ne per fer-los messionejar, mas així com lo metge qui sana e guareix les nafres dels malalts nafrats e consumats*"²⁰: he is there to do good, to ease the pain of the people. The comparison with the doctor —*lo metge*— healer par excellence, is therefore explicit. Once again, this quote calls to mind what can be read in the Gospels. Even if the *Chronicle* of Peter III is not a collection of miracles, over which, moreover, the author does not claim paternity, this idea of the king's role is intended to bring Christ's values closer to himself.

2. The speech about the vanquished

A victor's speech must be constructed with great care. It is for this reason that the skilful Peter III highlights the moments that seem to him to be crucial, by constructing particular phrases: the syntax therefore varies according to the author's intention. Like his contemporaries, Peter III uses polysyndetons²¹, which illustrate

15. Bloch, Marc. *Les rois thaumaturges. Etude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1983. We can also refer to Ullmann, Walter. *Medieval Political Thought*. Harmondsworth-New York-Markham: Penguin Books, 1979; Kantorowicz, Ernst. *Les deux corps du roi*. Paris: Gallimard, 1989.

16. Luke, 3, 38-39.

17. Luke, 5, 12-26.

18. Luke, 7, 1-10.

19. John, 11, 1-44.

20. "But came not to destroy, nor to oblige them to argue, but rather, like the doctor who cures and heals the wounds of the injured and the sick." *CPC*: 1055 (chapter III, paragraph 47). Author's emphasis.

21. Georges Molinié defines the polysyndeton as follows: "The polysyndeton is a constructive micro-structural device. It consists of the frequent and systematic use of linking structures, explicitly marked, between the groups, particularly in those concerning coordination." Molinié, Georges. «Polysyndète». *Dictionnaire de rhétorique*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1992: 275.

the numerous repetitions of *e* within his *Chronicle*²². But this use goes beyond simple convention, as we will recall.

Peter III combines polysyndetons with binary syntactic constructions: the originality of this combination lies in the fact that it is associated with the description of a precise time, the writing becoming, from then on, predetermined. Thus, Peter III, for example, wanting to endow his *Chronicle* with a touch of solemnity, writes: "*Diem primerament que la divinal excel·lència per sa suficiència fa e manté tot creat. (...) La segona és: Gran és, doncs, congruència que a l'alta potència sia atribuït e dat.*"²³ God here is the central axis of the author's argument and, thereby, deserves special treatment since two verbs then two past participles are used side by side: it insists on the greatness of the Creator and, simultaneously, fully submits to Him.

Peter III also uses binary syntagms to describe a festive atmosphere, particularly his own coronation: "*E com fom intrats dins l'Aljaferia, qui era encortinada e empaliada d'alt e de baix de molts rics draps d'aur e de seda (...), e les taules foren aparellades e meses, posam-nos a menjar...*"²⁴. Here we notice the extent to which everything works in pairs: the fabrics, the description of the building and the tables evoke the wealth of the celebrations that followed the coronation of the king, the greatest event of his life. It is thus that the Catalan sovereign seeks to share the joy of this great celebration.

Similarly, it is thanks to this recording process that Peter III can emphasise the injustices of which he believes himself guilty and which lay the motivation behind his retaliation. In this way, the king of Majorca, James, one of his great rivals, seems to persist to annoy him and thereby demonstrates his malicious intent: "*En aquest terç capítol és declarat en qual manera lo rei de Mallorques, qui era vassall e hom nostre lige, tractà e s'esforçà en denegar la senyoria alodial e la feultat de què ens era tengut...*"²⁵ In this example, the use of the two verbs *tractar* and *esforçar-se* is significant: for Peter III, it is a question of showing the king of Majorca's dedication in trying to harm him. He defends himself moreover with a double binary syntactic construction:

22. There are obviously many examples. However, to quote Peter III: "*E puis començaren a segar la torre. E havia-hi vint-e-nou hòmens, los demés genovesos. E foren al combatre nafrats en les mans e en la cara, e veeren-se perduts, e feren senyal de retre. E puis encara foren combatuts una peça.*" (And thus, they began to assault the tower. And there were twenty-nine men, mainly Genoese. And in the fight, they were wounded in the hands and the face, and seeing themselves lost, they made signals to surrender. And they still fought in the same place) CPC: 1074 (chapter III, paragraph 139). Author's emphasis.

23. "Let us state first that God's divine excellence through his sufficiency makes and maintains all creation. (...) The second is, it is thus of great congruence that it is attributed and given to his great power.) CPC: 1003-1004 (prologue, paragraphs 2 and 3). Author's emphasis.

24. "And as we entered the Aljaferia, which was curtained and draped from top to bottom with very rich golden and silk drapes (...), and the tables were set and laden, we began to eat..." CPC: 1026 (chapter II, paragraph 14). Author's emphasis. Later on, in order to describe the joy of the inhabitants of Lleida, during his entrance into their town, the author writes these few lines: "(...) fom aquí reebuts ab gran alegria e gran festa..." CPC: 1028 (chapter II, paragraph 23). The stress is ours. In the latter example, the repetition of the adjective *gran*, added to the binary syntactic construction, still further emphasises their happiness.

25. This third chapter, describes the way the king of Majorca, who was our vassal and liege, forced himself to deny the allodial seigniorial right and the loyalty that he owed us ... CPC: 1037 (chapter III, paragraph 1). Author's emphasis.



*"(...) nós, ab l'ajuda de nostre senyor Déus, qui és endreçador de tots aquells qui amen justícia e veritat e en Ell han ferma esperança, destruïm e anullam en tot, e corregim e castigam, per via ordinària e justa, molts d'aquells qui les havien començades e tort hi tenien..."*²⁶

After having, in his own time, settled this disagreement by force, Peter III now answers the king of Majorca in words and, to a simple binary syntactic construction he retorts with a double binary syntactic construction, which, rhetorically, represents, to his eyes, a weighty argument.

In a similar way, the Catalan sovereign sets out to blacken the image of Peter I of Castile:

*En aquest sisè capítol és contengut e declarat lo fet de la guerra, la qual lo rei de Castella iniquament e maliciosa s'esforçà de fer contra nós (...). Lo dit rei, mogut de gran malícia e supèrbia, ab totes les sues gentes, venc en les partides de Tarassona en lo mes d'abril següent e assejà la ciutat de Tarassona.*²⁷

With this binary syntactic construction, Peter III denounces even more vigorously the unfair attack of which he is the target, pointing out the hypocrisy and the pride of his Castilian counterpart. It is therefore by a new accumulative effect due to the same form of binary syntactic construction that the author, in his consideration, can criticise the attitude of Peter I.

In addition to this syntactical aid, Peter III uses laughter as a rhetoric tool. It is by this means that he also imposes his point of view. It is worth highlighting right away that laughter is lexically present in the *Chronicle* of Peter III. After taking over the kingdom of Majorca in order to punish James, the king includes this title amongst those that he had obtained previously. However, the subjects of the kingdom of Majorca are touched to appear after those of the kingdom of Valencia, to which Peter III, amused, retorts that this will perhaps improve the kingdom's fate, since, positioned in second place, on account of the past, luck had not smiled upon it:

*E puis diguem-los, rient, que en aquell lloc segon del títol no havia haïda ventura Mallorca de romanir a la Corona d'Aragó, ans era estada donada e retuda dues vegades, e així ara volíem assajar si melloraria la ventura en lo tercer lloc del títol. E ells així mateix rigueren-se'n, e no ens parlaren pus enant*²⁸.

26. (...) we, with the help of our lord God, who guides all those who love justice and truth and who have firm faith in Him, destroy and annul in all, and correct and punish, by the ordinary and just way, many of those who have begun to damage us ... CPC: 1091 (chapter IV, paragraph 1). Author's emphasis.

27. "In this sixth chapter there is contained and declared the event of the war, which the king of Castile wickedly and maliciously launched against us (...). The said king, moved by great malice and arrogance, with all his people, came to the area of Tarassona in the following month of April and besieged the city of Tarassona". CPC: 1123-1131 (chapter VI, paragraphs 1 and 10). Author's emphasis.

28. "And so we said, laughing, that in that second place in the title Majorca had not had the luck to remain in the Crown of Aragon, but rather that it was given and offered twice, and thus now we wished to see if our luck would improve in the third place of the title. And there they laughed about it, and did not talk to us until later". CPC: 1053 (chapter III, paragraph 36). Author's emphasis.

The anecdote greatly amuses the king, who laughs, according to his own words (*E puis diguem-los, rient*), at his own witty remark. He even goes as far as explaining it to the reader — (...) *que en aquell lloc segon del títol no havia haüda ventura Mallorques de romanir a la Corona d'Aragó, ans era estada donada e retuda dues vegades, e així ara volíem assajar si melloraria la ventura en lo tercer lloc del títol*— in order to make the reader share with him and thereby prolong the pleasure of a witticism of which he is evidently proud. This anecdote is revealing for two reasons. On the one hand, this line of thought is not pointless as it enables the sovereign to demonstrate that he is all-powerful: he has just defeated King James of Majorca and therefore seized his title —moreover, shortly before, he stresses the fact that the latter will no longer be called King, which is humiliating to say the least: *E d'aquí avant lo rei qui fo de Mallorques no fo apellat ne intitulat rei* (And from hereon he who was king of Majorca will no longer be called or titled king)— and he takes possession of his lands. Besides, it is not certain that the subjects of the kingdom of Majorca, present at this event, are laughing sincerely at the words of Peter III: on the contrary, their laughter must surely be forced. On the other hand, the trait of humour is turned into a rhetorical method because it enables the author to conclude the subject in apparent good humour but not without firmness.

Peter III's humour is often tainted with cruelty and mockery because, according to the author, it is another method of affirming his legitimacy and his power, the victor crushing the vanquished and pushing him into a corner. The narrator therefore tries to ridicule the person who is undergoing the critical examination of this pen, as he does, on another occasion, with James of Majorca, the pathetic defeated, who, before leaving his ancient lands, cries, asks for food which is refused him, tries to kill himself and is forced to beg the help of the Count of Foix:

E en Jacme de Mallorques tornava de Vilafranca de Conflent, e, com fo en la plaça de Puigcerdà, en Llivia, oí lo repicar e lo tabustol, e pres-li mal senyal, e aturà's una peça. E après venc avant vers la vila, e com fo a un git de ballesta, los del mur començaren a tirar, cridants altes veus —Aragó !—. E ell encara volc forçar d'acostar-se, e los del mur trameteren-li a dir, per frare Ramon de Canet, preicador, que es llunyàs e se'n anàs, e ell encara repremia, dient moltes paraules. Finalment, lo preicador hi tornà bé tres vegades, e dix-li que, si no se n'anava, que ell era mort ab tots quants hi eren ab ell. E, llavors, ell començà de plorar e fer gran dol, e dix que ell e la companya eren dejuns e havien passat lo port. E demanà que li fos donada la vianda que li havien aparellada en sa posada, e fon-li respost que no n'hauria gens. E, puis pregà e suplicà que li fossen donades ses robes e son saumatge. E fo-li respost que no se'n menaria res sens llicència del senyor rei d'Aragó. Ab tant ell e los altres seus se'n partiren d'aquí dolents e ab gran tristor e ab malediccions que es gitaven, e anaren-se'n. E, aquell dia mateix, pasaren lo port de Primorant dejuns, e cuidaren tots morir de fred e de mal, e cuidaren ésser contrets, majorment los hòmens delicats. Així que oim dir que En Jacme de Mallorques se baté molt la cara e lo cap de dol, e es volia ferir en si mateix ab brotxa e d'altres armes, mas que les li tolíen. Puis fo a Acs, e aquí manllevaren què despendre, que no havien vestidures. E, puis, anaren a Foix e el comte donà 'ls diners e els acolli bé. E feren la via de Montpesller continuament.²⁹

29. "And James of Majorca was returning to Vilafranca de Conflent, and, when he was in the place of Puigcerdà, in Llivia, he heard a ringing and clanging, and took it as a bad sign, and stopped there. And

Coming from Peter III's pen, the description of this crushing defeat is in no way pathetic. On the contrary, the author takes pleasure describing, voraciously, the misfortune that strikes his adversary: his requests for help, which are always refused:

E demanà que li fos donada la vianda que li havien aparellada en sa posada, e fon-li respost que no n'hauria gens. E, puis pregà e suplicà que li fossen donades ses robes e son saumatge. E fo-li respost que no se'n menaria res sens llicència del senyor rei d'Aragó. Ab tant ell e los altres seus se'n partiren d'aquí dolents e ab gran tristor e ab malediccions que es gitaven, e anaren-se'n

And his cries are just an occasion to ridicule him because his reaction is not compatible with that of a king. Stripped of his lands, James therefore submits to the worst humiliation possible, a progressive physical deterioration that culminates in a suicide attempt. Not without a certain cynicism, the author finds a valuable advantage in this mockery as he makes it a new demonstration of his power, insofar as he decides, at leisure, to be king.

Just as in this example, the humour such as it is used in the *Chronicle* of Peter III is savage and cruel but never pointless, for it responds to a rhetorical necessity. This is how the sovereign affirms his authority to the detriment of those who practice this kind of humour, who become the butt of the jokes.

Finally, in Peter III's *Chronicle*, it is worthwhile considering the place of the vanquished's body because the body helps to establish a power relationship between the different players. The most telling example is supplied by the interview granted by the sovereign of the Crown of Aragon to James of Majorca. This takes place near Elne, at the encampment of the king who has defeated him:

Dijous, a quinze de juliol, estant nós en les tendes prop d'Euna, per lo matí, don Pedro d'Eixèrica tornà a En Jacme de Mallorques, per amenar-lo'ns. E nós esperam la venguda

later he came towards the town, and when he was a crossbow shot away, the ones on the wall began to shoot, and began shouting "Aragó!" And he still wanted to try to get closer, and those on the wall sent the message, through friar Ramon de Canet, a preacher, to him to go away and he left, and he returned again, saying many words. Finally, the preacher went back three times, and told him that if he did not leave, he would be killed with all those who were with him. And, then, he began to cry and to be sorrowful, and said that he and the company were hungry and had crossed the pass. And he asked to be given the food that had been laid out in his place, and he was told that there would be none. And, then he begged and prayed to be given his clothing and draught animals. And he was told that he would not take anything without the permission of his highness the king of Aragon. And both he and his people left here with great sorrow and deep sadness and with curses that they threw, and they left. And, that same day, they crossed the Primorent (Puymorens) pass hungry, and trying not to succumb to the cold and illness, and looked after the sick, mainly the weaker men. Thus, we heard it said that James of Majorca beat his face and head with sorrow, and wanted to hurt himself with a lance and other arms, even though they were taken from him. Then they reached Acs (Aix-les-bains), and here they were got rid off, being told there were no clothes. And then they went to Foix and the count gave them money and received them well. And they continued on their way to Montpesller (Montpellier)". *CPC*: 1087-1088 (chapter III, paragraph 195).

del dit En Jacme de Mallorques, e no venc. Puis oïm missa e esperam-lo una peça, e encara no venc. Puis asseguem-nos a taula a dinar, car diguem que, si venia, bé ens en llevariem. Finalment, tro après dormir de sesta, En Jacme de Mallorques no venc. E llavors nós estiguem asseguts en un banc, al cap del nostre llit, en la tenda, ab l'infant En Jacme e ab tots los barons e cavallers e molta altra gent, que no n'hi podien més cabre. E En Jacme de Mallorques venc tot armat, salvant lo cap. E, com nos fo après, nós nos llevam de peus, e ell, tantost, al venir, que ens fo prés, ficà lo genoll en terra, e nós prenguem-lo per la mà per llevar-lo. E ell, sens voluntat nostra, quaix forçant, besà'ns la mà; e nós aixecam-lo alt e besam-lo en la boca. E fet açò, ell nos dix estes paraules en suma... (...) E, mantinent, dites aquestes paraules, ell se n'anà ensems ab don Pedro d'Eixèrca a Euna, e nós romanguèrem així com nós érem en la tenda ab l'infant En Jacme e los barons, cavallers e altres gentes.³⁰

Three moments of variable length make up this passage and each of them is proof of a real gestural richness. First, the king awaits the arrival of his recently defeated adversary alone in his tent. He cannot hide his desire to see him kneel before him and ask his forgiveness for the crime that he has just committed towards his lord. Peter III loses patience and ardently wishes to humiliate, once again, the unsubdued subject. He literally paces up and down, no longer knowing how to temper his impatience: he waits for him in vain the first time, then he attends Mass. His host has still not arrived. He therefore eats lunch sitting down, ready to get up to welcome the deposed king, he sleeps, wakes up, then sits on a bench when James finally arrives³¹. During this first stage, Peter III tries to relieve his boredom with harmless, everyday activities. Nevertheless, his movements—getting up, sitting down, going to sleep, carrying food to his mouth—, barely manages to cool his ardour: only the taste of victory and of humiliation will be able to satisfy him.

30. "Thursday, the fifteenth of July, while we were in the tents near Euna (Elne), in the morning, sir Peter of Eixèrca went to James of Majorca, to take him with us. And we waited for the arrival of said James of Majorca, and he did not come. So we said mass and waited for him there, and still he did not come. So we sat down around the table to eat, as we said that, if he came, we would take him. Finally, after taking our siesta, James of Majorca still had not come. And we sat on a bench, beside our bed, in the tent, with Prince James and with all the barons and knights and many other people, so that there was no room for any more. And James of Majorca came fully armoured, except for his head. And, when he was there, we stood up, and he, immediately upon arriving, was taken and knelt on the ground, and we took him by the hands to take him away. And he, without us wanting to, almost forcing us, kissed our hands; and we raised him up and kissed him on the mouth. And that done, he said these words to us together... (...) And, meanwhile, having said these words, he went with Peter of Eixèrca to Euna, and we remained there as we were in the tent with Prince James and the barons, knights and other people." CPC: 1079 (chapter III, paragraph 163).

31. "E nós esperam la venguda del dit En Jacme de Mallorques, e no venc. Puis oïm missa e esperam-lo una peça, e encara no venc. Puis asseguem-nos a taula a dinar, car diguem que, si venia, bé ens en llevariem. Finalment, tro après dormir de sesta, En Jacme de Mallorques no venc. E llavors nós estiguem asseguts en un banc, al cap del nostre llit, en la tenda, ab l'infant En Jacme e ab tots los barons e cavallers e molta altra gent, que no n'hi podien més cabre." ("And we waited for the arrival of the said James of Majorca, and he did not come. So we said mass and waited for him there, and still he did not come. So we sat down around the table to eat, as we said that, if he came, we would take him. Finally, after taking our siesta, James of Majorca still had not come. And we sat on a bench, beside our bed, in the tent, with Prince James and with all the barons and knights and many other people, so that there was no room for any more") CPC: 1079 (chapter III, paragraph 163).

The long-awaited presence of his adversary finally enables him to obtain what he desires. James of Majorca arrives armed, bareheaded. As the circumstances require, Peter III gets up: *E, com nos fo après, nós nos llevam de peus*. The wording is quite ambiguous so that we take notice of it because we should not only see politeness in it. Indeed, it is more a question of refusing to feel belittled by his enemy, the latter standing up and himself sitting down. This aspect is confirmed by what follows. The two men engage in a curious dance: the king of Aragon is standing and James of Majorca, under the guise of respect and submission, kneels down; Peter III takes him by the hand and raises him up. Here, the Catalan sovereign needs to feel physically superior to his interlocutor. This ritual allows him to do so but one cannot help but make a connection with the ceremony that was usually applied to the king and that earned him his nickname. Then, an unexpected event takes place: James kisses Peter III's hand. The circumstances surrounding this gesture deserve our attention. Indeed, the Catalan king pulls back his hand but, defeated by the grip of his adversary, he does not manage to free himself: *E ell, sens voluntat nostra, quaix forçant, besà'ns la mà*³². The last part of the utterance is highly meaningful: without being able to get a clear description here of this subject —perhaps the author does not wish to reveal what could be perceived as a weakness—, we imagine that Peter III tried to free himself of this unwanted grip. Forced to accept this mark of respect, he raises his host to his feet and embraces him, in accordance with convention. There is therefore, in this passage, a succession of gestures which inform us of the attitudes and the intentions of the characters. Peter III confirms his wish to show himself as physically superior to his enemy, that is to say by using his body. As for James of Majorca, on the contrary, he seeks the clemency of the king and this may explain his desire not to let go of his hand and, conversely, the wish of Peter III to take his hand away.

Finally, the third stage, which is very short, regards the separation of the two kings. Stripped of his lands, James goes to Elne and Peter III, the victor, remains in his encampment. The defeat and the victory are expressed in these two attitudes: the first because the body rises and moves away and the second because the body stays, having established its dominant position. For this reason, the body language is more explicit than that of words, the gestures say more than the words. There is therefore an inexpressible language for the victor and it is the body that undertakes to express it.

32. Author's emphasis.

3. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Peter III's speech is the speech of a victor. On the one hand, he punctuates his work with biblical references. He is thereby, in turn, David, Lot and even Jesus Christ. The image presented to us is that of a perfect sovereign. Obviously, far from depicting him, these icons idealise him and he therefore becomes a forceful individual, that is to say that he reveals an image to us that is not real but ideal, even, to a certain extent, a fantasy. Peter III's speech thus becomes tense because what is at stake for the sovereign is considerable, as he must leave an enduring image to posterity. On the other hand, the author, a skilled man of letters (let us not forget the importance which literacy held for kings because *rex illiteratus quasi asinus coronatus*) knows how to compose his speeches in such a way as to depict himself as all-powerful. He therefore completes his defeat on paper after having overwhelmed his enemies on the battlefield. Two methods are offered to him, namely the use of appropriate syntax —serving, in particular, as binary syntactical constructions— and the use of other, more original means, such as laughter or affirmation through the body. Consequently, the place of others (whether conquered or submissive) is negligible. That is certainly the price to pay for these secondary figures, who play a thankless role, banished to the shadows of history, unable to eclipse Peter III, and who are only useful because they serve the king and improve his image.

