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A STUDY OF
BLANCANDIN ET L'ORGUEILLEUSE D'AMOUR,
A THIRTEENTH-CENTURY
ROMAN D' AVENTURE

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ABSTRACT

The present study of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour, an anonymous verse romance of the early thirteenth century, considers the two principal themes of love and chivalry the work has in common with many earlier romances. A close examination of Blancandin's first adventure illustrates the preparation of the hero for his career as a knight through his introduction to the world of chivalry and to love. The character and role of the hero, Blancandin, are examined in the light of three assessments which present him as a wholly conventional hero, undistinguished from those of contemporary romances. The heroine, Orgueilleuse d'amour, is studied through a detailed analysis of the portrait of her provided by the knight at the ford. The theme of love throughout the romance is considered with particular reference to the love of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse. Several forms of armed combat, the essential feature of the world of chivalry, are examined and the importance of combat in the formation of Blancandin's character and to the romance as a whole is evaluated. The detailed description of places and objects forms an integral part of the romance as well as serving to illustrate aspects of the principal themes. The story of Blancandin's adventures is a coherent and unified one, and examination of some aspects of the romance's structure and the poet's narrative technique helps to show how coherence and unity have been achieved. Reference is made in the course of this study to the works of Chretien de Troyes, and in particular the romance Yvain (le chevalier au lion), in order to illustrate the ways in which the poet of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour follows the conventions of twelfth-century romance as they were exhibited in Chretien's romances. An attempt is made to measure the extent to which Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour conforms to the conventions of medieval romance, and to define and situate it more precisely within the romance genre.

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INTRODUCTION

Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is an anonymous verse romance of the early thirteenth century. The romance exists also in two prose versions which seem to derive from a common original. The edition of the text used throughout this study is the critical edition of Franklin P. Sweetser, based on the five manuscripts in verse.¹ Details of the five verse manuscripts are contained in the Introduction to Sweetser's edition, pp. 6-9, where they are identified as follows:

- Manuscript A, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français 19152, 4830 lines
- Manuscript B, Turin, Bibliothèque de l'Université de Turin, L.V. 44, 6200 lines
- Manuscript C, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français 375, 6136 lines
- Manuscript F, Paris, Archives nationales A B XIX 1734, dossier Nièvre, a fragment of 264 lines
- Manuscript P, Philadelphie, Bibliothèque de l'Université de Pensylvanie, French Ms. 22, 5548 lines.

Manuscript C was edited by Henri Michelant in 1867, and the fragment, Manuscript F, was published by Paul Meyer in 1889.

The text of Sweetser's critical edition is established as follows: up to l. 4816 the text of MS. A is given with variants from MSS. C and P, with passages supplied from MS. P where gaps or ambiguities occur in MS. A. From l. 4817, the texts of both MSS. C and P are given to the end of the romance. The end of MS. A which differs from that of MSS. C and P in that it omits the episodes of Sadoine's capture by Alimodés, and subsequent rescue by Blancandin, and the treachery of Subien, comprises one hundred and seven lines and is contained in Appendix I. As MS. P is incomplete, from l. 4817 the text of MS. C only will be considered for the purposes of the present study.

Questions of the date of composition of the romance,

its author, and the works which may have influenced aspects of the romance such as its beginning in the style of a 'roman éducatif' and the creation of characters, are examined in Chapter IV of Sweetser's Introduction. It is concluded that Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is an anonymous work, composed during the first third of the thirteenth century.

In Chapter V of his Introduction, Sweetser gives a résumé of the romance by episodes. This résumé, which takes into account the variations of all five verse manuscripts, divides the romance into twenty-one episodes. The numbers and titles of these divisions have been adopted in the present study and have been referred to as 'sections' for the sake of clarity, e.g. Section 3, "Blancandin's first adventure".

The form of the romance follows the conventions of medieval romance developed during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. The emergence of the romance genre from about 1150 reflected the tastes of an aristocratic public centred on courtly life. The contact with the luxury and civilisation of courts in the East, and with the more refined tastes of the nobility of southern France, occasioned by the Crusades, together with the increased feminine influence on courtly life, helped to develop new ideals of civilised behaviour, and of love. The courtly romance represented the combination of these new ideals and the established taste for feats of arms and heroic conduct which formed the basis of the earlier chansons de geste. The romance developed in line with the tastes of a particular section of society, the aristocratic class, a factor which profoundly influenced the conventions which became associated with the genre. The heroes and heroines of romance are drawn from the ranks of the nobility; the stories most frequently follow the fortunes of militant knights who seek opportunities to prove their worth and to gain honour and fame; the analysis of love is characterised by

exploration of subtle nuances of feelings; and above all, the combination of the knight's valour and the love of a noble lady expresses in the form of romance the refined notions of chivalry aspired to by the contemporary feudal nobility. The romance also reflected a change of perspective concerning man's place in society: whereas the heroes of the chansons de geste displayed their prowess in collective action for their king and country, the heroes of romance are individuals many of whom undertake a quest for some kind of personal fulfilment.

Writers of romance adopted a narrative style of composition similar to that of the chansons de geste, and the length of a romance became established at between five thousand and seven thousand lines providing scope for the medieval writer's love of amplification. However, the requirements of the more refined and idealistic content of the romance led to changes in the style of narration and the versification. Romance writers replaced the decasyllabic *laisses* of the chansons de geste with octosyllabic couplets, a form of versification which frequently gave rise to banal rhymes but which, nevertheless, was well suited to the measured refined tone of narration and the liveliness of dialogue in the romance. The presentation of characters in romance largely followed epic traditions based on early oral literary forms - thus detailed description of physical appearance, dress (particularly the knight's armour and weapons), and deeds of valour, play a large part in characterisation. The portrayal of inner feelings, particularly in connection with love or with conflict which may arise from the opposing claims of love and military reputation, often expressed in dialogue or monologue form, is perhaps the most significant innovative feature of the romance. Conventions, of description of characters and of places and objects, and of the analysis of emotions, developed during the twelfth century, some

to the point of being stylised, and the individual poet's ability to utilise and adapt such conventions to create works of originality and freshness became a measure of his skill.

The romance genre includes several types of romance, the principal three being the romans antiques which drew inspiration from Classical literature, the romans arthuriens such as the romances of Chrétien de Troyes which drew on the matière de Bretagne, and the romans d'aventure, a more loosely defined group which includes many romances, particularly of the early thirteenth century, which drew inspiration from neither Classical nor breton sources, but told stories of chivalrous adventure or series of adventures.

Our edition of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is subtitled 'Roman d'aventures du XIII^e siècle'. It has thus been assigned by its editor to the group of romances designated romans d'aventure. It is written in octosyllabic couplets, it is 6521 lines in length, and will be seen to follow to a large extent the conventions of romance developed during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries.

In the course of this study, reference will be made to the works of Chrétien de Troyes, particularly in order to illustrate the ways in which the poet of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour follows the conventions of twelfth-century romance as they were exhibited in Chrétien's romances. In particular, Wendelin Foerster's critical edition of Yvain (le chevalier au lion) introduced by T.B. W. Reid² will be used for comparative purposes, where applicable, in order to clarify points.

Reference will also be made to some of the judgements on Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour contained in Marie-José Southworth's Étude comparée de quatre romans médiévaux³, a comparative study of the structure of four romances - Jaufre, Fergus, Durmart, Blancandin - all composed between 1190 and 1240.

The present study will first consider (Chapter 1) the two principal themes of love and chivalry which Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour has in common with many earlier romances. In Chapter 2, a close examination of Blancandin's first adventure illustrates the preparation of the hero for his career as a knight through his introduction to the world of chivalry and to love. The character and role of the hero, Blancandin, are examined in Chapter 3 in the light of three assessments which present him as a wholly conventional hero, undistinguished from those of contemporary romances. The heroine, Orgueilleuse d'amour, is studied in Chapter 4 through a detailed analysis of the portrait of her provided by the knight at the ford. In Chapter 5, the theme of love throughout the romance is considered with particular reference to the love of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse. In Chapter 6, several forms of armed combat, the essential feature of the world of chivalry, are examined and the importance of combat in the formation of Blancandin's character and to the romance as a whole is evaluated. The detailed description of places and objects forms an integral part of the romance as well as serving to illustrate aspects of the principal themes and is considered in Chapter 7. The story of Blancandin's adventures is a coherent and unified one, and in Chapter 8 examination of some aspects of the romance's structure and the poet's narrative technique will help to show how coherence and unity have been achieved.

Through the study of these important aspects of the work, an attempt will be made to measure the extent to which Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour conforms to the conventions of medieval romance, and to define and situate it more precisely within the romance genre.

Notes:

1. Librairie Droz/Librairie Minard, Genève/Paris, 1964.
2. Manchester University Press, 1942.
3. Librairie A.G. Nizet, Paris, 1973.

Chapter 1

THEMES - LOVE AND CHIVALRY

Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour, in common with earlier courtly romances, has as its two principal themes love and chivalry. By the early thirteenth century the linking of these two themes had become an established literary practice:

A l'idéal célébré dans les chansons de geste, au combat pour la France, la chrétienté, le roi, le lignage, les principes féodaux, se substitue peu à peu une 'vita nuova' où la prouesse compose avec des mérites mondains, où le devoir épique et collectif cède la place à des mobiles individuels. L'étymologie de courtois et de courtoisie éclaire la formation et le sens de l'idéal nouveau. Ces termes dérivent en effet de cour, mot qui s'écrivait et se prononçait en ancien français avec un t final (latin populaire cortis, curtis, latin classique cohors, -ortis). De toute évidence la courtoisie se trouve donc en rapport avec une vie de cour. 'Civilité relevée d'élégance ou de générosité', selon la définition de Littré, elle implique un raffinement des mœurs, luxe, loisirs, politesse, belles manières, respect des bienséances, soins empressés auprès des dames qui dans les cours donnent le ton des relations sociales. Mais la courtoisie du moyen âge est beaucoup plus qu'un code de politesse et de galanterie. Elle englobe aussi un art d'aimer. Elle s'approfondit et se développe en une psychologie et une morale de l'amour. C'est par ce trait essentiel que la littérature courtoise - chanson lyrique et roman - s'oppose à la chanson de geste qui ne s'attarde pas aux souffrances et aux joies des amants.¹

Love is one of the principal themes of all courtly literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and combines with the themes of chivalry and adventure to create the special character of courtly romance.

The love theme is expressed by means of a set of commonly-used motifs. In the courtly romances of Chrétien de Troyes these conventional motifs appear in a fully developed form, and the poet's treatment of love in Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse

d'amour follows closely the traditions of preceding romances.

In courtly romance, love is the prerogative of the aristocratic class. Thus, Orgueilleuse's lady-companion quite properly urges her mistress to give her love to some knight or king of rank comparable with her own. Love is in itself ennobling - a knight gains in prestige and honour when he wears his lady's colours in battle and the service he owes her enhances his natural abilities and spurs him to ever greater achievement. Love between a knight and a lady in the romances involves a relationship of service, the knight's obligation of fidelity to his lady requiring loyalty in the nature of that owed by a vassal to his lord in feudal society. Orgueilleuse then is not only Blancandin's "amie", she is also his "dame", so that he is in a sense doubly bound to serve her interests.

Love is beset with obstacles, frustrations and difficulties. Interest is often first created, as in this romance and also in Chretien's Yvain, by making the lovers an unlikely pair. In the case of Yvain, the hero is struck with love for Laudine, the distraught widow of the man he has just killed. Love between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse at first appears unlikely in view of her proud refusal of all suitors and her outrage and desire for revenge after the episode of the stolen kisses. Obstacles and difficulties both before and after the declaration of love between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse provide much of the interest of the love theme. During the greater part of the romance, frustration is brought about by the separation of the lovers during Blancandin's absence fighting Orgueilleuse's enemies. Tension is maintained for the audience or readers throughout the series of battle scenes by the expectation of the lovers' eventual reconciliation.

Chivalry is the broad subject of the romance. To treat this concept as a 'theme' separate from the theme

of love is in fact to make an artificial division between two parts of a single whole. Chivalry encompasses all facets of knighthood of which love can be shown to be an essential part:

Only two themes are considered worthy of a knight: feats of arms, and love. ... they are permanently connected with the person of the perfect knight, they are part of his definition, so that he cannot for one moment be without adventure in arms nor for one moment without amorous entanglement.²

For the purposes of this discussion, however, the term chivalry is used in the sense of Blancandin's development as a knight through his feats of arms and adventures. It is thus seen as a theme separate from, yet closely related to, that of love.

Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is the story of the development and career of a single knight, from his youthful curiosity about chivalry until he has established himself as a knight of honour and reputation. The motifs of the theme of chivalry, like those of love, had become conventions of medieval romance, again developed by Chrétien, by the time this romance was written.

The knight, by the twelfth century, belonged to a distinct social class and was often, though not necessarily, of noble birth - Blancandin is, of course, the son of a king. The knight had to be properly trained - Blancandin's education might appear to have been hampered by his father's direction that chivalry be kept from him, but in fact as a child Blancandin was well trained in the practical skills of horsemanship and combat. He was thus well equipped to take up arms when he discovered what chivalry was all about. The knight must establish himself through experience:

... trial through adventure is the real meaning of the knight's ideal existence.³

Adventures are then necessary to the knight - they are the means by which he acquires honour and reputation. To be of the greatest value to the knight, adventures

should be more than daring exploits; they should have some sort of moral significance, they should benefit the social order in some way. For instance, Yvain's experience at the Château de Pesme Aventure not only gave him an opportunity to display his courage and ability, but his defeat of the demons with the help of his lion brought about the release of the captive maidens, thus establishing Yvain as the perfect knight of charity. Blancandin's adventures are linked together by an overall political purpose, that of defeating the enemies of Orgueilleuse and of establishing peace and security at Tormadai. Blancandin has a defined role to fulfil as Orgueilleuse's protector, and his adventures are all connected in a greater or lesser degree to fulfilment of that role. Success, honour and reputation result for Blancandin, and social order is restored and secured.

While the twin threads of love and chivalry are interwoven throughout the story of Blancandin, the emphasis of the narrative alternates between them - at first, the narrative is concerned with the education, trials and successes of the young knight; from his first encounter with Orgueilleuse the theme of love is predominant; from the time of Orgueilleuse's declaration of love for Blancandin and her engagement of him as her protector, the theme of chivalry becomes predominant for the remaining two-thirds of the romance. These divisions are however in no way rigid, nor do they imply the exclusion of one theme by the other, but represent rather an attempt to distinguish the sections of the romance where one theme appears predominant.

For the first third of the romance (ll. 1-1770), or up to the end of Section 6, "Orgueilleuse declares her love for Blancandin", according to Sweetser's divisions, the themes of love and chivalry complement each other, through the intermingling of Blancandin's

first adventures and the development and flowering of love between the hero and Orgueilleuse. The prologue recalls the good old days when

Chevalerie n'ert pas morte (1. 7)

thus providing the 'key' to the principal concern of the romance, the approval of chivalry. Section 2, "Blancandin's education and departure from his father's house" (ll. 23-206), is concerned with the education of the young prince and his introduction to chivalry, a subject his father has attempted to keep from him. Section 3, "Blancandin's first adventure" (ll. 207-396), tells of Blancandin's first adventure after leaving his father's house and this section relates an episode crucial to the content and to the structure of the whole romance. Within this episode the theme of love is introduced and that of chivalry is expanded as Blancandin meets a knight for the first time, is himself dubbed as a knight, and experiences his first knightly combat. Section 4, "The stolen kiss" (ll. 397-854), introduces the heroine Orgueilleuse and describes the first encounter between hero and heroine. It is important to note the circumstances of this encounter, and their significance in relation to the two principal themes.

On being asked his destination and purpose by the knight guarding the ford, Blancandin replies:

... "Sire, volentiers.
Ge quier serjanz et chevaliers
A qui ge puisse demorer
Por mon vasselaige esprover,
Quar ge ne quier fors los et pris." (ll. 509-513)

This is a clear statement of Blancandin's chivalrous aims: his desire to display his prowess, "mon vasselaige", and to seek honour and reputation, "los et pris". The knight reacts immediately to this declaration by proposing that Blancandin should daringly steal a kiss from his noble, beautiful and proud mistress, Orgueilleuse. The exploit is proposed as a possible means to the lady's favour with its attendant wealth and position:

Nel laissez ja por coardise,
 Que s'ele estoit de vos surprise,
 Trop vos dorroit or et argent;
 S'esteriez rois de sa gent. (ll. 547-550)

Blancandin's reply is especially illuminating - the idea is for him a challenge:

Dist Blanchandins: "Molt par fait bien.
 Ainz mais ne vi si saige rien;
 Bien se set de toz delivrer.
 Mais que qu'il me doie coster,
 Ge me metrai en aventure
 De baisier ceste criature ..." (ll. 559-564)

The above passages clearly demonstrate that the exploit of stealing a kiss from Orgueilleuse is both proposed and accepted as an adventure, a feat of audacity with the prospect of gaining an advantageous position which would fulfil Blancandin's stated aims. Love, thus far, has no part in Blancandin's view of his encounter with Orgueilleuse. The knight at the ford, on the other hand, has explained Orgueilleuse's proud refusal of any suitor, despite her lady-companion's urging, and suggests the possibility of Orgueilleuse granting Blancandin the favour of her love.

Then follows the portrait of the heroine, and it is significant that the lady is not described by a languishing lover in the manner of Yvain's impassioned description of Laudine in her grief (Yvain, ll.1462-1506), but in a rather matter-of-fact and informative way by her knight. He concludes his description with a repetition of his view of Blancandin's expectations, should Orgueilleuse grant him the favour of her love:

Or vueille Dieu le gloriox
 Qu'el face son ami de vos,
 Quar bien deffendriez la terre
 Quant vos alez los et pris querre." (ll. 605-608)

Blancandin's own expectations of the result of the exploit are simply those of an eager and impetuous young knight, and his enthusiasm, especially in the first line of his response, is far removed from thoughts of the prospect of the lady's love:

"Diex, fist l'anfes, quel aventure!
 Ainz mais ne vi tel criature.

Se g'en puis avoir un baisier
 De la pucele a l'acointier,
 Bien cuit qu'apres vivrai petit,
 Mais moi, que chaut se l'en m'ocit?
 A morir en sui, ou au vivre;
 Jamais n'en quier estre delivre." (ll. 609-616)

Blancandin thus views the proposed exploit wholly in terms of a chivalrous adventure, and the prospect of love at this stage of the hero's development is seen only as a means to an end, as a passport to his longed-for life of chivalry.

The theme of love, though subordinated to the claims of chivalry in the statements of the hero, is however very much present in this episode: the descriptions of Orgueilleuse's attitude to love by the knight at the ford, and the aftermath of the stolen kisses, particularly Orgueilleuse's reactions and the conversation with her lady-companion which follows, provide an intriguing and challenging situation. To Orgueilleuse's position of proud refusal has now been added the outrage of the stolen kisses, and much later another obstacle to the smooth course of love, Blancandin's absences from Tormadai, will add to the frustration and difficulties faced by the lovers.

In Section 5, "Blancandin's heroic conduct" (ll. 855-1352), the two themes are nicely balanced. The descriptions of Blancandin's entry into Tormadai, his successful meeting of the provost's challenge, the tournament between the people of Tormadai and Alimodés's men, are interspersed with scenes of Orgueilleuse's distress, self-examination and conversations with her lady-companion.

In Section 6, "Orgueilleuse declares her love for Blancandin" (ll. 1353-1770), the theme of love receives its fullest expression in the romance. The scenes between Orgueilleuse and her lady-companion, between Orgueilleuse and the provost, and between Orgueilleuse and Blancandin are depicted skilfully with delicacy and refinement. The complexities of the heroine's

feelings are presented with subtlety, psychological interest and intrigue. Orgueilleuse declares her love for Blancandin and his response is in line with his knightly ambition:

"Dame, ce ne refus ge mie;
 Por vostre amor, pris a conquerre
 Vos aiderai de ceste guerre." (ll. 1712-1714)

Orgueilleuse then offers him all he may ask of her, and in five brief lines before the provost informs him of the knights waiting to do battle with Alimodés, Love strikes Blancandin at last, and the force of the emotion is expressed by the poet in the conventional imagery of fire and arrow:

Cil esgarde la damoisele;
 El cors li repoint l'estancele
 Qui les autres esprant et art.
 Amors le ra feru du dart,
 Sovent li fait coulor müer. (ll. 1717-1721)

Now that his position as Orgueilleuse's protector is established, Blancandin turns immediately to the practical service of his lady and the furtherance of his knightly career.

The remaining two-thirds of the romance (ll. 1771-6521) are very much more concerned with the knight's adventures, with the 'practice and proving'⁴ of his knighthood, than with further development of the theme of love. Love between Orgueilleuse and Blancandin has served a more important purpose than love in itself: it has provided Orgueilleuse with a much-needed protector and defender of her lands, people and possessions; it has provided Blancandin with a cause. Love, with its obligation of the lover's service to his lady, is thus the motive underlying Blancandin's consequent series of adventures. However, love and service of his lady are not always the direct motivation for all his adventures. In the tradition of medieval story-telling, one episode often leads on to another less closely related to the central love theme, so that the hero's adventures sometimes lead him off at a tangent from his primary purpose of defeating and driving off Orgueilleuse's

enemies. In episodes telling of such 'secondary' adventures, the links between the central love theme and that of Blancandin's development as a knight become tenuous, and the concerns of knightly prowess and honour then outweigh his obligations as a lover.

For the greater part of the romance then the theme of chivalry is predominant. By the time of Orgueilleuse's declaration of love for Blancandin, he has already established himself as a knight worthy of respect, though still relatively inexperienced. The adventures which span the latter two-thirds of the romance provide Blancandin with a variety of opportunities to gain the experience which is essential to the knight's proving of his worth. As pointed out above, the theme of love is not always intermingled with the more important theme of chivalry in the same proportion. It provides, rather, a broad framework within which Blancandin's development as a knight takes place, in that it provides him with the cause which enables him to establish his knightly prowess and honour.

Between the time of Blancandin's departure from his father's house and his meeting Orgueilleuse's knight at the ford, an episode occurs which provides the young prince in search of adventure with his first experiences in the world of chivalry. It is an episode which teaches Blancandin valuable lessons, both about the nature of chivalrous adventure and about the nature of love, thus preparing him for the career which awaits him in the service of Orgueilleuse. It is in this episode that the theme of love is introduced, and the theme of chivalry is expanded and given the emphasis it will retain throughout the remainder of Blancandin's story.

Notes:

1. Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d'oc et d'oïl au XII^e siècle" in Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale, 2, 1959, p. 135
2. Erich Auerbach, Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, Trans. Willard R. Trask, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1953, p. 140
3. Ibid., p. 135
4. Ibid., p. 134

Chapter 2

BLANCANDIN'S FIRST ADVENTURE : AN INITIATION TO CHIVALRY AND LOVE

The first of Blancandin's adventures (ll. 207-396) occurs early in the text, forming Section 3 in Sweetser's résumé. After leaving his father's house

Por pris et por henor conquerre, (l. 204)
and after riding through the night, Blancandin meets a wounded knight and hears of his misfortune, of how he came to be injured and of the abduction of his lady by his enemy. Blancandin offers his assistance and, after being dubbed by the wounded knight, pursues the wrongdoer, engages him in combat, defeats him, and rescues the lady. He carries her back only to find that the wounded knight has died. In her grief, the lady too falls dead. Blancandin then proceeds on his way, pondering these new experiences.

The episode is complete in itself - neither the wounded knight, nor his lady, nor his enemy have any connection with other characters or situations in the romance. The story thus forms a cameo within the narrative which illustrates in a dramatic form the arming of the hero for action and his introduction to the real world of chivalry.

The importance of this episode to the narrative as a whole is twofold. Firstly, it expands the principal theme of chivalry by providing a practical demonstration of the theories of chivalrous conduct introduced in the previous section on Blancandin's education (ll. 23-206), and introduces the theme of love. It also introduces the motif of help which will be seen as an important aspect of Blancandin's role. Secondly, it plays a significant part in the formation of Blancandin as a knight, not only in the practical sense of his being formally armed for action and his first experience of combat, but also in the

psychological sense, in the formation of his attitudes and ideals.

The world of chivalry has until now existed largely in the imagination for Blancandin - his father had forbidden him knowledge of it, but after seeing mounted knights depicted on a tapestry in his mother's room, Blancandin questioned his tutor who explained the knights' apparel and conduct (ll. 57-116). The denial of knowledge of chivalry by a parent finds a parallel in Chrétien's Perceval where the young Perceval is deliberately shielded by his mother from the subject. Both youths are then introduced to chivalry by chance: Blancandin by seeing the tapestry and asking his tutor questions; Perceval by meeting five knights by chance in the forest. After Blancandin has questioned his tutor closely on the situation of a king (ll. 89-116), he forms the resolve to become a knight and leaves his father's house. Fortunately he is equipped not only with theories and dreams but also with practical skills, as his education included tuition in these, though their purpose was kept from him:

Porquant si sot bien boholder,
Un cheval poindre et galoper. (ll. 47-48)

Now after riding all night, Blancandin comes upon the wounded knight and hears a tale of combat and killing, of dishonour and treachery, of love and grief. After declaring his willingness to help, Blancandin is provided with the necessities for the task ahead - the material requisites of armour, and more importantly his elevation to the status of a knight.

Blancandin borrows some articles of armour and weapons from the wounded knight; he already has his father's sword, and swift horse complete with saddle and breast-plate. Now fully equipped, Blancandin is ready to be dubbed by the wounded knight:

Atant s'est Blanchandins armez.
Li chevaliers li a donnee
La grace de caindre l'espee.

Ilueques fu il adoubez
 Et fu chevaliers apelez,
 Qu'ainz d'autrui ne prist nules armes. (ll. 266-271)

These six lines describe a very simple ceremony whereby Blancandin acquires the appellation of knight, but they outline a series of actions of great significance in the world of chivalry depicted in medieval romance. Jean Flori, in his article, "Pour une histoire de la chevalerie: l'adoubement dans les romans de Chrétien de Troyes"¹, has shown that the word "adouber", previously synonymous with "armer" meaning simply 'to equip', undergoes a semantic change towards the end of the twelfth century, and is used by Chrétien in his romances almost exclusively to mean 'to admit to knighthood'. The dubbing of a knight involves several factors. To the practical aspect of equipping the knight is added a sense of honour conferred by the donor - in Blancandin's case, the honour implicit in his use of his father's sword, and horse complete with armour, is combined with the honour conferred by the wounded knight in lending Blancandin his hauberk, helmet, shield and lance. Blancandin's task will be performed in order to bring the wounded knight and his lady together, and in this context it is significant to note that he also borrows the symbol of love, the "penon d'amors" on the lance.

The most important factor is the ceremonial element - the simple gesture of the girding of the sword. The significance of this action is brought out by the use of the expression:

Li chevaliers li a donnee
 La grace de caindre l'espee, (ll. 267-268)

stressing the honour conferred by this gesture, and its importance. The simple conferment of arms, however, is not sufficient to indicate admission to knighthood which also requires an oral declaration. One brief line tells that Blancandin is named a knight:

Et fu chevaliers apelez, (l. 270)

and the significance of this declaration is heightened by the following line:

Qu'ainz d'autrui ne prist nules armes, (l. 271)
 stressing that he had not received arms previously from anyone else.

In this short passage then, Blancandin is armed, has his father's sword girded on him by the wounded knight, and is declared a knight. This simple ceremony serves to recognise Blancandin's readiness for admission to the world of chivalry:

Adouber, ici synonyme de faire chevalier, c'est conférer un grade, donner un status, introduire dans un ordo qui a tous les caractères d'une classe et plus encore d'une caste recrutant ses membres par cooptation, les intronisant par le moyen d'une cérémonie déclarative.².

However, it is important to note that the arms with which Blancandin is equipped are only borrowed from the wounded knight, and this fact is reinforced by his intention to return soon with the lady. After completing his task and marvelling at what he has witnessed, Blancandin removes his arms and leaves them, and puts on his own cloak again:

Si se desvet, ses armes laisse
 Et puis a son mantel repris. (ll. 386-387)

Immediately afterwards he is referred to as "li damoiseax" (l. 389) and a little further on as "l'anfes" (l. 403), indicating that Blancandin is not yet to be regarded as a fully-fledged knight.

The ceremony of dubbing then cannot be said to effect Blancandin's formal admission to knighthood. Like the first adventure itself, it rather constitutes a further stage in his development. By dubbing Blancandin, the wounded knight gives formal recognition to the hero's readiness to assume the role of a knight. Blancandin's status as a knight in this episode is then a temporary one, brought about by the necessities of one particular set of circumstances. Like the whole episode, it is in fact a foretaste of what is to follow: when Blancandin

next takes arms to pursue his knightly career, they have been given by his lady.

Suitably prepared, Blancandin sets forth and discovers the wicked knight beating the lady. He cries out to the knight, requesting him to desist. There follow twenty-six lines of dialogue (ll. 299-324) between the two knights. At first Blancandin makes a formal request, addressing the stranger as "Franc chevalier" (l. 300). The tone of his speech continues to be polite, as befits a courtly knight:

Franc chevalier, par cortoisie,
Rendez au chevalier s'amie." (ll. 307-308)

The wicked knight replies with a threat, to which Blancandin responds with a challenge to fight. However, it should be noted that Blancandin has given the knight the opportunity to hand over the lady without the necessity of combat:

Quant par amors ne la veus rendre,
Vers moi la te covient deffendre." (ll. 321-322)

The polite request having failed to persuade the knight to release the lady, the two knights engage in combat. The fighting is described in conventional terms of the crashing and breaking of armour:

Lors broschent andui a tel rage
Que retentissent li boscaige;
Puis se fierent de tel air
Que les escuz firent croissir. (ll. 329-332)

Here the poet reminds us of Blancandin's early training and ability:

Blanchandins sot bien boorder. (l. 333)

On striking the decisive blows and unhorsing the wrongdoer, Blancandin pronounces the justice of the situation to his victim before beheading him.

In Blancandin's conversation with the wounded knight, in the description of the armour and weapons, in the ceremony of dubbing, and in the description of Blancandin's first combat, the world of chivalry so alluringly hinted at in the earlier two sections has come alive.

The theme of love occurs here for the first time in the romance. The power of this emotion is first brought home to Blancandin in the lament of the wounded knight. The abduction of his loved one by his enemy far outweighs consideration of his own injuries, and uppermost in his mind is the possibility of her dishonour:

Plus m'est il de sa desanor
Que il ne m'est de ma doulor. (ll. 225-226)

The intensity of these feelings is brought out by the poet's stress on the opposition of "sa desanor" and "ma doulor" in the construction of the rhyme. The contrast between the wounded knight's love for the lady and his own pain occurs in another two lines a little further on, spoken by Blancandin to the wicked knight:

Plus a de lui son cuer irié
Assez que du mal que il a. (ll. 304-305)

Again the opposition is heightened by the poet's choice of construction, this time not in the rhyme but in the use of the parallel expressions "de lui"/"du mal que il a". The wounded knight's love for his lady is expressed above all by the "penon d'amors" on his lance (l. 264), a symbol of love and a reminder of the close interaction of the concerns of love and chivalry.

The lady too speaks of her feelings to Blancandin. Firstly she declares that if they return before the wounded knight dies she will be able to restore him to life by use of magic powers.³ Then she reveals the extent of her love in two short but powerful and dramatic lines:

Et s'il est morz, por lui morrai,
Jamais ne m'en departirai. (ll. 361-362)

The balance and economy of expression in l. 361 of the declaration - the stress of the line falling first on "morz" and then on "morrai" - and the amplification of "morrai" by the negative expression "Jamais" in l. 362, combine to bring out the forcefulness of the lady's resolve.

When she returns with Blancandin to find that the

wounded knight has died, the drama of her words is paralleled by her actions. In a speech befitting a heroine of Greek tragedy, she passionately laments his death, brought about by his love for her, then falls dead over his body. This dramatic death scene recalls the fate of Pyramus and Thisbe, whose story was well known at this time in the anonymous twelfth-century tale, Piramel et Tisbé.

Love is thus illustrated very dramatically in this episode as an emotion of great power, and as a relationship commanding absolute loyalty and devotion between a knight and his lady.

In the course of Blancandin's later adventures, it will be seen that he is frequently motivated by the desire to help others in times of need. Assistance to others, and more precisely to those in circumstances of distress, is one of the attributes of a perfect knight, and often brings about opportunities for chivalrous adventure. This motif of help is strikingly illustrated in this first adventure. On hearing the wounded knight's lament, Blancandin is motivated by pity for him and immediately offers to ride after the abductor and if necessary fight him in order to recover the lady. Before he sets out on this task, however, he offers practical assistance by tending the fallen knight's wounds and covering him with his cloak. On approaching the wicked knight, Blancandin hears the lady's anguished plea for help and immediately responds:

"Diex, dist ele, sainte Marie,
 Quar me faites prochaine aïe!"
 Blanchandins vint la droitement. (ll. 295-297)

After defeating the wicked knight Blancandin places the lady on his horse and returns her to her lover.

Clearly this episode forms an important stage in Blancandin's progress in the ways of knighthood and a testing of his abilities; it thus constitutes a proof of

his competence for his chosen career. It is important to note in this context that his reactions to each step of the adventure are recorded. Thus his lessons are learned and his attitudes formed. Most obviously the episode covers a story specially created to give Blancandin a first experience of chivalry, before his own series of adventures commences.

His reactions are instinctive and immediate. Blancandin sees the wounded knight, rides straight to him, greets him and enquires about his wounds. He reacts to the knight's tale with an outward expression of pity and an inner resolve ("en son cuer" - l. 243) to help. His reply to the wounded knight reveals his youthful impetuosity as he promises aid and declares his fearless resolution:

Ge vos di bien : ou ge morrai
Ou la pucele vos rendrai. (ll. 253-254)

The eagerness of the young man anticipating his first adventure can be detected too in his rapid choice of items of the wounded knight's armour. Blancandin hastens off but immediately reproaches himself for not asking the knight's name. He recognises that he has made a mistake:

Forment se tient a engigné, (l. 284)
and the comment reveals Blancandin's awareness of his oversight caused by haste.

After the defeat of the wicked knight, and the death of the young lady, Blancandin reflects on his adventure (ll. 377-384). The particular aspect which causes his state of wonder is the reciprocity of love between the wounded knight and his lady. This wonder is effectively brought out by careful choice of words. Firstly, the poet makes use of verbal expressions:

Molt se merveille et forment jure
C'onques mais ne vit itel gent
Si entr'amer veraïement.
De cel [e] oeuvre forment s'esmaie,
Crient que ce soit fantosme vraie, (ll. 378-382)

The reactions of wonder and incredulity are paralleled by the opposition of truth and falsehood in four closely

related nouns, "fantosme" (qualified by the adjective "vraie" in an effective paradox), "voir", "mençonge" and "songe" in the space of three lines:

Crient que ce soit fantosme vraie;
 Ne set se c'est voir ou mençonge,
 Avis li est que ce est songé. (ll. 382-384)

These three lines form a particularly neat example of construction, each beginning with a different stage of Blancandin's thought - "Crient que ...", "Ne set se ...", "Avis li est ..." - and each ending with an alternative interpretation of the phenomenon - "fantosme vraie", "voir ou mençonge", "songe". The third of these lines (l. 384) marks the conclusion of Blancandin's reflection. He now continues on his way fearing the friends of the knight he has killed, but confident that he will have many more adventures.

This short episode of one hundred and ninety lines tells a story begun in medias res which is exciting and interesting in itself. The episode is a well-constructed unit, having a clear beginning and conclusion, but it is merely an incident which interrupts Blancandin's journey. Passages of narrative and dialogue alternate and the analysis of Blancandin's reactions provides a contrast with the description of the drama and indicates the importance of the episode in his formation.

Blancandin travels on after his first adventure, now firmly established as the hero of the romance and proven worthy to pursue his chosen career as a knight by the victorious experience of his first combat. He has witnessed the effects of love, and this first adventure has now fitted him for his encounter with Orgueilleuse, mistress of Tormadai, and his future role in her service.

Notes

1. Romania, 100, 1979, pp. 22-53
2. Ibid., p. 44
3. For discussion of the lady's claim to magic powers, see Chapter 7, p. 105

Chapter 3

THE CHARACTER AND ROLE OF BLANCANDIN

In considering the hero of the romance, Marie-José Southworth in her Étude comparée de quatre romans médiévaux makes the following assessment:

Blancandin ... a toutes les vertus et il est exempt de défauts. Chevalier parfait, il ressemble aussi à un automate, sans faiblesses humaines et sans défaillance morale.¹

Franklin P. Sweetser, in the introduction to his critical edition of the text, summarises the poet's presentation of the two principal masculine characters as follows:

Blancandin et Sadoine sont des héros de convention, doués de qualités qui ne les distinguent pas de beaucoup d'autres héros des romans de l'époque.²

A third assessment of the hero by Alexandre Micha in a brief examination of the romance in the Dictionnaire des lettres françaises - le moyen âge is even more summary as the writer simply places the character of Blancandin within the romance tradition, adding that he belongs to the category of heroes who discover chivalry and seek adventure despite having been denied knowledge of such matters in their upbringing.³

These three assessments, taken together, present Blancandin as the conventional hero, undistinguished from other heroes of contemporary romances, the perfect knight - par excellence. Such a definition suggests that Blancandin is then a stereotype whose state of perfection would seem to exclude any interest in his character or any possibilities of change or development of it beyond those aspects pertaining to his role as an example of perfect knighthood. While it is true that the presentation of Blancandin's character is not treated by the poet with the same kind of psychological insight as is the character of Orgueilleuse, it can be shown that the hero does emerge as more of an individual than the above assessments would suggest. In order to evaluate

the character and role of Blancandin, it is proposed to examine descriptions of his appearance, and subjects examined earlier (his early training, and first experience of the world of chivalry), then to outline his progress towards establishment and recognition as a knight, to examine the multi-faceted nature of his knightly role, and finally, in the conclusion of this study, to assess this role in terms of the ideals of knighthood held by contemporary society.

The poet introduces his hero from the thirty-first line of the romance with four highly stylised lines:

Diex lor envoia un danzel
 Preuz et cortois, gentil et bel.
 Blanchandin l'apelent par non;
 Molt par fu de gente façon. (ll. 31-34)

The adjectives used to describe Blancandin in the two conventional binary expressions, "Preuz et cortois, gentil et bel" (l. 32), are general terms conveying the ideals of valour and worth, courtliness, nobility and beauty or handsomeness which naturally befit the son of a king and queen, herself a king's daughter. The linking of such general terms belonging to related semantic fields in binary expressions is a stereotyped feature of medieval literature and many examples, particularly of the pair "preuz et cortois", occur.⁴ While the epithet "gentil" denotes Blancandin's general nobility, several references are made to his royal birth, for example in ll. 1071-1074, 1092, 2316-2318. More precise details of Blancandin's appearance are given in the description of the young prince as he leaves his father's house in search of adventure. This description (ll. 159-184) is principally concerned with his apparel, his sword and the trappings of his horse, but includes two physical details, his eyes and complexion:

Les elz a vers, la coulour fresche. (l. 174)

His whole appearance is summed up in ll. 179-180 where the poet calls his audience's or readers' attention to the particularly noble and fine appearance of his hero:

Et si vos di que li danzeax
Ert a merveille genz et beax. (ll. 179-180)

A longer and more detailed description is provided as Blancandin approaches the knight at the ford after his first adventure:

Li chevaliers choisi l'enfant
Qui tant par fu de gent senblant.
Les elz ot vers et blanc le front,
Les sorciz noirs et le poil blont;
La facé ot vermeille et clere,
Bien resanble filz d'emperere.
Ne ja el nes ne au menton
N'aparceüssiez meffaçon.
La boche ot gente et fresche et bele
Con se ce fust rose novele,
Et si chevauche si tres bien
Que nus n'i puet amender rien.
Soz ciel n'eüst fille de roi
Qui tant fust plaine de desroi,
S'ele le velt bien esgarder
Que ja se puist tenir d'amer. (ll. 477-492)

This description of Blancandin's appearance and ability comprises only sixteen lines in all, and thus falls short of A.M. Colby's criterion of length for a 'portrait' of a handsome man.⁵ It constitutes rather a 'short description' and contains some interesting features. Lines 479-481 describing the eyes, forehead, eyebrows, beard and face of the young man are linked by the common theme of colour, and all these features are given the conventional colours used to represent ideal physical handsomeness of men in courtly romance. The description of physical features follows a roughly descending order but is limited to Blancandin's face - in ll. 483-486 the nose and chin are faultless (ll. 483-484), and the description of the mouth conveys his beauty and youth, combined in the image of the rosebud (ll. 485-486). The earlier descriptions of Blancandin's appearance in general terms are reinforced here by l. 478, "Qui tant par fu de gent senblant", and by l. 482, "Bien resanble filz d'emperere", an assessment of Blancandin by the knight at the ford as one who is fit to be an emperor's son. Blancandin's riding ability is such that it could not be improved, i.e. it is perfect, and his excellence

is summed up in the last four lines (ll. 489-492) by the mention that no king's daughter could resist falling in love with him.

These passages describing Blancandin's appearance present a young man who is good looking and attractive in terms of the criteria for beauty and excellence prevailing in the romance. However, Blancandin's physical traits are treated in a wholly conventional manner, and the poet does not portray his hero with as much individualising detail as he does his heroine. In this the poet follows contemporary trends. The ideal lady is customarily portrayed as an object worthy of admiration and desire, and as the inspiration of love and deeds of valour by the knight. In this sense, her beauty is usually her greatest asset and calls for appropriate elaboration from the poet. The conventional hero, on the other hand, is portrayed far more extensively by description of his actions than of his appearance. Though the description of the hero is bound by convention to conform to the courtly ideals of handsomeness, it is through enumeration of his chivalrous virtues and deeds that aspects of his individual character are conveyed.

The second section of the romance, "Blancandin's education and departure from his father's house" (ll. 23-206), is concerned with Blancandin's first introduction to chivalry. Besides details of his formal education and the particular significance of his discovery of chivalry despite his father's wishes to the contrary, certain aspects of Blancandin's character are revealed which are not only relevant to the events being related but also recur and are reinforced during later stages of his career. Chief among these are his enquiring mind, which here leads him to pursue his investigation of chivalry with his tutor (ll. 57-116), and to which will later be added resourcefulness and ingenuity, and his firmness of resolve in pursuit of his goals, as is here shown in his

determination to seek honour and reputation in the world of chivalry (ll. 123-132), and displayed many times thereafter in the service of Orgueilleuse.

In the third section of the romance, "Blancandin's first adventure" (ll. 207-396), the poet adds several qualities to the character of the hero. In this episode, Blancandin displays - besides youthful enthusiasm - his unrestrained willingness to help persons in distress, his compassion in tending the wounded knight, his courage in challenging and fighting the wicked knight, his courteous treatment of the wounded knight's lady, and finally and most significantly in terms of development of character, the ability to reflect upon and learn from his experiences.

Blancandin's role as a lover will be examined in Chapter 4. In this context, it is important to note the constancy he displays towards Orgueilleuse. After Blancandin's defeat of the enemies of Ruban, king of Athens, the king offers him the hand of a princess (ll. 2492-2499). Remembering his love for Orgueilleuse and considering her more beautiful than the young lady in question, Blancandin tells the king, "par cortoisie" (l. 2515), that though he does not refuse the lady he will defer any action until he has sought advice. Thus he extricates himself from a delicate situation because of his love for Orgueilleuse, and at the same time reveals an ability for diplomacy in his reply to the king. Blancandin's obstinacy in this situation has a parallel in Yvain's experience at the end of the episode of the Château de Pesme Aventure. In ll. 5694-5770 of Yvain, the hero and the seigneur dispute the matter of Yvain's reward of the castle and the seigneur's daughter after the battle. Yvain here displays his constancy to Laudine and to his mission by declaring that he cannot accept the offer, adding that he will return and do so should that ever be possible.

Reference has already been made to Blancandin's greater preoccupation with the concerns of chivalry than with the concerns of love, and indeed it is in his role as a knight that the principal interest of the hero's character lies. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Blancandin's education in the world of chivalry and preparation for his role as a knight have been furthered by his exposure to the two most important experiences of that world - love and combat. In his first adventure, Blancandin proves himself worthy to pursue his chosen career. His next adventure, the exploit of the stolen kisses, though not involving combat, does however demonstrate the hero's daring and courage, qualities to be admired which Orgueilleuse attributes to Blancandin's nobility in her monologue of self-examination:

Ja n'eüst fait tel vasselaige,
 Se il ne fust de haut paraige.
 Molt a grant cuer soz la mamele,
 Quant il baisa tel damoisele.
 Ja certes, se il fust vilains,
 Sor moi n'eust tendu ses mains. (ll. 1073-1078)

Blancandin's next opportunity to demonstrate his skills in fighting comes with the challenge issued to those who wish to lodge in the provost's house. By his speed and strength, Blancandin triumphs in the fight with the provost.⁶ He is duly lodged, honoured and well served by the provost and his family. The poet is careful to assure his audience that Blancandin's victory is an honourable one:

Mais l'enfant n'en doit avoir [blasme],
 Se li chevax le defola,
 Qu'il fist ce que cil li rouva. (ll. 962-964)

The desire for military action remains uppermost in Blancandin's mind, despite the entertainment afforded him by the provost's daughters, as he watches the assembly of the knights of Alimodés and Orgueilleuse in readiness for the tournament. In response to the provost's enquiry, Blancandin reveals his eagerness to fight and repeats his resolve to seek opportunities to do so:

Ge voi la fors cez chevaliers;
 Se ge fusse armez com il sont,
 Volentiers fusse el premier front,
 Quar por estre a tel assanblee
 Sui ge partiz de ma contree,
 Et si en ai guerpi ma terre
 Por ce que l'on n'i faisoit guerre." (ll. 1180-1186)

Now for the second time in the romance, Blancandin is armed for action, this time by the provost. Besides offering Blancandin articles of weaponry and apparel of fine quality and a valuable horse, the provost offers to serve Blancandin himself, as "escuier" (ll. 1187-1196). This unusual offer on the part of the provost to serve as "escuier", together with his concern to provide Blancandin with fine equipment, illustrates the extent of his esteem for the eager young man, esteem the poet thus hopes to inspire also in his audience or readers. The provost duly arms Blancandin for action, and the poet reinforces the significance of this event by describing in greater detail the articles of equipment already listed by the provost (ll. 1201-1232). In this second instance of arming, there is no formal ceremony of dubbing. Blancandin requests his own sword, but no formal girding is mentioned:

Blanchandins demande s'espee,
 Ne velt qu'autre li soit donee. (ll. 1215-1216)

Now fully equipped, Blancandin sets out with the provost in attendance and immediately kills one of the enemy. Exhibiting another quality necessary to the perfect knight, that of generosity, Blancandin gives his victim's horse to the provost's wife in return for her hospitality. While Orgueilleuse and her lady-companion watch from the tower, he acquits himself admirably during the day's battle. He takes as prisoners to the provost's house ten important knights - "Dis chevaliers de grant affaire" (l. 1328). In the evening he is richly entertained, and his prowess is admired by his captives:

Molt l'esgardoient li baron
 Que l'enfes ot pris en l'estor
 Por ce qu'il ert de grant valor. (ll. 1350-1352)

Blancandin's achievements in this battle arouse Orgueilleuse's feelings of love for him. More significantly in terms of Blancandin's ambitions, this exhibition of his prowess leads to his being considered by all as a knight of considerable worth. His early education gave him the necessary practical skills, his first adventure saw him armed for action, ceremonially dubbed as a knight and exposed to the force of love and the experience of knightly combat. His encounter with Orgueilleuse revealed his appetite for adventure and his daring; his meeting with the provost provided his second victory in combat. On being fully equipped a second time, Blancandin goes forth to his greatest test thus far - a full-scale battle fought against an enemy host under the watchful eye of the lady in her tower. He emerges from this test victorious - by the force of his actions, he pleases the provost, earns the admiration of established knights, inspires love in the heart of Orgueilleuse, and above all, confirms his worth as a knight.

Having thus earned recognition as a knight, Blancandin is still relatively inexperienced. His entry into Orgueilleuse's service now provides him with opportunities to put his knighthood to the test, to acquire honour and reputation, to become not just a knight but a singularly accomplished one. Such opportunities place Blancandin in a variety of situations and involve relationships with a number of people. He is not like Yvain, a solitary figure engaged in a very personal quest in a process of moral and psychological development, but rather a knight with a diversity of roles, engaged in a series of adventures, the main purpose of which is to exhibit in a variety of situations the outward military skill of the hero.

Blancandin is first and foremost a fighter, a man in search of military prowess, as will be shown in our study of his battles in Chapter 6. His role as Orgueilleuse's lover is clearly subordinate to his practical role as her protector, and though love provides the framework for the

adventures, his service to Orgueilleuse stems as much from the practical considerations of her need for a protector and his need for a cause.

Blancandin does not fight a series of single combats, but frequently fights in conjunction with others. The single combats he engages in usually take place within the context of a larger tournament or battle. For example, single combat takes place between Blancandin and Rubion (ll. 1834-1882), but this engagement develops into a full-scale battle (ll. 1883-1976) when more than forty of the enemy and then Orgueilleuse's knights join the fray.

After Blancandin's period of exile in the kingdom of Ruban of Athens, he returns with Ruban's son Sadoine and an army of men to defend Tormadai against Orgueilleuse's enemies. In the subsequent battles at Cassidoine and Tormadai, Blancandin fights as the leader of an army. His role as a leader is, however, a nominal one, as all the fighting takes place in the conventional chivalrous manner of combat between single knights, so that Blancandin's prowess is described in terms of his individual ability rather than in terms of his ability to command and organise others. From the time of his sojourn in Ruban's kingdom, Blancandin does not fight alone - all his subsequent battles are fought in conjunction with Sadoine.

The relationship between Blancandin and Sadoine is an important one which exemplifies the bond of companionship between two warriors; because of the loyalty this bond demands, the hero is forced to make a choice between the claims of love and those of friendship when Sadoine is captured by Alimodés. Blancandin and Sadoine are brought together by the latter's father, Ruban, who has appointed Blancandin as his seneschal and placed him in command of his men:

Li rois Rubans fait demander
Son filz Sadoine o le vis cler.

Chevalier estoit de novel;
 A Blanchandin en fu molt bel.
 Par grant joie et par amistié
 Sont anbedui acompaignié;
 Que tant com il porront durer,
 Ce lor a fait le roi jurer,
 Ne s'entrefaudront il por rien;
 Ainz aidera l'un l'autre bien,
 Quar li rois a guerre molt fort
 Que uns autre rois li fait tort. (ll. 2339-2350)

This passage establishes the relationship between the two warriors both informally and formally. The two men are drawn together first by natural inclination - Sadoine's appearance impresses Blancandin (l. 2342) - and a natural empathy and friendship are immediately formed between them (ll. 2343-2344). This friendship is then strengthened into a bond of military companionship, formalised by the oath required of them by the king. Blancandin and Sadoine are required to swear that neither will fail the other as long as they live, and that each will help the other (ll. 2345-2348). Together the companions then defeat Ruban's enemies in a battle which covers two days (ll. 2413-2482 and ll. 2527-2542). After seeing Blancandin's distress while he addresses the rose and thinks of Orgueilleuse, Sadoine proposes that he should accompany Blancandin to serve her. The formal bond between them is again referred to when Sadoine asks Ruban to approve this proposal:

Avuec Blanchandin m'en irai;
 Jamais ne m'en departirai.
 Ge li ai seirement juré,
 Si li sera molt bien gardé. (ll. 2727-2730)

The strength of this formal bond is matched by the close friendship of the two men. Sadoine's trust in Blancandin is so great that he unhesitatingly agrees to his conversion to Christianity and that of all his men during the storm at sea (ll. 3151-3233). On arrival at Cassidoine the companions reveal the extent of their co-operation in Blancandin's promise to secure the daughter of Alimodés as Sadoine's bride, and Sadoine's continuing assistance to Blancandin in his service of Orgueilleuse.

"Tenez, compainz, la damoisele
 Que ge vos ai lonc tens pramise;
 N'a si bele desi qu'an Frise.
 Tenu vos ai bien covenant;
 Or me raidiez d'or en avant
 Tant que ge ai secorue
 Orgueilleuse d'amors ma drue." (ll. 3690-3696)

Sadoine accordingly leaves three thousand knights to secure peace at Cassidoine (ll. 3865-3870) and accompanies Blancandin to Tormadai. With the capture of Sadoine by Alimodés after the battle of Tormadai, the bond between the companions is put to its most severe test, and Blancandin is forced to choose between the claims of friendship and of love. He is greatly afflicted by Sadoine's capture and as he watches the departure of Alimodés's ship he reflects on Sadoine's faithful service and resolves to do all in his power to help him:

Certes, compains, je t'aiderai
 Ne jamais jor repos n'arai,
 Si te rarai u vif u mort. (ll. 4953-4955)

Here, the virtues of honour and loyalty involved in the companionship of warriors outweigh for the knight the claims of love.⁷ The reciprocal arrangement of help between Blancandin and Sadoine is later brought out by Sadoine's willingness to leave his bride at Cassidoine and assist Blancandin in freeing Orgueilleuse from the treacherous Subien.

Another facet of Blancandin's role is the small, but important, emphasis placed on the fact that he is a Christian knight; it becomes evident only in the episode of the conversion of the Saracens at sea and the subsequent conversion of Alimodés's daughter. Blancandin does not set out on his adventures as a 'defender of the faith', and his bringing about the conversion to Christianity of Sadoine, his men, and Alimodés's daughter should rather be considered within the wider contexts of the role of divine Providence in the romance and the opposition of the 'good' Christians and the 'wicked' Saracens or pagans.

Blancandin's principal roles, as a knight, a lover, and a companion, provide him with ample scope to prove his prowess, his constancy and his loyalty. His progress through the series of adventures entailed in the process of proving his knighthood is not without setbacks, such as capture, shipwreck, storm, the company of pagans, the temporary loss of Sadoine, and the treachery of Subien. Blancandin reveals in all these situations his capacity for improvisation, decisiveness and resourcefulness, qualities which illustrate his role as the hero of an adventure story, as well as his military prowess. For example, when shipwrecked in a hostile land, he resorts to posing as a Saracen, relying on his skill in disguise and the benefits of his early education in foreign languages (ll. 2245-2250). He relies on his education and convictions to effect the conversion of Sadoine's men, fearful and distressed during the storm (ll. 3201-3206). Together with Sadoine he resorts to intrigue in order to flush Subien out from the house of thieves (ll. 6402-6503).

Blancandin, impressively accomplished in many ways, also shows himself to be capable of ordinary human emotions. Marie-José Southworth's assessment suggests that Blancandin's perfection makes him like an automaton. However, besides the episode of the rose, admitted by this critic as "son seul moment de faiblesse"⁸, and the evidence of the hero's deep feelings for Orgueilleuse, the poet reveals Blancandin's capacity for compassion in his treatment of his relationship with his father.

When Blancandin left his father's house in pursuit of adventure, he gave no thought at all to his parents' feelings. Subsequently no mention is made of his background save a few brief references to his royal birth by the narrator, and by Blancandin in order to identify himself, for example to Ruban of Athens:

"Sire, fait il, ge sui de Frise,
Filz a un duc de haut paraige;
Li rois est pres de mon lignaige. (ll. 2316-2318)

However, Blancandin is careful not to identify himself as the king's son, presumably in order to avoid explaining his presence alone and disguised in a pagan country. The reappearance of Blancandin's father in the story comes as a surprise and appears to have little relevance to the main concerns of the narrative. The episode of Blancandin's rescue of his imprisoned father is interpreted by Marie-José Southworth as a means of showing Providence 'punishing' Gloradin (named later in l. 4494) for earlier denying his son Blancandin education in the ways of chivalry.⁹ Though Blancandin's father certainly regrets the loss of his son, this interpretation places unjustified stress on the role of Providence in the romance. The episode does however provide opportunity for portraying the hero in yet another role, that of a compassionate and forgiving son. Curiously, Blancandin does not at first reveal his identity to his father. Still disguised as a Saracen, he tests the sincerity of his father's feelings. He claims to be a friend of Blancandin, shows him Blancandin's ring, and tells him his son is dead. His father's extreme distress at this news moves the hero to compassion:

Li rois l'ot, de doulor se pasme;
 Noirs devint et verz comme basme.
 De demie loëe plaine
 N'en senti on fun ne aleine.
 Blanchandins entre ses braz lieve;
 Son pere voit, forment li grieve
 Qu'i [1] demaine si grant doulor.
 Merci li prie, por amor. (ll. 3815-3822)

The episode is significant therefore in terms of Blancandin's character. It serves to remove what may be regarded as blemishes on the character of a perfect knight, his estrangement from his father, and the lack of respect inherent in his clandestine departure from home, and it provides the hero with an opportunity to display qualities of compassion and generosity. Furthermore, the reconciliation of Blancandin with his father helps complete the story by providing further justification of the earlier references to the hero's royal origin.

Blancandin emerges at the completion of the romance as a knight of worth and honour, having demonstrated his ability to cope with a diversity of situations and overcome and profit from a number of setbacks. His relationships with Orgueilleuse, Sadoine, and his father, reveal him as a man of sensitivity, of constancy, of integrity; it is largely through the unfolding of these relationships that the poet creates in Blancandin a character of far greater depth than a mere stereotype of perfect knighthood. To complete our assessment of Blancandin's role, it will be useful to consider, in the conclusion of this study, the extent to which his portrayal reflects an historical view of early thirteenth century knighthood. Most of Blancandin's adventures are undertaken in the service of Orgueilleuse. She is introduced to Blancandin, and to the audience or readers, by the account given by her knight at the ford, after Blancandin has been prepared for his encounter with the heroine by his introduction to the real world of chivalry and to love.

Notes:

1. Southworth, p. 144
2. Sweetser, p. 41
3. Dictionnaire des lettres françaises - le moyen âge, Librairie Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1964, p. 138
4. Glyn Sheridan Burgess, Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois, Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1970, pp. 99-101
5. Alice M. Colby, The Portrait in Twelfth-Century French Literature - An Example of the Stylistic Originality of Chrétien de Troyes, Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1965, p. 4
6. For discussion of Blancandin's combat with the provost, see Chapter 6, p. 76
7. Southworth, p. 141
8. Southworth, p. 144
9. Southworth, p. 138

Chapter 4

THE PORTRAIT OF ORGUEILLEUSE D'AMOUR

After Blancandin's first experience of combat and his introduction to the mysterious effects of love, he travels on alone pondering these events and anticipating further adventures. At this point in Blancandin's story, the poet introduces the heroine, Orgueilleuse. Blancandin comes upon a knight guarding a ford who, after directing him to lodgings for the night, tells him the next day of his mistress, her proud refusal of any suitor, and proposes to Blancandin the audacious exploit of stealing a kiss from her. After accepting this challenge, Blancandin asks the lady's name. The knight's reply comprises a passage of forty-three lines, twenty-nine of which constitute a formal portrait of Orgueilleuse; the remaining fourteen explain the political situation of her lands and repeat the possible gains to be made by Blancandin.

The conventions of the portrait in medieval romance have been explored by Alice M. Colby in her book, The Portrait in Twelfth-Century French Literature - An Example of the Stylistic Originality of Chrétien de Troyes.¹ The methods and criteria used in this work can be applied to the portrait of Orgueilleuse, in order to determine its function within the narrative, and to illustrate the similarities and differences between this portrait and aspects of portraiture in twelfth-century romances.

A.M. Colby describes the purpose of the portrait as two-fold:

... it stands out from its context as a semi-independent unit the purpose of which is not only to give the listener a mental picture of an important character primarily in order to provoke in him an emotional reaction which will affect his interpretation of the work but also to display the writer's skill in the manipulation of stylistic devices.²

The portrait of Orgueilleuse has two other important

functions: it provides information to another character within the narrative, and it creates anticipation in the audience or readers. To illustrate the importance of these aspects of providing information not only to the audience or readers, but also to a character within the narrative, the circumstances of the portrait may be compared with those of the portrait of Laudine in Chrétien's Yvain.

Yvain, imprisoned and languishing in the throes of a seemingly impossible love, describes Laudine as he watches her grieving for her husband whom he has just killed. The portrait (Yvain, ll. 1462-1506) is given through the eyes of a lover actually looking at the object of his admiration and desire, and furthermore it is charged with emotional and situational complexities: Laudine's excessive grief, Yvain's unreasoning passion, his fears that Laudine will injure herself, and the enormous obstacles which appear to stand in the way of his winning her love. The portrait of Orgueilleuse, on the other hand, is presented by her knight guarding the ford, in an informative way, in reply to Blancandin's enquiry. Though the knight does not, like Yvain, speak as a lover, he speaks as a loyal and admiring servant of his lady, so that the portrait of Orgueilleuse is characterised by the same stereotyped content and fervency of praise in the description of the lady's beauty as occur in portraits of other beautiful women in earlier romances.

The lady described here is not present, a factor which adds to the function of provoking an emotional reaction in the listener, a strong element of anticipation. The appearance of a heroine or of a lady to be loved in the story is anticipated earlier in a very general way by Blancandin's witnessing the effects of love during his first adventure - the listener then awaits the opportunity for Blancandin to experience this emotion for himself. The portrait prepares for Orgueilleuse's appearance by

provoking in the listener a highly favourable attitude towards the lady who is presented as the object of much admiration. The expectation that her stand of proud refusal is about to be challenged by the hero, Blancandin, is then fostered by the information contained in the last fourteen lines of the knight's speech.

The portrait of Orgueilleuse together with the following fourteen lines completes the knight's account of his lady. The first mention of the heroine occurs prior to this account, as part of the poet's introduction of the knight himself. Though he does not name her, the poet identifies her as "La pucele de Tormadai" (l. 415) and describes her remarkable beauty:

La pucele de Tormadai,
Que plus bele flor n'est en mai;
Que tant ert gente criature,
Por esgarder la fist nature. (ll. 415-418)

The lady is next mentioned by the knight (ll. 514 ff.) in response to Blancandin's declared intention to seek means by which to acquire honour and reputation. The knight advises Blancandin that his beautiful mistress is coming in their direction:

Ci chevauche ma damoisele,
En tot le mont n'en a tant bele; (ll. 515-516)

and proposes the exploit of stealing a kiss from her. The knight then proceeds firstly to describe her retinue and then to refer specifically to his lady again, this time mentioning two important aspects of her character:

Ma damoisele vi[e]nt derriere
Qui molt par est cortoise et fiere. (ll. 533-534)

The knight then expands the description of his lady's pride by outlining her disdain of suitors, and proposes the exploit to Blancandin as a means of winning her love. Blancandin greets the knight's proposal with enthusiasm and enquires the lady's name. The knight now identifies his lady - her name, Orgueilleuse d'amour, in fact sums up the impression of her which the knight has already given - and goes on to give a detailed description of her appearance. Several aspects of the lady's character can

Thereafter, the overall emphasis of the portrait is on physical appearance, the parts of the body being described in a generally descending order, as is customary in formal portrait description; in this case the order is fairly regular, apart from the chin being mentioned before the teeth and mouth, and the ear being mentioned after all facial features.

The portrait is characterised by five topoi or conventions of description: the topoi of the detailed portrayal of a beautiful woman, of indescribability, of Nature's work, of uniqueness and outdoing, and of perfection. The portrait may be divided as follows:

identity	1 line	(l. 566)
physical description	19 lines	(ll. 567-573, 575-586)
indescribability	4 lines	(ll. 587-590)
Nature's work	1 line	(l. 591)
uniqueness and outdoing	2 lines	(l. 574 and l. 592)
perfection in terms of a talent	2 lines	(ll. 593-594)
<hr/>		
29 lines		

The nineteen lines on physical description may be further divided as follows; according to the number of lines used to describe each feature:

hair	2
eyebrows	2
eyes	1
nose and chin	1
face	1
teeth and mouth	1
ear	1
neck	4
shoulders and arms	2
breasts	2
body and hands	1
fingers	1
<hr/>	
19	

A step-by-step examination of the poet's depiction of these parts of the body reveals many similarities with, but also some interesting divergences from the conventions

of description outlined by A.M. Colby.

1. The hair (ll. 567-8)

The word "sor" conveys the fixed ideal of blondness and the convenient rhyme "sor"/"or", besides defining the hair's colour, contains the added connotation of a value judgement on its splendour. However, the conventional description appears to be modified a little by the adverb "auques" and adverbial expression "par poi qu'il ne ...", suggesting that the hair is "rather blonde" and "very closely" resembles gold.

2. The eyebrows (ll. 569-570)

The negative expression of l. 569 does not directly describe the lady's eyebrows, but rather praises them for not being large. It is significant to note that big bushy eyebrows feature frequently in portraits of ugly persons, and so by implication Orgueilleuse possesses eyebrows of the opposite quality, that is, small and delicate ones. The reference to the shape of the eyebrows does not appear to be a common literary convention before this time. A.M. Colby's findings show that the author of Partonopeus is the only twelfth-century writer to refer to the arches formed by the eyebrows.³

3. The eyes (l. 571)

The expression "vers comme faucon" is a commonly used comparison to describe the liveliness and sparkle of the eyes. A similar example is found in a mid-twelfth century text:

Et vairs les eulz comme faucon mue

(Orable, La Prise d'Orange, l.256)⁴.

The adjective "vair" has been the subject of debate among scholars. A.M. Colby quotes examples of its use: in the above line from La Prise d'Orange comparing, as does our poet, human eyes with those of a falcon; describing a horse's eyes in a comparison involving crystal; and describing a lady's glances. She concludes:

Vair could not possibly be applied to the dark eyes of a falcon or of a horse, to crystal,

and to a lady's glances if any specific notion of color were included in its meaning. The one thing that glances, crystal, and the eyes of human beings, falcons, and horses have in common is their sparkle.⁵

4. The nose and chin (l. 572)

The conventional general phrase "bien fait" meaning "well-formed", "well-shaped", that is aesthetically pleasing, in this line refers to both the nose and the chin, in an economy of expression.

5. The face (l. 573)

The adjective "gente" indicates beauty in general and nobility, hence distinction, while "couloree", a word usually used to describe the redness of cheeks, here conveys the sense of "with a rosy complexion".

6. The teeth and mouth (l. 575)

The teeth and mouth are here described in conventional terms of portraits of beautiful women, the teeth being fine and delicate, "dougiez", the mouth being bright red, "vermeille".

7. The ear (l. 576)

The reference to Orgueilleuse's ear is perhaps the most interesting feature of the portrait, in terms of the conventionality of the description. A.M. Colby has shown that ears are not described, either in twelfth-century vernacular portraits of beautiful women and handsome men, or in Latin literature of the same period, and that in Chrétien's portrait of Soredamors (Cligès, ll. 825-829), the poet actually excuses himself from describing the chin and ears as there is so much to describe.⁶ Ears feature frequently however in portraits of ugly persons where hairiness and excessive size are aspects commonly described. A striking example of this tradition occurs in Chrétien's description of the Giant Herdsman in Yvain:

Oroilles mossues et granz
Autiex com a uns olifanz.

(Yvain, ll. 297-298)

The opposite qualities of roundness and smallness occur in the description of Orgueilleuse's ear, indicating that it is praiseworthy and as befits a beautiful woman. Curiously, the poet mentions "l'oraille" in the singular, indicating perhaps that only one ear is visible. In the description of this feature and in the following lines devoted to the neck, the style of the lady's costume (which is not described) may have some influence.

8. The neck (ll. 577-580)

The four lines concerned with the lady's neck strike a curious note in the tone of the portrait as a whole. The knight states that he would consider anyone who enquired about Orgueilleuse's neck a fool, that she has a white one "like other people do", and ends by stressing the truth of what he has just said. There would appear to be a suggestion here of parody of the stylised conventions of portrait description, perhaps hinted at in the earlier modified and "negative" praise of the hair and eyebrows. On the other hand, the poet may be attempting here to inject a touch of irony and humour into his otherwise serious formalised description. In these four lines he indulges in a kind of word-play, perhaps trying to be a little original and surprise his listeners. The remainder of the portrait, however, seems serious in its intention of describing Orgueilleuse in a laudatory manner, so that the four lines devoted to her neck tend to detract a little from this otherwise carefully constructed tribute to the lady's beauty.

9. The shoulders and arms (ll. 581-582)

The epithets "gentes" and "beax" are those commonly used to express ideal beauty, and will be discussed further below. In l. 582 the expression "cousuz a laz" refers to the ribbons or laces with which Orgueilleuse's sleeves are fashioned.

10. The breasts (ll. 583-584)

The description of Orgueilleuse's breasts contains a common comparison in portrayals of ideal beauty and also

provides an attractive rhyme. The same comparison occurs in Chrétien's description of Philomena:

Autressi come deus pomettes
Estoient ses deus mamelettes.

(Philomena, ll. 161-162)⁷.

11. The body and hands (l. 585)

Once more, the conventional epithets to describe ideal beauty, "gent" and "bel", are employed, but the beauty of the hands is extended in the following line on the fingers.

12. The fingers (l. 586)

Long fingers were considered ideal by twelfth-century poets, and the qualities of being "traitiz", "well-formed", and "plains", "smooth", are conventionally applicable to any part of the body and skin, of beautiful women or handsome men.

General statements of beauty and the use of several specific words and expressions denoting colour occur in all portraits of beautiful women and perhaps constitute one of their most stylised features. The adjectives "bel" and "gent" appear several times in the description of Orgueilleuse:

La face gente ... (l. 573)

... plus bele que fee. (l. 574)

Gentes espauls et beax braz (l. 581)

Gent a le cors et beles mains; (l. 585)

Several conventional expressions of colour also occur. The use of "sor" in describing the hair has been mentioned. Orgueilleuse's complexion is denoted by the word "couloree" and her mouth is "vermeille", "bright red", both of which are commonly used adjectives to describe redness. Like redness, whiteness is a quality of certain parts of the body worthy of admiration. In this description whiteness occurs only once where Orgueilleuse's neck is said to be white, "blanc", like those of other people.

Four lines (ll. 587-590) deal with the indescribability of Orgueilleuse's beauty. A poet's admission of his inability to describe a lady's beauty is a common feature of twelfth-century portraits. In this case, however, the poet makes a larger claim in that he says anyone who wished to tell of Orgueilleuse's beauty would begin in vain as no-one would be able to reproduce it. The notion of reproduction is expressed by the verb "contrefaire" ("contreferoit", l. 590) which not only conveys the idea of reproducing Orgueilleuse's beauty in words, but also the idea of making something in imitation, of making a "copy". An interesting example of this idea of making a "copy" of a beautiful woman occurs in Chrétien's portrait of Enide, where Nature marvels at her handiwork and finds herself unable to copy her exemplar:

Molt estoit la pucele gente,
 car tote i ot mise s'antante
 Nature qui fete l'avoit;
 ele meismes s'an estoit
 plus de .V^c. foiz mervelliee
 comant une sole foiee
 tant bele chose fere pot;
 car puis tant pener ne se pot
 qu'ele poïst son essanplaire
 an nule guise contrefaire.

(Erec et Enide, ll. 411-420)⁸.

The idea that Orgueilleuse's beauty cannot be reproduced either in words or by art, as a "copy", testifies to her uniqueness, a point reinforced in l. 592, in the general and somewhat hackneyed expression that there never before existed such a creature.

The reference to Nature's work in the creation of the beautiful Orgueilleuse occurs in only one line (l. 591) where the poet simply repeats what he has already affirmed in l. 418, that "Nature made her to be looked at". It is interesting to note that later in the romance when Blancandin describes Orgueilleuse, it is God and not Nature who has "made her to be looked at":

Diex qui la fist por esgarder
 N'i laissa riens a amender. (ll. 3907-3908)

The notion of outdoing, which usually involves a comparison with another individual, a historical or legendary figure, or any person who ever existed, occurs in l. 574. After mentioning the beauty of her face, the poet declares:

Cent tanz ert plus bele que fee, (l. 574)
perhaps relying for the strength of his comparison on his listeners' appreciation of faery beauty gained from their familiarity with Arthurian literature, such as Chrétien's romances or Marie de France's lais.

The claim of perfection for the lady occurs in relation to her manner of speaking, (ll. 593-594), where the poet simply says that in this there is nothing to be improved. A.M. Colby notes that:

As for talents, the ability to be a good conversationalist is the only one to which very much attention is paid. 9.

The reference to Orgueilleuse's courtly speech follows then similar references in twelfth-century portraits.

The portrait of Orgueilleuse can be seen to follow fairly closely the conventions of portraiture developed during the twelfth century, and useful comparisons can be made with several features of Chrétien's descriptions of beautiful women. However, Chrétien's descriptions of his heroines tend to be longer and more complex than the portrait of Orgueilleuse, which is confined very largely to the description of her physical appearance. For example, in Chrétien's description of Laudine, the enumeration of her fine features is interwoven with the expression of her grief, and the poet has clearly transformed the conventional framework to suit his narrative purposes, to evoke the beautiful but grieving Laudine as she appears for the first time to Yvain. The description of Orgueilleuse constitutes a portrait in the strict sense more closely than does Chrétien's description of Laudine, as the poet's principal purpose here is simply

to describe Orgueilleuse's physical appearance.

The description of Orgueilleuse's features therefore follows, for the most part, the conventions established in earlier romances. The inclusion of the lady's ear in the description is perhaps unusual, although the manner in which it is described can be said to belong to the conventional style of describing physical beauty, if only by its direct opposition to the conventional description of the ears of ugly persons. Inclusion of this feature may indicate novelty in the description of a beautiful woman, or perhaps simply the poet's desire for completeness.

The twenty-nine lines of the formal portrait identify Orgueilleuse as the conventionally beautiful heroine, and it is in the knight's references, before and after the portrait, (ll. 514-558 and ll. 595-608), to her disdain of any suitor and to the political implications of her stand, that her individuality and potential interest as a character are revealed.

Immediately after the description of Orgueilleuse, Blancandin expresses his enthusiasm for the adventure promised in the proposed exploit of stealing a kiss from her. The encounter between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse which follows heralds the development of love between hero and heroine. The course of their love is fraught with obstacles and frustrations, providing the poet with opportunities for analysis and intrigue in line with the treatment of the love theme in earlier romances.

Notes:

1. Librairie Droz, Geneva, 1965.
2. Ibid., p. 4
3. Ibid., p. 39
4. Quoted by A.M. Colby, ibid., p. 41
5. Ibid., p. 42

6. Ibid., p. 149
7. Quoted by A.M. Colby, ibid., p. 60
8. Les romans de Chrétien de Troyes: I, Erec et Enide,
ed. Mario Roques, Paris, 1955, p. 13
9. Colby, p. 24

Chapter 5

THE LOVE OF BLANCANDIN AND ORGUEILLEUSE D'AMOUR

Love between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse d'amour constitutes one of the major themes of the romance. As has been stated in Chapter 1, the love theme is interwoven with the other major theme of chivalry during the first third of the romance (ll. 1-1770), but thereafter the love story of the hero and heroine is relegated, for the most part, to the background, as the principal concern of the narrative is the story of Blancandin's knightly career. The aim then of this chapter is to explore the theme of love more fully: firstly, to examine its expression during the first third of the romance, and secondly, to outline the part it plays during the remainder of the narrative.

As we have seen, the theme of love is first introduced in the third section of the romance, ll. 207-396, "Blancandin's first adventure". As Blancandin sets off again after this adventure, it is the power of this emotion which has left the strongest impression on our hero. The episode has served, amongst other things, to expose Blancandin to the mystery of love in preparation for his encounter with Orgueilleuse.

The knight at the ford provides a clear picture of Orgueilleuse's attitude to love. First we learn that despite her lady-companion's urging, Orgueilleuse rejects all suitors proposed to her:

Ma damoisele vi[e]nt derriere
 Qui molt par est cortoise et fiere,
 Et chevauche loig de sa gent
 O sa maistresse solement
 Qui molt souvent li dit et prie
 Qu'ele donast sa drüerie
 Ou a chevalier ou a roi
 Qui fust de paraige endroit soi,
 Mais de tot ce n'a ele cure. (ll. 533-541)

A little further on, after proposing the exploit of stealing a kiss, the knight tells us more, that Orgueilleuse

has never been kissed and has never taken a lover. However, there now follows the significant implication that the lady does not reject the idea of love out of hand. Rather, she has declared that she will never love,

Jusque fortune li dorra
 Ou chevalier ou damoiseil
 Qui tant par ert cortois et bel,
 Que nus n'i savra que reprandre
 Se toz jorz le devoit atendre. (ll. 554-558)

Obviously, the knight sees Blancandin as the prospective suitor who may be acceptable to his proud lady, and thus the scene is set for their meeting.

The outlining of Orgueilleuse's stance brings into play some important facets of the subject of love and marriage as it appears in courtly romances, and in the wider context, of the institution of marriage as it had developed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Under the increasing influence of the Church and through the secular desire to ensure social order, the institution of marriage by this time had become first and foremost a practical measure, a means of securing legitimate succession and of ensuring stability of land tenure and political power through advantageous alliances. Thus, it is for such practical reasons that Orgueilleuse's lady-companion urges her to give her love to a knight or king of suitable lineage, i.e. of rank appropriate to her own ("Qui fust de paraige endroit soi", l. 540), and it is because of this view of marriage that Orgueilleuse's refusal of Alimodés's suit brings such shame and hardship to her people as he tries to win her through waging war. Orgueilleuse then is making an independent stand against this concept of marriage as an institution for purely practical and political ends. Instead, she holds out for love - for the love of a knight or young lord whose only qualifications will be courtliness and a handsome appearance ("Qui tant par ert cortois et bel", l. 556). Now it is clear that her proud stance and her disdain of suitors do not constitute a refusal of love, as seems to be implied by her name "Orgueilleuse d'amors" (l. 722),

but more accurately, indicate a refusal of the conventional view of love held by her people who understand 'love' (here called "druerie", l. 538) to be synonymous with a marriage of convenience to secure the stability of Tormadai. The knight at the ford, in proposing to Blancandin that he steal a kiss from Orgueilleuse, hopes that by bringing these two together a solution will be found on several counts: that Orgueilleuse will willingly give her love to Blancandin, that he will then defend Tormadai and ensure stability, and in so doing, fulfil his stated aims of seeking honour and reputation.

The notion that Orgueilleuse's acceptance of Blancandin will lead to the solution of the problem of Tormadai's security has its parallel in Chrétien's Yvain. Laudine's acceptance of Yvain as her husband is greatly influenced by her urgent need for a defender of the fountain. Laudine responds to Yvain's declaration of his love for her (Yvain, ll. 2025-2032) not with any reference to his avowal of love, but with a question regarding the fountain:

"Et oseriez vos anprendre
Por moi ma fontaine a deffandre?" (ll. 2033-2034)

Yvain's reply on this point, "Oil voir, dame! vers toz homes" (l. 2035), secures her acceptance, and a little further on Laudine makes it clear that her practical need for a protector is her reason for remarrying:

Et jel ferai por le besaing. (l. 2045)

It is worth taking a second look at the initial encounter between hero and heroine in order to reiterate the circumstances in which the poet brings together the two protagonists of his love story. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Blancandin views the proposed exploit simply as an adventure and an opportunity to fulfil his ambitions. Orgueilleuse's stance as described by the knight portrays her as a lady of determination and independence. The action which brings these two together involves the unusual and daring use of a conventional symbol of love,

the kiss; the three kisses Blancandin steals from Orgueilleuse provide the starting point for the unfolding of a love story firmly set within the traditions of courtly romance.

By means of this encounter between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, the poet has created a challenging situation which gives ample scope for complexity and skill in working out the love theme. Interest is immediately created by the prospective lovers being an unlikely pair, as too were Chrétien's Yvain and Laudine.¹ The most significant point about the lovers at first is the distance between them. The stealing of the kisses has in effect created a physical and psychological gap, physical as immediately afterwards Blancandin flees and Orgueilleuse vows revenge, and psychological because Blancandin has behaved in a thoroughly uncourtly manner towards a lady. The poet now works towards the bridging of this gap, through analysis of the lady's changing emotions and the eventual establishment of a relationship of service between the lovers.

The analysis of feelings constitutes the most interesting feature of the treatment of the love theme in courtly romance. Here, the poet makes use of several conventions developed in earlier courtly romances: the outlining of stages in the development of love; the role of Love as a deity ("li diex Amors", l. 1384); the parallel between inward and outward effects of emotion; the expression of feelings through monologue, in declarations made by the lovers to each other, and through conversations with a third party; and during the period of their separation, the evocation of the loved one in memory and dream. Further aspects of the poet's treatment of the love theme include the creation of situations of intrigue in order to heighten tension and increase the complexity of the story, and the importance of the love

of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse in the story of the defence of Tormadai.

The outlining of stages in the development of love is clearly evident in the analysis of Orgueilleuse's feelings, and reveals the poet's sensitivity to the nuances of feminine emotions. Orgueilleuse's immediate reaction to Blancandin's "assault" is to vow revenge on the one who has caused her such shame, and she declares that revenge will be the most severe:

Soit filz de roi ou soit de conte,
Si perdra il demain la teste,
Ja ne fera de lui grant geste. (ll. 726-728)

This is exactly the reaction we have been led to expect by the earlier delineation of her character. But in the next few lines, a very different picture of Orgueilleuse emerges, as she betrays her femininity by promptly falling in a faint. The subsequent efforts of her lady-companion to calm her feelings of outrage have in fact the opposite effect of strengthening her feeling of being dishonoured and her resolve to be revenged:

Ge le ferai ardoir ou pendre.
Ardoir le ferai, ou noier,
Quar molt en ai grant desirrer.
Grant desverie fist, par foi,
Quant onques adesa a moi. (ll. 800-804)

However, this bravely uttered resolution is no longer that of a cold, proud and self-possessed lady, but rather that of a very vulnerable and discomfited one. Just after these words the knight from the ford approaches Orgueilleuse:

Il la vit molt descoloree
Et corrociee et exploree, (ll. 821-822)

and indeed her tears are such that no-one is able to comfort her:

Sa damoisele tint por fole,
Quant son coraige si descuevre
Et qu'el plore por itel oevre,
Que nus ne la puet conforter
Por riens c'on li saiche nomer. (ll. 848-852)

Orgueilleuse's distress is lasting. Her resolve to punish Blancandin is expressed in even more extravagant and

irrational terms:

Diex, dit ele, de quele mort
 Me seroit il graignor confort?
 Feraï le ardoir ou noier,
 En poiz boillir ou graillier
 Ou a coës de cheval traire? (ll. 1019-1023)

The alternative punishments of burning and hanging (l. 800) are commonplace; Orgueilleuse's consideration of more dire and humiliating ones reveals the intensity of her feelings. The lady-companion's suggestion that she is over-reacting and that Blancandin may have been motivated by admiration of her beauty then leads Orgueilleuse to a calmer and more honest appraisal of her feelings, and to the dawning of love.

Two lines mark the turning point in Orgueilleuse's passion and in her understanding of her emotions. The dramatic reversal of her feelings towards Blancandin is neatly expressed by understatement in l. 1044:

Ele se sent forment lassee,
 D'amors li vient une penssee. (ll. 1043-1044)

In the following monologue of self-examination (ll. 1045-1088), Orgueilleuse weighs up her situation in a calm and reasoned fashion. She recognises that her resolve to have Blancandin put to death for stealing a kiss is unreasonable, in the parallel expression of two separate lines:

Trop seroie fole et legiere, (l. 1050)
 Trop seroie desmesuree. (l. 1059)

She also recognises that Blancandin's audacious action can be explained by his youth:

Ge cuit qu'il le fist par enfance (l. 1063)

though she still fears that she may be shamed by his boasting. Orgueilleuse's monologue has points in common with that of Yvain (Yvain, ll. 1428-1506). Like Yvain, though less extensively, Orgueilleuse muses on the opposition of love and hate, "Harrai le ge quant il m'a chiere?" (l. 1049), and on "folie" or excess (ll. 1050 and 1059). Then, calmly, Orgueilleuse recognises that her planned revenge on Blancandin would not enhance her

reputation, but would instead cause her dishonour:

Si me tenroit on a desvee.
Ja por ce n'estroie vengiee,
Ainz seroie plus aviliee. (ll. 1060-1062)

For the first time, Orgueilleuse considers Blancandin as an individual, noting his probable rank, acknowledging the courage he displayed by undertaking the exploit, and noting also his handsome appearance. However, though Orgueilleuse now views Blancandin in a more accommodating light and proposes to make him her seneschal (l. 1081), she remains unwilling to compromise her avowed stance of not accepting any suitor.

Orgueilleuse's attraction towards Blancandin is gradually strengthened, firstly by admiration for his prowess and secondly by jealousy. From the window of her tower, she watches him fight in the tournament with Alimodés's men, and, in line with the traditions of courtly romance, just as the love of a lady may inspire a knight in combat, so the prowess of an accomplished knight may inspire admiration and feelings of love in the lady. At the same time, Orgueilleuse remembers that the provost with whom Blancandin is lodging has two daughters, and later when she hears sounds of merriment from the provost's house after the tournament, she experiences the pangs of jealousy and at last fully recognises the true nature of her feelings for Blancandin:

Qu'ele n'i reviegne noient
Ainz s'est mis en la gelosie;
S'il est amis, el est amie. (ll. 1368-1370)

At this point of recognition by Orgueilleuse of her true feelings, the poet introduces the concept of Love as a deity, Cupid, who strikes the heroine with his dart, "Amors l'a ferue du dart" (l. 1375), and in so doing causes the outward and physical effects which parallel the inner experience. The burning effect of Love's dart causes dramatic changes in colour:

Quar molt sovent color li mue,
Et si palist et si tressue.
Noire devint, vermeille et bloie, (ll. 1377-1379)

and then causes trembling and shaking. These ten lines (ll. 1375-1384) not only describe the outward effects of Orgueilleuse's feelings but also clearly constitute a punishment for her earlier disdain:

Dedenz la chanbre pointe a flors
La justisoit li diex Amors. (ll. 1383-1384)

Orgueilleuse is then afflicted with all the effects of what her lady-companion identifies as "li max d'amors" (l. 1409), and in order to bring herself to Blancandin's notice, she resorts to intrigue. To dispose of the threat posed to her ambitions by the provost's daughters, she tells the provost that she knows Blancandin is already spoken for:

Qu'il a molt plus cortoise amie
Arriere en son país laissiee, (ll. 1494-1495)

and that she will arrange advantageous marriages for his daughters. Orgueilleuse's previous determination to refuse all suitors has thus given way, through the dawning of her love for Blancandin, to an equally firm determination to have the man of her choice.

The gradual flowering of Orgueilleuse's feelings for Blancandin has thus been skilfully described through a series of stages. By contrast, only brief references are made to Blancandin's experience of love, reinforcing the impression that for him the concerns of love remain subordinate to those of chivalry. On hearing the provost's message that Orgueilleuse wishes to see him, and that she has told the provost of Blancandin's "amie", he denies that he has ever been in love with anyone. He then declares that he is motivated to help defend Orgueilleuse solely by the desire to exercise his prowess as a knight and not by any thoughts of love:

Se ge li aide de sa guerre,
Ce faz ge tot par gentillise.
Ne l'en demant autre servise,
N'autre loier, fors de paller,
Et que sovent puisse joster,
Quar ge n'ai soig de feme prandre;
Autre part me covient entendre. (ll. 1620-1626)

The dawning of love in Blancandin receives very brief

expression. Factors which were brought into play in describing the development of Orgueilleuse's feelings - the role of the god of Love, and the parallellism of inner emotions and outward physical changes - are in Blancandin's case compressed into a mere five lines immediately after the lovers' declarations to each other:

Cil esgarde la damoisele;
 El cors li repoint l'estancele
 Qui les autres esprant et art.
 Amors le ra feru du dart,
 Sovent li fait coulor mûer. (ll. 1717-1721)

Unlike Orgueilleuse, Blancandin does not embark on any analysis of his feelings. In fact, immediately after this moment, he proposes to the provost that they return to the knights who are preparing for battle - once again chivalrous concerns take precedence over those of love. At this stage of his career, Blancandin shows himself to be much more concerned with the challenge of future battles to be undertaken in the service of Orgueilleuse than with the emotional aspect of his relationship with her. The first expression by Blancandin of his love for Orgueilleuse occurs later in the short monologue as he leaves Tormadai as Alimodés's captive, and it is only much later in the romance, when his adventures have necessitated his prolonged separation from Orgueilleuse, that Blancandin closely examines and expresses his feelings for her, as will be explored further on.

The second meeting of the hero and heroine is notable firstly for the delicate contrast brought out by the poet between Orgueilleuse's inner feelings and her actual conversation with Blancandin, and secondly for the declarations made by the lovers to each other. During their conversation, the poet effectively alternates passages of dialogue with passages describing Orgueilleuse's feelings and her difficulties first in not revealing and then in wishing to reveal them to the unsuspecting Blancandin. The action thus takes place on two levels - on the one hand, in Orgueilleuse's heart and mind, as suggested by the poet:

Tel joie en a la damoisele
Li cuers li volete et sautele, (ll. 1653-1654)

La pucele du cuer soupire,
 Ne sait comment el li puist dire
 Que el est por lui enbrasee
 Molt durement, et trespenssee, (ll. 1689-1692)

and on the other hand, in the conversation during which Orgueilleuse outlines the dilemma of her political situation and asks Blancandin to help repulse Alimodés's attacks.

Orgueilleuse's problem of not knowing how to convey her feelings to Blancandin is solved by his asking her to explain her reference to his "amie" in her conversation with the provost. This provokes the heroine's declaration of her feelings:

"Damoiseax, sire, c'ert por moi
 Que ge disoie en moie foi,
 Que plus vos aim que ne puis dire;
 Mes cors en est en grant martire.
 Se vos volez, d'or en avant
 Seron de verai cuer amant." (ll. 1705-1710)

This declaration is on a single plane, that of love, a purely emotional statement of Orgueilleuse's feelings and desire that henceforth they should be true lovers. The significance of Blancandin's reply to Orgueilleuse's passionate declaration has already been noted in connection with the balance between the two major themes of the narrative:²

L'enfes respont par cortoisie:
 "Dame, ce ne refus ge mie;
 Por vostre amor, pris a conquerre
 Vos aiderai de ceste guerre." (ll. 1711-1714)

Orgueilleuse rejoins with the pledge that he shall have whatever he asks of her (ll. 1715-1716). These declarations, taken together, constitute a clear expression of the contractual nature of the relationship of service being established between Orgueilleuse and Blancandin, whereby she offers him her love (just a little prior to this, ll. 1665-1674, she has asked him to defend her in war, a proposal which he has readily accepted, ll. 1686-1688), and he in return undertakes to fight in her

defence, for her love and, significantly, for his reputation. The contract thus expressed in these declarations is reinforced by Orgueilleuse's gifts to Blancandin, which are the outward symbols of their relationship:

... par grant amor
Lui envoia un oriflor
Et un escu et un cheval,
Tot covert d'un vermeil cendal,
Et avuec ce sa destre manche
Que de s'amor soit en fiance. (ll. 1749-1754)

Here the convergence of the two major themes of love and chivalry is clear; because of love, Orgueilleuse gives Blancandin the equipment he will require in battle in her service, and in battle he will wear her colours and her right sleeve, the tokens of her promise to grant him her love.

The technique of presenting a character's feelings by means of monologue, as in the passage of Orgueilleuse's self-examination (ll. 1045-1088), is used again in two parallel passages when Blancandin sails from Tormadai as Alimodés's captive, in which Blancandin and then Orgueilleuse reflect on their separation (ll. 2144-2160, 2163-2183). Blancandin watches Orgueilleuse's castle as he sails away and calls upon the castle to protect his loved one. He then contemplates Orgueilleuse's fate, should Alimodés win her, and proposes to appeal to the god of Love:

Au Dieu d'amor ferai homaige,
S'il me garist mon heritaige
Du roi a la barbe chenue
Qui me quide tolir ma drue. (ll. 2155-2158)

His monologue concludes with the expectation of seeing Orgueilleuse again:

Mais se Diex plest, ja ne perdrai
S'amor; encois la reverrai. (ll. 2159-2160)

The narrative switches abruptly to Orgueilleuse in her tower (ll. 2161-2162), and continues with her monologue which closely parallels that of Blancandin. She first laments the loss of her lover, and then calls down curses

upon Alimodés and all his race. After musing on her first meeting with Blancandin and the stolen kisses, she reiterates her love for him, and resolves to wait for him for ever. The passage concludes with the same sentiment as expressed by Blancandin:

Se Dieu plest, encor revenra. (l. 2183)

A more striking example of monologue occurs when Blancandin's emotions are conveyed in an evocative passage during his stay in the kingdom of Ruban (ll. 2587-2656). Firstly, the poet carefully sets the scene for Blancandin's reminiscences. The hero goes into an orchard, which is described in detail³, and is there depicted alone in an exotic place far removed from the usual backdrop of the battle scenes, perhaps in order to heighten the sense of his homesickness. In a passage reminiscent of that from Chrétien's Perceval where the hero is reminded of his "amie", Blancheflor, by the sight of three drops of blood on the snow (Perceval, ll. 4194-4212)⁴, Blancandin contemplates a rose and remembers Orgueilleuse. He addresses the rose, comparing its beauty with that of Orgueilleuse, and affirming that in terms of colour her face is superior, as too is her scent. Contemplation of the rose leads Blancandin to lament his separation from Orgueilleuse and inspires in him the desire to return to her. He freely expresses his feelings of love for Orgueilleuse, reproaching the god of Love for allowing the beauty of leaves and flowers to flourish while he is separated from his loved one (ll. 2617-2620). There follows his imagined vision of the lady as he is borne on a cloud by the god of Love (ll. 2629-2634) incorporating in l. 2633, "Celui qui totes autres vaint", a kind of paraphrase of Virgil's 'omnia vincit amor' (Aeneid I, 663). Blancandin, overcome with grief, lamenting further his 'loss' of Orgueilleuse, then plucks a rose and kisses it:

Por s'amie baise la flor
Qui li sanble de la coulour. (ll. 2653-2654)

His impassioned grief has been watched by Sadoine (ll. 2657-2660) who was hidden but now enters the garden and asks

the reasons for his sorrow, observing that Blancandin's sigh seems like one occasioned by love (l. 2666). The episode containing the monologue, from Blancandin's entry into the orchard (l. 2587) to his departure from it in the company of Sadoine (l. 2710), represents the poet's most complete analysis of Blancandin's feelings. His extension of the stereotyped comparison of the rose and the lady's beauty creates a fine analysis of the effects of separation on the lover.

The expression of emotions to a third party is the most frequent means employed by the poet to analyse the feelings of both his hero and heroine. In this regard, the conversations between Orgueilleuse and her lady-companion are crucial to the unfolding of the heroine's love for Blancandin. At first, ll. 735-806, the lady-companion attempts to calm Orgueilleuse at the height of her rage and desire for revenge, and offers her advice on how to behave. In a later passage, ll. 1009-1038, the lady-companion again tries to temper Orgueilleuse's passion for revenge with common sense. Her purpose then is to counter the excesses of Orgueilleuse's emotion with advice based on common sense and a practical point of view. At the first sign of Orgueilleuse's admiration for the strange knight Blancandin (ll. 1279 ff.), she again urges a marriage with Alimodés for practical and political reasons. When Orgueilleuse is struck by Love's dart, the effects of love are conveyed by the conversation which follows between the heroine and her lady-companion. The role of Orgueilleuse's lady-companion is an important one, having several points in common with that of Lunete, Laudine's companion in Chrétien's Yvain.

Blancandin expresses his feelings at various stages of the romance to the provost, to Sadoine, and to his father. As we have seen from his brief conversations with the provost, Blancandin's meeting with Orgueilleuse and her pledge of love for him have not produced in him the emotional reactions of a lover, but rather the enthusiastic

anticipation of a young knight facing adventure. After the sight of a rose has recalled his thoughts to Orgueilleuse while in exile, he expresses his feelings of love for her in conversation with Sadoine. Interestingly, his emotions are expressed in terms of warfare:

Li diex d'amors nos fait grant guerre,
Qui tant me tient en ceste terre. (ll. 2671-72)

One interpretation of this romance holds that the episode of the rose provides the only expression by Blancandin of the sentiments of love, and that his later conversation with his father explains his love for Orgueilleuse in a merely factual way, devoid of emotion.⁵ Blancandin's replies to his father's questions in ll. 3891-3956 about Orgueilleuse are indeed expressed in a rather formal and stylised fashion, especially his first speech in this passage, ll. 3897-3912, where he describes her beauty in conventional and general terms:

Ja par home n'ert aconté
De pucele si grant beauté,
Qu'ancore n'en ait assez plus;
Ne la porroit descrire nus.
Bien puet on dire, c'est sanz glose,
Quar c'est li lis et c'est la rose.
Du mont ou nus n'a sa pareille,
De sa beauté est grant merveille.
Diex qui la fist por esgarder
N'i laissa riens a amender. (ll. 3899-3908)

The comparison with the lily and the rose of l. 3904 recalls the parallel of the rose and Orgueilleuse in Blancandin's monologue in the orchard (ll. 2607-2656), and here adds to the idea that her beauty is superlative and unique. He also speaks of his great love for her, and relates how he is comforted during their separation by her appearance in his dreams:

Souvent me vient en avison
Que ge tieg de son non le brief,
Por ce ne sui mie si grief
Que por la vision m'apaie
Que ge cuit que par ice l'aie.
Molt sui liez quant en mon dormant
Me vient la pucele devant. (ll. 3930-3936)

This expression of his love for Orgueilleuse reveals an emotional commitment, even though it is presented in a

subdued manner, compared with Orgueilleuse's more passionate affirmations, and l. 3935 in particular quite clearly conveys emotion.

The themes of love and chivalry are skilfully interwoven in Section 13, "Blancandin's arrival at Tormadai" (ll. 3859-4140), and in Section 14, "The battle of Tormadai" (ll. 4141-4816), thus bringing together again the twin concerns of the narrative after the lovers' separation. In Section 13, passages describing the arrival by sea of Blancandin and his companions before Tormadai and the encampment of Alimodés are followed by Blancandin's conversation with his father already referred to, and then by his long conversation with the provost sent by Orgueilleuse as her messenger. In the course of the latter conversation, the topic of the lovers' faithfulness one to the other during their long separation takes precedence over arrangements for the forthcoming battle. Most significantly, Blancandin gives the provost a ring to take to Orgueilleuse as a pledge and reassurance of their love:

"...
Dites moi a ma douce amie,
Beax amis, qu'el ne s'esmoit mie.
De moie part la salüez
Et cest enel d'or li donez.
S'en son doi l'a la damoisele,
Toz jors avra color novele
Et amera veraïement,
Et si garra de son torment;
Dites li que ge l'i envoi." (ll. 4129-4137)

Orgueilleuse receives Blancandin's ring, sends advice to her men of an underground route (ll. 4507-4520), and sends her colours to inspire Blancandin and his companions (ll. 4523-4538). She watches the preparations from her palace, calling upon Love to keep Blancandin from harm, and she sends him her sleeve:

Et reclaime le dieu d'amor
Qu'il garde sain son ameor.
Cele a prise sa destre manche
De drap de soie tote blanche,
Si la ferma en un espié;
A Blanchandin l'a envoié ... (ll. 4599-4604)

The exchange of the ring for the colours and the sleeve conveys the reciprocal character of their relationship. For his part, Blancandin never loses sight of the fact that it is for Orgueilleuse that he is fighting, and in reply to the provost, he declares his intention to marry her when the battle is over:

- "Se ge puis faire la bataille,
Dist Blanchandins, ge la pranrai;
Jamais autre de lui n'avrai." (ll. 4590-4592)

Eventually Blancandin and Alimodés fight in single combat, agreeing that the victor shall win Orgueilleuse, who is watching from her tower and praying for Blancandin's victory. Orgueilleuse's prayer ends with a firm avowal of her love, in terms which recall the vow of the unnamed lady rescued by Blancandin in his first adventure. The unnamed lady declared:

Et s'il est morz, por lui morrai,
Jamais ne m'en departirai. (ll. 361-362)

Orgueilleuse makes a similar declaration:

Se il i muert, ge morrai ja; (l. 4786)

and then ends her prayer by taking this resolution further, towards a suicidal intention, in an ultimate expression of her inability to face life without Blancandin. Her death wish, here repeated, occurs at the end of a long résumé of Christian teaching and is accompanied by much emotion (ll. 4795-4796). It is a moment of great tension:

Se il i muert, bien soit seür
Que me leraï chaoir du mur.
Ovuc s'ame en ira la moie;
Ja ne tenra mes autre voie. (ll. 4791-4794)

The double death, here only a wish, reminds us, as did the deaths of the wounded knight and unnamed lady of the first adventure, of the story of Pyramus and Thisbe.

Blancandin wins Orgueilleuse and is faced almost immediately with a choice between the claims of love and friendship when Sadoine is taken prisoner by Alimodés. Blancandin chooses to fulfil his obligation as a knight to render aid to his companion-in-arms and, having placed Orgueilleuse in the care of her seneschal Subien, he

embarks on the task of freeing Sadoine. This adventure and the final one involving Subien's treachery are played out before the long-awaited marriage of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse takes place. The description of the lovers' reunion and marriage is very brief and forms part of the conclusion of the romance:

Mait quant son dru voit revenir,
 A ses deus bras le va saisir
 Et cil le baise et ele lui.
 La s'entrespeusent ambedui;
 Ses espousa uns archevesques.
 Assés i ot abés et vesques
 Et menestreus et jogleors.
 Huit jors entiers dura la cours,
 Et Blancandins fu coronés,
 ...

(ll. 6509-6517)

The love theme is treated throughout according to the conventions of courtly romance. Orgueilleuse is portrayed as a typical heroine, and the analysis of her feelings is conducted with considerable sensitivity. As has been demonstrated, the relatively small extent to which Blancandin's experience of love is explored by the poet serves to indicate the far greater emphasis placed on the more military aspects of his experiences as a knight.

Notes:

1. See Chapter 1, p. 11
2. See Chapter 1, pp. 16-17
3. See Chapter 7, pp. 99-100
4. Chrétien de Troyes, Le roman de Perceval ou le conte du graal, ed. W. Roach, Genève-Paris, 1959
5. Southworth, p. 144

Chapter 6

COMBAT - ITS NATURE AND IMPORTANCE

The predominance of chivalry brings many varied battle scenes including full-scale battles and occasions of single combat. Scenes of preparation for combat and description of the battles occupy a large proportion of the narrative; besides providing the setting for the development of Blancandin's role, and providing opportunities for him to display prowess, they form an integral part of the story.

In the course of Blancandin's adventures, twelve instances of military engagement take place. It is proposed to list these episodes and to group them into three broad categories of combat. Each category will then be defined in general terms, using specific instances of combat to illustrate points made. Aspects common to all three categories will be discussed, and the overall importance of the episodes of combat to the romance as a whole will be evaluated.

The twelve combat episodes are:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Single combat with the wicked knight | ll. 297-352 |
| 2. Single combat with the provost | ll. 912-972 |
| 3. Alimodés's attack on Orgueilleuse's castle | ll. 1093-1158 |
| - ensuing battle in which Blancandin joins | ll. 1231-1326 |
| 4. Single combat with Rubion | ll. 1834-1881 |
| - full-scale battle | ll. 1882-1976 |
| 5. Preparations for battle in Ruban's kingdom | ll. 2387-2396 |
| - full-scale battle against Ruban's enemies | ll. 2413-2482 |
| - continuation of battle | ll. 2527-2542 |
| 6. Preliminaries to battle with Daire | ll. 3343-3397 |
| - full-scale battle with Daire | ll. 3398-3432 |
| - continuation of battle | ll. 3573-3688 |
| 7. Preliminary description of Alimodés's army | ll. 4413-4426 |

- full-scale battle at Tormadai 11. 4458-4885
- single combat with Alimodés 11. 4695-4726,
4797-4833
- continuation of battle 11. 4834-4885
- 8. Assault on Cassidoine by Alimodés 11. 5496-5510
- 9. Alimodés's daughter sends her men
to fight her father and free
Sadoine 11. 5613-5673
- 10. Full-scale battle with Alimodés
outside Cassidoine 11. 5778-5905
- 11. Battle with Subien at Castelfort 11. 6250-6365
- 12. Battle with band of thieves 11. 6464-6494

These episodes may be grouped in three broad categories of combat: individual combats between two opponents (nos. 1, 2, 4, and 7, above); tournament-style combat (no. 3); and battles (nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12). It should be stressed however that this categorisation cannot be rigid; for example, frequently individual combat takes place within a full-scale battle but is described as the combat between two single opponents; large full-scale battles are considered in the same category as the relatively minor confrontation of Blancandin and Sadoine on the one hand and Subien and the thieves on the other.

There are four major instances of individual combat in the romance; in each case Blancandin confronts an opponent. He fights the wicked knight (11. 297-352), meets the provost's challenge (11. 912-972), challenges and fights Rubion (11. 1834-1881), and fights Alimodés for the prize of Orgueilleuse (11. 4695-4726, 4797-4833) during the battle of Tormadai. Of these four episodes, the duel with the provost takes place in special circumstances and will be considered separately. In the remaining three instances a verbal challenge is first issued and accepted: Blancandin challenges the wicked knight to mount his horse and fight, or to fight on foot (11. 317-324); he challenges Rubion to battle, in the name of Orgueilleuse (11. 1837-1842); after taunting each other Alimodés and Blancandin agree to fight for

Orgueilleuse (ll. 4697-4717). The combat between Blancandin and the wicked knight has been examined in Chapter 2, and requires no further comment; an appraisal of Blancandin's duels with Rubion and with Alimodés reveals some important features of the poet's depiction of individual combat.

The response of Blancandin to the provost's challenge differs from the other three instances of individual combat in that the battle is intended to test a stranger's worth in order that he may be accepted as a lodger in the provost's house. The nature of this test is outlined in Greek letters set in marble over the provost's door (ll. 912-934), perhaps linking it to the testing of heroes in the literature of antiquity. The test involves an unequal contest, in terms of conventional single combat: against the fully-armed provost the intending lodger must force his entry armed only with a wooden lance. These already formidable odds are increased by the seriousness accorded this custom by the provost's vow to fight to kill or wound (ll. 935-938). Blancandin wins the contest by his speed and horsemanship. The provost's defeat is immediately followed by three lines of authorial comment, which confirm the unusual nature of the incident, as the poet exonerates Blancandin:

Mais l'enfant n'en doit avoir [blasme]
 Se li chevax le defola,
 Qu'il fist ce que cil li rouva. (ll. 962-964)

The individual combat between Blancandin and Rubion, and between Blancandin and Alimodés, includes many elements of conventional description of such engagements. Jean Rychner lists seven elements which make up the motif of the attack with the lance as it occurs in the chansons de geste. These elements, listed below, are likewise found in descriptions of combat in romance:

1. Eperonner son cheval.
2. Brandir la lance.
3. Frapper.
4. Briser l'écu de l'adversaire.
5. Rompre son haubert ou sa brogne.

6. Lui passer la lance au travers du corps,
ou alors le manquer, l'érafler seulement.
7. L'abattre à bas de son cheval, le plus
souvent mort.¹.

The combat between Blancandin and Rubion is described in twenty-eight lines (ll. 1855-1881). The two mounted opponents lower their lances, spur on their horses and strike each other's shields, breaking the lances to pieces (ll. 1855-1858). They then draw their swords, and at this point the narrator interrupts to mention the onlookers (ll. 1859-1864). The focus returns to the fight to record the blows to the helmets causing sparks, then shifts back to the sighs and thoughts of the watching Orgueilleuse (ll. 1865-1871). Blancandin strikes the decisive and resounding blow and Rubion falls (ll. 1872-1874); the narrator then describes the reaction of Alimodés's daughter (ll. 1875-1880). The description ends with Blancandin extracting his sword from his victim.

The combat between Blancandin and Alimodés occupies in all forty-six lines in two sections, ll. 4718-4726 and ll. 4797-4833, interrupted by Orgueilleuse's prayer as she watches from the tower. The action of the battle follows a similar pattern to that of the combat with Rubion. The horses are spurred on and great blows are struck to the shields, damaging them and the lances (ll. 4718-4725). The swords are drawn, and at this point (as in describing the combat with Rubion) the poet switches to the onlooking lady in the tower (ll. 4726 ff.). The account of the combat resumes with Blancandin drawing his sword and striking his opponent's helmet with a resounding blow which breaks the pommel off his sword. With a second blow he splits the shield (ll. 4797-4807). Blancandin strikes the decisive blow on the helmet and unseats Alimodés (ll. 4828-4833).

This battle between the rivals for Orgueilleuse is described in greater detail than the earlier combat with Rubion, in line with its far greater significance to the plot. The first section (ll. 4718-4726) is concerned with

the initial engagement of the opponents and the blows to the shields. Three lines are devoted to the damage inflicted by these blows:

Li tainz en chiet et li cuirs ront
Et les forz hantes que il ont
Resont despeciees et fretes. (ll. 4723-4725)

In describing the damage inflicted, the poet follows contemporary trends in portraying chivalrous combat, as the strength and superiority of the militant knight may be illustrated by the damage inflicted on his opponent's weapons and armour.² The description of combat often relies too on the evocation of visual and sound effects to stress the effectiveness of the combattants' blows, and a neatly expressed example of this occurs in the latter section of the duel with Alimodés:

Blanchandins a traite l'espee,
Au roi en a bone donee.
Sor son heaume tel cop li done
Que li boscaiges en resone.
Li cox ala de tel vertu
Que le pomel a abatu;
Tot le nasal, et de la face
En abat si que pert la trace. (ll. 4797-4804)

The description of the duel is interrupted by Orgueilleuse's prayer at the point where the opponents draw their swords, which has the effect of suspending the action to heighten interest and tension in the audience or readers. Before the prayer however Blancandin is described through the eyes of the watching Orgueilleuse (ll. 4727-4740); this description pays particular attention to the colours and apparel of both knight and horse. Blancandin's armour is predominantly white, marking him as a knight of righteousness and virtue, worthy of his lady's earnest supplication. In the closing stages of the duel Blancandin is depicted twice with his sword drawn in readiness for the decisive blow:

Orgilleuse d'amor regarde
Devers senestre, en une angarde
Voit Blancandin, le damoisel,
Qui tient le branc d'acier novel (ll. 4817-4820)

A itant Blancandins s'avance
Et tient le branc d'acier tot nu. (ll. 4828-4829)

The promise of victory implied in this gesture seems fulfilled when he strikes and Alimodés is unseated, but full-scale battle recommences immediately with the intervention of Alimodés's brother and Sadoine with their respective armies.

The instances of single combat - excluding the unconventional contest between Blancandin and the provost - follow fairly closely the stages of the motif of the attack with the lance outlined earlier (p.). In each case, two mounted opponents spur on their horses, strike each other's shields with their lances damaging both shields and lances, then continue the engagement with swords, until the victor (Blancandin in all three instances) unseats his opponent.

The battle which follows Alimodés's attack on Orgueilleuse's castle differs in several ways from other examples of full-scale battle, though it takes place between the two principal armies of the romance. These differences enable it to be considered as combat more in the style of a tournament than a pitched battle. The episode covers ninety-five lines (ll. 1231-1326) including the conversation of Orgueilleuse and her lady-companion who are watching.

Two factors in particular indicate that the episode is rather less than a serious battle: the relatively few casualties from the fighting, and the style and tone of the narration. Some indications of the nature of the confrontation occur in the following passage which describes the setting:

Devant les murs sor le fossé
Fu la prairie molt bele;
Desor l'erbe fresche et novele
Furent les jostes commenciees,
Quant les batailles sont rengiees.
Sovent i perdent et gaaignent,
Quar ce savez, issi bargaignent. (ll. 1152-1158)

The style of the description is light and indicates the

anticipation of a pleasant form of entertainment, an occasion of spectator sport rather than pitched battle. The sporting nature of the contest is further indicated in ll. 1157-1158 with the mention of losing or winning, "perdent", "gaaignent", together with the suggestion of risk, "issi bargaignent", either in a general sense or in the sense of a monetary involvement perhaps in the laying of bets, or in the expectation of prizes to be won.

Apart from the incident described in ll. 1237-1246 where Blancandin strikes an enemy opponent dead and presents his victim's horse to the provost's wife, there is no mention of further casualties of the fighting. The only other evidence of violent combat occurs in ll. 1259-1266 when Blancandin strikes off the arm of another opponent.

The combat of the latter section (ll. 1317-1326) is described principally in general terms, summing up the action of a mass of people:

Atant laissent le plaidoyer,
 Si esgardent le tornoier,
 Si com il viennent et il joignent
 Et li un vers les autres poignent.
 Mainte foiz a l'enfant josté;
 Maint chevalier a encontre
 Qui molt li porte grant envie;
 Nel pueent desconfire mie.
 Bien le firent li poigneor;
 Jusqu'au vespre dura l'estor. (ll. 1317-1326)

In contrast with the descriptions of later serious battles, both the tone and language are light and rhythmical. In particular, the three couplets making up the first six lines of this passage are so evenly balanced as to create the effect of figures moving gracefully in a form of dance or tableau.

The relatively few casualties, and the style of the narration, contribute to the interpretation of this contest as combat in the style of a tournament as opposed to a pitched battle which functions as a preparation, a sort of dress rehearsal, for the following serious battles to be fought between the knights of Orgueilleuse and

Alimodés. An historian, Noël Denholm-Young in his article, "The Tournament in the Thirteenth Century", makes the following observations about the tournament between 1150 and 1350:

It is for the most part not a matter of individual jousting, but a mass-meeting of side against side, resulting in a *mêlée* which differed little from real war. The tournament during those two centuries had an importance that no modern sport can parallel. It was training for war, and recognized as such, and so a tournament, like military manoeuvres, could have a deep political significance.³

In the light of this view of tournaments of contemporary history, the episode under discussion may be considered as a similar sort of contest, in preparation for the more serious conflict to follow.

The remaining nine instances of combat in the romance are serious battles, including those which follow or incorporate single combat. These episodes differ from the tournament-style combat just examined in that they are portrayed as events of more serious purpose, they involve more violent conflict usually resulting in many casualties, and they bring about specific developments in the plot. For example, the full-scale battle (ll. 1882-1976) which develops from the single combat between Blancandin and Rubion is initially provoked by Alimodés's assault on the city of Tormadai (ll. 1771-1780) followed by Rubion's call to battle addressed to Orgueilleuse's knights (ll. 1797-1800). Following Blancandin's victory over Rubion, Orgueilleuse exhorts her cowardly knights to join him in repulsing Alimodés's men (ll. 1883-1895), and the size of the ensuing conflict is indicated in four lines which describe the whole battle scene:

La veïssiez a l'assanbler
Tant ruiste cop de branc doner
Et tant bon chevalier chaïr
Et mainte arme de cors partir. (ll. 1901-1904)

The following seven lines describe Blancandin's defeat of

the king of the Giants, and the poet then vividly depicts the violence and casualties of the battle:

Cil i fierent de cuer verai.
 La ot tant Sarrazin cheü,
 Mort et navré et confondu.
 Soz la cité ot un estanc
 Qui tot estoit vermeil de sanc,
 Et des escuz vermax et blaus
 Resplendissent tertres et vax.
 Li jorz fu beax, la poudre lieve;
 A ceus de l'ost durement grieve.
 En malaise sont li plusor,
 Quar du soleil est granz l'ardor. (ll. 1912-1922)

As we have seen in connection with the description of single combat, the poet here too creates visual effects of the results of the blows struck in order to stress the prowess of the victors. The spectacle is effectively created by the use of colour and brilliance, and the sense of a multitude conveyed by the use of imprecise terms of quantity such as "cil", "tant", "tot", "ceus de l'ost", and "li plusor".

The battle continues with Blancandin's engagement with Daire, Alimodés's son, who is accompanied by a hundred Saracens. In describing the battle scenes, the poet uses the conventional romance methods. J.L. Levenson in his article, "The Narrative Format of Benoît's *Roman de Troie*", refers to the ways in which Benoît and other medieval writers convey the confusion and chaos of battle scenes by the use of epic formulae and motifs:

In Le Roman de Troie, therefore, the total chaos of medieval warfare again and again subsides, epic fashion, leaving in the forefront of the narrative an encounter between two heroes which takes place in an orderly formulaic manner.

In his delineation of the Trojan war, therefore, Benoît regularly disengages scenes of individual and often heroic combat from the drama of general *mêlée*; brings less chaos out of more chaos in a process which gives his narrative a definite rhythm.⁴

In this battle as in all the major battle scenes of our romance, the poet uses this technique, both to convey the magnitude of the battles and to highlight the specific skills and achievements of Blancandin, alone or in

conjunction with his companion, Sadoine.

Daire, wounded, retreats with his men and is pursued by Blancandin to Alimodés's tent where the hero attempts to seize Alimodés's daughter. The battle concludes with the dramatic onslaught of the pagans who rally to capture Blancandin, killing his horse, and then hand him over to Alimodés (ll. 1959-1976). This conclusion is not the agreed cessation of hostilities at the end of a day's tourneying, but a decisive action with significant and far-reaching consequences. It leads to Blancandin's banishment and eventual arrival at the kingdom of Ruban, thus setting in motion further development of the plot.

The most important battle which constitutes the climax of the romance is the battle between Blancandin and Alimodés and their men outside Cassidoine (ll. 5790-5905). Blancandin and Sadoine with their armies join forces to inflict a decisive defeat on the enemy. At the conclusion of the battle, the passage describing the imprisonment of Alimodés and final combat and collection of spoils provides another example of the rhythmical and stylised nature of the narration:

A itant l'ont fait desvestir
Et l'en mainent en la cité.
Illueques l'ont emprisoné,
Puis retornent a l'estor hors.
Illueques les ont pris et mors,
Abatus et tenus et pris.
Illueques ont assés conquis
Destriers, cevaus et palefrois.
Departir font tot le harnois
As chevaliers et as maisnies. (ll. 5896-5905)

As in the description of the tournament-style combat, the poet skilfully portrays a scene of great activity involving many people. The economy and simplicity of means employed to achieve this effect, reducing a scene of massed action to the essential gestures, is striking: the series of verbs in ll. 5900-5901 gives the impression of speed and adds a sense of urgency to the action; the repetition of "illueques" ('there') and the series of plural nouns (ll. 5903-5905) help convey the scope and

confusion of the scene.

In line with contemporary trends in describing chivalrous combat in romance, the poet devotes many lines to details of the preparation and arming of combattants before describing the actual scenes of combat. As we have seen in Chapter 3, these details were accorded considerable emphasis in the episode of the provost's arming of Blancandin (ll. 1187-1232) through repetition and expansion of the first description of the armour and weapons.

The articles of equipment provided for the militant knight before combat customarily include a "hauberc", "helme", "escu" - shield, "chaucés" - leg-armour, "esperons" - spurs, lance, and sword. In Blancandin's resolution to rescue Sadoine, he calls for these essential items, listing them:

Metés et armes et cevaus,
Aubers, elmes fres et noviaus,
Escus et lances et espees. (ll. 4961-4963)

Mention is often made also of the provision of a horse, with saddle and breast-plate, and sometimes with a covering. The knight may also carry a "penon d'amors" from his lady on his lance.

Stress is frequently placed on the richness and fine quality of these items; besides their obvious utilitarian purpose, they have the equally important function of enhancing the knight's virtues and skills. A splendid appearance also plays a large part in inspiring the admiration of ladies who customarily watch chivalrous combat. When preparing for his first experience of combat, Blancandin requests the wounded knight's "auberc jazerant" (l. 255) and "escu d'olifant" (l. 256); the equipment provided by the provost includes a hauberk "dont les mailles furent a or" (l. 1207), a richly decorated helmet, and large shield of fishbone, perhaps whalebone:

Li cercles en fu merveillous,

D'or et de pierres preciox.
 A son col pent une grant targe
 Qui fu d'os de poisson marage. (ll. 1211-1214)

The most detailed description of preparation for battle occurs before the battle of Tormadai when eighty-four lines are devoted to the arming of Alimodés by four Saracens (ll. 4319-4402). Not only are the customary articles listed in the order in which they are put on, and their richness stressed, but also included are references to their origins, adding more colour and exoticism to the description. Most of the items have been gifts and are very old. For example, the first items to be put on are the spurs and leg-armour:

Uns esperons d'or li donerent,
 Aportez furent de Marsome
 Et présenté a lui de Rome.
 Molt sont riche li esperon,
 Et li rois, hardiz et felon.
 Chauces li lacent a fresel
 Dont les mailles et li tassel
 Estoient d'argent neelé;
 Faites furent d'antiquité.
 Un roi les conquist en Espagne;
 Ja de saete ne de gaigne
 Ne d'autre arme n'erent fausees,
 Tant sont les mailles bien ovrees. (ll. 4322-4334)

Interestingly, in ll. 4325-4326, the richness of the spurs is immediately followed by mention of the boldness and wickedness of Alimodés. The remaining articles of his equipment - breastplate, helmet, sword, shield, lance - are described in even greater detail and are all of similar opulence.

The detailed portrayal of the militant knight's armour and weapons indicates the medieval audience's taste for colourful and exotic description of the setting of a romance. In her book, Les éléments descriptifs dans le roman d'aventure au XIII^e siècle, Faith Lyons quotes Gaston Paris' observation on the importance of such description:

... Gaston Paris souligne la place que prend dans le roman d'aventure le décor, c'est-à-dire "le costume, l'équipage et tout le cadre extérieur de leur époque. C'est ce cadre

extérieur que nos romanciers, suivant en cela l'exemple des auteurs des poèmes imités de l'Antiquité, se sont particulièrement plu à décrire, et c'est un des côtés de leurs oeuvres sinon les plus louables au point de vue de l'art, au moins les plus intéressants pour l'historien et l'archéologue: fêtes, banquets, tournois, mobilier, ornement, et parures, ils décrivent tout par le menu, offrant à leurs contemporains ce plaisir toujours vif, et que les nôtres recherchent encore, de se regarder vivre et marcher comme dans un miroir, ou de s'initier aux raffinements et aux somptuosités de la 'haute vie' à laquelle tous ne peuvent prétendre."5.

Besides describing the preparation of knights for combat, our poet provides equally detailed descriptions of other aspects of the world of chivalry, some of which will be considered in the following chapter.

As we have seen, the latter two-thirds of the romance, ll. 1771-6521, are largely concerned with Blancandin's military adventures. Description of combat, both of individual duels and full-scale battles, including detailed description of the necessary preparations, forms a large proportion of the narration of these adventures. The twelve combat episodes listed on pp.74-75 take up 1517 lines of the romance's total of 6521 lines. Of these 1517 lines, 279 lines (the first three combat episodes) occur in the first part of the romance comprising 1770 lines. The remaining lines devoted to combat episodes, 1238 lines, occur in the second part comprising 4751 lines. In addition to the lines covering the combat episodes as listed, a significant proportion of the second part of the romance is taken up by descriptions of preparations for, and discussions about, battles.

Most importantly, the battles constitute the proving ground for Blancandin's military skill, and the means by which he demonstrates his prowess and gains honour and reputation. The number of battles in the romance and the proportion of the narrative devoted to them indicate the predominance of the theme of chivalry; the battles are the means by which the poet explores his principal theme

in relating Blancandin's career as a knight.

Besides their function in relation to the hero, the battles are themselves an important part of the story, providing scenes of spectacle which add colour and excitement to the narrative. Although description of combat fills a large proportion of the romance, the work consists of more than a mere string of military engagements. Rather, the episodes of single combat and full-scale battles provide peaks in the narrative of Blancandin's story. The account of Blancandin's career and his love for Orgueilleuse takes place in the form of an adventure story; it is now proposed to examine some of the other elements of this story to which the poet has applied his imagination and skill in description.

Notes:

1. Jean Rychner, La chanson de geste: essai sur l'art épique des jongleurs, Genève-Lille, 1955, p. 141
2. Edward A. Heinemann, "La place de l'élément 'brandir la lance' dans la structure du motif de l'attaque à la lance", Romania, 95, 1974, p. 112
3. Noël Denholm-Young, "The Tournament in the Thirteenth Century", Studies in Medieval History Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke, eds. R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin, R.W. Southern, Oxford, 1948, p. 240
4. J.L. Levenson, "The Narrative Format of Benoît's Roman de Troie", Romania, 100, 1979, p. 63
5. Faith Lyons, Les éléments descriptifs dans le roman d'aventure au XIII^e siècle, Librairie Droz, Genève, 1965, p. 10

Chapter 7

APPAREL, OBJECTS AND PLACES; THE SUPERNATURAL

Imaginative description of apparel, objects and places provides colour and additional interest to the story of Blancandin's adventures. Descriptive passages, sometimes consisting of only a few lines, but frequently long and very detailed, provide glimpses of the courtly life portrayed in the romance, and evocations of exotic and mysterious elements. Some of these passages will now be examined in order to consider the poet's choice of features for particular description and their relationship to the principal themes of the romance.

Passages of description form only one aspect of the romance's setting. In this chapter we shall also examine the sea journeys, with particular reference to the geography of the romance, and the occurrence of several features which draw their inspiration from the world of the supernatural, the 'merveilleux'.

Among the subjects chosen by the poet for detailed description are the following: apparel, decoration, the offering of hospitality, and military preparations other than the equipment of knights for combat, including the defence of city and castle and the building and preparation of ships. Places and the natural elements are also occasionally described in detail.

Several passages describe apparel as distinct from armour, and the detailed nature of such passages indicates the popular taste referred to earlier in the observation of Gaston Paris¹, as well as the poet's purpose of enhancing his characters' less visible attributes. The first such passage describes Blancandin's apparel in ll. 159-180 as he leaves his father's house in search of adventure:

Bien fu vestuz de dras rëax
Et de garnemenz principax;

Ses chaucés furent de brun paile
 Tranchiees a menue maille;
 Si esperon furent a or,
 N'en ot meillors en un tresor;
 Chemise, braies de chainsis
 Plus blanche que n'est flor de lis.
 Onques es braies n'ot corroie,
 Sis braiers ert trestoz de soie.
 Si ert vestuz, ce m'est avis,
 D'un sidoine forré de gris.
 Sis manteax fu d'un ostorin,
 Li orles fu d'un sebelin;
 En son chief un chapel de glesche.
 Les elz a vers, la coulor fresche;
 Uns ganz a or avoit es mains.
 Diex! comme fu riches li frains,
 Et li poitrax et la sorsele.
 D'un os d'ivuire fu la sele,
 Et si vos di que li danzeax
 Ert a merveille genz et beax. (ll. 159-180)

The first two lines (ll. 159-160) defining Blancandin's apparel as "réax", royal, and "principax", princely, prepare the listener or reader for the emphasis on the richness and refinement of each part of his clothing to be described. The fabrics from which his garments are made are particularly fine or luxurious: his breeches are of rich silken cloth, "paile"; his shirt or tunic and trousers of fine and especially white linen, "chainsis/ Plus blanche que n'est flor de lis"; his girdle or sash of silk; an outer garment, "sidoine"², incorporates grey fur, "forré de gris"; and his cloak of rich purple cloth, "d'un ostorin", bordered with sable, "d'un sebelin". Blancandin's magnificent clothes are complemented by gold spurs (l. 163), golden gloves (l. 175), and, rather curiously, a hat made of or resembling a type of flower, "un chapel de glesche".³ After the reference to the hat, the poet describes Blancandin's bright eyes and fresh complexion (l. 174) in a line which seems more appropriate to a description of physical features than of apparel. Following the enumeration of the garments, the poet begins l. 176 with the exclamation "Diex!", which precedes three lines describing the trappings of the horse, an exclamation which probably serves to emphasise the superlative nature of Blancandin's apparel as much as the richness of

the reins, "frains", breastplate, "poitrax", and saddle-cover, "sorsole", which the horse has, together with a saddle of bone ivory, "d'un os d'ivuire".

This descriptive passage has several features in common with the portrait of Orgueilleuse examined in Chapter 4; whilst the natural beauty of a heroine of romance is conventionally described at length, the hero is more commonly portrayed by a detailed description of his armour or his clothing, but the techniques of such description are similar. For example, the overall tone of the passage is laudatory, as the poet emphasises the superlative nature of Blancandin's apparel; besides his garments being royal and princely, the gold of his spurs is equal to any treasure (l. 164) and the linen of his shirt and breeches whiter than a lily (l. 166). As in the portrait of Orgueilleuse, the poet follows a generally logical order, but it is interesting to note that in this case, it is an ascending order, beginning with his breeches and spurs and ending with his hat, with the reference to gloves (l. 175) perhaps added as an afterthought or to link the description of Blancandin's clothes with the apparel of his horse which begins with the reins (l. 176).

A more detailed description of the trappings of a horse occurs in ll. 684-694 where the richness of the trappings of Orgueilleuse's horse is emphasised:

Et ele vient après sa route
 Desor un palefroi norrois
 Dont les regnes erent d'orfrois.
 La cheveciere ert bien ovree;
 Un fevre i mist une jornee.
 Qui fist les faces et les serres,
 Aportez fu d'estranges terres.
 Et li poitrax fu d'uevre bone,
 Mainte sonete d'or i sone.
 Tote la chiere du cheval
 Fu covert[e] d'un vert cendal. (ll. 684-694)

The reins are embroidered with gold, "d'orfrois", little golden bells jingle on the breastplate, "Mainte sonete d'or i sone", and the horse's face is covered with silken cloth. However, the poet also stresses the particularly

fine workmanship which has produced the horse's trappings. Besides noting the gold embroidery of the reins, we learn that the head-harness is well made, "bien ovree", requiring a whole day's work by the craftsman (l. 688), and that the breastplate too is of good workmanship, "d'uevre bone". The quality of the buckles and bits, "les faces et les serres", is attested by the information that the craftsman was brought from foreign lands (ll. 689-690), and in implying the equation of foreign origin with superior quality, the poet indicates a little of the popular fascination with the refinements of other civilisations, particularly from the East.

Other passages dealing with apparel include the description of clothing provided for Blancandin at Ruban's court as part of the hospitality offered him (ll. 2307-2310), and the description of clothing given by Blancandin to his father (ll. 3835-3840). The latter passage, like the description of the preparation of Alimodés for battle (ll. 4319-4402) examined in the previous chapter, includes references to the origins of some items mentioned, once again indicating the mystery and attractiveness of faraway or famous places:

Blanchandins le fait revestir
 D'un drap qui fu ouvré a Tir.
 Il ot chaucés d'un paile chier
 Et uns solliers de Montpellier;
 Puis l'afublent d'un vert mantel,
 Si l'en maine sus el chastel. (ll. 3835-3840)

Passages which describe types of decoration include the description of Orgueilleuse's throne (ll. 4153-4190), the decoration of Tormadai in preparation for Blancandin's arrival (ll. 4277-4292), and the decoration of Sadoine's tent (ll. 3437-3462). The passage describing Orgueilleuse's throne set upon the shore where she waits to greet Blancandin on his return to Tormadai contains some of the most extravagant and colourful lines of description in the romance:

Estendre fait sor le rivaige
 Un drap qui fu faiz a Quartaige,
 Ovrez a bestes tot faitiz;
 Desoz un faudestuel fu mis
 Dont li pecol estoient d'or.
 Les pierres valent un tresor,
 Les jaspes et les diomicles,
 Les topaces et les bericles,
 Les jagonces, les esmeraudes
 Et autres pierres meriaudes.
 N'est hom qui tant saiche descrire
 Qui des pierres vos saiche dire
 Les granz vertuz ne les miracles.
 Desoz ot quatre tabernacles,
 Si sont li quatre evangeliste.
 Saige fu cil qui fist la liste
 Qui si la fist naturellement,
 Et par desoz, le firmament.
 Molt fu le firmament bien fait;
 Soleil et lune i ot portrait,
 Les quatre venz et les chandoiles,
 Et la planete et les estoiles;
 Les orgenes, li encenssier,
 Les iglises et li mostier;
 Tot ce fu par desus escrit,
 Et encor plus que ge n'ai dit.
 Deforz avoit quatre serpenz;
 Riches fu li entailllemenz,
 Quar chascun des serpenz tenoit
 Le faudestuel par tel endroit,
 Qu'il n'i adoise ne n'ato[u]che;
 Et chascun tenoit en sa bouche
 Un cierge qui luist comme basme;
 Fox est cil qui tel oevre blasme.
 Desor avoit por le soleil
 Un riche sidoine vermeil.
 La siste Orgueilleuse d'amor
 Et ses damoiseles entor.

(ll. 4153-4190)

Here the device of adding mystery and superiority by reference to an item's origin is used only in describing the cloth which is laid out for the throne to stand upon (l. 4154). The description of the throne itself is tripartite; three passages of detailed description - of the richness of the throne's jewels, of its ornamentation, and of its supports - are each followed by a short general comment by the poet. Firstly, in ll. 4156-4165, the gold and precious stones representing a great treasure (l. 4158) are listed. The poet then comments in ll. 4163-4165 that their great virtues and powers cannot be described, referring to the powers and significance

attributed to precious stones in medieval lapidaries.⁴ His brief reference to the impossibility of describing the powers of the stones serves to reinforce the brilliance and value they add to the throne.

The ornamentation of the throne depicts a dazzling representation of the heavens, wherein medieval notions of the heavenly bodies are intermingled with religious ideas (ll. 4166-4176). The detailed description of the throne's ornamentation, and its supports (ll. 4179-4185), may indicate the poet's recollection of an object he has seen, but it also bears some resemblance to St John's vision of the heavenly throne in Revelation, 4, particularly in the references to the jewels, and to the four serpents which recall the four beasts of the Apocalypse. The number four figures prominently in the poet's description - the most common association of the number four, the four evangelists, is reinforced by the four tabernacles, and later the four winds, and the four serpents. Description of the ornamentation (ll. 4166-4176) is followed by an example of diminutio in l. 4178 when the poet states that he has not described everything depicted on the throne. The third general comment occurs in l. 4186 with his assertion that he who finds fault with such a creation is a fool. The poet's general comments, together with ll. 4168-4169 where he refers to the wisdom of the man who made the border, serve to stress the scope and magnificence of the throne's decoration. The final two lines of the passage (ll. 4189-4190) represent the culmination of the description, and thereby link the magnificence of the throne with the excellence of Orgueilleuse who sits upon it. To this enhancing of the heroine is surely added the sheer pleasure of colourful description for itself.

A hundred or so lines further on in the same episode - Section 14, "The battle of Tormadai" - a shorter passage describes the decoration of the city and people to welcome Blancandin (ll. 4277-4292), and provides an

illustration of the medieval love of festival:

Ainsi le fait sanz nul deffens
 Par la cité en quatre sens
 Que les rues soient pavees
 Et de tirez encortinees
 Et de pailles et de cendax,
 De borz, des cortines roiax,
 Et par desus les bans ovrez
 Les bons riches tapiz gitez.
 La veïssiez en maint cortis
 Cueillir roses et flor de lis.
 Li borjois furent bien vestu
 De dras de soie a or batu,
 Et les dames et les mesniees
 Refurent bien apareilliees.
 L[i] juleor furent devant
 Qui vielent et vont chantant. (ll. 4277-4292)

As in the descriptions of apparel examined earlier, the richness and/or fine quality of cloth is an important feature of this passage. The streets are to be draped in rich silken cloths, "tirez", "de pailles et de cendax"; embroidered cloths, tapestries, hung with worked banners, and lined with good rich carpets. Flowers are also gathered for decoration (ll. 4285-4286). The men of the town are clothed in cloth of silk and beaten gold, and the women and others of the households are all well dressed (ll. 4287-4290), indicating the participation of the entire city in the celebrations. The preparations are completed with the addition of singing minstrels (ll. 4291-4292).

One of the most interesting examples of decoration occurs in the passage describing Sadoine's tent at Cassidoine (ll. 3437-3462). The inscriptions on the tent, described in eighteen lines (ll. 3445-3462), comprise a comprehensive analysis of courtly love, with particular emphasis on the role and influence of the god of Love, "le Dieu d'amor", and thus link what appears to be a purely descriptive passage with the romance's principal themes:

Escrit i sont li jugement
 D'amors et li atisement
 Des acolers et des baisers
 Des dames et des chevaliers,
 Et li grant soupir des puceles

Et le regart des damoiseles
 Qui molt sont sovent esmeü
 Quant chascune esgarde son dru.
 D'autre part fu le Dieu d'amor,
 Qui ja n'amera tricheor,
 Ne chosé ou il ait boisdie,
 Ne trahison ne felonie.
 Chevalier het tornoieor
 S'il ne porte manche d'amor,
 Et s'il ne done largement
 De son avoir a tote gent.
 Jalox het ou il a envie,
 Et pucele qui n'est amie.

(ll. 3445-3462)

The first part of the analysis outlines the conventional behaviour of lovers: the embraces, and kisses, the sighs, and the tender looks (ll. 3450-3452). Attention is then drawn to the god of Love: his dislike of any form of deceiver, or anything connected with deceit, treachery, or wickedness; his expectations of the knight (ll. 3457-3460); and his jealousy of any maiden who is not loved (ll. 3461-3462). Love's expectations of the knight comprise two essential requirements of chivalry, and emphasise the interaction between love and military action in the life of a courtly knight: firstly, the god of Love hates to see a knight who does not wear his loved one's colours in battle, and secondly, he abhors the knight who does not give generously of his possessions to his people.

The extension of hospitality to a guest occasions passages which describe clothes, decoration and entertainment, such as that describing the hospitality extended to Blancandin by the provost and his family (ll. 1333-1349):

La sale fu encortinee,
 De jonc et de mente pavee.
 Li vallez descent au perron;
 Les puceles tot environ
 Si l'aid[ier]lent a desarmer,
 Puis deslacent le heaume cler.
 Enpres li desçaignent l'espee,
 La baniere li ont ostee;
 Les chaucés et les esperons
 Li osterent a genoillons,
 Puis aportent un drap de soie.

Li prevoz velt bien c'on le voie,
 Qu'an en demaint grant richeté,
 Quar il en a le pris porté.
 Et de harpes et de vïeles
 Furent les melodies beles
 Tot contreval par la meson.

(ll. 1333-1349)

After describing the draping of the room (ll. 1333-1334), the poet goes on to outline the ceremonial disarming and robing of the hero by the provost's daughters (ll. 1336-1343). Five lines (1338-1342) describe the removal, item by item, of Blancandin's helmet, sword, banner, leg-armour, and spurs, and then a silken garment is brought for him. The importance of offering suitable hospitality is emphasised by the provost's desire that great "richness" be accomplished in Blancandin's honour (ll. 1344-1346). The passage concludes with the beautiful music to be heard throughout the house (ll. 1347-1349). The hospitality of the provost's family is described further in ll. 1555-1569, including preparation by the provost's daughters of a bed for Blancandin with a pillow which ranks among the wonderful objects in the romance.

Passages concerning military preparations most frequently describe the arming of knights for combat, but in this category the defence of Orgueilleuse's castle (ll. 1093-1100) and the building and preparation of ships (ll. 2747-2758, 6030-6039) are also described in detail. The passage detailing the defence of Orgueilleuse's castle forms part of the preparations for the tournament-style combat between her knights and those of Alimodes:

L'endemain, quant jor parust bel,
 A fet bien garnir son chastel
 De granz haches et de maques,
 De max et de pierres aguës
 Et de granz targes et d'escuz,
 De lances et de pex aguz.
 Les mangoneax drescent en halt
 Por mielz deffendre de l'assaut.

(ll. 1093-1100)

The most interesting feature of this passage is the enumeration of weapons used for military action other than

those which make up the conventional equipment of the knight and frequently described in passages concerned with preparation of knights for combat. The variety of weapons - axes, clubs, hammers, sharpened stones, shields, lances, sharp stakes, and "mangoneax", types of catapult used to fire stones or darts⁵ - with the exception of shields and lances, are all items of non-chivalrous military equipment; and the piling up of plural nouns helps to create a picture of an impressively defended stronghold. Interestingly, the ensuing conflict is conducted in a wholly conventional and chivalrous manner between the two opposing groups of knights on the field in front of the walls (ll. 1152-1158, 1231-1326), and there is no mention of the castle's defence weapons being deployed.

When Sadoine proposes to join Blancandin in his mission to relieve Tormadai, he asks his father to have a ship built for this purpose. The short passage which follows describing the building of the ship (ll. 2747-2758) gives practical details of the construction and fitting of weapons, and perhaps provides a realistic glimpse of medieval shipbuilding:

Lors fait les charpentiers mander
 Por cele barge commencer.
 De trente piez fu le dromont.
 Li maz en fu droit contremont;
 Une broche ot el front devant
 Et un autre enmi le chalant.
 La tierce fu faite desriere
 Por deffendre la gent d'arriere,
 Quant il trespaseront les barges.
 Se il encontrent les uslaiges,
 Bien les porront illuec atendre
 Et le dromont vers ax deffendre. (ll. 2747-2758)

The poet employs three different words to define the vessel: "barge", "dromont" and "chalant", and though these words describe the same vessel, they possess slight differences of meaning as is indicated by the following line from La Chanson de Roland where the idea of three different types of vessel is expressed:

Il nen i ad barge ne drodmund ne caland.

(La Chanson de Roland, l. 2467)⁶.

The first term, "barge", is the least specific, being a general word meaning 'boat'. The two remaining terms have more specialised connotations, "dromont" being a fast-moving ship⁷, and "chalant" designating a flat-decked boat used for transport⁸, and may indicate the poet's desire to introduce slightly more technical terms into his description to define a particular type of vessel. Further details in the description tell us its length (l. 2749), that it has an upright mast (l. 2750), and is armed by three pointed weapons, one to the front, one from the middle and one to the rear of the vessel (ll. 2751-2754).

A later passage concerned with ships describes not their construction but their provisioning prior to a sea voyage, when preparations are made for the departure of Blancandin and Sadoine from Cassidoine (ll. 6030-6039):

Les nes ont garnies au port
 De blé, de vin et de forment
 Et si metent maint garniment
 Et les destriers et les cevaus
 Et les haubers fres et noviaus,
 Les lances et les brans forbis.
 Li estrumant se sont ens mis,
 S'ont les governaus atornés,
 Dont vinrent li baron as nes,
 Blancandins o le roi Sadoine. (ll. 6030-6039)

Like the earlier description of shipbuilding, this passage describing the practical matter of loading and readying the ships also creates a realistic scene of medieval sea-faring. The poet first describes the provisions of grain and wine, then goes on to list the military equipment loaded onto the ships: horses and armour, including haubers, lances and polished swords. The helmsmen, "estrumant", then take their places, and the wheels, "governaus", are turned, in readiness for Blancandin and Sadoine to embark.

Places in the romance are described by the poet both in a straightforward and realistic manner as in the passage describing Blancandin's first view of Tormadai

(ll. 857-880), and in a highly imaginative and colourful way as in his description of the orchard in Ruban's kingdom (ll. 2587-2610). The former example creates a picture of a walled and fortified town as it appeared to Blancandin approaching on horseback:

Devant lui regarde, si voit
 Icele vile ou [il] aloit :
 C'est la citez la damoisele.
 Dedenz a mainte sale bele;
 La tor fu fermee en la roche,
 De plon i avoit mainte cloche
 Dont li quarrel sont seelé.
 Haut sont li mur et li fossé;
 Tuit furent de marbre vermeil.
 Molt fu cil de riche conseil
 Qui si en fist l'uevre hautisme.
 Li quarrel sont taillié a lime
 Et la tor est quarree et lee;
 Desus par est si bien ovree.
 La couverture et li corbel
 Furent molt orgueillox et bel.
 Devant la porte sont les lices
 Et les granz barres lanceïces.
 Comme cil qui atendent guerre
 De felon roi d'estrangle terre,
 Chascune porte est bataillie[e]
 Et a deffendre apareilliee;
 Molt i portent coivres et darz
 Et pex aguz de totes parz.

(ll. 857-880)

Apart from a reference to the many fine rooms to be found in the city (l. 860), the poet limits the aspects chosen for description to those which may be perceived from outside: the tower, walls, trenches, gates and defences. The tower, set in the rock (l. 861), is described in considerable detail: first mentioned are its bells; next described are the walls and trenches, only the former presumably is made of red marble (ll. 864-865); the squared stones have been finished by filing (l. 868); the tower is square and wide (l. 869); and the roof and supports particularly fine and imposing (ll. 871-872). Emphasis is placed twice on fine workmanship (ll. 866-867, 870). The tower's defences include gates, great springing bars, and doors fortified with quivers, darts, and sharp stakes.

The orchard in Ruban's kingdom is by contrast

described as an exotic and ethereal place, a fitting location for Blancandin's reverie which follows the descriptive passage:

Un jor entra en un vergier
 Blanchandins por esbanoier.
 Herbe i vint de maintes manieres;
 Si i croissoit espices chieres,
 Petre et gingenbre et garingal,
 Clox de girofle et citoal,
 Li requelices en meint sens,
 L'astubienc et li encens.
 Molt i avoit pins et loriers,
 Cyprés et beax alemandiers.
 Si croist li arbres de jouvent
 Qui fait rajovenir la gent.
 Li arbre i sont molt merveillox
 Et li leus fu molt preciox,
 Que nus n'i vait, si grant mal ait,
 De toz malaiges santé n'ait,
 Por ce que il garir en doie.
 Par le vergier l'erbe verdoie,
 En plus riche ne puet nus estre;
 Ce sanble paradys terrestre.
 Mais plus esgarde qu'autre chose
 Blanchandins une flor de rose
 Qui el rosier ert espanie;
 Si li remembre de s'amie.

(ll. 2587-2610)

The poet describes first the grasses, spices and aromatic herbs growing there (ll. 2589-2594), and then the trees (ll. 2595-2599). All these plants and trees are unusual by northern French standards as they belong to the East or to the Mediterranean, and so convey the exotic nature of the orchard to the listener or reader. The passage makes reference to certain supernatural aspects of the orchard which will be considered in connection with the 'merveilleux'. The grass grows more luxuriantly here than anywhere else (ll. 2604-2605) and the exoticism and extravagance of the description are summed up in l. 2606 when the poet declares that this place seems earthly paradise, "paradys terrestre". The passage concludes with Blancandin's catching sight of the rose which will recall his thoughts to Orgueilleuse.

Examples of passages describing the elements are to be found in the descriptions of the storm at sea (ll. 3185-3193), and the season of spring when Blancandin

and Sadoine leave Cassidoine (ll. 6049-6053). The storm at sea is a significant event of the narrative, occasioning the conversion of Sadoine and his men to Christianity, and so calls for appropriate and convincing description:

Tuit furent en grant tenebror;
 Morir quident tuit li plusor,
 Quar la torment [estoit] molt fort
 Et du dromont croissent li bort.
 Li vent herice et la mer poudre,
 Tone et esclaire et chieent foudre.
 Onques nul hom en son aaige
 Ne vit onques graignor oraige
 De vent et de noif et de pluie. (ll. 3185-3193)

Though relatively short, the description is at once succinct and evocative. Striking effects are achieved by the concentration of terms in lists such as the verbs in ll. 3189-3190, and the nouns each preceded by "de" in l. 3193 where one term reinforces another. The device of uniqueness is also employed in ll. 3191-3193 to stress the singular violence of the storm.

By contrast the few lines describing spring (ll. 6049-6053) make up one of the rare passages of description in the romance which appears to be almost superfluous:

Ce fu au tans que naist la flor
 Et l'aloëte cante au jor,
 Et li rosignos el boscage
 Que les nes issent del rivage
 Et qu'il guerpissent Cassidoine. (ll. 6049-6053)

The description is stylised as it covers only the conventional traits of spring - flowers, skylark and nightingale, and its lyricism seems a little out of context. However, the mention of spring here possibly indicates that the weather is now propitious to sailing after the storms of winter.

The description of sea journeys forms an important part of the narrative, because of their structural function of linking episodes to be considered in the following chapter, and in relation to the geography of the romance. The inclusion of sea voyages also indicates

the influence of the historical travels of the Crusaders. Tales of long sea journeys to and from the mysterious places of the eastern Mediterranean undertaken by Crusaders and pilgrims opened up new horizons to the imagination of medieval audiences in Western Europe. Pilgrims' travels provide the background for the episode in the romance where Blancandin and Sadoine encounter the provost and others on their way back from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land (ll. 2801-2963).

Two passages from the description of sea journeys pay particular attention to geographical details: the first outlines the journey from Ruban's kingdom undertaken by Blancandin and Sadoine (ll. 2785-2800), and the second their journey from Cassidoine towards Tormadai after which Orgueilleuse is rescued from Subien and her kingdom restored (ll. 6055-6074). Each of these passages lists a wide variety of places passed, giving in a few lines the impression of great distances travelled over considerable lengths of time. A closer examination of these lists of places reveals a fascinating glimpse of medieval notions of geography, particularly as they are employed by the writers of romance.

The first passage (ll. 2785-2800) contains a colourful mixture of real and imaginary places:

Par devant l'isle de Bogie
 Gouvernerent cele galie.
 Iluec ne repaire nus hom,
 Quar il n'i a se singes non.
 La terre passent de Persie,
 Et puis cele de Femenie.
 A senestre laissent le Coine,
 Et puis cele de Babiloine,
 Et voient la tor de Marroc,
 La ou fu li rois Rabaot;
 La terre de Jerusalem,
 Et choisirent le flun Jordan.
 Costantinoble costoierent,
 Et la terre as Grifons laissierent.
 Tant se pranent a gouverner
 Qu'il ne voient fors ciel et mer. (ll. 2785-2800)

Persia, Babylon, Jerusalem, Jordan, and Constantinople are all recognisable locations in the near East, or

borders of the Mediterranean Sea. However, though these place names may be grouped in a roughly definable geographical area, suggesting that the journey takes place in the Aegean and far eastern Mediterranean Seas, in fact they cannot comprise an itinerary which is possible in real terms as, for example, it would be impossible to see the cities of Babylon and Jerusalem, or the river Jordan, from the sea. Other places passed on this journey, like the island of "Bogie" (l. 2785), belong to the realms of myth or fantasy. The particular significance of islands in Old French texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries has been examined in an article by Jill Tattersall⁹, in which she makes the following reference to the island of "Bogie" and to "Femenie":

In Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'Amour the travellers sail past the isle de Bogie where no humans dwell: 'Illuec ne repaire nus hom/ Quar il n'i a se singes non'. Bogie is named as part of a strange itinerary comprising both real and imaginary places, including the legendary Femenie, land of women.¹⁰

The second passage (ll. 6055-6074) while listing several identifiable places - "Europe", "Arragon", "Alixandre", "Persie", "Surie" - describes a journey past many imaginary lands, rocks and islands:

S'en vont par mer a fier estoire,
 Passent les roces de Montoire
 Et les illes de Bocident,
 Tres par devant l'arbre qui fent,
 Et passent Europe le grant,
 Illuec conversent li Gaiant;
 Passent les ... de Loquiferne
 Et de Baudaire et de Biterne
 Et le gouffre de Saternie
 Et passent devant Femenie
 U il n'en a se femes non,
 Et passent le regne Arragon,
 Tant que il voient Alixandre
 Et la grant tor de Salimandre
 Et Persie qui tostans art.
 Tant ont costoié cele part
 Le grant palagre de Surie,
 Que il ont Tormadai coisie,
 Le riche palais et la tor
 Ma dame Orgilleuse d'amor.

(ll. 6055-6074)

This journey from Cassidoine to Tormadai involves great distances and appears to take the travellers the length of the Mediterranean from "Europe le grant" via Aragon, Alexandria, Persia, to Syria and thence to Tormadai. Though this itinerary is at best vague, and includes many imaginary rocks, islands and places passed along the way, it perhaps helps to situate the imaginary city of Tormadai. From this passage, we may imagine Tormadai to be located somewhere on the coast of the eastern Mediterranean or Aegean Seas, a location which would not be incongruous with other geographical 'evidence' of the text, including the place names mentioned in the journey from Ruban's kingdom, or with the provost's return by sea from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

Both passages quoted present an interesting combination of real and imaginary places, listed with little regard for geographical reality. Even those places which are identifiable by name do not occur in any logical sequence which enables satisfactory reconstruction of the routes of the journeys. Jill Tattersall's observations on the literary use of islands are found to be equally applicable to other locations, in that contemporary knowledge of geography and map-making was only approximate or obscure until the late thirteenth century:

It was a simple matter to 'insert' an extra island into a known route and give it a familiar or invented name. Alternatively, an island not on any of the well-known routes could be named, and again its existence would be incontestable. Having once found an island, an author could lose it again just as conveniently. In any case, whether or not an audience actually believed a story and its circumstantial detail, people would be as unlikely as they were unable to challenge the geographical matter it contained.¹¹

We may suppose therefore that the poet sought not to describe actual or possible itineraries for the sea voyages but, by the intermingling of imaginary and real (but for his audience, probably equally exotic) places,

to create interludes of colour and excitement in his story. Moreover, the description of the sea journeys adds substance, a kind of amplification to the narrative, helping to create suspense, besides providing colourful interludes between the scenes of battle.

A further aspect of description in the romance worthy of comment is the occurrence of several references to places, objects and characteristics of a supernatural nature, grouped together for convenience under the title of the 'merveilleux'. These references are particularly interesting in the light of Sweetser's statement on page 3 of his Introduction:

Bien que l'auteur se soit inspiré du Perceval de Chrétien de Troyes, surtout au début du poème, il ne s'agit pas ici d'un roman arthurien, car Blancandin ne contient pas de traces de magie ni d'éléments féeriques.

Though Sweetser's assertion that Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is not an Arthurian romance is not disputed, the romance does nevertheless contain references to faery or supernatural elements. These include the comparison of Orgueilleuse's beauty with faery beauty in the portrait (ll. 566-594):

Cent tanz ert plus bele que fee, (l. 574)
and the claim of magic powers made by the wounded knight's lady when Blancandin rescues her during his first adventure:

S'ainz i venoie qu'il fust morz,
Ge sai tant et charmes et sorz,
Bien li rendrai encor la vie
S'ainz i vieng qu'ele soit partie;
Et s'il est morz, por lui morrai,
Jamais ne m'en departirai. (ll. 357-362)

The lady's powers, "et charmes et sorz" - magic spells and predictions - by which she claims to be able to revive the wounded knight provided she reaches him before he dies, are clearly stated as elements of magic.

These two examples are very slight, in comparison

with two other supernatural elements which have curative and consolatory powers and which are described at some length: the pillow provided for Blancandin in the provost's house (ll. 1564-1569), and the orchard of Ruban's kingdom (ll. 2597-2603). The poet describes firstly the buttons on the pillow and then its contents:

Dedenz fu emplí de fenex.
C'est un oisel dont il est mains;
Li oiselez n'est pas vilains.
Quant sor son chief l'a aucun home,
Ja por pensser ne perdra some,
Ne ja n'iert en travail n'en paine. (ll. 1564-1569)

Interestingly, the pillow is filled with the feathers not from a real bird but from the Phoenix of Classical mythology, indicating magic or supernatural powers. The reference to the Phoenix is unusual in that the powers attributed to the pillow have no association with the normal traits of the Phoenix, i.e. consummation by fire and resurrection. In addition, l. 1565 describing the Phoenix as a scarce bird constitutes an understatement in that the bird of Classical mythology is in fact unique and rare. Lines 1566-1569 of Sweetser's text are hard to make sense of as they stand, but the variants show us the meaning that the pillow has a good effect when a man has his head on it.¹².

The orchard of Ruban's kingdom possesses more than natural attributes of tranquillity; not only does it contain trees of youth with powers of rejuvenation (ll. 2597-2598) but the whole place has an aura of the supernatural and possesses curative powers:

Li arbre i sont molt merveillox
Et li leus fu molt preciox,
Que nus n'i vait, si grant mal ait,
De toz malaiges santé n'ait,
Por ce que il garir en doie. (ll. 2599-2603)

Of greater significance to the narrative than the supernatural elements examined above are references to dreams as portents of future events and to rings which are used as tokens or which possess special characteristics. There are two examples of dreams foretelling

future misfortune. In ll. 5690-5702, Alimodés describes to his people at Cassidoine how he has dreamed of a violent storm arriving from the sea, with winds to upset his tents and golden eagles to terrify him. Immediately after his account, Blancandin arrives at port to rescue Sadoine. Similarly, Blancandin describes to the provost his dream of Orgueilleuse beseeching his help (ll. 5959-5973), and immediately the provost tells him of Subien's treachery, beginning with the words:

... "Se Diex me voie
 Bien est cis songes avertis ..." (ll. 5974-5975)

Rings used as tokens or possessing special qualities of protection are conventional elements of ancient and medieval literature. One such ring, possessing the extraordinary power of rendering its wearer invisible, is the one given to Yvain by Lunete and which performs the important function of saving the hero from his pursuers.¹³ The rings mentioned in this romance are very different from Lunete's ring however, as they do not produce such a spectacular result, but rather function as tokens or possess a variety of protective powers.

The first ring mentioned here is that given to Blancandin by the knight at the ford as a token to guarantee that he will be accepted as a lodger nearby (ll. 432-435); it is duly returned to its owner the next day (ll. 495-497). Blancandin's own ring possesses specific powers of protection - it is described in detail when he shows it to his imprisoned father (ll. 3794-3806):

Et si vos di veraïement
 Que cest enel d'or me dona.
 Sire, connoistriëz le ja?
 La pierrë en est de berill;
 Ge l'ai portee en maint perill.
 Bien sai qu'el a vertu si fort,
 Qu'ele garist home de mort
 Et de chartre, ce me dit on.
 Hom qui le port ne tient prison,
 Ne ne perdra goute de sanc
 De braz, de coste ne de flanc.
 Ne ja n'iert par arme entamez;
 De moi est il bien esprouvez. (ll. 3794-3806)

The particular function of the ring in this context is as a means of identification, but it is interesting to note the extensive powers of protection against death, injury and imprisonment attributed to it.

Blancandin sends a ring, possibly the same one as shown to his father, but simply described as a golden ring, "cest enel d'or" (l. 4132), to Orgueilleuse as a pledge of his continued service, a ring which also promises protection to its wearer:

Et cest enel d'or li donez.
 S'en son doi l'a la damoisele,
 Toz jors avra color novele
 Et amera veraïement,
 Et si garra de son torment;
 Dites li que ge l'i envoi. (ll. 4132-4137)

The guarantee inherent in this ring is threefold, and not simply against physical harm: the wearer will have a fresh colour, i.e. good health, will love truly, and will be relieved from worry.

These instances of magical or supernatural elements do not play a major role in the narrative as a whole but provide additional interest in Blancandin's story. The detailed and varied descriptive passages, the description of sea journeys, and the references to magic or supernatural powers, all add colour to the events of the account of Blancandin's adventures. These aspects of the narrative are more than mere interludes however; they comprise an integral part of the story and make a contribution to the overall structure of the romance, helping to make the story a cohesive whole.

Notes:

1. See Chapter 6, pp. 85-86
2. "sidoine" - Sweetser's glossary (p. 476) gives the meaning in this instance as simply 'sorte de vêtement'. Tobler-Lommatzsch lists several examples of "sidoine" under the heading 'Nesseltuch', meaning cotton fabric, which do not define the type of garment but which include mention of fur perhaps as trimming or lining.
3. Sweetser, Notes Critiques, p. 391
4. Sweetser, Notes Critiques, p. 396
5. A-J. Greimas, Dictionnaire de l'ancien français, Larousse, Paris, 1968, p. 390
6. F. Whitehead (ed.), La Chanson de Roland, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, p. 72
7. Sweetser, Glossaire, p. 444
8. A-J. Greimas, op. cit., p. 100
9. Jill Tattersall, "The island and its significance in Old French texts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries", French Studies, Vol. XXXIV, No. 1, January 1980
10. Tattersall, ibid., p. 7
11. Tattersall, ibid., p. 9
12. Sweetser, p. 138, variants:
 1566 C P Li orilliers
 1567 C P Q. son c. tient deseur nul h.
13. T.B.W. Reid (ed.), Yvain (le chevalier au lion), Chrestien de Troyes, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1942, ll. 1023-1037

Chapter 8

ASPECTS OF STRUCTURE AND NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

The story of Blancandin and his adventures is related in a narrative notable for its coherence. Consideration of the overall structure of the romance together with the examination of factors contributing to the unity of the story - the presence throughout of the hero, heroine, the single goal of the security of Tormadai, the single line of enemies, and a small number of supporting characters - and the examination of some of the narrative devices employed, will help to demonstrate the poet's achievement of a tale well told.

In considering the structure of the romance as a whole, it is important to note the broad differences between the five manuscripts in verse from which Sweetser's critical edition of the text is derived.¹ In the Introduction to his edition, Sweetser outlines the establishment of his text: up to l. 4816 he gives the text of MS. A with variants from MSS. C and P supplying passages from MS. P where gaps or ambiguities occur in MS. A. From l. 4816 MS. A brings the story to an end in one hundred and seven lines after Blancandin's defeat of Alimodés and his brother Arimodés in the battle of Tormadai. Alimodés and Arimodés flee in their ships, leaving Blancandin to marry Orgueilleuse, Gloradin to return to his kingdom, and Sadoine to rejoin his wife at Cassidoine. From l. 4817, Sweetser gives the texts of both MSS. C and P until the end of the romance.² However, MS. P is incomplete, ending with Blancandin's rescue and establishment of Sadoine at Cassidoine, and so for the present purpose of examining the structure of the romance, from l. 4817 the text of MS. C only will be considered.

The basic form of the romance follows the conventions of medieval romance developed during the twelfth century.

It is written in octosyllabic couplets, and the length of Sweetser's text - 6521 lines - is comparable to the approximate length of 7000 lines of Chrétien's romances. It has already been noted that the principal concerns of the romance, love and chivalry, were those of earlier courtly romances.³ The broad story line of the romance, the adventures of a single knight, is the plot of many earlier romances, and Marie-José Southworth shows in her comparative study that four romances, including Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour, all dated between 1190 and 1240, have in common the following five stages in their plots:

- the young hero sets out in search of adventure
- he is dubbed a knight
- he falls in love with a noble and rich lady
- he accomplishes feats of arms until he defeats the lady's enemies
- he marries the lady and becomes king and protector of her lands.⁴

In the case of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour, it is the degree of emphasis placed on each of these five stages and their relationship to each other which play a large part in determining the structure of the narrative.

Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is a clear example of bipartite writing, the story falling into two distinct parts marked by the point of establishment of the relationship of love and service between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, followed by his immediate departure to defend her against her enemies. The point of bipartition occurs at l. 1770 which corresponds to the end of Section 6, "Orgueilleuse declares her love for Blancandin", in Sweetser's résumé. It has already been shown that from this point in the story the emphasis on the twin themes of love and chivalry, well-balanced in the first part, becomes unequal, the concerns of chivalry gaining predominance in the second part of the romance.⁵ This change of emphasis in fact underlies a basic change of direction in the narrative which has important

implications in defining and situating the romance within the genre, as well as marking a clear division between its two parts.

In his book, Structure in Medieval Narrative, William W. Ryding has applied the theories on narrative structure set out by Tasso in his Discorsi del poema eroico (1594) to important Old French narrative works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁶ Of particular interest to the present study is his relation of Tasso's discussion of the question of beginning, middle and end to the common bipartite form of medieval narrative. Bipartite writing must necessarily have "its own special sort of beginning, middle, and end"⁷, the middle functioning as a bridge between the two parts of a diptych. Such a middle is often brief, bringing the first part to an end and setting the second in motion. By examining its beginning, middle and end, it will be seen that our romance is a clear example of this type of narrative organisation.

The first part of the romance begins as a 'roman éducatif', the similarities with Chrétien's Perceval having been noted earlier⁸, and it develops in line with the traditions of courtly romance, with the interlacing of the themes of love and chivalry. The young Blancandin, having acquired a taste for chivalrous adventure despite the absence of encouragement in his upbringing, sets out in search of honour and reputation. His first adventure, as we have seen, forms an episode complete in itself and at the same time important to the narrative as a whole; it functions as Blancandin's initiation into the world of chivalry and as his introduction to love. Thus prepared, Blancandin goes on to encounter Orgueilleuse with whom a love relationship is established, and to prove himself worthy as a knight at Tormadai. From the commencement of the romance up to this point - l. 1770 - the narrative progresses steadily and coherently towards a climax, particularly in terms of the love theme. At this point,

the love relationship between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse is firmly established, thereafter receiving far less emphasis than his chivalrous adventures, and undergoing no significant development in psychological terms as does, for example, the relationship of Chrétien's Yvain and Laudine.

However, this conclusive establishment of the love relationship, together with Blancandin's swift recognition as an accomplished knight after his meeting the provost's challenge and his spectacular defeat of Alimodés's knights at Tormadai, effectively brings the 'roman éducatif' to an end after only 1770 lines. In fact, the relationship with Orgueilleuse, while promising to provide Blancandin with his desired life of chivalrous adventure in her service, has in this part tended to obscure the aims of the hero of a 'roman éducatif', a story which the reader or listener might have expected at its beginning to lead through a graded series of adventures to Blancandin's ultimate recognition as a knight of honour and reputation.

The 'middle' of the romance occurs then at the end of the first part, and constitutes not a substantial part of the narrative but only the point (l. 1770) at which bipartition occurs. Having in essence 'concluded' the love story of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, which from this point on awaits only to be formalised in marriage after the security of Tormadai is established, the poet returns to the adventures of his hero. The abruptness of this change in direction has already been discussed in connection with Blancandin's greater concern with the challenge of future battles in his lady's service than with deepening the experience of love.⁹ Hereafter the emphasis of the narrative falls principally on the series of adventures and battles Blancandin undergoes until the dénouement and his eventual reunion and marriage with Orgueilleuse. It is from this 'middle' that the narrative becomes more accurately that of a 'roman d'aventures'

rather than that of a 'roman éducatif' or a courtly romance in the style of Chrétien de Troyes.

In considering the second part of the diptych, it is interesting to note that Marie-José Southworth defines the structure of the romance as tripartite, by dividing this second part in two.¹⁰ She defines the three parts of the romance as "un roman de formation, des récits de voyages en terre païenne et un traité de chevalerie"¹¹, proposing as the dominating factor of her second part, "des revers de fortune que redresse l'intervention de la Providence".¹² While the episodes of the romance which involve the conversion of pagans to Christianity and such 'providential' matters as Blancandin's survival of the shipwreck, meeting with the provost at sea on his return from Jerusalem, and change of course from Tormadai to Cassidoine because of a storm, occur within the confines of M.-J. Southworth's second part, these elements do not in themselves constitute sufficient reason to separate these adventures and battles from those of her third part. The artificiality of such a division is reinforced by its occurrence after the battle of Cassidoine which results in the defeat of Alimodés's son Daire, the rescue of Gloradin, and the marriage of Sadoine with Alimodés's daughter, the battle in which Blancandin brings about the defeat of an important member of Alimodés's line and which therefore properly belongs to a connected series of battles against a common enemy. M.-J. Southworth's later extensive treatment of the five major battles contained in her second and third parts as a series and with points in common further blurs the division she has proposed.

It is however not denied that certain religious and providential elements tend to be concentrated near the beginning of the second part. Rather than helping to define the "récits de voyages en terre païenne", these religious elements and providential circumstances constitute the means by which the poet equips his lone hero with the manpower and arms with which to defeat his

lady's enemies. Blancandin's first brave defence of Orgueilleuse, his combat with Rubion, is preceded by a dismal picture of Orgueilleuse's knights:

La dedenz furent tuit armé
 Li chevalier de la cité;
 N'i a cel qui issir s'en ost.
 Blanchandins fu chiés le prevost.
 "Hostes, fist il, par Saint Maart,
 Trop sont cil chevalier coart.
 Legiere est mauvestiez a faire;
 Trop se pueent arriere traire. ..." (ll. 1801-1808)

Obviously Blancandin cannot defeat Alimodés, his relatives, and their vast armies alone, and the story thus continues with a perhaps improbable, but nonetheless coherent, sequence of events which remedies this situation. This sequence is rendered coherent largely by the linking of events through cause and effect: Blancandin's lack of support during his first major battle facilitates his capture by Alimodés; the shipwreck enables Blancandin, the sole survivor, to escape and places him in a country where, through resourcefulness and courage, he gains the alliance of Sadoine and his army; because of a storm at sea Blancandin is able to convert his new allies to Christianity, an important point in terms of the moral framework of the romance, and his journey is also diverted by the storm to Cassidoine where Daire is defeated, Gloradin rescued, and Sadoine married to Alimodés's daughter who also embraces Christianity. At the point where M.-J. Southworth divides the latter part of the romance into her second and third parts, an important stage of the narrative is indeed reached: Blancandin has achieved a position of strength from which to set about securing Tormadai from its enemies.

The second part of the diptych, the 'end' of the narrative, comprises then Blancandin's adventures in the service of Orgueilleuse, progressing through his acquisition of an ally, Sadoine, and an army, his defeat of Alimodés and his line, and his securing of Tormadai against both its external and internal enemies, by means of a series of battles. With the absence of any real

development of the love theme in the latter part, the structure of the romance changes from that of an interlaced narrative in the first part to a more loosely connected sequence of episodes in the second. This series of adventures and battles bears similarities with the structure of the chansons de geste, with which the latter section of the romance also shares the following characteristics: the opposition of Christian virtue and pagan wickedness; the line of enemies which is destroyed (or, in the case of Alimodés, imprisoned); the conversion of pagans to Christianity; collective effort rather than individual effort of the hero; and the incidence of treachery.

The end of the romance, and in particular the episode relating the treachery of Subien, calls for close examination. It is noteworthy that one manuscript (MS.A) does not include the capture and rescue of Sadoine or the treachery of Subien, and it would certainly appear to the modern reader that the Subien episode in particular is unnecessary to the story of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, as it introduces a new character and a new set of circumstances at the very point where one might expect the protagonists to be finally reunited in the security of Tormadai. However, though the late introduction of a new character (l. 4983) delays the dénouement and strikes a discordant note in a romance which is otherwise remarkable for the consistent nature of its characterisation, the inclusion of the episode is not as incongruous as it first appears. Firstly, it is important to remember the medieval writer's concern with length. Writing within a romance tradition which favours a length of around 7000 lines and considers the writer's ability to amplify and lengthen a story a matter for admiration¹³, our poet would hardly wish to end his romance at only 5000 or so lines. The Subien episode, interlaced with the rescue of Sadoine, helps to draw out the romance to a more respectable length of 6521 lines. Secondly, the episode may simply indicate a desire for variety, together with a

reluctance on the part of the poet to bring his hero's adventures to an end. We may imagine the poet, having created a hero who has acquitted himself admirably in so many situations, wishing to invent new challenges through which to demonstrate Blancandin's abilities. Thirdly, and less tenuously, the Subien episode constitutes a factor in the construction of the narrative worthy of consideration. In two important ways the episode has a balancing effect: it represents the defeat of the internal as opposed to external (i.e., Alimodés and his line) enemies of Tormadai; and it provides a balance between the opposing claims of love and friendship with the episode of Sadoine's rescue. In the latter instance, we note that after watching his captured ally Sadoine being taken away in Alimodés's ship (ll. 4939 ff.), Blancandin is faced with a choice between the claims of love and friendship. As an honourable knight he chooses to rescue his captured companion-at-arms for the sake of friendship. Alongside this episode of Sadoine's rescue with which it is interlaced, the Subien episode may thus be interpreted as a reinforcement of Blancandin's love for Orgueilleuse, as in the latter instance he is faced with the necessity of rescuing his lady for the sake of love. Nevertheless, to the modern reader, the Subien episode remains among the least satisfactory aspects of an otherwise remarkably coherent narrative.

Several factors play an important part in the poet's achievement of coherence and unity in his story. The first and most obvious is the presence throughout of the hero, Blancandin, and from l. 415 and to a lesser extent in the second part, of his lady, Orgueilleuse.¹⁴ The second, from the time of Blancandin's encounter with the knight at the ford in ll. 403-620 is the single goal of all his adventures in the service of Orgueilleuse, the security of Tormadai. The third, which is closely linked to the second, is the presence throughout of a single line

of enemies headed by Alimodés. The fourth factor is the presence of supporting characters who provide a parallel to the main story or who reappear from time to time to contribute to the continuity of the action. Another less significant factor is the ever-present motif of help which underlies all the efforts of the hero.¹⁵

The importance of the supporting characters as factors contributing to the unity of the romance warrants further comment. The role of Sadoine as companion-at-arms to Blancandin has already been considered.¹⁶ In addition, Sadoine's relationship with Alimodés's daughter provides an interesting parallel to the principal love theme, the relationship of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse. While the love story of Sadoine and Alimodés's daughter is well constructed and involves the additional interest of her conversion to Christianity and desertion of her family's common goal, the subordination of Orgueilleuse and Tormadai, the poet never allows it to compete with the importance of the central love story of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse. Rather the secondary love story is skilfully worked into the political interest of establishing the security of Tormadai, as the relationship between Sadoine and Alimodés's daughter involves the defeat of both Daire and ultimately, through his daughter's rejection, Alimodés, and results in their marriage and the establishment of Blancandin's ally, Sadoine, as king of Cassidoine.

We have already noted the role of the lady-companion in the development of Orgueilleuse's feelings.¹⁷ However, with the establishment of the love relationship, and after comforting Orgueilleuse on the capture of Blancandin, her purpose is fulfilled, and the provost thereafter fills the role of Orgueilleuse's counsellor. The provost plays a significant role throughout the romance: besides being an official in Orgueilleuse's city, he acts as host to the unknown Blancandin; he volunteers to act as Blancandin's squire and assists him in battle; and most

importantly, he continues to act as the ally and adviser of both Blancandin and Orgueilleuse throughout the whole story. By having the provost meet Blancandin and Sadoine at sea on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (ll. 2801-2961), and later extending his role to that of messenger when Orgueilleuse sends him to sea to meet an approaching ship (ll. 3973-4140), the poet creates in this character an important link between the two main characters, during the long periods of the story when they are separated. The provost thus contributes to the unity of the work.

The role of the provost on meeting Blancandin at sea a second time (ll. 3973-4140) is important not only for the practical purposes of securing Tormadai but also for reviving the reader's interest in the love theme. A note of humour and intrigue is introduced as the unwitting provost tells the 'stranger' of his lady's concern for her absent lover, while Blancandin who has recognised the messenger teasingly provokes him into assurances of Orgueilleuse's fidelity, before revealing his identity and sending the provost back to Orgueilleuse with his ring and promise of protection. Later in the episode of the treacherous Subien, the faithful provost joins forces with the viscount of Castelfort against the traitors, and later travels to Cassidoine to tell Blancandin of the treachery. Clearly then, the provost plays a significant role, particularly as a messenger, in serving the interests of Blancandin, Orgueilleuse, and the security of Tormadai, and in contributing to the overall coherence of the story.

The consistent and straightforward nature of the poet's narrative technique contributes substantially to the coherence of the story. Through his attention to economy of organisation, and his adherence to simple linear development of the plot, the narrative is noteworthy for its clarity. Two points which clearly illustrate this characteristic are the poet's care in introducing his

characters and the ways in which the episodes of the romance are linked. Other points worthy of comment include the use of dialogue in conjunction with narrative, and the poet's occasional comments.

The principal characters of the story are given detailed introductions: we have seen how Blancandin's character has been gradually described in the early sections of the romance, and how Orgueilleuse has been introduced both by the formal portrait and by other information given Blancandin by the knight at the ford. The provost is introduced through action - through the unusual form of combat in which he and Blancandin engage to settle the matter of lodging. Other supporting characters are introduced by short descriptions or vignettes usually identifying them by name, by some aspect of their function, or by some individualising physical or psychological trait.

The first such introduction of a minor character is of the knight at the ford, and it combines a short physical description with mention of his function, neatly incorporating the first mention of the heroine and her city of Tormadai:

Choisi l'anfes un chevalier
 Qui acoroit sor son destrier,
 Molt bien armez d'eaume et d'escu,
 De bon hauberc maillié menu;
 S'espee fu de nuef forbie,
 Si tint une lance brunie;
 La barbe avoit florie et blanche.
 Deci qu'a l'arçon vers la hanche
 Molt estoit richement armez.
 Illuec fu por mostrer les guez
 A çax qui passer i devoient
 Qui sa dame servir voloient,
 La pucele de Tormadai,
 Que plus bele flor n'est en mai;
 Que tant ert gente criature,
 Por esgarder la fist nature. (ll. 403-418)

The latter part of this passage mentions the heroine for the first time, describing her briefly in laudatory, but conventional literary terms, thus helping to create a favourable attitude towards her in the mind of the listener or reader.

The sketch of Orgueilleuse's lady-companion is relatively brief but expresses her loyalty and devotion to her lady in an original way:

Dejoste lui vient sa mestresse
 Qui en a perdu mainte messe
 Et mai[n]te voie de mostier
 Por lui dui^ré et chastier. (ll. 695-698)

The introduction of the principal enemy Alimodés and his allies is simple and dramatic, and provides an example of the poet's ability to supply identifying characteristics with economy of expression:

Atant ez vos Alimodés,
 Un roi felon et molt engrés,
 Et chevalchoit un dromadaire.
 Dejoste lui fu sis filz Daire
 Et sa fille qu'il aime bien,
 Et Rubion, un roi païen. (ll. 1101-1106)

In an equally simple, brief passage, the poet introduces Sadoine, telling us in four lines that he is the son of King Ruban, that he has a bright complexion, that he is a newly-created knight, and that Blancandin is very favourably impressed with his appearance:

Li rois Rubans fait demander
 Son filz Sadoine o le vis cler.
 Chevalier estoit de novel;
 A Blanchandin en fu molt bel. (ll. 2339-2342)

Similarly brief but effective descriptions are given of Alimodés's daughter (by Blancandin, ll. 2699-2702) and of Subien (ll. 4982-4985). The three characters of Blancandin's first adventure - the wounded knight, his lady, and the wicked knight - are not named or identified in any way, nor do they reappear in the romance, helping to show that it is an isolated example, a lesson in the ways of chivalry to be learned by the young Blancandin.

It is evident that the poet has exercised particular care in linking episodes of the romance, thus preserving unbroken continuity of action throughout. In the early sections, the sequence of adventures is linked by the logical and conventional means of the hero's 'travelling on'. Thus Blancandin rides from his father's house until he meets the wounded knight (ll. 205-212); after his

first adventure he rides on again until he meets the knight at the ford (ll. 389-403); after the adventure of the stolen kisses, Blancandin gallops off at speed (ll. 715-719), and then the poet skilfully directs the narrative towards Orgueilleuse by outlining her vow of revenge. From this point in the story until the end of the first part (l. 1770), the poet employs a simple yet effective device for changing scenes while preserving essential continuity of action. By means of abrupt changes of focus, without using an adverb or adverbial phrase expressing a change of time or place, - a device commonly employed in fiction writing to the present day - the poet is able to convey the impression of simultaneous action in two succeeding episodes. Several examples occur: at the conclusion of the conversation between Orgueilleuse and her lady-companion (ll. 729-852), two lines shift the scene back to Blancandin, and introduce his approach to Tormadai:

Orgueillose d'amors parla
Et Blanchandins esperona; (ll. 853-854)

a similar but more interesting shift occurs in ll. 987-990 where the scene moves from Blancandin to Orgueilleuse by the association of partaking of food:

Il menga avuec le prevost
Pain et vin et chapons en rost.
Orgueillose d'amors penssa;
Onques ne but ne ne menja; (ll. 987-990)

a longer and less obvious example occurs after the battle with Alimodés's knights when Orgueilleuse watches the celebrations at the provost's house:

Et de harpes et de vïeles
Furent les melodies beles
Tot contreval par la meson.
Molt l'esgardoient li baron
Que l'enfes ot pris en l'estor
Por ce qu'il ert de grant valor.
Orgueillose d'amors estoit
A la fenestre ou el veoît
Le deduit que li prevoz maine. (ll. 1347-1355)

In the latter part of the romance, from l. 1771, Blancandin's adventures are linked principally by the journeys they occasion to and from Tormadai. However, the

break which occurs at the 'middle', at the beginning of his adventures in the service of Orgueilleuse, is markedly abrupt. Having established the relationship between Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, the poet continues with a brief conversation between Blancandin and the provost, then switches immediately to the readying of Alimodés and his men for battle. Lines 1769-1770 mark the end of Blancandin's conversation with the provost:

Atant laissent le pledoier
Et si s'assieent au mengier. (ll. 1769-1770)

With no transitional remarks, the narrative continues to describe Alimodés's preparations:

Alimodés et si baron
Furent devant son paveillon.
Les murs esgardent de defors,
Puis sonent buisines et cors. (ll. 1771-1774)

For the remainder of the romance, a straightforward narrative technique of progressing logically from one adventure to another is followed, the actions of Orgueilleuse being incorporated as we have already seen through the provost's function as messenger and link between the main characters. The journeys by sea which link the later episodes enable the characters to be conveyed smoothly from scene to scene, and contribute to the logical sequence of episodes.

The poet's use of dialogue in conjunction with narrative was noted in the examination of Blancandin's first adventure, where the alternation of passages of dialogue with passages of description helped to provide a balance between Blancandin's reactions to his experience and the narration of dramatic actions.¹⁸ Throughout the romance the poet continues to insert passages of dialogue, and also of monologue, which serve to relieve the long descriptions, particularly of battle scenes, and to maintain interest in the characters through their interpretation of and reactions to events.

For the most part, the poet adheres to the stance of an omniscient author at a distance from his narrative.

However, he frequently addresses his audience or readers by introducing a character or situation with an expression such as "Ez vos ...", or an imperative such as "Saciés", or a subjunctive such as "Veïssiés":

Ez vos Orgueilleuse d'amor
Qui descendi devant sa tor; (ll. 977-978)

Saciés, li boins provos i fu,
Qui molt ot le cuer irascu,
Qui Blancandin ot herbregié; (ll. 5935-5937)

La veïssiés fiere crïee
Entor Sadoïne et grant bruor. (ll. 4862-4863)

The poet addresses his audience in such ways in order to direct attention towards an important point or to shift the focus from one scene to another, but intervenes relatively seldom with authorial comments on the action itself. There are several interesting examples of authorial comment, perhaps the most noteworthy being the poet's exoneration of Blancandin from blame after his defeat of the provost.¹⁹ The poet inserts a general comment of a didactic nature in ll. 3085-3088 after the provost's reflections on the good fortune he has enjoyed since meeting Blancandin:

Por voir vos di, ce est la some,
Molt doit on bien servir prodome
Et faire henor a mainte gent. (ll. 3085-3088)

Other comments are in the nature of an aside such as that of l. 2137 when the poet remarks thus on Blancandin's feelings after being captured by Alimodés:

Se il plore, ne m'en merveil, (l. 2137)

or an exclamation such as that of ll. 4996-4997 to convey the true nature of Subien's character to the audience or readers:

He, Diex, c'or ne s'i set gaitier
Blancandins del felon traître! (ll. 4996-4997)

The poet's direct appeals to his audience are reminiscent of the frequent occurrence of such comments in Beroul's Tristran.²⁰ These include the simple imperative:

Oiez du nain boçu Frocin, (Tristran, l. 320)

and longer passages calling for the audience's attention which reflect the truly oral style:

Qui veut oïr une aventure,
 Con grant chose a a[n] noretur,
 Si m'escoute un sol petitet!

(Tristran, ll. 1437-1439)

The presence, throughout the story, of Blancandin and Orgueilleuse, of the single goal of Tormadai, of a single line of enemies, and a small number of supporting characters, together with the poet's attention to such aspects of composition as the introduction of characters, linking of episodes, balancing of dialogue, description and narrative of events, and sparing use of direct authorial comment, all help to create a clear and coherent narrative. However, though the overall structure of the romance is a clear example of bipartite organisation as Ryding defined it, the characteristics of the two parts are sufficiently distinct to raise questions about the precise nature of the romance and its place within the medieval romance tradition.

Notes:

1. See Introduction, p. 4
2. Sweetser, pp. 29-30 and p. 55
3. See Chapter 1, p. 10
4. Southworth, p. 7
5. See Chapter 1, p. 13
6. William W. Ryding, Structure in Medieval Narrative, Mouton, The Hague, 1971, p. 11
7. Ryding, ibid., p. 40
8. See Chapter 2, p. 21
9. See Chapter 5, p. 65
10. Southworth, pp. 133 ff.
11. Southworth, p. 148
12. Southworth, pp. 144-145. The emphasis placed by this critic on the role of Providence in the romance has already been called into question in connection with Blancandin's rescue of his imprisoned father.

13. Ryding, op. cit., p. 62
14. One critic quoted by M.-J. Southworth (p. 148, Note 21) considers the two main characters the only factors connecting the romance's series of adventures, but such a view ignores the importance of the supporting characters, and other elements of the story present throughout the romance.
15. Southworth, pp. 149-151
16. See Chapter 3, pp. 38-40
17. See Chapter 5, p. 69
18. See Chapter 2, p. 28
19. See Chapter 6, p. 76
20. Beroul, The Romance of Tristan, ed. A. Ewert, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1971

CONCLUSION

Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour follows to a considerable extent the conventions of twelfth-century courtly romance. The principal themes of the romance - love and chivalry - though imperfectly balanced are those of earlier courtly romances. Blancandin's progress during the first part of the romance towards establishment as a knight closely follows the pattern of a roman éducatif and bears similarities with that of Chrétien's Perceval. Orgueilleuse is depicted, particularly in the portrait, as a conventional heroine, and the poet's treatment of the love story is refined and provides psychological interest within the tradition developed by Chrétien de Troyes. The description of chivalrous combat in the romance is largely conventional; the nature and circumstances of many of the battles and the proportion of the narrative devoted to them provide, however, the principal difference between this work and earlier courtly romances. Description of places and objects forms an important part of the story, helping to enhance the characters, to lend colour and excitement to the narrative, to provide interludes between the battle scenes and to link episodes.

Two features of the romance of particular interest are the role of Blancandin, and the overall structure of the narrative, both of which features have considerable bearing on the situation of Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour within the romance genre.

Blancandin's role is a many-faceted one: we see him as a young aspirant to the world of chivalry, as a lover, as an accomplished knight, as a leader of men, as a Christian knight, as a companion-at-arms, as a caring son, and as a loyal and able protector. In all these capacities, Blancandin is an exemplary figure, a model to be admired and imitated. In the prologue (ll. 1-22), the poet bemoans the corruption of the present by comparison with the 'good old days', and concludes with two lines:

Or en poëz oïr la some:

A poine est mais un ge[n]til home. (ll. 21-22)

The story which follows is that of Blancandin, "un gentil home" par excellence, who will exemplify all the virtues of the past and, by implication, counteract the vices of the present, as they have been outlined in the prologue.

Blancandin is of noble birth, of good lineage. He upholds the code of chivalry, and in the course of his career guarantees safety and freedom from fear for individuals, protects virtuous women, and exercises firm, just and honest rule. In short, Blancandin is the example by which the poet will show that in times past "Chevalerie n'ert pas morte" (l. 7) as he assumes it to be in his day. In this context, the series of adventures Blancandin is involved in may be seen as a series of exempla, comparable to those of a religious nature intended as examples of conduct to be imitated.¹ In portraying Blancandin as a model, the poet does not develop his hero's character with any real moral or psychological depth, i.e. he is not torn by conflict or doubt about what he is to do or guilt about an omission. Blancandin's role thus has a general moral purpose in providing an example of conduct to be imitated by aspiring young nobles of the poet's audience, but it does not provide an example of personal moral development and self-realisation, the attributes displayed by Chrétien's heroes.

The character of Blancandin reflects some interesting aspects of the historical view of knighthood in the early thirteenth century. Georges Duby has shown that at this time two levels of the aristocracy were fused: the 'châtelains' and the knights previously attached to them as vassals by feudal ties; this fusion was accompanied by an increase in the importance of the dubbing of a knight.² Achieving the status of knighthood thus became a distinction apart from that of noble birth, so that even the son of a king, like Blancandin, would seek the distinction of being a knight. To this rise in the status of knighthood corresponded an increased sense of the

honour and Christian purpose of chivalry. From the early eleventh century in France, the Church recognised the military vocation of members of the aristocracy, their role as 'soldiers of Christ'; later their vocation as Christian knights was symbolised by the development of the dubbing ceremony into a rite of the Church.³ The emphasis on Blancandin's role as a Christian knight is small, being confined to the conversion of first Sadoine and his men, and then of Alimodés's daughter to Christianity, but nevertheless it constitutes a reflection of the contemporary view of knighthood.

The portrayal of Blancandin as an exemplary knight, whose virtues are illustrated through a series of adventures designed to provide him with opportunities to display his prowess, and who reflects to some extent contemporary views of knighthood, has an important bearing on the structure of the romance. As we have seen, the first part of the romance follows the form of a roman éducatif, developing in parallel fashion the twin themes of love and chivalry. From l. 1771 however, the romance takes the form of a roman d'aventures, as the theme of chivalry gains predominance.

The imbalance of the principal themes and the related structural division into two such distinct parts creates a romance which in the first part bears many similarities with courtly romances in the style of Chrétien de Troyes, but which in the second part becomes a series of adventures narrated in a fairly loosely connected sequence of episodes. In the first part, the poet outlines Blancandin's progress towards knighthood, creates a sensitively-drawn heroine, and presents a delicately-worked love story. However, having virtually concluded the love story by l. 1770, the poet then devotes himself to a romance of action, where Blancandin is portrayed as a model knight through a series of adventures. The description of combat, especially major battles where the hero participates in collective as well as individual

effort, recalling the battles of the chansons de geste, dominates the second part and the psychological interest of the love theme is almost totally overshadowed. In a recent general survey of the romance genre, Blancandin et l'Orgueilleuse d'amour is classified as a 'roman d'aventure et d'amour' and listed under the sub-heading 'Idylle et passion'.⁴ It is clear that the predominance of the theme of chivalry, and the devotion of two-thirds of the narrative to Blancandin's chivalrous adventures renders classification of the romance as 'Idylle et passion' inappropriate. It would be more accurate to include it under the sub-heading 'Épreuves et péripéties'.

The attempt to create a well-balanced and convincing story while thus changing the emphasis of the narrative is not entirely successful, as the development of Blancandin's character to provide psychological interest comparable to that achieved in the portrayal of Orgueilleuse and the analysis of the love story in the first part is sacrificed in the second part to a rather stereotyped presentation of a model hero and exemplar of knightly virtues. However, the variety of Blancandin's adventures, the element of surprise in the often dramatic turn of events, and the evocative description of wonderful and beautiful places and objects, compensate to a considerable degree for any lack of depth in the hero's character. In addition, Blancandin's story is told with considerable skill, in a coherent and unified narrative, marked by the poet's attention to clarity and a logical sequence of events, and the romance provides entertaining and profitable reading.

Notes:

1. Southworth, pp. 135, 144
2. Georges Duby, Hommes et structures du moyen âge, Mouton, Paris-The Hague, 1973, p. 344

3. Duby, ibid., pp. 345-348
4. J. Frappier and Reinhold R. Grimm (eds.), Le roman jusqu'à la fin du XIII^e siècle, Grundriss der romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters, Volume IV, Carl Winter - Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, 1978, pp. 457-458

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