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The evolution of prayer in French medieval literature: A medium of character development and projection in the mystères de la Passion

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The Ohio State University, 1991
THE EVOLUTION OF PRAYER IN FRENCH MEDIEVAL LITERATURE: 
A MEDIUM OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND PROJECTION IN 
THE MYSTÈRES DE LA PASSION

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for 
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate 
School of The Ohio State University

BY

James D. Wilkins, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1991

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To Arnoul Greban, Eustache Mercadé,
Jean Michel and the Others
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INTRODUCTION

THE EVOLUTION OF PRAYER IN MEDIEVAL FRENCH LITERATURE

Prayer, an integral component of religious devotion, finds an important place within the early written literature of most cultures. To lend verisimilitude, or to build the stature of a literary figure, an author has only to portray that character as a person who trusts and is in contact with divinity. This may especially be seen in the Old French vies des saints, chansons de geste, miracles de Nostre Dame, and romances—a corpus of literature spanning a period of four hundred years, i.e. the eleventh through the fourteenth centuries. As the medieval mind did not separate between the sacred and the profane,¹ one finds a seemingly strange mix of prayer, epithets and

¹ See Alan Knight, "From the Sacred to the Profane," Tréteaux 1 (1978), 42, where Knight says that in medieval cosmology the world was "... a closed and absolute system." He continues by stating that, with the earth at the center of the universe, and the Incarnation at the center of history, the self was understood to be "... an essential part of a unified divine plan."
profanities within a single work of literature, though
"... l'idée de Dieu les domineet les pénètre."²
Epic tales of slaughter and great violence are tempered
and made palatable, however, by demonstrating that the
violence portrayed was for God, country and king.³
One format used to accomplish this specification of
purpose is the epic-hero prayer, i.e., those prayers
prayed by prominent figures in the vies des saints and

² Louis Petit de Julleville, Histoire de la langue et
de la littérature française des origines à 1900, vol. 1
³ E.g., La Chanson de Roland, text established and
commented by Gérard Moignet, ed. Fernand Angué (Paris:
Bordas, 1969): Pur nostre rei devum nus ben murir /
Chrestientet aidez a sustenir (vv. 1127-28). See Léon
Gautier, La Chevalerie, 3rd ed. (Paris: Librairie
Universitaire, 1895), 540-45, where the importance of
prayer and other religious devotion to the medieval
knight are discussed in detail. Also, Edmond Labande,
in "Le credo épique: A propos des prières dans les
chansons de geste," in Recueil Clovis Brunel, vol. 2
(Paris: Société de l'École des Chartes, 1955), 62,
says that prayer regularly took place "... à la veille
d'un combat, surtout d'un duel judiciaire, au coeur
même de la bataille, ou encore au moment le plus
critique d'un siège. Le combattant implore le Ciel
pour lui-même pour que la grâce divine le tire d'une
situation qui semble désespérée; parfois, c'est un de
ses proches qui prie à ses intentions."
The evolution of prayer and prayer language can most readily be demonstrated by examining prayers in a variety of literary genres, such as the *vies*, *chansons de geste*, *miracles de Nostre Dame*, romances, and *mystères de la Passion* (Chapters 1–3, below): the chronologically early (i.e., mid-11th century) to those of the late fifteenth century. Most prayer passages in literature of this period seem to fall into a

4. By prominent characters, I refer to those who are quantitatively prominent, e.g., in "Gebete und Anrufungen in den altfranzösischen Chansons de geste," Johannes Altona, referring to the *Chanson de Roland*, points out: "So betet im Rol. Karl 12mal (137. 339. 698. 2384. 2479. 2518. 1887. 2934. 2998. 3066. 3100), Roland 8mal (1854. 2252. 2261. 2303. 2337. 2364. 2368. 2384), Turpin zweimal (2196. 2239), Olivier--und dies würde obige Behauptung allerdings nicht stützen--einmal (2013), die Französen zweimal (1837. 3694)."

5. Beginning with vernacular works appearing in the mid-13th century (ca. 1243, with the *Passion des Jongleurs*), I will concentrate on prayer as found in the *passions* up to the end of the 15th century (1486, the *Passion* of Jean Michel).
category which Bzdyl calls the narrative prayer.\textsuperscript{6} The prayers seem to have a similar internal, thematic structure: invocation, comment and request.\textsuperscript{7} Marie Pierre Koch labels such prayers as Biblical and saying, "The word 'creed' is used with the meaning that the person praying might add to his long review of biblical events: 'I believe, Oh God, thou hast done all these things; therefore, grant my petition.'\textsuperscript{8} Generally the prayers fall into categories delineated by purpose. Johannes Altona categorizes the prayers by asking the following four questions: 1) Who is praying and to whom are they praying?, 2) What is being requested?, 3) What is the occasion of the prayer?, and 4) What


\textsuperscript{7} Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 138.

religious ceremonies accompany the prayers?⁹

This introduction will serve as an overview of the
epic-hero prayers found in several works of the
aforementioned genres, and seek to establish that the
direct prayers found in the medieval mystères de la
Passion, which may be considered the epics of the
Christian faith, are but the crowning steps in the
evolution of literary prayer in medieval French
literature and that they are the offspring of a diverse
tradition of spiritual oratory. To accomplish this, I will examine a sampling of prayers from specific genres as to their chronological development and the evolution of their thematic content.

The 'vies des saints'

Some of the earliest extant direct prayers in medieval French literature are those found in the Vie de Saint Alexis (early 11th century, ca. 1050). Consider the following prayers found in the Vie de Saint Alexis:

E! reis celestes, par ton comandement
Enfant nos done qui seit a ton talent
(vv. 24-25)

E! Deus, dist il, si forz pechiez m'apresset!
S'or ne m'en fui, molt criem que ne t'en perde

10. This study will not deal with indirect prayers, such as strictly narrative prayers, or epithets. See Altona, "Gebete und Anrufungen," 12, where he defines the distinction between direct and indirect prayers, saying, "Zu den direkten Gebeten rechne ich im Allgemeinen Bitt-, Dank- und Beichtgebete; zu den indirekten: Gruss, Fürbitte bei diesen Gebeten wird (. . .) Abschnitt III eine besondere Betrachtung gewidmet werden."

The first prayer (vv. 24-25) is one offered by Alexis' parents prior to his birth, to establish the premise in the vie that Alexis was a gift of God in response to a prayer of petition (Bittgebet). It begins with an invocation (E! reis, v. 24) and concludes with a request (par ton comandement / enfant nos done, vv. 24-25). The invocation itself begins with an apostrophe, which Culler asserts "... serve as intensifiers, as images of invested passion."¹² Not only must the praying person capture the attention of deity, but must likewise specify the deity's identity, as non-Christian enemies pray to their deity, and as imps and demons pray to Satan, their lord-figure.¹³ In this case, the comment (or what I shall later call the statement of being) is, in paraphrase, "If God commands it, it will


¹³. See note 74, below, p. 58.
be" (v. 25). Such comments are common to later prayers, even those within the Vie de St. Alexis (cf. vv. 207-11 above).

The second prayer (vv. 59-60) contains all three thematic elements: the invocation (El Deus, v. 59), the comment (si forz pechiez m'apresset, v. 59), and the request (S'or ne m'en fui, molt criem que ne t'en perde, v. 60). Petit de Julleville, in Histoire de la langue et de la litterature francaise des origines à 1900, comments concerning the invocations frequently used to begin these prayers and the fact that they, "... ferment ainsi la porte au panthéisme qui a dévoré l'Inde." The comment and request are clearly indicative of the desperation of Alexis, establishing a deliverance motif.

It is the third prayer (vv. 201-11) that best illustrates this tripartite structure. There is a difference, however, in the order of occurrence of the narrative components. For example, Alexis begins with the invocation (El Deus, dist il, bels reis qui tot governes, v. 201), establishing that the god prayed to is the Sovereign One, He who is in control of the

situation. The next section is the request (Se tei ploüst, ici ne volsisse estre, vv. 202), followed by the comment (vv. 203-11) in which Alexis expresses his desire to leave wife and to devote himself entirely to the service of God. 15

Of growing importance is the development of poetic formulas, especially those that serve as introductions (e.g., vv. 59; 201). 16 Some descriptive phrases seen in the Vie de Saint Alexis will be found repeated in chronologically later chansons de geste, beginning with the Chanson de Roland. An important characteristic of prayer is its relationship with tradition. To pray, as


16. See Joseph Duggan, "Formulas in the Couronnement de Louis," Romania 87 (1966), 326-27. On p. 317 of the same article, Duggan purports that "A formula may be regarded then as a series of words 1) joined together in a syntactic grouping; 2) embodying a certain semantic content which is essential to the telling of the story; 3) limited in its form by the versification of the poem, which, in the case of the Old French epic, means both the meter (eight-, ten- or twelve-syllable verse) and the assonance or rhyme." See also Duggan, 326. Also, see Altona, Gebete und Anrufungen, 7-15, as he responds to his own categorical question "Zu wem wird gebetet?"
one has learned from others, gives the praying individual a sense of continuing community, not simply identification with the reality of the present moment, but with the past and the future as well. For this reason, poets use elements repetitively, elements that signify prayer. Certain phrases, such as *El Deus* semiotically identify the moment as one of temporal transcendence for the person with whom they originate. More practically, Duggan suggests the necessity of such formulas to aid in the oral recitation of long epic works from memory. For example, on the use of epithets, he indicates they are "mainly a matter of versification, and the functional filling in of the line seems to take precedence over the semantic value of the expression." 17

17. Duggan, 325. Also, cf. 344, where Duggan purports that the repetitive nature of the *chansons de geste* indicates a fundamental difference between them and the romances. "The extreme formalism of the *chansons de geste* places it nearer to the strict beauty of ceremony than to the transports of lyrical refrain. The questions of origins apart, the formula can perhaps be compared, esthetically, to the melodic patterns of medieval chant or to the iterative effect of liturgical phrases in a litany."
The 'chansons de geste'

The same basic structures are in evidence within the prayer of Roland in the Chanson de Roland (1150; vv. 2369-72): 18

Deus, meie culpe vers les tues vertuz
De mes pecchez, des granz e des menuz,
Que jo ai fait dés l’ure que nez fui
Tresqu’a cest jur que ci sui consoût!

The invocation (v. 2369) is followed by a combined comment and request (vv. 2369-72), in which Roland asks forgiveness for the sins he has committed from his birth to the present moment. The contrastive imagery used by the poet (meie culpe/tues vertuz; granz/menuz; l’ure que nez fui/jur que ci sui consoût) establishes the basic motivation for a prayer of request: humankind and God are essentially distanced (i.e.,

18. See La Chanson de Roland, ed. Joseph Bédier (Paris: L’Édition d’Art, 1927), 310-13. Here Bédier asserts, in his discussion of the prayers found in the Chanson de Roland, that they probably originate in the liturgy, namely the ordo commendationis animae. Moignet also mentions this in a note, La Chanson de Roland, 178, commenting on v. 2384 (Veire Patene, ki unkes nemis): "La prière de Roland est faite de formules liturgiques décalquées du latin, celles que doit réciter tout pénitent aux approches de la mort (ordo commendationis animae)." Cf. the prayer of Charlemagne, Laïsse CCXXVI.
distinctly different in essence); therefore, humankind
is in need of divine contact and intervention.

The prayer contained in verses 2383-88 is also
very interesting within the context of the evolution of
the basic thematic structure of literary prayers:

Cleimet sa culpe, si priet Deu mercit:
Veire Patene, ki unkes ne mentis,
Seint Lazaron de mort resurrexis 2385
E Daniel des leons guaresis,
Guaris de mei l'anme de tuz perilz
Pur les pecchez que en ma vie fis! 2388

The context of the prayer is one of great humility in
the face of great danger. The basic pattern (i.e.,
invocation, comment, request) is again employed by the
poet (v. 2384, 2384-86, and 2387-88, respectively).
The prayer is addressed to the true Father. This is
important within the epic framework, i.e., in battles
against the Sarrasins, who claimed Allah as father. To
more extensively define the external supernatural force
being called upon to act on behalf of the praying
person, the poet further delineates veire Patene ki
unkes ne mentis (v. 2384): not only is he addressing
the true God, but the God of truth, the One "who never
lies." Additionally the poet includes references to
Biblical characters and events which closely parallel
those of the protagonist (Lazarus, v. 2385; Daniel, v.
2386). These are situations, within the deliverance motif, out of which God brought the Biblical protagonists; hopefully, He will do likewise for those of the chanson de geste. In both instances, each is an illustration of God's having delivered historical figures from death, which is an appropriate preface to Roland's request (v. 2387). The order of the poet's choice of illustrations is reversed from the Biblical chronology (i.e., Lazarus in the New Testament and Daniel in the Old Testament). The ending of the prayer, not found within the prayer itself, recalls the

19. According to Labande, in "Le crêdo épique," there are fifteen references to Daniel in the lion's den in the chansons de geste (72, n. 3) and eighteen references to the raising of Lazarus (75, n. 2). For additional information on the number of occurrences of Biblical events in the prayers of the chansons de geste, see his thorough listing, 70-78. Cf. André Moisan, Répertoire des noms propres de personnes et de lieux cités dans les chansons de geste françaises et les œuvres étrangères dérivées, vols. 1 and 2 (Geneva: Droz, 1986).

20. Cf. the genealogies of Christ in the New Testament (Mt. 1:1-17; Lk. 3:23-38). In Matthew's list of lineage he begins with Abraham. This is important because of Matthew's audience, i.e., the Jews. It is essential that he show Christ as a descendant of Abraham, Father of the Jews. In Luke's genealogy, the list begins with Christ and His lineage is traced back to Adam, a descendant of the first human, much more appropriate to Luke's audience of non-Jewish, Greek-speaking proselytes and citizens of the diaspora.
prayer of Christ in Gethsemane (see Chapter 3, below).

Following the preceding prayer's comments and requests (vv. 2383–88), we read (vv. 2389–2396):

Sun destre guant a Deu en puroffrit. 2390
Seint Gabriel de sa main l'ad pris.
Desur sun braz teneit le chef enclin;
Juntas ses mains est alet a sa fin.
Deus tramist sun angle Cherubin
E seint Michel del peril; 2395
Ensembl'od els sent Gabriel i vint.
L'anme del cunte portent en pareis.

As in the Gethsemane prayer,\(^\text{21}\) there is the arrival of the Archangel Michael to be with the protagonist in the hour of anguish. Already the literature of heroic acts has established an analogical relationship between the epic hero of oral tradition and literature and the historical Christ, whereas in the passions, there is a reverse analogy: the epic-hero motif is imposed conversely upon the Christ figure. Here, Cherubim and

\(^{21}\) For example, the Passion du Palatinus ([1300], vv. 184–91); Passion de Ste-Geneviève ([1360], vv. 1162–69); Passion d'Arras ([1414], vv. 11700–10; 11732–42); Passion de Semur ([1430], vv. 6223–30); Passion de Greban ([1452], vv. 18946–91; 19004–07); Passion de Michel ([1486], vv. 20059–106; 20129–34). Also, see Fierabras (vv. 1235–41, below).
Gabriel accompany the chief angel. Jacques Ribard remarks concerning the symbolic reference here to the Trinity:

"Il est frappant de constater que le premier plan y est occupé par une trinité de héros, Roland, Olivier et Turpin, qui trouve d'ailleurs son correspondant spirituel dans la trinité des trois archanges, Michel, Gabriel et Chérubin, venus emporter l'âme de Roland en paradis—trinité céleste qui, dans la conception hiérarchique chère au Moyen Age, n'est elle-même que l'émanation et la figure de la Trinité divine."

Another soteriological and Christological allusion is that of *le chef enclin* (v. 2391). There is a striking resemblance in the physical pose of Roland at his death to that of Christ at His death on the cross.

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24. Cf. John 19:30, as well as the *Passion de Greban* ([1452], narrative lines between vv. 26005-06).
In the epic Couronnement de Louis (1170) one finds further examples of evolving compositional thematics, especially the typological relationship between the epic protagonist-hero and Christ. It is in the Couronnement de Louis that one finds the basic pattern of prayer followed by nearly all poets of chansons de geste in their portrayal of long, direct Biblical-creed-narrative prayers. There appear to be


two levels of narrative discourse at work in the prayers of French medieval literature. The reader of these prayers must distinguish between narrative references to prayer, as in the romances, and narrative prayer with referential content, i.e., references to events and persons external to the actual temporal event, yet internal to the prayer act.

Some critics contend that the long prayers found in the Couronnement de Louis are the inspiration for later prayers. Jean Frappier has entitled the type of prayer inspired by those of Guillaume in the Couronnement de Louis "la prière du plus grand péril". In verses 687-733, we read the prayer of


28. See Jean Frappier, Le Chansons de geste du cycle de Guillaume d'Orange, 2e ed., vol. 2 (Paris: Société d'Édition d'Enseignement Supérieur, 1967), 130-40 for an explanation and disscussion of this common prayer type. Dimitri Scheludko purports the theory that all epic prayers are derived from the prototype found in the Couronnement de Louis, to which Edmond Labande takes exception. See Scheludko's "Neues über das Couronnement Louis," in Zeitschrift für französische
Guillaume as he faces a fierce battle with the approaching Sarrasin army:

A pié descent del destrier sejourné;
Contre Orient aveit son vis torné,

(Footnote continued from previous page)

Sprache und Literatur 55 (1931): 425-74 and Edmond Labande, 64-65, for refutation of Scheludko, as well as a critique of the research of Léon Gautier and Johannes Altona; also, Guy Raynaud de Lage, "L'inspiration de la prière 'du plus grand péril'," Romania 93 (1972): 568-70, interestingly suggests that the source of this type of prayer could very possibly be the Christian apocrypha itself. He cites, in particular, the first Book of Maccabees. Raynaud concludes that "ici, comme là, il s'agit de guerre sainte, et si on ne peut strictement considérer que les livres en question soient 'une source', il est intéressant selon nous d'évoquer une inspiration commune, commandée par des contraintes et des sursauts analogues, chez des hommes de foi et d'épée dont les barons médiévaux auraient pu légitimement revendiquer le patronage" (568-69). The heroic determination of the Maccabees was also very apparent in the prayers, especially those of Judas. Raynaud offers, among others, the following example from the Vulgate "puisque c'est celui que lisait les hommes du Moyen Age" (569): I Macc. 4:30-33 (translation from the New Jerusalem Bible) "When he saw their military strength he offered this prayer, 'Blessed are you, Saviour of Israel, who shattered the mighty warrior's attack at the hand of your servant David, and delivered the Philistine camp into the hands of Jonathan son of Saul, and his armour-bearer. Crush this expedition in the same way at the hands of your people Israel; let the troops and cavalry bring them nothing but shame. Sow panic in their ranks, confound the confidence they put in their numbers and send them reeling in defeat. Overthrow them by the sword of those who love you, and all who acknowledge your name will sing your praises.'"
Une prière a dit de grant bonté:
N'a soz ciel ome qui de mere seist nez,
S'il la disit par bone volente
Al matinet, quant il sereit levez,
Ja puis deables nel porreit encomber.
Deu reclama par grant umilité:
«Glorios Deus, qui me fesistes né,
Fesis la terre tot a ta volente,
Si la closis environ de la mer;
Adam formas et puis Evain sa per;
En paradis les en menas ester;
Li fruiz des arbres lor fu abandonez,
Fors d'un pomier, icil lor fu veez;
Il en mangierent, ce fu grant foleté;
Grant honte en orent quant nel porent celer.
De paradis les en covint aler,
Venir a terre, foir et laborer,
Et mortel vie sofrir et endurer.
Cains ocist Abel par cruelté;
Adonc covint terre braire et criër;
Uns cruelz donc lor fu cel jor donez;
Riens n'aisseit d'els n'i covenist aler.
Deus, cil qui furent de celui pueple né
Onc ne vos voldrent servir ne onorer:
Toz les fesistes al deluge finer.
N'en escapa fors solement Noé,
Et si trei fill, et chascuns ot sa per
De totes bestes por le siecle estorer,
Masle et femele fist en l'arche poser.
Deus, de cel siecle qui de cels furent né
Eissi la vierge qui tant ot de bonté,
Ou vos deignastes vostre cors esconser.
De char et d'os i fu tes cors formez,
Et del saint sanc qui fu martirs clamez.
En Bethleem, la mirable cité,
La vos plot il, vrais Deus, a estre nez,
Tot veirement a la nuit de Noel;
Sainte Anastaise vos fesistes lever;
N'ot nule main por vo cors onorer;
Vos li rendistes tot a sa volente;
Et des treis reis fustes vos visitez,
D'or et de mirre et d'encens onorez;
Far autre veie les en fesist aler,
Quant desor mei li donai avantage,
Qu'once mais par ome ne reçui tel damage.»

The thematic content of this prayer, much more
elaborate than those of either the La Chanson de Roland
or La vie de saint Alexis, falls into four basic categories: 1) posturing for prayer (vv. 687-88); 2) invocation (v. 695); 3) comment (vv. 675-730); 4) request (vv. 731-33). In the comment, the remarks proceed from those concerning the individual who is praying (v. 695, me) to those referring to the earth and the sea (i.e., God is sovereign Creator), and in chronological order to Adam and Eve (vv. 698-706), Cain and Abel (vv. 707-10), Noah (vv. 711-17), the Virgin Birth of Christ (vv. 718-25), and the visit of the three kings at the birth of Christ (vv. 729-30). Note that verses 711 and 718 serve as introductory verses, repeated to mark divisions between major Biblical historical periods. They also serve to relate present circumstances to the past, establishing prayer as an incorporation of the praying person into history, rendering the individual atemporal, or transhistorical. No doubt this is why, according to Labande, "... les poètes s'attachent à suivre de très près la Sainte Écriture, qu'il copient parfois mot à mot, témoignant
pour elle d'un profond respect." 29

This prayer is quite different from the second long prayer found in the Couronnement de Louis. During his battle with Corsolt, Guillaume finds himself in a very difficult situation (vv. 974–1030):

Veit le Guillelmes, si tint le chief embronc,
Deu reclama par son saintisme nom:
"Glorios pere, qui formas tot le mont,
Qui fesis terre sor le marbrin perron,
De mer salée la ceinsis environ,
Adam fesis de terre et de limon,
Evaïn sa per, que de fi le savons,
De paradis lor fesistes le don,
Le fruit des arbres lor mesis a bandon,
Fors d'un pomier lor veastes le don;
Cil en mangierent, ne firent se mal non,
Mais puis en orent si cruel guerredon
Qu'en enfer furent, el puiz de Baratron,
Qu'adonc servient Berzebut et Neiron.
A unes pasques fesis procession,
Que d'une asnesse chevalchas le faon,
Si vos sivirent li petit enfancion;
As blanches pasques en font procession
Et un et altre li prestre et li clerçon
Et herberjas chiés le lepros Simon.
La Magdeleine fesistes le pardon,
Qui mist ses uelz sor voz piez a bandon,
Et i plora par bone entencion;
Tu l'en levas a mont par le menton,
De ses pechiez li fesistes pardon.
La fist Judas de vos la traïson;
Il vos vendi, s'en ot mal guerredon,
Trente deniers en recut li felon;
Et en la croiz fustes mis a bandon.
Juïf en firent come encriesme felon:

29. Labande, Le crêdo épique, 70. Though these prayers were in literary form prior to the popularity of the vernacular versions of the Scriptures, oral tradition probably dictated which events were included and which were not, based on commonly-taught liturgy.
Ne voldrent creire vostre surrection.
El ciel montas al jor d'Ascension
Dont vendra, sire, la grant redemption
Al jugement ou tuit assemblerons.
La ne valdra pere al fill un boton,
Li prestre n'iert plus avant del clerçon,
Ne l'arcevesques de son petit guarçon,
Li reis del duc ne le cuens del troton
Nuls om traître n'i avra guarison.
Et as apostres donas confession;
Mesis saint Pere el chief del pré Neiron
Et convertis saint Pol son compaignon;
Jonas guaris el ventre de peisson,
Et de la faim le cors saint Simeon,
Et Daniel en la fosse al lion;
Et Symon mage abatis, le felon;
Moysès vit la flame enz el buisson
Qui n'ardeit busche ne ne faiseit charbon.
Si com c'est veir, et creire le deit on,
Defent mon cors de mort et de prison,
Que ne m'ocie cist Sarrazins felon.
Tant porte d'armes qu'aprochier nel puot on,
Car s'arbalestre li pent a son giron,
Mace de fer li pent a son arçon,
Se cil n'en pense qui Longis fist pardon
Ja n'iert conquis, trop a d'armes fuison."

Once again the narrator begins his prayer with an
invocation, followed by a lengthy comment section in
which he recites the mighty works of the Sovereign Lord
of Christianity. In this prayer, however, after
beginning with the creation of Earth and the primal
story of Adam and Eve (vv. 979-85), rather than
mentioning the immediate and tangible consequences of
the Fall (e.g., toil, pain in childbirth), this prayer
divulges the greater cosmological consequences (vv.
986-87, *en enfer, el puiz, adonc serveient Berzebut et
Neiron*). The poet proceeds directly to the Triumphant
Entry of Christ into Jerusalem just prior to His
This emphasis on Christ and His Passion may lead the reader to identify Guillaume, the protagonist, with Christ. Rather than an interpretation such as this destroying the literal meaning of the text, Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski believes that a typological reading (i.e., Guillaume = Christ) is indeed called for. Included in the protracted reference to the Passion of Christ is a list of Biblical characters to whom Christ showed special graces of healing and forgiveness, such as Simon the leper and Mary Magdalene. It would seem that someone


31. The figure of Mary Magdalene will become a very important figure in the mystères of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. "La fréquence de ce thème et son développement parfois considérable sont, à notre avis, à l'instar de celui des Mages, à relier à un pèlerinage, celui de Vézelay. On notera que les auteurs suivent ici de très près le texte évangélique" (Labande, Le crêdo épique, 74). Labande notes 22 references to Magdalene's repentance in the chansons de geste (74, n. 5). Cf. Accarie's study of Mary Magdalene in the Passion of Jean Michel (1486), Le théâtre sacré de la fin du moyen âge. Étude sur le sens moral de la 'Passion' de Jean Michel (Geneva: Droz, 1979); Wolfgang Greisenegger, Die Realität im religiösen Theater des Mittelalters (Vienna: Universitäts-Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1978), "Realitätsdarstellung als Erziehungsmittel," 238-45;

(Footnote continues on next page)
in desperate need of grace, faced with physical harm and possible death, would naturally select such persons and events to strengthen personal faith and to call to the mind of deity the events of the past in hope of rendering their recurrence a possibility within the present circumstances.

After positively presenting the aforementioned incidents and persons, the author of the *Couronnement de Louis* proceeds with a mention of the treachery of Judas and the Jews in the story of Christ's Passion. The Crucifixion is mentioned briefly (v. 1002, *en la croix fustes mis à bandon*) followed immediately with a reference to the Ascension, with the only mention of the Resurrection being that the Jews did not believe it (v. 1003, *ne voldrent creire vostre surrection*). As a

(Footnote continued from previous page)


32. For other occurrences of this and other events surrounding the Crucifixion, see Labande, *Le crédo épique*, 76–77. In note 4, on page 76, the author mentions that there are 57 references to the Crucifixion, "mais presque toujours en termes extrêmement concis."
result of the Ascension, redemption will come at the
time of the Last Judgment "where all will be assembled"
(vv. 1005-12).

Following the Passion-Redemption motif, the
narrator begins another section by listing several of
the renowned heroes of the Scriptures. Beginning with
the Apostles Peter and Paul (vv. 1013-15), Guillaume
proceeds to mention Jonah (v. 1016), Simeon (v.1017), Daniel (v. 1018), Simon the magician (v. 1019), and Moses (vv. 1020-21). Except for Peter and Paul, the
interpolated non-Old Testament examples, are people of
less-known credentials, or of tainted character. The
others are characters that are appropriate to the
"deliverance-out-of" motif chosen by the poet: Peter and Paul from prison, Jonah from the belly of a great
fish, Daniel from the den of lions, Moses from the land
of Egypt, which seems appropriate in the context of
Guillaume's battle with Corsolt. This frantic

33. See Labande, Le crédo épique, 78. This is the only
mention of this Simeon in the chansons de geste. Cf.

34. This is the only such occurrence according to
Labande in the chansons de geste (Labande, Le crédo
épique, 71). Moisan lists three additional occurrences
(Répertoire des noms propres, vol. 2, 893).
achronological interlacing of New and Old Testament examples can perhaps be explained by the fact that Guillaume was in a very desperate situation (i.e., the enemy was approaching). It seems unlikely that he would have the time, or composure, to orally recite historical events in chronologically correct order. However, the more likely explanation is that prayer itself transforms the prayer act and actor into atemporal entities. Within a context of intense prayer chronology becomes meaningless as the prayer and the supplicant become permeated with timelessness. "Le héros, se représentant fiévreusement des épisodes prodigieux de l’histoire sainte, accumule les témoignages imagés de la toute-puissance divine et mèle dans son oraision une verve assez désordonnée et naïve à des formules consacrées et des motifs traditionnels."35

Following this enumeration of Biblical incidents of miraculous deliverance, interspersed with references to unbelievers (i.e., Judas, Jews, Simon the magician), Guillaume presents his request to God for deliverance from the sword of the Sarrasins (vv. 1022-30), with a

35. Frappier, Les Chansons de geste du cycle de Guillaume d’Orange, vol. 2, 137.
final Biblical reference to Longinus and a reminder of the fact that he was pardoned for piercing the side of Christ with a sword (v. 1029). He thus intimates that he, too, would forgive the Sarrasins if indeed he is not delivered, as Christ was neither spared death, nor the final piercing of His side by Longinus's sword. The sword motif itself becomes increasingly prevalent in the *chansons de geste* and is even found in the fifteenth-century *mystères de la Passion*, though its meaning takes an ironic twist (see Chapter 3, below).

"La bele Aude" in *Girart de Vienne* (ca. 1200) prays a long, direct prayer structurally similar to that of prayers found in the *Couronnement de Louis*.


37. At one point in the *Chanson de Roland*, for instance, Roland "prays" to his sword, Durendal (vv. 2303-11 in Moignet's edition of *La Chanson de Roland*, 172).

(1170) and later in *Fierabras* (ca. 1240), but with some substantial thematic differences (vv. 5683-5722):

Glorieux Deus, par vos seintime nom,
Qui estorates terre, mer, et poison,
Et le ent ciel, par vostre eleccion; 5685
Adam feis de terre et de limon,
et sa moillier, Evain l'apes l'on,
tout Paradis lor mei∫ a bandon,
fors d'un pomier dont lor veas le don;
puis en mengierent, ne lor fist se mal non, 5690
encore en ont li oir reprovoison
Dedanz la Virge pre∫s anoncion,
si en naquis en guise d'afançon,
en Blauiam, que de fi le savon.
Puis fus offerz au tenple Salemon, 5695
entre se[s] braz vos pris[t] seint Simion.
Troi roi s'esemurent de lor grent region
por vos requerre et merci et pardon.
Les innocens de par tout son roion
fist decoler Herode le felon,
qu'il vos cuida metre a destrucion.
.xxx. anz alates par terre, ce savon,
o vos apostres, preechant vostre non;
la Madelaine feites le pardon
qant a voz piez vint plorer chies Simon. 5700
Judas le fel vos vendi a bandon,
.xxx. deniers, molt en ot povre don.
En croiz vos mistrent li mal Juif felon,
mort i sofrites por no sauvacion;
et au tierz jor eus surrexion:
enfer brisates, n'i ot desfansion,
les voz amis gitates de prison,
tuit sont en gloire en vostre mension.
El ciel montates a jor d'Acension. 5710
Si voirement com nos ice creon,
et com c'est voirs que nos ci devison,
si gerisiez Oliver le baron,
que ne l'ocie Roll[ans], li ni∫s Charlon!
Blau sire Deus, par vo seintime non,
metez entr'aus pes et acordaison:
se l'un en muert par aucune achoison,
ja n'en remendrai vive!

The reader should note the strong influence of the *Couronnement de Louis* in this passage. In fact, the

Bertrand de Bar-Sur-Aube, however, expands the creation account to include not only the earth, but the sea, the fish, and the sky (vv. 5684-85). In addition, the sovereignty of God is emphasized by the phrase par vosstre eleccion (v. 5685). The creation of Adam and Eve and the story of the Fall are very similar to those found in the prayer of Guillaume in the Couronnement de Louis (vv. 980-84). The narration proceeds to the Virgin birth and the presentation of Christ by Mary in the Temple (vv. 5691-96), including the dedication of Christ by Simon (vv. 5695-96). Then, the mention of the three kings (vv. 5697-98), the slaughter of the Innocents (vv. 5699-5701), and the public ministry of Christ (vv. 5702-03), though here it is mentioned as a thirty-year ministry (cf. v. 5707). 39

39. In the various chansons de geste the duration of Christ’s life varies from thirty to thirty-three years. Cf. Labande, Le credo epique, 73, n.9. Since Christ’s earthly sojourn lasted thirty-three years from birth to (Footnote continues on next page)
After mentioning Magdalene, who was pardoned by Christ and who washed the feet of Christ with tears at the home of Simon (vv. 5704-05; see Chapter 2, below), the treachery of Judas and Christ’s crucifixion at the hand of the Jews, all for our salvation (v. 5706-09) is followed three days later by the Resurrection (v. 5710). In verses 5711-13, we find a reference to what is called the Harrowing of Hell, which later becomes a very significant scene within the *mystères de_

(Footnote continued from previous page)

Ascension, could this be a scribal error, or perhaps an expression of the belief that Christ’s ministry was a life-long one? It is tempting to grant the author the second possibility, but the phrase *o voz apostres* (v. 5703) would seem to indicate that the manuscript should read *xxxiii.* instead of *xxx.* (v. 5707), unless it means that at age thirty Christ began to go about with His disciples and preach. Fierabras, in an almost identical statement, reads *XXXII. ans passés* (v. 1178), a more Biblically accurate assertion, though the New Testament indicates Christ’s earthly lifespan as thirty-three 33 years.
la Passion (see Chapters 1 and 2, below). Lastly, within the comment section of the prayer, is a reference to the Ascension (v. 5714).

The narrator then gives a creedal affirmation of all the events he has just mentioned, as in the Couronnement de Louis (e.g., v. 1022). This is followed by references to extra-Biblical and legendary characters, e.g. Olivier, Roland, li nifs Charlon (vv. 5717-18). The inclusion of renowned, legendary non-Biblical heroes gives the belief in prayer additional and more immediate efficacy. The narrator affirms his

40. There is only one direct reference to this occurrence surrounding the Passion of Christ in the Bible (i.e., I Peter 3:18-20): "In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison." In a note (h) on p. 459 of the New Jerusalem Bible, referring to these verses, the commentators add, "The 'spirits in prison' to whom he 'preached' (or 'proclaimed') salvation are identified by some writers as the chained demons mentioned in the Book of Enoch (some texts are corrected so as to make Enoch, and not Christ, preach to them). Others interpret this passage of the souls of the dead who, punished at the time of the flood, are nevertheless called by the 'patience of God' to life. cf. 4:6. Mt. 27:52seq. has a similar allusion to Christ's deliverance, between his death and his resurrection, of the 'holy ones', that is the upright who were waiting for him, cf. Heb 11:39seq.; 12:23, to enter the eschatological 'holy city'." The main source of the full-blown legend comes from the Gospel of Nicodemus, Tradition A, vv. 512-796, and Tradition B, vv. 424-739. See Ford, L'evangile de Nicodhme, 52-57; 92-98.
stance within the epic tradition and within the human tradition: \textit{metez entr'aus pes et acordoison} (v. 5720). Here the request that God bring peace between Olivier and Roland is amplified by Aude's oath that if either of them dies, she could no longer go on living (\textit{ja n'en remendrai vive}, v. 5722).

Every instance of God's deliverance, whether Biblical, apocryphal, or that passed on solely by oral tradition represents a valid basis for request within the epic prayers. For this reason, we see a progressive solidification of prayer components, used repetitively, evolving into formulaic structures.
In Gui de Bourgogne there are additions and expansions similar to those seen in Fierabras, though considerably abridged. For example, the three kings (v. 2553), the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (vv. 2554-55), Mary Magdalene (v. 2558; 2567):

He Diex! ce fu grant joie quant la dame enmeira;  
En icle léisce saint Josep l’espousa.  
Quant la verge florie en sa main verdoia, 2545  
Josep en fist grant joie et forment l’anora  
Et quant ei [sic] vint au terme que Diex le destina,  
La dame sans doler, Sire, s’en delivra.  
Biaus Diex! toute naissance a ce jor esclera;  
Li oisel et les bestes, qui erent grant piega, 2550  
Chascune endroit sa forme grant joie en demena.  
L’estoile en Oriant par ton commant leva,  
Li troi roi vos requistrent, chascuns vos aora,  
El temple Salomon la Virge vos porta,  
El bras saint Simion vostre cors commanda. 2555  
Diex, pere glorieus, qui le mont estoras,  
Le cors saint Lasaron de mort resucitas,  
Marie Madeleine de ses pechies mondas,  
A la Pasque florie en Jhrusalem entras,  
Au jor d’Acension sus ou ciel en montas, 2560  
Par grant humilité l’asnesse chevauchas,  
Felon juif vos pristrent, ce ne fu mie gas,  
En la crois vos poserent par le commant Judas,  
En guise de larron la mort i anduras,  
El sepulcre vos mistrent, envols d’un cher siglas,  
Au tiers jor surexis, de mort resucitas, 2566  
Marie Madelaine el vergier confortas  
Et de bele clarté le monde enluminas;  
Sire, si com c’est voirs que tu ensi erras,  
Si garisses tu m’ame de ce felon Judas, 2570  
Qu’encor puisse véoir Karlon qui mult est las.

New additions include the mention of Joseph, the earthly father of Christ (vv. 2544-46). Here is an apocryphal reference to the miracle of the budding branch (v. 2545, la verge florie en sa main verdoia) used by God to convince Joseph that what had been told him concerning the virgin birth of Christ, via his wife-to-be Mary, was indeed true and a doing of the Lord Himself. There is also the mention of Lazarus (v. 2557). The request segment includes an analogical reference to Judas: Si garisses tu m'ame de ce felon Judas (v. 2570). As a result, a typology is once again established between the epic protagonist-hero and Christ.

Further examples from the chansons de geste will demonstrate this evolution in thematic content and narrative expansion. In Pierabras ([ca. 1240], vv.

42. This is one of only two mentions of this event in forty-one chansons de geste. The other is in La chanson du Chevalier au Cygne et de Godefroid de Bouillon, vv. 3537-40 (Labande, Le credo epique, 72, n. 7).
Charlemagne prays for Olivier:

Puis dist une priere que vous dire m'orres:
«Glorieus Sire peres, qui en crois fu penes,
Et en la sainte Virge et conceus et nes; 1170
En Bethléem, biaus Sire, nasquis en povretes,
Et en povre drapiaus mis et envelepes;
Sire, la sainte estoile i rendi grans clartes,
Et li pastour des cans en ont leur cors sonnes.
De la vostre naissance fu li mons luminés; 1175
Moult en pesa Erode et as Juïs dervés;
Tous les petis enfans en fist il decoler.
Puis alastes par tere .XXXII. ans passés.
Vous fesistes Adam, vrais Diex esperités,
Puis sistes Evain, dont li mons est peuplés. 1180
En paradis, biaus Sire, leur prestastes ostel;
Tout li biens de laiens leur fu abandonnés,
Fors seulement .I. fruis qui lor fu deveés;
Mais Adans en menga par pecié de maufés;
Par ce caîsmes tuit en grant caitivetés. 1185
Dix, tu garis Marcus, ki tous estoit lieprés,
Mesiaus fu de viaire et de bouce et de nés.
Li premiers hons en tere ki en fu encombrés,
Ice fu li premiers, dire l'oi letrés,
Ki te mist à l'estake quant tu i fus menés, 1190
Et tu le maudecis, mêisme Damedès,
Ke jamais pour s'amour ne fust nus hon savés;
Ne sera il pour voir, ja Dix n'en e rt fausés.
Judas i fist que fel et que leres prouves.
Par .I. mardi au soir, Dix, fustes pourparlés,1195
Et par .I. venredi fustes en crois levés.
Là fustes, biaus dous Sire, et plaiés et navrés;
D'englentiers et d'espines, Dix, fustes couronnés,
Si ke aval la face vous courut li sans clers.
Li cors sainte Marie fu iluec esplourés; 1200
Tant fu cele angoisseuse en qui flans fus portés,
Ke ne le poot dire nus hon tant soit letrés.
Vous le reconfortastes par mou' grant amistés,
Saint Jehan le baillastes, qui estoit vos privés,
Ke il le vous gardast du quartier jour passé, 1205
Ke lor serîes vous de mort resussités.

Et Longis vous feri de la lance es costes:  
Il n’avoit ainc vœu de l’eure qu’il fu nés;  
Li sans fu par la lance duques as puins coulés;  
Il en terst à ses ex, tantost fu alumés.  
Sire, me[ра]chi cria; tu séus son pensé.  
Si parfont fu vos cors, sire Dix, entamés,  
Que jusqu’en Gorgatas fu vostre sans coulés.  
Deus meus desis; adont fus deniés.  
Nicodemus i vint, qui tant estoit senés.  
Sains Josech vous rechut quant fustes descloés;  
De Pilate l’en ert ja li dons créantés.  
Devant heure de vespres fustes de crois ostés,  
Et ou large sepucre et cociés et possés.  
Des .III. Maries virges fustes vous visetés,  
Et pour vos plaies oindre fu l’onguement portés.  
Tu n’i estoies pas, ja en eres alés;  
Iluec estoit li angles vermaus et enflammés,  
Ki lors dist que de mort estiés resussités;  
Dolentes s’en alerent quant n’i fustes trouvés.  
Sire Dix, en infer fu vos cemins tornés,  
Si en getastes fors vos drus et vos privés.  
De paradis baillastes à saint Pier le clés.  
Voiant tous vos amis, fustes ou ciel montés;  
Bastesme commandastes, c’est nos crestientés.  
Ensi com chou est voirs, Diex, que dire m’oés,  
Garissiés Olivier qu’i ne soit affolés,  
Et ke mes droit i soit desrainés et prouvés.»

It seems clear that the Biblical-creed-narrative prayer pattern⁴⁴ is beginning to solidify structurally into a recurring prayer format, though techniques used to narratively expand structural components differ with each poet. Even within the same work, e.g. Fierabras, there are a variety of prayers used. For example, the

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following by Richard de Normendie (Fierabras, vv. 4361-65) is a very brief, Biblical-creed-narrative prayer:

Escortrement commence Jhesu à reclamer:
«Glorieux sire pere, qui te laisas pener 4362
En la crois benêoite pour ton pule sauer,
Garisiês hui mon cors de mort et d'afoler,
Que je puisse Karlon mon message conter.» 4365

The God called upon is the One who Himself willingly submitted to humiliation and death with a purpose and is now alive to hear this particular prayer at this particular point in time. In similar fashion, the supplicant is asking to be kept from death that his purpose may be accomplished (i.e., que je puisse Karlon mon message conter, v. 4365). The following prayer is spoken by Olivier, asking for the conversion of the Sarrasins, in Fierabras (vv. 1400-10):

«Ha Dix, dist Oliviers, biaus rois de maîsté, 1400
Com est cis paiens preus et plains de grant fierté!
Onques mais ne vi homme de la sole bonté.
Sire pere Jhesu, s'il est ta volentê,
C'or le tenist or Karles à son demaine trê,
Et si que il l'éust bautissié et levé! 1405
Jou et Rollans et il seriemes mais privé,
Par droite compaignie et plevi et jurê.
Sainte Marie dame, priês ent Dame dé
Que li paiens créist sainte crestienté.
Bien aroie exploiíte et assê conquestê.» 1410

Though following the same basic structure as the first, this prayer is addressed to three Persons: Dix, biaus rois de maîsté, v. 1400; Sire pere Jhesu, v. 1403; and Sainte Marie dame, v. 1408. Beginning with the invocation, there is a vivid contrast drawn between the
one true God and the false pride of the enemy. Jesus is also Lord of the king and kingdom, while Mary is entreated to pray that the enemy be converted—a distinct delineation of divine responsibility.

The differences deserving mention are the expansions of recurrent prayer elements (i.e., invocations) used by earlier poets or those added by their successors, often to transform a previously existing prayer into one appropriate to a specific situation. While some prayers of this type speak of the creation of the world and/or of man, this one begins with a mention of the

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45. Rossi, "La prière de demande," 457. Another good example of this is from Aliscans, vv. 567–584, in a prayer by Guillaume who torna vers la montaigne (v. v. 563). In the prayer, his invocation is Dix, dist li quens, saint Maihieu de Bertiaigne, / En Aliscans ai perdu ma compaigne (vv. 567–68). Cf. the prayer of Rainouart in vv. 6572–75: Saint Lienart, qui les prisons desloie / Saint Julien, mon tinel vous othroie! / Sor vostre autel de bon cuer le metroie / Se de cest champ le prist porter pouvoie.
redemptive act (v. 1169, qui en crois fu penés) and is followed by references to events surrounding the Incarnation (v. 1170) and Birth of Christ (vv. 1171-77). There is a brief reference to His life (v. 1178), possibly because the protagonist has the pagan, non-believing enemy in his thoughts. As if there is a need to give the audience background to, or a reason for, Christ's terrestrial sojourn, the poet returns to the creation of Adam and Eve and their subsequent Fall in the garden of Eden (vv. 1179-85). The need to give the underlying reason for an historical event seems to be an increasingly important prayer component, as audiences become more discerning. However, there is no mention of Eve made when referring to the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, only that she is the mother of the world's inhabitants (v. 1180, dont li mons est peuplés). Only Adam is mentioned as having partaken (v. 1184, mais Adans en menga par pecié de maufés).

In verses 1186-93 new elements are added to the prayer text. For example, there is a reference to
Marcus, a leper healed by Christ. The poet also narratively expands the reference to the Crucifixion (vv. 1196-1219), which heretofore has been a mere reference to the fact that Christ was hung on a cross. In this prayer, however, we read of the wounds received (v. 1197), and of the Crown of Thorns (v. 1198). A section devoted to the plight of Mary, the mother of Christ (vv. 1200-1203), ensues. The responsibility given to the Apostle John by Christ is referred to as well (vv. 1204-06). In verses 1207-14 one finds an expanded reference to Longinus, who was blind from birth (v. 1208), who pierced Christ with a sword (v. 1207), and whose sight was restored when his eyes were touched by the blood that flowed from His wounds (vv. 1210-14). The Deposition of Christ (i.e.,

46. This is the only reference, according to Labande, to Marcus in the chansons de geste, "déformé par divers traits légendaires" (Labande, 74). Moisan lists two additional references (Répertoire des noms propres, vol. 1, 685).

47. Cf. Couronnement de Louis, vv. 765-77; Raoul de Cambrai, vv. 1141-43.

48. The appearance and importance of Mary will increase greatly in the late 12th through the 15th centuries. I will consider this progression in the miracles de Nostre Dame, and the role of Mary in the passions as I proceed in this study.
the removal of His dead body from the Cross) by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus is alluded to in verses 1215-19. The visit of the four Marys is expounded upon (vv. 1220-25), followed by references to the Harrowing of Hell (vv. 1226-27), to the Ascension and the Great Commission (vv. 1228-30). Following the credo épique, in order to express belief in all that has been said and to positively identify it as a creed, Charlemagne ends the comment section of his prayer by affirming c’est nos crestientés (v. 1230). By using the first-person plural nous, the audience is incorporated into the prayer act—it is made an actively involved agent—becoming united with the protagonist, a poetic device both well-suited and

49. Cf. John 19:38-42. This scene becomes increasingly important and common in later Passion literature, especially the mystères de la Passion. There is a rather lengthy reference to the Deposition in the Evangile de Nicodème, 321-26. There are seven such references in the chansons de geste (Labande, 77, n. 2). For additional references to hell in the chansons de geste, see Moisan, Répertoire des noms propres, vol. 2, 1139-40.
common in Passion dramaturgy. In this case, the audience is a very general one, i.e. Christian France, but it is an audience nonetheless.

Following the comment section, Charlemagne enunciates his request beginning with the usual statement of affirmation immediately preceding the request within the same formulaic unit (v. 1231, Ensi com chou est voirs, Diex, que dire m'oës). This is a conditional statement. The deliverance of the protagonist is directly related to his personal adherence to the Christian creed. The last two lines of the prayer are devoted to the request (i.e., Garissiés Olivier, v. 1232; ke mes dores i soit desrainiés et prouvés, v. 1233). In Aliscans, after

50. For example, in the narrative poem, La Passion des Jongleurs, vv. 495-500: Beau Sire Dieus, pour quoi soufoires / Se pour ce non que tu vouloies / Ceste angoisse, ceste dolor, / Ceste painne pour nostre amor. / Pour nous racheter de forfet / Que nostre premier pere ot fet.

51. This is the driving force behind the crusades. Cf. André Vauchez, La spiritualité du Moyen Age. VIIIe-XIIe siècles (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 61.

an invocation and comment, in which Guillaume offers
his *credo*, he presents his request (vv. 553-58):

\[
\text{Si com c'est voirs, si aidiés vo vasal,} \\
\text{K'encore voie Guiborc au quer loial} \\
\text{Et Loëis, l'enperéor roial,} \\
\text{Et Aimmeri, mon chier pere carnal,} \\
\text{Et Ermengart, la francé natural,} \\
\text{Et mes chiers freres ki sont enperial.}
\]

Intertwined with faith and purpose of action on his
behalf (and on the behalf of God) is the king, France,
father, wife, friends, and family.

The end of Guillaume's prayer in the *Couronnement* 
de *Louis* is not the end of the prayer scene *per se*.
Following his request, Charlemagne receives an angelic
visit, reminiscent of those found in the earlier
*chansons de geste*, which has been narratively expanded
by the poet (vv. 1234-44):

\[
\text{Karles leva sa main, si s'est saignés de Dé.} \\
\text{Atant es yous .I. angle qui jeta grant clarté,} \\
\text{Que Diex i envia, li rois de maisté.} \\
\text{Tres devant Karlemaine s'est l'angles arestés:} \\
\text{Empereres, dist il, pourquoi desconfortés?} \\
\text{La bataille ert vincue et li cans ert finés;} \\
\text{Oliviers le vaincra, mais moult ert ains irés.}
\]

53. Cf. *La Passion* by Greban (1452), vv. 18946-50; 
18961-65; 18985-91. Here, as in the prayer of 
Charlemagne, the angel sent by the Father comforts 
Christ in terminology much like that of the *chansons de 
geste*. For example: *Filz de Dieu, parfaicte 
puissance, / prenez en vous ferme constance; / venez*

(Footnote continues on next page)
Quant l'angles ot ce dit, atant s'en est alés. 1241
Karles oí le vois, atant s'en est tornes,
Vers le ciel esgarda, .III. fois est enclinés,
Damediu aoura, atant s'en est levés.

Though it is common to see divine assistance by
way of a conquered and/or converted enemy, angelic
visits are not usual, nor are other obvious miraculous
occurrences. 54 Marguerite Rossi remarks:

[I]l faut remarquer par ailleurs que, si
la prière obtient le triomphe des bonnes
causes, ce n'est pas en général par la voie
du miracle: c'est par là, nous semble-t-il,
que la chanson de geste se démarque de
l'hagiographie. On a souvent remarqué
combien le merveilleux, quelle que soit sa
forme, est peu compatible avec l'esprit de la
chanson de geste; la prière des héros épiques
n'a pas pour effet d'annuler les obstacles ni
de supprimer la succession des actes humains

(Footnote continued from previous page)

entrer en la bataille / de laquelle sans nulle faille /
eschaperez victorieux (vv. 18961-65); prenez tost la
pierre et la fonde / qui Golias tue et confonde / sans
james vertus recouvrer (vv. 18985-87).

54. There are exceptions. One notable one is in the
Chanson de Roland when the sun stands still as it did
for Joshua in the Old Testament story of the conquest
of Jericho (cf. New Jerusalem Bible, Joshua 10:13; La
Even so, the battle must be won by human vigor and
strength. Cf. Vauchez, 60-61: "L'idéal de la vie
chrétienne à l'époque féodale, c'est un style de vie
héroïque caractérisé par une suite de prodigieux
efforts et une recherche du record, à l'image du
chevalier qui doit se surpasser sans cesse en
accomplissant de nouvelles prouesses."
nées à la fin poursuivie: elle donne à l'homme la force d'agir jusqu'à la réussite (. . .). 55

'Les Miracles Nostre Dame'

In the chansons de geste of the 12th and 13th centuries, prayers were principally addressed to God (i.e., Dieu), whereas in the late 13th and 14th centuries the dogma of mariology greatly influenced literature. 56 In the miracles (ca. 1340), the principal addressee is no longer God the Father or the


56. Li romans de Bauduin de Sebourc "est la seule [chanson], à notre connaissance, qui présente une prière s'adressant continûment à Marie, ce qui est, à vrai dire, étonnant lorsque l'on songe à l'intensité de la piété mariale dès le XIIe siècle" (Labande, Le crédo épique, 68). See Creizenach, Geschichte des neueren Dramas, vol. 1 (Halle, a.S: Max Niemeyer, 1911; reprint, New York: Benjamin Blom, 1965), 142-51. Of the heroes' confidence in Mary, the author says, "Im Augenblicke der höchsten Not steigt sie hernieder, von Engeln und Heiligen begleitet, stets denen Trost und Hilfe spendend, die ihren Namen glaubig anrufen" (143). In the passions, especially those of the 15th century, there is a shift to Christocentrism, though Mary continues to play a significant dramatic role (see Chapter 2, below).
Son, but Mary, the mother of Christ. However, an earlier example of such a prayer is found in Le Miracle de Théophile (ca. 1260). In desperate need of help from Satan, the Virgin Mary to get his soul’s contract back
from Satan, Théophile prays (vv. 541-51):

Ha, Dame! aiez de moi merci!
C’est li chetis
Theophile, li entrepris
Que maufé ont loïé et pris.
Or vieng proier.
A vous, Dame, et merci crier,
Que ne gart l’eure qu’asproier
Me viengne cil
Qui m’as mis a si grant escil.
Tu me tenis ja por ton fil,
Roïne bele!

After addressing his petition to Mary (Dame, v. 541), he begins with a request (aiez de moi merci, v. 541), followed by a comment on the praying person (i.e. the


58. "Ha, Dame! Ayez pitié de moi! C’est le pauvre Théophile, le miserable que les demons ont ligoté et retiennent prisonnier. Et je viens vous adresser une prière à vous, Dame, et implorer votre pitié car, d’un instant à l’autre, j’attends qu’il vienne me broyer celui qui m’a mis dans un si grand tourment. Mais toi, jadis, tu m’as considéré comme ton fils, reine belle!" Le Miracle de Théophile, trans. and adapt. Roger Dubuis, 16.
Self): a description of what has brought him to this point. It is only then that the request comes into focus (vv. 546-49). The protagonist refers to himself in the third person, as if acting in the role of mediatorship (v. 545; cf. v. 548). It seems that this internal change of personal prayer perspective represents an evolution yet to be developed to its fullest in the mystères de la Passion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. 59

The Miracle de Nostre Dame d’un enfant qui fut donné au dyable quant il fu engendré 60 contains the following prayer written in octosyllabic verse and rhyming couplets (vv. 240-55):

Vierge puissant, que ceste voye
M’a esté diverse et penable!
Royne, vierge esperitable,
Tournez le nous a penitence
Et nous destournez de grevance,

59. Cf. Arnoul Greban, Le mystère de la Passion, ed. Gaston Raynaud and Gaston Paris (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1878; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), vv. 18721-26, where Christ prays in agony prior to His death: La deité me la presente telle, / la fresle char la redoubte et sautelle / et tant la crainint que n’a mes que la voix; / L’ame reffuit a ta protection / qui de son corps prent tel compassion / que son grand dueil ne veult ou scet retraire. Christ objectively observes the interplay of His humanity and divinity, almost as if He were a third-person, objective observer.

Si’il vous plait, et de l’ennemy.
Nuef mois a que ne fusmes cy:
Ains puis ne finasmes d’errer.
Vierge puissant, vueillez garder
Le fruit que je sens dedans moy
Du Sathan, que n’en aie ennoy,
Que je li donnay comme foile.
Destourber me fist la parole
Yre, dont mes cuers se repent.
Mettez y vostre amendement,
Dame, par vostre doux plaisir.

The difference in the prayers found in the miracles is not one of expansion, or deletion, but of the object of prayer discourse. The Virgin Mary is addressed from a very personal perspective. No longer is the prayer (i.e., as in the Biblical-creed-narrative prayers of the chansons de geste) sermonic in either composition or tenor, nor is it a mere petition to give strength to act, but it is extremely personal and urgent. There is no affirmation, or creed—only a request. The focal point of the prayer is the addressee and the request of the addressor. As in the epic-hero prayers of the vies and the chansons de geste, the addressee directs remarks of adoration to deity: vierge puissant (vv. 240; 248); vierge esperitable (v. 242); royne (v. 242); dame (v. 255).

These are formulas of address very similar to those found in the *chansons de geste*. 62

The remainder of the prayer is dedicated to comments on the present circumstances (vv. 245-46; 250-51) and the protagonist’s presentation of the request for protection and deliverance (vv. 243-45; 248-250; 254). The supplicant prays penitently (*tournez le nous a penitence*, v. 243), as do those in the *vies* and *chansons de geste*. The prayer ends with resignation, on the part of the praying woman, to the will of deity (*par vostre doulx plaisir*, v. 255). 63

In the same *miracle*, the son born of the woman (see vv. 240-45) prays to the Virgin Mary (vv. 792-815):

```
Dame, royn e precieuse,
Dessus toutes autres royaulx
Et sur toutes dame loyaulx,
Fontaine de grace habondans,
A touz pecheours secourans
Quant en vous on ferme creance
Et de leurs meffaiz repentance,
Vierge digne, dame piteuse,
Sur toutes' autres amoureuse,
Gemme esmerée, vray rubis,
Saphirs clers, dyamant gentis,
Esmeraude vraye, toupasse
```


63. Cf. *s'il vous plait* (v. 245) and *veuillez garder* (v. 248).
A qui vertu toute autre passe,
Sur toutes autures eslevée,
De paradis porte et entrée,
Car me donnez cuer et courage
De vous servir tout mon eage,
Et veuillez par vostre puissance,
Combien que j’aie de grevance,
Que je puisse conseil trouver,
Dame, qui me puisse assener
Par quoy j’aie crestienté,
Si qu’ennemis n’ai poosté,
Vierge, sur moy en nulle fin.

The content of this prayer more closely resembles the
Biblical-creed-narrative prayer of the chansons de
geste than does the preceding one. Following the
invocation (v. 792), the comment section (vv. 793-808)
is considerably lengthier than that of the previous
prayer. The praying person, as in the chansons de
geste, comments effusively on the divine character of
the Virgin (dessus toutes autres, v. 793; fontaine de
grace, v. 795; a tous pecheours secourans; dame
piteuse, v. 799; gemme esmereé, 801; la qui vertu toute
autre passe, v. 804; de paradis porte et entrée,
v. 806).

A different type of prayer is found in the Miracle
de Nostre Dame d’un chanoinne qui par l’ennortement de
ses amis se maria, puis laissa sa femme pour servir
Here the chanoine prays to be delivered from his marriage so that he may serve the Virgin:

Mère Dieu, que me secourez!
En moy sens un trop dur assault.
La char me bout, tressue et sault
de ce que ja dedans ce lit
N’a pris et eu son delit
Et son vouloir de la pucelle
Qui y gist, qui par est tant belle,
et me dit j’ay pensée lasse
Quant entre mes bras ne l’embrasse,
et a moy par suis trop eschars,
et que s’on me deust en chars
Ardoir ou noyer en viez puis
Puis qu’avoir ma voulenté puiz,
D’elle, tenir ne m’en deusse,
Posé que de certain sceusse
Que j’en deusse estre periz.
Contre ce dit mes esperiz
Que se je de ce ne me garde,
Je ne donray l’eure de garde
Que me verray si desceu
Et me sera cy mescheu
Que j’aray perdu, doulce dame,
vostre amour et mon corps et m’ame.
Nient moins la charoingne chestive
Encontre l’esprit estrive
Et art par desir et remue
Pour la belle que la voy nue.
et pour ce dy qu’il avient peu
Qu’estoupes n’ardent près de feu:
estoupes est hommes et feu femme;
Qui tost est espris de tel flame.
car de ce feu, bien m’en recors,
sens en partie espris mon corps.
Mais, vierge, pour la vostre amour,
Cy ne feray plus de demour,
Mais pour moy garder de bruir
Tout maintenant m’en vueil fuir
Et laissier quanque j’ay ou monde,
Pour vous, mère Dieu pure et monde,
Devotement de cuer servir
Et la vostre amour desservir.
Ceste lettre cy laisseray
Qui dira qu'alez m'en seray
Estre hermite, et que l'en entende
Que jamais jour on ne m'atende.
Meubles et femme, je vous lais,
Et mes amis touz, clers et lais,
Conmand a Dieu et a sa garde.
Doulce mère Dieu, je regarde
Quel chemin tenir je pourray.
Ce bois la par my m'en yray.
Il est hault, estrange et sauvage.
E! Diex, vezcy un hermitage
Tout vuit. Je tieng nul n'y habite.
Certes demourer comme hermite
Y voulray, c'est m'entencion,
Et ycy par devocion
Mon temps user.

This prayer is structurally distinct from those
examined to this point. The invocation and comments
are interlaced with request. It begins with a request
(v. 1023, que me secourez). Then, rather than
commenting on the deity, as has been the pattern
heretofore, the chanoine comments on his personal state
of being. This is a very important point in the
evolution of prayer in French literature of this
period, one that will continue until the sixteenth
century. No longer is the primary focus upon deity,
but it is increasingly upon the Self. En moy sens un
trop dur assault (v. 1024) is a formula very similar to
that which Christ Himself uses as He prays to the
Father in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His
arrest and crucifixion: En moy sens le plus fort debat
Though the attention is now turned to the Self, the praying individual needs an Other, an enemy, to blame for the present predicament, establishing a deliverance motif much like that sought after in the chansons de geste. In this case it is la char (v. 1025) and la pucelle (v. 1028), not the Sarrasin, or the rebellious subject— it is moy (v. 1056). It is not until verse 1056 that the request becomes clearly formulated: **Mais pour moy garder de bruir . . . Pour vous . . . devotement de cuer servir / et la vostre amour desservir** (vv. 1056-63).

Following the prayer, the chanoine sees an empty hut and, recognizing this as an answer to his prayer, chooses to live the rest of his life there as a hermit (v. 1077) in service to the Virgin who, hopefully, will deliver him— the image of feudal devotion and courtly love (albeit, love of deity).

**The Romances**

A chronological study of literary evolution would not be complete without considering some examples from

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the romances, e.g., *Lancelot* (ca. 1230)\(^{66}\) of Chrétien de Troyes and *Tristan et Iseut* (ca. 1170)\(^{67}\) by Béroul. The prayer passages in *Lancelot* are similar in structure and tenor to those found in *Tristan et Iseut*. Most occurrences are composed of an invocation and then an extended period of inner rationalization, with interpolated conditional clauses, which serve as indirect narrative prayer. Jean Frappier, concerning the relationship of such prayer with that of the *crédo épique*, states:

... Plus la litanie se prolonge, s'efforce d'être exhaustive, plus elle revêt d'efficacité. À cet égard le *crédo épique* n'apparaît nullement comme un fait isolé dans la poésie médiévale. Il s'apparente à l'oraison secrète que dans le *Conte du Graal* [vv. 6485-91] l'ermit enseigne à son neveu Perceval en la lui répétant à l'oreille jusqu'à ce qu'il la sache par cœur : « Bien des noms de Dieu y étaient inclus, il y avait parmi eux les plus grands, ceux que nulle bouche d'homme ne doit prononcer, si ce n'est


en péril de mort ». Aussi, quand il la lui
eut apprise, il lui défendit de la dire, si
cel n’était pour échapper à un bien grand
danger. 68

Consider the prayer of the knight as he approaches
a seemingly impossible situation (vv. 1096-1125):

Li chevaliers a l’uis s’areste
et dit: "Dex, que porrai ge feire?
Meûz sui por si grant afeire
con por la reîne Guenievre.
Ne doi mie avoir cuer de lievre
quant por li sui an ceste queste.
Se Malvestiez son cuer me preste
et je son comandemant faz,
n’ateindrai pas ce que je chaz.
Honiz sui se je ci remaing.
Molt me vient or a grant desdaing,
quant j’ai parlé del remenoir—a
tent en ai le cuer triste et noir.
Or en ai honte, or en ai duel
tel que je morroie, mon vuel,
quant je ai tant demoré ci.
Ne ja Dex n’ait de moi merci
se jel di mie por orguel
et s’assez mialz morir ne vuel
a enor que a honte vivre.
Se la voie m’estoit delivre,
quelle enor i avroie gié
se cil me doneint congié
de passer oltre sanz chalonge?
Donc i passeroit, sanz mançonge.
auz li pieres hom qui vive;
et je oi que ceste chestive
me prie merci molt sovant
et si m’apele de covant
et molt vilmant le me reproche."  1125

68. Frappier, Les Chansons de geste du cycle de
Rather than call upon God, Mary, or other saints to deliver him, the knight makes an appeal to human courage and to chivalric honor. God is invoqued twice (v. 1096, *Dex, que porrai ge feire?*; v. 1112, *Ne ja Dex n'ait de moi merci*), the first time in search of wisdom and the second as an oath, swearing to the knight's own lack of pride. Even after directly asking God for wisdom, the knight diminishes his request by stating that if the way to the lady were clear of obstacles, there would be no honor in the rescue (vv. 1116–21). This is in keeping with Rossi's statements concerning non-miraculous intervention, but goes one step further: there is no request for direct assistance from God. Deity is an objective, relatively non-involved Other—it is man and his reasoning capacities that are the active agents in this prayer discourse. One may easily see the analogy between the knight and Christ developing at this point. Christ would like to escape the death of the Crucifixion, but to do so would foil God's plan to redeem humankind from the Fall. Rosemary Woolf notes that "from the end of the twelfth century onwards there developed a perfect parallelism between the theological stress upon Christ's display of love in
the Cross and the conception of chivalric conduct in the Arthurian romances."  69

Verses 3524-31 and 3532-35 contain examples of narrative reference to prayer. As no one prays directly, the content of the prayer act is relatively insignificant, though the poet mentions the content and circumstances surrounding the prayer:

Trois jorz avoient geūné
et alé nuz piez et an lenges
totes les puceles estrenges
del réaume le roi Artu,
por ce que Dex force et vertu
donast contre son aversaire
au chevalier qui devoit faire
la bataille por les cheitis.

69. Rosemary Woolf, Art and Doctrine: Essays on Medieval literature, ed. Heather O'Donoghue (London-Ronceverte, WVA: Hambledon Press, 1986), 101. Woolf expounds on the war motif building around the Passion of Christ during the twelfth century. She says, "The battle image, as we have seen, was strikingly appropriate to the old doctrine of the Redemption in that the result of the Crucifixion was the result normally peculiar to battle, an enemy defeated, and so long as art represented Christ on the Cross as a hero triumphant, the self-evident differences between the Crucifixion and a battle remained satisfactorily unobtrusive" (111). Accepting this motif as a probable one (I will comment further on this in Chapter 3, below), the Gethsemane prayer scenes in the passions would then assume increased importance, as they would have an even more clearly analogical relationship to the prayers of epic heros and knights offered just prior to battle. Evidence of this may be seen in the prayer language found in the Passion de Troyes (ca. 1482), vv. 5575-77: Si tiens qu'en ceste euvre florie / toute la grant chevalerie / de haulx cieulx sy s'y employera.
Et autresi cil del païs
reppriolent por lor seignor,
que Dex la victoire et l'enor
de la bataille li donast. 3535

The poet narratively informs the reader as to who is praying (totes les puceles estrenges / del réaume le roi Artu, vv. 3526-27; autresi cil del païs, v. 3532), whom they are praying for (le chevalier, v. 3530; lor seignor, v. 3533) and their specific requests (por ce que Dex force et vertu / donast contre son aversaire, vv. 3528-29; que Dex la victoire et l'enor / de la bataille li donast, vv. 3534-35). This is an indirect prayer of intercession, similar in genre to that of Aude in Girart de Vienne (vv. 5682-722, above), but as it is narrative, it is distinct as a prayer type.

In Béroul's Tristan et Iseut, after shooting at a stag and wounding it, the stag flees, and Tristan follows it. As he is running after the animal, the potion which he has drunk three years previous finally loses its effect, and Tristan begins to regret the fact that the potion has deprived both him and Iseut of a life of comfort and duty. 70 He repents (vv. 2160-

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Motivated by a displaced sense of guilt, the protagonist offers a prayer of repentance. The potion is responsible for depriving Tristan and Iseut of their reasoning and, consequently, their happiness and the happiness of the king. "The poet’s emotion is occasioned not by the sin but by the suffering, the
innumerable troubles, they endure. Varvaro continues, "its religious awe is directed towards greatness in suffering, and thus remains on a totally human level." God is addressed five times in the prayer (vv. 2161, 2170, 2172, 2185 and 2189). Only once is a typical invocation used, just prior to the request: A Deu, qui est sire du mont (v. 2185). Otherwise the references to God are ephitetic clichés. Tristan, much like the knight in Lancelot, makes personal narrative the substance of his prayer monologue. He does not ask God to rectify the situation brought on by the potion, but rather to give him the necessary courage to make things right—to redress the situation. The analogy to Christ and His resignation to His own death is striking.

The 'mystères de la Passion'

Within the religious drama of the 13th through 15th centuries, one finds a variety of prayer types,


72. Vârvaro, Béroul's "Romance of Tristan", 64.
as they are obliged to by their sources. Within the genre, man and God act and interact, making discourse between them a necessarily frequent occurrence. Some of the interaction is between demons and Satan, or between humans and reason, as in the romances. One of the earliest passions available to modern readers is the *Passion des Jongleurs* (1243). It is a narrative account of the events surrounding the Passion of

73. For example, the Vulgate, the apocryphal books, the vernacular gospels, such as the *Évangile de Nicodème*, the *Postilles* of Nicolas de Lyra, the *Meditations* of pseudo-Saint Bonaventure, the *Vita Christi* by Ludolophus of Saxony, and the *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus Voragine.


75. *Passion des Jongleurs*, ed. Anne Joubert Amari Perry (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981). There are earlier Biblical dramas containing events surrounding the Passion of Christ, such as *Le Jeu d'Adam* (ca. 1160) and the *Seinte Resureccion* (ca. 1175), but the *Passion des Jongleurs* (1243), a narrative Passion poem, will be the starting point in my examination of French medieval religious theater, as it represents an important source for Passion dramatists. I will, however, occasionally draw examples from the other two.
Christ. The prayers that are found in it are, however, direct prayers within narrative, unlike the narrative references to prayers often found in the romances. In these direct prayers within narrative, the jongleur assumes the role of narrator and actor, as in the chansons de geste and romances. For example, in the Passion des Jongleurs (1243) we find the following prayer of Christ on the Mount of Olives (vv. 471-486):

« Père », fet il, « ce croi tres bien
Que tu puez fere toute rien.
Se toi plaisoit, pas ne morroie,
Aingois la mort trespasseroie.
Mes cors a paër de morir.
Ceste douleur m’estuet soufrir;
Mes neporquant li mien desirs
Ne soit pas fet, mes tes plesirs.
Le teue volenté otroi,
Or fai tot ton plesir de moi. »

Einsi se dementoit le Sire
Qui iert sanz pechie et sanz ire.
Uns sainz angres est descenduz
Del ciel, qui li est aparuz;
Son Seigneur prist a conforter
De ce dont il ot dementer.

Like those in other literary genres, this prayer contains the typical invocation (v. 471), comment (vv. 471-72; 475-76), request (vv. 473-74; 477-80).

76. Cf. Lancelot, vv. 3525-35.
77. When citing a passion, I will give its approximate or exact dating in each instance. This will hopefully heighten the reader’s awareness of the evolutionary aspect of this study.
Following the prayer, angels descend on Christ to comfort Him (vv. 483-86). The use of poetic parallelisms to assist in narrative expansion, as well as for dramatic effect, is in evidence (cf. vv. 477-80).

As Christ (the second Adam) prays, so the first Adam offers prayers within the *passions* very similar to those found in the *chansons de geste*, with a good deal more detail on the events surrounding the Creation and Fall, understandably as he was a participant in the events. For example, at the Harrowing of Hell in the Sion Fragment (ca. 1325),78 Adams prays for deliverance (vv. 2-23):

\[
\text{Sire rois, la vostre merci,} \\
\text{Je ne l'ai pas mis en obli),} \\
\text{Por ce que menjai de la pome.} \\
\text{Je fui deceu par ma feme;} \\
\text{Eve me dist se j'en menjoe} \\
\text{Ausi com tu trestot seroe;} \\
\text{Je me pensai : ele dist voir;} \\
\text{Il feroit bon trestot savoir.} \\
\text{Ensi tost com je l'oi mengié,} \\
\text{Et je reconui mon pechié;} \\
\text{Bien vi que decéuz estoe;} \\
\text{Eve me mit en cele voe.}
\]

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78. Joseph Bédier, "Fragment d'un ancien mystère," Romania 24 (1895): 86-94. Here, Bédier cites the opinion of F. Jostes, but admits that Gaston Paris places the date of its composition in the "dernières années du XIIIe siècle" (87).
Mon outrage ai bien comparé:
Lon tens ai ceanz demoré!
Or sui joanz : tu es li sire
Qui me trera de cest martire.
Hal sire, je sui tot certains
Vos me fistes a cestes mains:
Gitez nos toz de cest torment
Ou travailliez fumes formant.

Adam prays as an epic hero, but he narrates events from his own personal experience. This autobiographical narration is presented from the narrator's personal point of view. He prays in self-defense: v. 7, Je fui deceu par ma feme; v. 15, Eve me mit en cele voe. He speaks for all those in Hell (v. 22, gitez nos toz) much as the epic hero stood in a mediating position vis-à-vis those for whom he or she prayed.⁷⁹

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⁷⁹. Cf. Aude in Girart de Vienne, vv. 5683-5722, where she prays for a resolution to the conflict between Roland, whom she loves, and Olivier, her brother.
In the Passion provençale du manuscrit Didot (ca. 1345), a dramatic non-narrative passion, Christ prays at the table with His disciples prior to partaking of a meal in Simon’s home (vv. 362-373):

Senher Dieus, payre omnipotent,
Que formest home de nient:
Senher, tu·l formest de ta ma
E puis fezit lo vi e·l pa.
Aysi co, senher, el dezert .V. pas fezest, que a nos es cert,
Tu benezis aquet manyar
Que a nos a fayt aparelhar
Aysel que·l dona ab cor bo;
Senher, dat li salvasio
E a tos cels que devo manyar,
Senher, ab tu puscan estar!81

This passage is much more similar, compared to that of the Passion des Jongleurs (1243), to the epic-creedal prayers of the vies and chansons de geste. The invocation (v. 362) is followed by a comment beginning with the creation motif, common in early genres (vv. 363-67), followed by a request (368-73). Here God is addressed in epic tenor as payre omnipotent (v. 362)


and as the one who created man *ex nihilo* (que formest
*home de nient*, v. 363).

Not until the time of the fifteenth-century
*mystères de la Passion* does the tremendous evolution
that has taken place across the various genres in the
realm of prayer become evident. At the very beginning
of the *passions*, especially those of the fourteenth and
fifteenth centuries, it is clearly established in the
prologue that the audience is about to see the story
behind the cosmological accomplishment of the
redemption from evil by a good God through His Son,
Jesus Christ:

\begin{verbatim}
Verbum caro factum est.  1
Dieu tout puissant, filz eternel
regnant en regne supernel,
homme fait par amour fervente,
a prins corps passible et mortel
dedens le ventre maternel  5
de la vierge tres excellente
et par voye clere et patente
a monstré la voye et la sente
de parvenir la hault en gloire:
apar quoy present est nostre entente 10
faire demonstrance evidente
de ses fais dignes de memoire. 82
\end{verbatim}

82. From the prologue to the *Passion de Jean Michel*
(1486), vv. 1-12, Omer Jodogne, ed., *Le mystère de la*
*Passion de Jean Michel* (Angers 1486) (Gembloux: J.
Duculot, 1959).
In the *Passion de Ste-Geneviève* (1360) we read the prologue’s prayer for efficacy in the performance and observance of the mystère (vv. 131-36):

- Or ly prïons tous sanz faintize 131
- Qu’il nous doint faire tel servize,
- Par confess et par penitance,
- Et par vraie repentence, 134
- Par quoy nous puissions trestuit estre
- La sus en la gloire celestre.

The prologue to the *Passion de Semur* (ca. 1430) adds (vv. 18-22):

- Or nous fault doncques encor 18
- Querir la maniere comment
- Ceste grace pourons avoir
- Pour venir plus ligierement 21
- A la fin de nostre vouloir.

The purpose of the dramatic act, established in the prologues, is that actors and audience may attain to entrance into heaven, or at least obtain the good graces of God (*Passion de Semur* [1430], vv. 21-22; *Passion d’Angers* [1486], vv. 8-9). In the *Passion de Ste-Geneviève* (1360) service is viewed as an entrance to heaven, much as service to God, king and country was seen as a hero’s assured method of entrance into

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terrestrial and celestial glory (Passion Ste-Geneviève [1360], vv. 134-36: \textit{Par quoy nous puissions trestuit estre / La sus en la gloire celestre}).

In the Arras Passion (1414)\textsuperscript{85} we read the following prayer of John the Baptist just prior to his death by decapitation at the request of Herod’s daughter (vv. 7264-89):

\begin{verbatim}
O vray Dieu, pere omnipotent,
Qui homme fis a ta figure,
Qu’a toy fu inobedient,
Quant il pecha outre mesure,
Deffeng ta povre creature
Qui ton messaigier a esté
Du faulx sathan et del ordure
Ou les dampnez sont hostélé.
Roy puissant, sainte deite,
Ta nouvelle loy ay preschiet,
Penitence ay amonesté,
Le saint baptesme exaulciet
Ton benoit fil ay baptiziet,
J’en appelle ton tesmoignage
Encore ne l’a point nontiet
En infer al humain lignaige,
II me fault faire ce messaige
Aux peres de l’ancienne loy
Que jettez seront de servage
Par Jhesus le souverain roy.
Veuillies avoir pite de moy,
Et me deffends de Sathanas,
Mon esperit recommande a toy
Pour le mettre i j a manus tuasl
Mon amy, fais quant tu vorras
Ton devoir de moy maintenant.
\end{verbatim}

Lines 7264–67 of this prayer represent a combined invocation and comment. After addressing God (v. 7264), John continues with the usual reference to creation (v. 7265) and to the Fall (vv. 7266–67). John then asks God to deliver him, not from death (which is the immediate threat), but from Satan when he descends into Hell following his death (vv. 7270–71; 7285). This is a reference to the fact that after preaching the gospel of Christ, John must now go to Hell and preach to the the righteous souls in prison (who will soon be set free—v. 7283, Que jettez seront de servage / Par Jhesus le souverain roy), as will Christ following His own death on the Cross. The request for deliverance is followed by a resignation to God’s will (vv. 7288–89, fais quant tu vorras / Ton devoir de moy).

86. John the Baptist is considered the forerunner of Christ. It was he who would prepare the way for the coming of Christ into the world. Cf. Mt. 3:3; Mk. 1:2–3; Lk. 3:4–6; Jn. 1:23. No doubt the playwright had such passages in mind when composing this prayer.
Summary

The prayers found in the early *vies des saints* and *chansons de geste* had their origins in the liturgy of the Christian faith. When combined with a purpose (i.e., protection of the kingdom against enemies, both internal and external) and faith, these prayers were expanded to demonstrate a Biblical knowledge of a God who created all things visible and invisible, and who was active within creation for the good of humankind, in spite of humankind's propensity for evil. From early on, the prayers began to become an integral part of those stories either passed on orally, or written as literature. The prayers were expanded to include a wide variety of applicable examples of God's deliverance of His servants in the historical past and His ability to deliver in the present. Thus they evolved into direct Biblical-creed-narrative prayers.

In the romances, the prayers assume a format more appropriate to the narrative poetic and prose structures of the adventures of knights and peoples in distress. The strict dependency on God, seen in the *chansons de geste*, was now transferred to the noble and brave knight and his ability to reason correct choices and physically realize their accomplishments.
The miracles, composed in the fourteenth century, contain prayers addressed to Mary, the assumed spiritual mediator between God and man, as she had physically mediated between the two in the process of the Incarnation. Mary, the mother of Christ, had, since the twelfth century, had become a focal point of man's faith: as a former human being who had become an intermediator for humankind, she was able to identify

closely with humanity's most difficult moments (i.e., the death of her own Son by crucifixion.

Mary is seen as an object of devotion in the mystères de la Passion as well. In the prologues to the great Christian epics centered on the Passion of Christ it is often to Mary that requests for assistance and enlightenment are directed. In the later Christian dramatic "epics" (i.e., the passions), there is a reverse trend toward Christocentrism, especially in the Passions of Greban and Michel. God, in Christ, is once again the focal point of man's faith. The prayers found in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Passion dramaturgy recall the sovereignty of the triune God of the vies and chansons de geste, as well as the

88. For example, see the Passion de Jean Michel ([1486], vv. 22-24), the Passion de Semur ([1430], vv. 59-85), and the Passion de Ste-Geneviève ([1360], vv. 6-14).

89. "The Passion du Palatinus, which is the earliest of the French Passion plays (early fourteenth century), places a strong emphasis on the kingship of Jesus. The passion plays of the first half of the fifteenth century, including that of Arnoul Gréban, interpret the historical Jesus for the community of believers. By contrast, the Passion play of Jean Michel speaks to the individual by stressing the moral dimension of Jesus' message" (Alan Knight, "The Enacted Narrative: From Bible to Stage in Late-Medieval France," Fifteenth-Century Studies 15 [1989]: 236).
homocentrism of the romances and the miracles. All the
linguistic and poetic evolutionary forces at work in
prayer in medieval French literature, along with the
increasing number of vernacular translations of
Biblical and apocryphal works, combine to give a wide
variety of techniques available to passion
playwrights. As a result, poets and playwrights now
turn from a mere recounting of oral and written
tradition, as in the epic Biblical-cred-narrative

90 Alan Knight, in "The Enacted Narrative," says,
"[o]ne should understand, however, that the playwrights
did not always invent the connective scenes and actions
in biblical plays. They may have shaped such scenes to
their own purposes and expressed them in their own
style, but the extra-biblical material was usually
taken from established authors or based on traditional
works. Clearly some of these sources had more
authority than others, particularly in historical and
doctrinal matters; but medieval playwrights,
approaching the material from a dramatic point of view,
selected elements that would make a strong impression
on the spectators" (234). See Sister McKean, The
Interplay of Realistic and Flamboyant Art Elements In
The French Mystères, The Catholic University of America
Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 60
(Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America
1969), 1-3, where she offers the sermo humilis as a
primary source of expansive tendencies in the passions,
though flamboyance (an art term) is the driving factor
(3-4). Cf. Meir Sternberg, a chapter entitled "Gaps,
Ambiguity, and the Reading Process" in The Poetics of
Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the
Drama of Reading (Bloomington: Indiana University
prayers, to an emphasis on the internal reasoning of those in prayer, giving spectator and modern reader a more intimate portrayal of human distress and triumph.

In the following chapters, I will examine prayers within the passions written for male roles (Chapter 1) and those written for female roles (Chapter 2), to demonstrate the evolution within gender-specific prayer monologue and dialogue. Then, in the final chapter (Chapter 3), the prayer of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane will be studied as an important step in the evolution of literary prayer, as "le Verbe Incarné les comporte tous les deux." 91

91. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, Dictionnaire des symboles, 341, speaking of both "maleness" and "femaleness".
CHAPTER I
THE PRAYERS OF MEN IN THE PASSIONS

In the next two chapters I will examine prayer passages in the mystères de la Passion within the context of gender. Prayer is an important component of the passions. Prayers "... étaient insérées dans un ouvrage théâtral destiné certes à émouvoir les spectateurs, mais aussi à les instruire et à les édifier; les auteurs avaient sans doute des intentions didactiques en écrivant ces textes : donner au public des leçons de spiritualité, lui apprendre à bien prier."¹ In fact, the plays themselves were seen as


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prayers, i.e., acts of devotion to God. The audience was often exhorted in the prologues to listen in the name of God, or Mary.² Within the body of the work there were frequent calls to prayer, the audience itself enjoined to pray, and there were benedictions at the close.³

Within the plays, playwrights wrote prayers for the roles of both men and women, though those of women

(Footnote continued from previous page)

the simple and untutored and to lead them from the concrete, the everyday, to the hidden and the true—precisely as did that great plastic art of the Medieval churches which, according to É. Mâle's well-known theory, is supposed to have received decisive stimuli from the mysteries, that is, from the religious drama" (155-56).


3. Ruth Crosby, "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages," Speculum 11 (1936): 109. Prayers seem to punctuate action, representing the very rhythms of life. Alan Knight, in Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), notes that drama in medieval culture was "... an essential part of the rhythm of life, the constantly recurring rhythm of fast and feast, constraint and release, work and play" (121).
were usually played by men. However, on stage the actual sex of the person speaking was relatively unimportant. Keir Elam affirms it is the dramatis persona who matters: it is he or she "who actually performs the illocution." These plays were "dramatizations of the liturgical year and were thus reactualizations of the creation of the world and of the historical origins of the Christian community." At the moment of dramatic re-presentation, it is the audience that must, with the actors on stage, create the dramatic illusion. The audience, by interpreting "physical 'sayings' on stage as higher-order speech


5. Keir Elam, The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama (London and New York: Methuen and Company, Ltd., 1980), 169. Elam contends that the "responsibility for the utterance as a full speech act, with all its possible moral and social consequences, is attributed to the dramatic and not the stage speaker" (170). Cf. Paul Zumthor in Essai de poétique médiévale (Paris: Le Seuil, 1972): "... le texte ... résorbe pour un instant l'action: prières, sermons, discours, d'autant plus détachés du geste, réduits à la seule solennité de la voix, que celui qui les prononce ou à qui on les adresse représente une autorité plus haute: Dieu, la Vierge, un patriarche, un saint" (432).

6. Alan Knight, "From the Sacred to the Profane," Tréteaux 1 (1978), 42. "The theater, whether specially constructed or set up in a city square, was an image of the cosmos [emphasis mine]" (42).
events in the dramatic world,"\(^7\) must accept the speech acts (i.e., prayers; discours) as coming from the \textit{dramatis persona} enunciating them, rather than from a mere stage voice. This active role of the audience in medieval theater is further advanced by Henri Rey-Flaud, who says that "dans un théâtre du moyen âge le spectateur est actif: c'est lui qui crée l'espace et le temps à chaque moment de l'action."\(^8\) Paul Zumthor states that, "la marque propre de ce discours situe dans le je, qui devient fictif et porte référence à un ensemble complexe d'autres signes tels que costume,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{7} Elam, 170. For this to happen, Elam says the audience "must project both a set of intentions on the part of the speaker and a semiotic competence . . . on the part of the listener. This is a major aspect of the spectator's role in 'constructing' the dramatic world" (170). See Susan Bennett's analysis of actor-spectator relationships in her chapter entitled "The Audience and Theatre," in Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 92-176. Cf. Heinrich Richard Falk, "Test-free methodology for Medieval Theatre," Fifteenth-Century Studies 13 (1988): 23-28. Falk asserts that, "the essence of theatre is the interaction of performer and spectator and the result of that interaction is performance" (26).
\item \textsuperscript{8} Henri Rey-Flaud, Pour une dramaturgie du Moyen Age (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980), 170.
\end{itemize}
décor, et situation connue." It seems likely, therefore, that the prayers written in the passions, were perceived by spectators with gender specificity.

The prayers extract their thematic content and structure from the chansons de geste, the miracles, and the romances, as well as from the canonical Scriptures and apocryphal-legendary material. In an evolving poetic tradition, original prayers were written to meet the needs not only of the immediate spectator-audience, but of the increasingly humanistic mentality of those audiences. Auerbach claims that "in contrast to the feudal literature of the courtly romance, which leads away from the reality of the life of its class into a world of heroic fable and adventure, here there is a movement in the opposite direction, from distant legend and its figural interpretation into everyday contemporary reality." Their realism may be seen in


10. Auerbach, Mimesis, 158–59. Auerbach continues concerning the end result of this evolution: "But later it is different: realism of a coarser grain begins to thrive, and varieties of mixed style, of the

(Footnote continues on next page)
their attention to detail.\footnote{In art and letters of this period, there is the tendency of "accentuating every detail, of developing every thought and every image to the end, of giving concrete form to every concept of the mind" (Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages [New York: Doubleday, 1954], 277). Sister Mary Faith McKean, in The Interplay of Realistic and Flamboyant Art Elements in the French Mystères, The Catholic University of America Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 60 (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), discusses at length the techniques used by authors to embellish original textual sources, such as the use of supplementary elements for "clarity and immediacy" (20), and for the purpose of explicitation (34) and reiteration (37).} I will attempt to show that the prayers of Adam and of the legendary figure Longinus, in their thematic content and structure, are not only examples of a developing multi-layered literary tradition, but that the evolution of the prayers within the mystères de la Passion is one toward a blunt juxtaposition of Passion and crude farce, develop, which to us appear strange and unseemly. (. . .) The subliterary survival of the tradition of the antique mime and the more conscious, more strongly critical, and more forceful observation of life, which, beginning with the twelfth century, seems to have set in among the lower classes too, led at that time to a flourishing development of the popular farce, whose spirit may well be assumed to have soon found its way into the religious drama as well" (159).
an appreciation of the individual and human aspect of
the divine story which serves as their basis.

**The Prayers of Adam**

In the canonical account of Judaeo-Christian
to beginnings, Adam is an extremely important character.
Because of Adam, the Passion of Christ became the
nuclear event in the redemptive history of humankind.
In order for the redemptive act to be realistic vis-à-
vis a human audience, the motivation for it must be
linked to the human element, which in its weakest
moments is the principal catalyst. As we have seen (in
Introduction, above), Adam is referred to frequently by
those who pray in the Biblical-creed-narrative
tradition.12 There is a binary relationship between
Adam and the human race: 1) Adam is the father of the
human race (according to the Judaeo-Christian world-
view) and 2) Adam is the cause of the Fall, for which

12. See André Moisan, Répertoire des noms propres de
personnes et de lieux cités dans les chansons de geste
françaises et les œuvres étrangères dérivées, vol. 1,
Textes français: Noms de personnes (A-N), Publications
Romanes et Françaises, 173 (Geneva: Droz, 1986), 110,
where all references to Adam found in the French
chansons de geste are listed.
all humankind suffers to the present moment. The source of all Passion dramaturgy is therefore linked to events in the Garden of Eden. Within the prayers in the chansons de geste we have seen varying accounts of the Fall and their placement of responsibility for the Fall. Some place the blame on Adam, others on Eve, and still others divide the blame equally between the two.\textsuperscript{13} The important progression in religious drama is the shift from third-person narrative references to Adam and events surrounding the Fall to first-person narrations of these events. McKean, speaking of the transformation of Biblical narrative into drama, notes that it consists of "putting the words of the narrator-observer into the mouth of an actor taking part in the scene, with the necessary changes from third to first person . . .".\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} The seduction of Adam by the serpent, via the woman (i.e., Eve), is frequent in the Anglo-Norman literary tradition. See Willem Noomen, ed., Le Jeu d'Adam (Ordo Representacionis Ade), Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 99 (Paris: Champion, 1971), 6.

\textsuperscript{14} McKean, The Interplay of Realistic and Flamboyant Art Elements in the French Mystères, 2.
Whatever the orientation, Adam is the focal point of the theology of the Fall. Following the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the garden, both are banned from their paradisical abode and eventually take their place in Limbo with the children of God from all the ages, from Adam to Christ.

15. For example, Romans 5:14b, "He [Adam] prefigured the One [Christ] who was to come. . ." [inserts mine]; I Corinthians 15:23, "Just as all die in Adam, so in Christ all will be brought to life; . . .". This desire for thorough understanding of the foundations of the Christian faith is a common manifestation of medieval spirituality. Sandro Sticca, in "Drama and Spirituality in the Middle Ages," Medievalia et Humanistica 4(1973), identifies three basic manifestations: 1) "a practical and affective spirituality removed from intellectual reasoning and interested in emotion" 2) "a speculative spirituality concerned with theological preoccupations" and 3) "an effective and speculative spirituality which tends to unite and reconcile reason and feeling" (70).

16. It is interesting to note that, as Adam and Eve symbolize disobedience in the garden (i.e., of Eden), Christ exudes obedience in the garden (i.e., of Gethsemane).

17. Auerbach, Mimesis, 158: "In principle, this great drama contains everything that occurs in world history. In it all the heights and depths of human conduct and all the heights and depths of stylistic expression find their morally or aesthetically established right to exist; and hence there is no basis for a separation of the sublime from the low and everyday, for they are indissolubly connected in Christ’s very life and

(Footnote continues on next page)
In the **passions**, Hell and its contents were a fixed prop on most stages. As God the Father and His angels looked on from the **mansion** of Paradise to the audience's left (stage right), the lower right (stage left) of the stage was simultaneously spewing smoke, fire and demons, usually entering and exiting "Hell" through a large mechanical dragon's mouth.18

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suffering. Nor is there any basis for concern with the unities of time, place, or action, for there is but one place—the world; and but one action—man's fall and redemption." Also, Axton, in *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 67, speaking of liturgical re-enactments, says "As representational drama it may have been unsatisfactory, but as the induction to a commemorative, communal [emphasis mine] experience, it provided a profoundly satisfying emotional experience."

18. This was common stage decor in the 15th century. See Donald Stuart, *Stage Decoration in France in the Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910), 120. Stuart indicates, however, that at Semur, the entrance to Hell does not seem to have been a dragon's head (123). He continues by citing Greban's description of Hell (128–29), given through Lazarus after Christ had raised him from the dead. Hell was divided into four sections (vv. 15791ff): 1) Limbo of Fathers [where Adam would be located]; 2) Purgatory; 3) Limbo of infants; and 4) Pit of Hell. See Stuart's detailed account of the staging of Hell in medieval theater on pages 128–51. Cf. Cohen, *Histoire de la*...

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It is not until the Harrowing of Hell (i.e., that moment when Christ descends into Hell to release those imprisoned there)\(^\text{19}\) that Adam and his descendants are

\[\text{(Footnote continued from previous page)}\]

\[\text{mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du moyen âge (Paris: Champion, 1951), 92-93, where Cohen describes the three principle ways in which Hell was portrayed on the stage: 1) "une tour de forteresse, sur le plan de celles dont étaient flanquées les villes du moyen âge" 2) "un puits; entrée généralement en forme de gueule monstrueuse, qui s'ouvre et se referme pour livrer passage aux diables [this is where Jesus throws Satan after breaking down the doors of Hell; stage imagery used later by Molière in Dom Juan]" and 3) "un parloir; place où les diables se tiennent à la vue du public." This monstrous opening was often referred to as "la chappe d'hellequin" (95). Cf. remarks concerning staging by Moshé Lazar, ed., \textit{Le Jugement Dernier (Lo Jutgamen General): Drame provençal du XV\textsuperscript{e} siècle, édition critique avec traduction, introduction, notes et glossaire (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1971), 34-38.}\]

\[\text{19. This event finds its source in the Évangile de Nicodème (see edition of Alvin Ford, \textit{L'Évangile de Nicodème: les versions courtes en ancien français et en prose, Publications Romanes et Françaises, 125 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1973). The Évangile is divided into two parts: the Acta Pilati and the Descensus ad infernos. For a discussion of other sources and the Harrowing scene as staged in the various passions, see Chapter 5, "The Harrowing of Hell," in Jean Gray Wright, \textit{A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in the Medieval French Drama} (Menasha,}\]

\[\text{(Footnote continues on next page)}\]
freed from the underworld (i.e., limbe) and returned to their rightful place in the heavenly paradise with God the Father. Below is a diagram of the manner in which this scene was staged at Valenciennes in 1547, on the twenty-second day of performance:

![Diagram of the scene](image)

Fig. 1

(Footnote continued from previous page)


Most passions of the 14th and 15th centuries contain prayers of petition by Adam, and most of them are prayers emanating from his prison in Hell. Here, not unlike the epic heroes of the past who invoke Adam's name and recount his story of disobedience in the Garden of Eden, Adam prays for deliverance much in the same way as they. Until the time of the "grands Mystères", however, Adam is envisioned in prayer upon the actual arrival of Christ at the gates of Hell (i.e., the actual moment of deliverance). Consider the following prayer from the Passion d'Arras (1414), vv. 20330-62, following Gabriel's announcement to those in Hell that Christ has come to deliver the souls imprisoned there:21

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O vray Dieu, pere tout puissant, 20330
Je vous rens graces, maintenant
Toute ma tristesse est ravie
Par une voix que j'ay oye
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21. Eustache Mercadé, Le mystère de la Passion. Texte du MS 697 de la Bibliothèque d'Arras, ed. Jules-Marie Richard (Arras: Imprimerie de la Société du Pas-de-Calais, 1891; reprint, Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1976). For a discussion of the elaborate scenery used to stage Hell in the Passion d'Arras, see Stuart, 337-38. Jean Gray asserts that "this scene follows the Descensus in arrangement and content. Such additions to the scene, as the announcement of Christ's coming not only by great light as in the Descensus but by the words of Gabriel as well, (...) do not alter the essential character of the incident" (A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection, 94).
Disant que le Dieu tres haultain
Venra cy anuyt ou demain
Pour nous jetter hors de l'ordure
Tres puant, pollue et obscure.
Resjoissons-nous, mes amis,
Nous serons temprement remis
Ou lieu de paradis terrestre
Ou jadis avoie mon estre.
J'en fus banis hors et chassié
Et dejetté par mon pechié
Jusqu'en exil oultre la mer.
Et la me convint labourer
Toute ma vie en desconfort,
Oncques depuis n'oyt accord
Qui consonnast a melodie,
Et quand mon âme fut partie
Du corps par la mort qui tout prent,
Grans et petis incontinent,
Je fus en infer trebuchié
Ou j'ay moult durement couchié
Par l'espasse de cinq mil ans.
Las! aussi avez fait, enfans,
Et souffert grant paine et cruelle
Par ma coulpe et par ma querelle,
Avez comparé mon meffait,
Mais pour vray sachiez et de fait,
Nostré Sauveur tantost venra
Qui malgré Satan nous menra
De ce lieu en gloire éternelle.

Adam prays this prayer with duality of purpose. First, the actor must identify his dramatis persona to the audience (which cannot view a written script). This he does, in vv. 20340-54, by identifying himself as the primary disobedient one, at the same time including his audience (nous: vv. 20336; 20338-39; 20360-61 and the implied vous in v. 20355-56) within the realm of penalty (vv. 20355-58: enfans; souffert grant paine et cruelle par ma coulpe et par ma querelle), though not responsibility. In a prayer from the Passion de Greban
Adam identifies himself, not only to the spectators of the drama, but to all of those in Hell at the moment of Christ's arrival and their subsequent deliverance: Enfans (v. 32784); Adam suis, vostre premier pere, / qui la chançon commenceray (vv. 32942-43). He is the source of 1) human existence, 2) the original sin, and 3) the resulting punishment. Therefore it is he who has the right to begin the song of deliverance. Adam picks up where epic heros leave off by giving personal, first-person insight into the period of time immediately following the Fall. Sandro Sticca purports:

In all these dramatic expressions one perceives the mystical method of emphasizing the concrete, the human; the desire to stress the immediacy rather than the historicity of the scene, and to arrive at the intensification of emotions through the evocative power of the thing seen is clearly and primarily the expression of a readily definable religiosity: the peculiar gift of the spirituality of the medieval mystics.  

Herein lies the mimetic thrust of Passion dramaturgy: the character re-presented on stage is one in time and


23. Sticca, "Drama and Spirituality in the Middle Ages," 84.
essence with the audience. There is a visual and oral identification based on the shared knowledge of actor and spectator. The audience, cognizant of the Biblical account of history, allows itself to become totally identified with, and even absorbed by, the *dramatis persona* of Adam, empathizing with the protagonist in all aspects of the situation, having the assurance a priori that the predicament Adam (and spectator) is now and will be resolved in imminently satisfactory fashion.

Adam further illumines the consequences of the Fall by using highly contrastive terminology to allude to conditions prior to and immediately after the Fall, such as *tristesse/ravie* (v. 20332), *le Dieu tres haultain/l'ordure tres puant, pollue et obscure* (vv. 20335; 20336-37), and *paradis terrestre/en exil oultre la mer* (vv. 20340; 20344). It is a contrast of high and low, light and dark, clean and unclean, serving to foster a dichotomous imagery of righteousness and sin.

Adam, in a state of separation from God, is internally longing for a mystical reunion with God, His infinite creator, not uncommon to devotional religion of the Middle Ages. As a background intensifier, there is also a musical theme linguistically embedded in this prayer-poem (vv. 20333 and 20347-48: *accord, consonnant, melodie*), in keeping with Greban's *chançon commenceray* (v. 32943), if not actual music.

As Adam prays, the "reader" (i.e., spectator) becomes aware of the fact that he (i.e., Adam) is unaware of events occurring outside of Hell, or his perception of them is, at most, minimal. He learns of the soon-to-come Harrowing of Hell by Christ par une voix que j'ay oye (v. 20333). He is also unsure of the timing of events (venra cy anuyt ou demain, v. 20335).

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25. This religiosity is Augustinian in nature, readily seen in 1) the Pauline prayer for pardon and 2) the neo-Platonic ascent to the supreme light. See Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*, ed. and trans. Samuel McComb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 127; and Donald Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narrative," *Medium Aevum* 51 (1982): 139, and his description of a confessional prayer (of which this is a type, more than Biblical-creed-narrative) as tripartite: acknowledgment of guilt for sins, account of sins, a petition for the intercession of Christ.

This uncertainty about the arrival of Christ removes him from the controlled cosmos of the simultaneous stage to a very localized and visible reality. It creates an ambivalent context for medieval spectators uncertain about their future.²⁷

In this monorhythmic passage (i.e., octosyllabic verse, rhymed couplets), there is a great deal of motion away from and toward. God will come from on high to the underworld (vv. 20334-35). Adam hopes to be restored to Paradise (vv. 20340-41) after his liberation from Hell. Adam recounts the banishment from Eden (20342-33) and to its antithesis (i.e., Hell) where he and Eve were sent for the rest of their existence (v. 20344). Adam speaks of his death (Et quand mon âme fut partie, v. 20349), and his exile to and in Hell (v. 20352). He cyclically returns to the expected arrival of Christ (v. 20360) and his

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²⁷. Cf. John W. Robinson, "The Late Medieval Cult of Jesus and the Mystery Plays," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America 80 (1965): 508-14. He states that, "Something, then of the rationale of the presence of the audience at the performances of the mystery plays, and something of the nature of their experiences, may be rather more than guessed at by considering both the social-religious and aesthetic contexts of the performances" (513).
anticipated release from Hell and departure to a place of eternal glory (v. 20362).

There are differences to be noted between this prayer of Adam and the one cited in the Introduction, pages 61-62, above. Here Adam claims to have been in Hell five thousand years (v. 20354), and in the

Fragment de Sion (ca. 1300)\textsuperscript{28} it was four thousand years (cf. v. 3). The five-thousand-year reference was perhaps used by Mercadé to bring the drama of the Fall and Redemption into the present tense. From Creation to the Crucifixion, according to conservative Biblical theology, four thousand years passed. At the time of the play, in the present, five thousand years would have lapsed since the Biblical account of the Fall. In fact, some playwrights add an extra 400 years or so to specify the actual moment of the re-creation of these "historical" events in a dramatic context.\textsuperscript{29} The exact time is irrelevant: it has been a long time of

\textsuperscript{28} Joseph Bédier, "Fragment d’un ancien mystère," Romania 24 (1895): 86-94.

\textsuperscript{29} Cf. verse 4 of the Fragment de Sion (ca. 1300), where the author adds to four thousand years .III.C. et .III.III toz compliz (repeated in the Passion de Biard [1470], ed. Grace Frank, Classiques Français du Moyen Age, 30 [Paris: Champion, 1922], v. 1887).
suffering. Concerning discrepancies of this type, Auerbach says that "what these violations of chronology afford is in fact an extremely simplified overall view adapted to the simplest comprehension--but this simultaneous overall view is at the same time the expression of a unique, exalted, and hidden truth, the very truth of the figural structure of universal history." 30

The major structural difference in the parallel prayer of Adam in the Passion d'Arras (1414) is that there is no mention, by Adam, of Eve's responsibility in the Fall, as there is in the Fragment (ca. 1300), where Adam squarely places the entire blame for the Fall on Eve (cf. vv. 7-15). Here the male author, as he seeks to wholly identify his spectator-audience with the protagonist pro tempore through dramatic verisimilitude, is himself identified with his moral

30. Auerbach, Mimesis, 158. Cf. Petit de Julleville, Les mystères, vol. 1 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1880), 256-57. Petit de Julleville asserts the non-cruciality of historical inconsistencies. What the spectators wanted from medieval drama was verisimilitude and a concomitant identification with actors and actions on stage, "...à retrouver dans les personnages qui défilent devant lui, son langage, ses habitudes, ses sentiments, ceux de ses amis, de ses voisins, de tous ceux qu'il fréquente et connaît le mieux dans la vie réelle et journalière" (257).
and sexual counterpart, Adam, who is also his creation, in the sense that the playwright must amplify dialogue that is missing in the Scriptural account. The result is certainly indicative of a shift toward acceptance of personal responsibility, and also the ability of male authors to give their male creations very human qualities.

In the *Passion de Semur* (1430), we see a distinctly different prayer of Adam following as Christ's invitation to Adam to come *hors de servaige* (v. 8610). Adam gladly submits on bended knee (*genu flexo*) with a prayer of repentance, though blame in


this prayer is displaced onto the Annemi (v. 8621).

There is no mention of Eve (vv. 8617-27):

Tu es cil qu'as formé le monde
Ansin com il est a la romanse,
Quil formé m'as a ta sanblance.
J'ay pechier contre ton essance 8620
Quant l'Annemi par son envye
Mangier me fist, par glotonnye,
Du fruit de l'arbre de science
De bien et de mal, et pour ce
Trespassay ton commandement;
Or m'en prendz en amendement
Et cy me fait de pechier monde.

Following the invocation and comment on the object of
the prayer (vv. 8617-19), Adam immediately confesses
his sinfulness as a result of the enemy (i.e., Satan)
having made him partake of the forbidden fruit (vv. 8620-25). This play appears to have been more greatly
influenced by the earlier liturgical plays that allow
the male-figure (in this case, Adam) to blame an Other
for misdeeds and sins. Adam admits guilt (v. 8620),
but the originator of the temptation is the one truly
responsible (vv. 8621-22), much as Eve was the
scapegoat in the Fragment (ca. 1300). Perhaps this is
the most realistic of all possible responses to
impending guilt. This is, in fact, the very activity
that the spectator is involved in at the moment this
prayer is heard and visualized. Through dramatic union
with the dramatis persona, i.e. Adam, the spectator has
found an Other on which to place the responsibility,
not only for his sin, but the misery that has resulted from the Fall (i.e., toil, sickness, death). As if in reciprocity, the actor quickly displaces the guilt and responsibility on a supernatural Other, thus allowing a reprieve, not only for the spectator, but for the persona he portrays.

This displacement of guilt (or responsibility) is further advanced by a shift in pronoun and verb usage. There is a decided progression, beginning with the use of the first-person singular, as in v. 8620, when the narrator-speaker (i.e., Adam) refers to himself. Then, after a single mention of the enemy and his motives (l'Annemi par son envye, v. 8621), the speaker begins using the direct object pronoun me to refer to himself. No longer is he the actor, but he is acted upon, by a third party—the devil (cf. vv. 8622, 8626 and 8627). This poetic tone of lugubrious self-denial, via denial of the Self's involvement in the actual misdeed, is accentuated by the nasal /ã/ or /ãs/, with the exception of verse 8624.

In the Arras Passion (1414), the prayer of Adam contains no request for deliverance, rather a promise to his progeny that deliverance is imminent (vv. 20339; 20360-62), whereas in the Fragment (ca. 1300), more in
keeping with the request of a Biblical-creed-narrative-type prayer, there is a request made directly to Christ (cf. vv. 22-23).\textsuperscript{33} It is as if to compensate those who have been imprisoned with him because of his original sin that Adam promises them imminent deliverance. Attention is no longer focused on God (as it was in verse 8617), but away from all those directly involved in the first sin and toward those who have innocently suffered as a result. This fifteenth-century movement away from request and petition for deliverance seems representative of a shift begun in literary prayer at the time of the courtly romances.\textsuperscript{34} It seems appropriate that drama match the life and literary experience of actors and spectators. Rather than miraculous deliverance from difficulties, an ethic of "patient waiting" and expectancy of Christ's second coming seems to be developing and is, at last, being expressed in performance literature.

\textsuperscript{33} In the Passion des Jongleurs (1243), ed. Anne Joubert Amari Perry (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), there is no pre-deliverance prayer of Adam. Christ, after entering the portals of Hell, takes Adam's hand and offers him liberty. Adam accepts and points Him out as the deliverer of all who are in Hell because of his (i.e., Adam's) original disobedience (cf. vv. 2863-74).

\textsuperscript{34} See Introduction, above, 52-59.
Following the actual arrival of Christ in Hell, Adam, in the *Passion d’Arras* (1414), prays in gratitude for his deliverance and the deliverance of all his descendants. As he is the father and progenitor of all who sin and are in servitude to sin, so Adam is the first to be delivered from the ultimate penalty of sin, i.e. death and Hell. His first response is indicated in a narrative paragraph between verses 21045 and 21046: 

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... et dist Adam : Exaltabo te Domine qui susceptisti me nec delectasti inimicos meos super me.

Domine Deus meus clamavi ad te et sanasti me. He then offers the following prayer of gratitude (vv. 21046-55), using language reminiscent of that used in the miracles:
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O sire, bien te doy amer
Et servir et regracier
Et toy louer quant de ce lieu
Me jettes, mon pere et mon Dieu,
Je sçay que tu ne souffresis
Qu’aversaires ou anemis
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35. It is common for those delivered by the Virgin Mary to pledge service in return for her favors. Cf. Rutebeuf, *Le Miracle de Théophile*, ed. Roger Dubuis: L’enfer attend mon âme / Et sa porte est ouverte; / Je paie ma démesure! / Ce sera dure perte, / Preuve de ma folie, / Si j’en fais ma demeure... / Accepte mon hommage, / Tourne ton doux visage... (41); O, reine généreuse, / Illumine mon coeur, / Efface mes ténèbres; / Qu’à toi je puisse plaire / Et ta volonté faire! / Donne-moi cette grâce (42). Cf. Longinus’s similar pledges, below, 117ff.
Premissent leur delit sur moy,
Ainçois, mon vray Dieu, je congnoy
Que quant au besoing t'ay clamé
Tu m'as benenement sauvé.

In the Passion de Greban (1452), there are two relatively lengthy prayers by Adam: one in the prologue, during a brief re-enactment of the Fall (vv. 813-850), and another at the beginning of the first day of the play, where he prays from Limbo for the coming of the Messiah who alone can deliver him from his place of torment (1741-95). The first prayer takes place immediately after God pronounces His judgment on both Adam and Eve following their disobedience:

O souverain pere divin,
haultaine lumiere infaillible,
quel offence grievve et terrible
ay je au jour d'uy vers toi commis!
en quel danger me suis je mis!
a quel meschief suis je venu!
Doulx Dieu, que m'est il advenu
d'estre allé contre ta deffence!
O tres noble estat d'innocence,
tresor hault et digne sur tous,
or est tu bien pardu pour nous.
Pardu, voire! helas! comment?
sans fin, irreparablement
changé en dure doleance!
O griefve desobeyssance,
hydeux serpent, horrible monstre,
ta faulce trayson nous monstre
quel grand bien nous as empesché;
car par la sente de peché
et les desers de dur remort
nous maines au terme de mort
sortir nostre honteux demaine.
O tres noble nature humaine,
pur ruisselet de deité,
miroir de pure eternité,
a l'ymage de Dieu molee,
or es tu par moi violee;
par moy ta noblesse est pardue.
This prayer is divided into five sections, each beginning with O (vv. 813-20; 821-26; 827-34; 835-40; 841-50), which serves to call into being (or deify) that which is not, or is no longer. The rhythm is characteristically irregular, much like one finds in poetic passages of great stress or anguish. In fact, according to McKean, "many conflict situations are more clearly defined by good use of broken rhythm." Each segmented enunciation is addressed to a different object. In the first (vv. 813-20) the addressee is the

36. See Culler, The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction, where, speaking of apostrophe, Culler advances it as "... a device which the poetic voice uses to establish with an object a relationship which helps to constitute him" (139); and, "... they serve as intensifiers, as images of invested passion" (138). Cf. Pierre Larthomas, Le Langage dramatique: Sa nature, ses procédés (Paris: Armand Colin, 1972), 74-78, a chapter entitled "Les exclamations (ou gestes vocaux)."

souverain pere divin. Adam offers a constrastive insight into the result of his desobedience. The adjectives divin (v. 813), haultaine (v. 814), infaillible (v. 814) are used in opposition to griefve (v. 815) and terrible (v. 815). This is the manifest realisation of the cosmic consequences of the Fall spoken by the person deemed responsible by those who watch and listen (i.e., the audience). Included in this polar imagery is danger (v. 817) and meschief (v. 818). Adam forthrightly accepts responsibility in this instance (v. 816, ay je . . . commis; v. 817, . . . suis je mis; v. 818, . . . suis je venu).

Then, gazing into the past, Adam addresses the tres noble estat d'innocence (v. 821)38 as if addressing deity. The language used to describe this bygone entity is described by modifiers often used to describe deity: tresor hault et digne (v. 822; cf. v. 814), further expression of the consequences of the Fall. In the third section Adam focuses on the act of

38. Cf. Geoffroi de Paris, assumed source of La Passion des Jongleurs (1243), gave an interestingly similar nomenclature to his work: La Bible des sept estaz du monde. Cf. Anne Joubert Amari Perry's introduction to La Passion des Jongleurs and her reference to this work in her discussion of sources.
disobedience itself, here shifting only partial blame to the serpent (v. 828). He continues listing the consequences of his recent actions by linking his sin with death (vv. 833). In this section and the one following, Adam includes the spectator in his prayer by using the first-person plural, nous (vv. 823; 829-30; 833-34 [nostre]).

In another passage from Greban’s Passion (1894-1939), Adam gives a soliloquy in which he focuses on his enfans (v. 1894). In addition to references to his offspring, there is a detached third-person reference to himself, much as occurs in the parallel prayer of the Passion de Semur (1430): O dolant et maleureux pere, / c’est dommage et pitié qu’il vist / qu’ainsi son lignage asservist (vv. 1904-06). Here the dramatis persona becomes a cosmic entity capable of objective judgment.

In the fourth section, Adam addresses a personified human nature and the travesty he committed against it (vv. 839-40). It is clearly a passage of self-analysis, as if Adam were able to clearly see, not only his Self, but humanity in a miroir (v. 837). Other words advance this idea, such as l’ymage (v. 838), ray cler (v. 843), and fontaine (v. 844). He continues the mise-en-relief of the state of human
nature at its origin, which he clearly sees in/on reflection, to its state subsequent to the Fall through use of strongly oppositional language, culminating in war-like imagery: *la bataille prise / qui jamais ne sera desprise / . . . mort fine le procès* (vv. 848-50). Rather than a simple allusion to the warrior in battle, Adam gives a context to the life of all those that come after him, his children. Likewise, more than a context for the life of his progeny, including that of the spectator, Adam succeeds in establishing a context for the epic drama about to unfold. It is a battle between the cosmic forces of evil and good, between primordial and fallen human nature. God Himself will fight personally in the battle, through Christ, and He will be victorious, but it will be a human struggle, a struggle against pain and death, not unlike that experienced daily by many individuals in the Middle Ages.  

39 Ultimately, Christ will reclaim those that have been held captive by the ennemy,

39. Bynum, in "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," suggests that "... medieval piety (at least in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries) speaks far more urgently of life coming from death, of significance located in body, of pain and suffering as the opportunity—even the cause—of salvation" (439).
including the spectator-participant in the immediate
dramatic re-creation.

The second prayer of Adam in the *Passion de Greban*
(1452) resembles both the first prayer mentioned above
and the Biblical-creed-narrative prayer familiar in
earlier epic literature (vv. 1741-1795):

O souveraine majesté
bon Dieu qui en éternité
regnez sans jamés prendre fin,
créateur et père divin
dessus toute chose creee
quand vendra l’eure desiree
que de cest enfer ysterons?
Ne sçay se toujours y serons:
l’attente largement me tarde.

Helas! haut plasmeateur, regarde
nostre misere et la consomme:
je suis Adam, le premier homme,
le premier de tous les humains,
que tu voulz formez par tes mains.

Hault juge, ne regarde pas
mon pesché, mon cruel trêspas:
justice modere et accorde
par doulceur et misericorde;
aultrement mon fait est piteux.

O haut triumphant vertueux,
vertu de mirable efficasse,
casse la chesne qui nous lasse,
lache nostre poix trop grevain.

Helas! mon juge tres haultain,
bienn me souvient de l’existence
et du noble estat d’innocence
ou vostre grace m’ordonna,
quand tous les fruiz m’habandonna
fors ung, dont je fis fol essay,
quant vostre command transgressay:
inobedience le fist,
qui de tout mon bien me deffist.
Serpent venimeulx, plain d’envye,
ta vie qui tout bien desunte
fut cause de mal encourir,
qui me rendist serf a mourir.

Neantmoins de ma povre puissance
je fis au monde penitance
grande et longue pour moy purger;
si fust temps que de ce danger  
1780
fusse hors, des longtemps y suis, 
et trouver remede n'y puis, 
qui me prive de tout soulas. 
Quand vendras tu, doux Messias, 
voir la peine qui nous habonde?  
1785
Quand vendras, tu sauveur du monde 
qui des prophetes es promis, 
visiter tes povres amis 
qui tant ta venue desirent 
et en toy desirant souspirent 
par douloureuse desplaisance?  
1790
Quand tu vendras, j'ay esperance 
que du tout nous resjouyras 
et tous noz cueurs consoleras 
de gloire haultaine et parfaicte.  
1795

In its narrativity, this prayer resembles the Biblical- 
creed-narrative prayers of the chansons de geste. The 
difference is that the narration is focused on one 
person and one event: Adam and the Fall. The oration 
opens with an invocation (vv. 1741-45), followed 
immediately by a question, springing from a desire for 
deliverance (quand vendra l'eure desiree / que de cest 
enfer ysterons?, vv. 1745-46). This question is 
repeated in verses 1784-1791. Adam initiates the plea 
for God to consider the events of the past and to 
alleviate the subsequent suffering. This differs from 
the typical Biblical-narrative prayer, however, in that 
the events mentioned are not recounted as rallying 
points of faith, but rather as declarations of guilt 
and a reliving of the sinful act.

Adam accepts the responsibility for his 
disobedience, at least initially (Je fis / transgressay
/ de tout mon bien ma deffist, vv. 1769-72), but on reflection, identifies the Serpent as the perpetrator of the crime (Serpent / ta vie / fut cause, vv. 1773-75). The Fall is portrayed here as a change of man's status from that of freedman to slave. Then, following the act of disobedience (v. 1771), Adam admits to becoming a serf a mourir (v. 1776). The only remedy (v. 1782) is for God Himself to come and return them to gloire haultaine et parfaicte (v. 1795).

The Passion de Troyes (ca. 1490),\(^{40}\) considered a very close reworking of Greban's Passion (1452), contains a prayer of Adam from Hell, prior to the birth of Christ. The prayer contains elements very similar to those found in the parallel passage in Greban's passion (see above, 102-103). The petitions for deliverance, however, have a different tenor—one of joyous anticipation and anxious hope: Donne moy jubilacion, / vray Dieu, contre qui j'ay meffait, / prans moy en exaudicion / de ce que j'ay vers toy forfait (vv. 3241-43); Vray Dieu, plein de toute puissance, / reçois mon fait en ta mercy, / en ayant de

moy souvenance, / pour me delivrer hors d'icy (vv. 3249-52).

The Passion de Biard (ca. 1470)\footnote{La Passion d'Autun, ed. Grace Frank (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1934). The Passion de Biard is one of two plays (the other, Passion de Roman) that constitute the Passion d'Autun. Frank says the two component plays were named after the copyists who edited them (7). It seems apparent that Roman was a dramatic work, whereas Biard was originally intended as drama, a "poème en partie dialogué, en partie narratif, adapté ou à la récitation ou à la lecture" (8). In any case, Frank states that the two had a common source which did not survive (9).} gives us a prime example of a seemingly reworked Biblical-creed-narrative prayer. In this prayer Adam prays directly to Christ who has just entered Hell to deliver the souls imprisoned there (vv. 1885-1907):

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Helas, seigneurs Dieu, la vostre mercy! 1885
Quatre mille ans avons ester icy,
Quatre cens et quatre, je confesse;
Las, tu ne l'as pas mys en obly,
Mon vraye pere, seigneur Jhesucrist.
Je fut deceuz, las, pour ma femme,
Qui me fit mangier la pomme.
Elle me fit tant que j'en mangoye,
Que je tous maulx et bien seroye.
Je me pansir a son dit veoir
Qu'i feroit bon trestout sc'avoit.
Tantost comme j'enn euz mangier,
Et je recogneu mon pechier,
Las, je vis bien que deceuz estoye,
Et que m'estoye mys en male voye.
Mon oultraige ay bien comparer:
Or sai ge bien tu est le syre
Qui nous trahira de ce martire,
Quar, syre, je suis tout certain
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Que tu me fit ja de tes mains. 1905
Gectes nous trestous de ceans,
Nous t’en prions devotement!

This prayer of interlaced octosyllabic and decasyllabic verse begins with an invocation (v. 1885), a lengthy comment emphasizing the Fall and the reasons behind it (vv. 1886-1900), and a plea for deliverance (vv. 1902-07). There are some striking similarities between this version (1470) and that of the Fragment de Sion (ca. 1300). An especially interesting one is found in Adam’s displacement of guilt for the Fall. He places responsibility for his sin on Eve, his wife. Note the repeated use of the passive and causative voices when referring to the incident: je fut deceuz (v. 1890), me fit mangier (v. 1891), me fit tant (v. 1892), je me pansir a son dit veoir (v. 1894), deceuz estoye (v. 1898), and m’estoye mys en male voye (v. 1899). This displacement of blame is tempered by an almost parenthetical admission of guilt in verse 1897: je recongneu mon pechier.

42. Cf. verse 1887 of Biard and verse 4 of Fragment de Sion; Biard, v. 1888 and Fragment de Sion, v. 5; v. 1889 of Biard does not exist in Fragment de Sion; v. 1907 of Biard (Nous t’en prions devotement) and v. 23 of the Fragment de Sion (Ou travailliez fumes formant).
There is a return to the element of creedal affirmation in this prayer. Just prior to making his request for deliverance known (gectes nous trestous de ceans, / nous t’en prions devotement!, vv. 1905-06), Adam avows his adherence to the creedal truths of creation and redemption: or sai ge bien tu est [sic] le syre / qui nous trahira de ce martire / Quar, syre, je suis tout certain / que tu me fit ja de tes mains (vv. 1903-04).

There is virtually no mention of Adam, or prayer by Adam, in the Passion by Jean Michel (1486). The only enunciation relegated to Adam in the Passion is the following: O noble secours amiable, / paix de chere redemption, / souverain confort charitable / haultaine reparation! / O parfonde discretion / trop enclinee vers tes hommes, / benoiste soit la passion / par laquelle [r]achéptez sommes (vv. 57-64).43 Perhaps this is the only reference because the characters in

43. Omer Jodogne, ed., Le mystère de la Passion (Angers 1486), 472-73, "Addition VII (entre les vers 28674 et 28676 de A." This cursory reference to Adam (and in an addition, at that) is possibly indicative of the extent to which 15th-century man was accepting himself as the center of responsibility, for good or bad.
the *Passion* (1486) are seen as very real people, removed from ancient myths of primordial blame for human depravity, who accept personal responsibility for their own sin and guilt. The prayers of Adam, especially those from the *Passion de Greban* (1452), indicate an increasingly self-oriented, tendency toward introspection on the part of the playwrights composing religious dramas near the end of the 15th century.

44. Jean Michel substitutes moral sense for literal sense. He abandons the grand episodes of the Christian myth and the act of Redemption that one finds in Greban's first and fourth days, for instance. See Jean-Pierre Bordier, "Jean Michel contre les mystères? A propos d'un livre récent," *Tréteaux* 3 (1981): 35-42. Claiming that from Greban to Michel, we have passed from medievalism to humanism (38), Bordier affirms Michel's emphasis on the subjective nature of salvation, rather than the objective nature (39), and that love and penitence are more important than theological scenes such as the Descent into Hell (40).

45. "Or Jean Michel, et c'est déjà sensible quand il limite sa matière ne prétend pas faire un drame de la Rédemption. Il sait bien que Dieu s’est incarné pour ‘réparer si grande injure’ (v. 553), mais il conçoit davantage son Mystère comme une méditation et une imitation de la vie de Jésus. Cette valeur exemplaire est d’ailleurs double : c’est en cherchant à se conformer au Christ lui-même, idéal de perfection proposé à l’homme, que celui-ci pourra ‘sa vie sotte / corrig[e](r) vertueusement’ [emphasis mine], mais c’est aussi en méditant l’exemple de tous les pécheurs que Jésus a croisés sur sa route" (Maurice Accarie, *Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge. Étude sur le sens moral de la Passion de Jean Michel* [Geneva: Droz, 1979], 127-28).
believe there is also a shift from a dominant male epic-warrior mentality to one of femininity, receptivity and malleability (see Chapter 3, below). We now begin to see men who have succumbed, become victims (i.e., inferiorized), and are subsequently liberated. They do not begin in a position of strength as they often do in the chansons de geste and the romances. Maleness is no longer a controlling factor. The prayers of Adam seem to support this conclusion, as do the prayers of other male characters in the passions.

The Prayers of Longinus

Longinus is an apocryphal figure prominent in Passion dramaturgy from the earliest plays to those of the 16th century. He is given a place in the Passion des Jongleurs (1243), the Passion du Palatinus (ca. 1300),46 and nearly every Passion thereafter, including that of Jean Michel (1486). Unlike Adam, the first-created human, Longinus is a sinner by birth, with no

preeminent relationship with the Protagonist of the passions (i.e., Christ). Unlike others, such as Adam, who merely observe the culminating act of the Passion (i.e., the Crucifixion), Longinus actively participates by thrusting his lance into the body of Christ, a symbolically male act, likely to widen the gap of identification with spectators bereaved over the death of their Saviour, but narrowed considerably by the events that immediately ensue. His prayers following his healing and subsequent conversion are important in the evolution of Passion dramaturgy as they demonstrate an increased awareness of those who experience conversion as adults, rather than those who come to a knowledge of the Scriptures through infant baptism, catechism, and familial instruction. The audience experiences first-hand what they have been taught: their sins caused the death of Christ.

The role and persona of Longinus vary in the different plays. However, one part of the legend remains consistent in most: Longinus, who is blind,

47. He is mentioned in the Évangile de Nicodème as Longiz, le chevalier (v. 292); Dunc prist Longiz, le chevalier, sa lance, sil feri el costé; et sanc et eve en issi (vv. 292-93).
pierces the side of Christ with a lance. The blood that pours from the open wound flows down the shaft of his lance. He gets blood on his hands and then touches his eyes. Immediately and miraculously he receives his sight. Jean Gray Wright says of the legend:

The incident of Longinus, the soldier who pierced with his lance the side of Christ as he hung upon the cross, is of almost invariable occurrence in the French plays on the Passion and Resurrection. As Longinus feels the blood running from the wound upon his lance and down upon his hands, he touches his eyes; immediately he is able to see clearly, he realizes his sin, begs mercy from Christ and is pardoned. In those scenes where Christ is yet alive, He signifies His forgiveness to the lamenting Longinus, but ordinarily the miraculous recovery of the soldier's sight is considered the token of Christ's forgiveness. (. . .) The material of this scene is drawn almost entirely from

48. Cf. reference to the Évangile de Nicodème, above. Longinus, also a centurion in several of the plays, is perhaps the centurion referred to in Luke 23:47. A more solid allusion is found in the non-synoptic gospel of John (19:32-37): "Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it--true evidence, and he knows that what he says is true--and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfill the words of scripture: 'Not one bone of his will be broken;' and again, in another place scripture says: 'They will look to the one whom they have pierced.'"
legends.

Many references to Longinus are found in the various chansons de geste. One example is found in the prayer of William in the Couronnement de Louis (1170), vv. 768-74:

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Longis i vint, qui fu bien eürez,
Ne vos vit mie, ains vos oï parler,
Et de la lance vos feri el costé,
Li sans et l'aive li cola al poing clers.
Terst a sus uelz, si choisi la clarté,
Bati sa colpe par grant umilité,
Iluec li furent si pechié pardoné.
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In Fierabras (ca. 1240), Olivier prays a Biblical-creed-narrative prayer, a portion of which mentions Longinus (vv. 945-50):

Quant Longis vous feri de la lance trenchant,
Il n'avoit ainc véu en trestout son vivant; 946
Li sans li vinst par l'anste juques as ex coulant,
Il en terst à ses ex, tantost en fu véant.
Merchi vous cria, Sire, sa poitrine batant, 949
Et vous li pardonnastes sans point de mautalent.

A parallel passage in Fierabras adds: Sire, me[r]chi
cria; tu séus son pensé (v. 1211).

The epic writers, in their embellishment of the legend, provide a substantial non-canonical source for medieval playwrights. However, most directly, the narrative Passion poems, such as the Passion des Jongleurs (1243), are probably the most immediate source for the later dramaturgists. Two fourteenth-century manuscripts of the Passion des Jongleurs (1243) portray him as cruel and an evil hater of God. We read in verses 1668-79:


53. Fierabras, 37.

54. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in the Medieval French Drama, 6. Also, see note 24 on the same page.
As the evolution in the passions of the 14th and 15th centuries moves toward more in-depth character analyses, so the character of Longinus is more fully developed. The mention of Longinus is very brief in both the Passion du Palatinus (ca. 1300) and the Passion Provençale (1345). In the latter, only the astonishment of Longinus after receiving his sight and his subsequent repentance are mentioned. In the


56. See vv. 1613-20 and preceding narrative reference:

Bels senher Dieus, hieu te ador, 1613
Que es del mon ver salvador.
Senher, en tu ay mon sper,
Que m'as rendut lo mieu vezer.

(Footnote continues on next page)
former, additional elements are mentioned by the author, such as Christ's forgiveness of Longinus and Longinus's promise to serve Christ in penitence:57

Ha, dolent moy! com grant mescheance!  
Douz Jhesucrist, roy de puissance,  
Pardonez moy si voirement  
Com j'a [sic] de tout repentement.  
Bien voi vous estes dieu sans dote:  
Je ne veoie maintenant goute;  
Or m'a rendue ma lumiere  
Vostre saint sanc, biax tres dous pere.  
Roy de gloire, trop ai pechie  
Vers vous, aiez de moy pitié.  
( . . . )

(Footnote continued from previous page)

Tu as suffreyta pazio  
Per la nostra redempcio.  
Los fals Juzeus que tu an mort,  
Senher, diables los ne port!

57. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in the Medieval French Drama, II. Also, Longinus' motive for piercing the side of Christ is a more personal one (rather than solely at the prompting of another person: S'il est Diex, j'en ralumerai (v. 1053). In the Passion de Roman (ca. 1470) Longinus says to the people: Pour Dieu, qui le m'ensegniera, / S'y ly plet, il me garira (711-12). After he regains his sight miraculously, Longinus pleads for forgiveness: Sire, je ay persé tont [sic] coster [sic], / Et m'a donne clarte / Mes je requier la Trinité / De mon peciés pardon et grace (vv. 722-25). The Passion de Biard (ca. 1470) adds the following narrative lines: Et puis la lance poignierent / contre le costé droitement, / Et puis le firent urté / Et entra dedant le costé / Et puis après senta le sant / Et disit tres piteusement: . . . (vv. 1163-627); Et puis incontinant il vit / Et piteusement lui crie mercy: . . .(vv. 1175-78).
Sire, n'ai cure de mal faire,
Et vous promet, tant com vivrai,
Comme preudons vous servirai.

Other changes take place in the Autun and Semur Passions. Instead of being a chevalier, as he is in most previous literary references, Longinus is identified in less noble terminology. In the Passion de Semur (1430), he is an aged chevalier who has fallen into poverty. Then, later passions, such as those of Greban, Ste-Geneviève, and Arras, show Longinus to be a knight, a character type developing probably as a result of the romances and their proclivity for character analysis. The episodes concerning Longinus

58. Passion de Roman (ca. 1470), vv. 690-96. Helas, je suis Lontgint, / Povre homez que ne voy goute (vv. 694-95).

59. Passion de Semur (1430), vv. 7829-33. See Jean Wright, 11-12, for an in-depth discussion of this evolution.

60. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in the Medieval French Drama, 16: "... the later plays, more deeply interested in analysis of character, try to attribute to him a definite attitude, either hostile toward Christ or well-disposed toward him. In certain cases they find a specific motive for his act—the desire for revenge or the hope of a cure." Cf. the Passion d'Arras (1414), vv. 17768-892; the Passion de Ste-Geneviève (1360), vv. 2975-3060; the Passion de Greban (1452), vv. 26525-705; the Passion de Jean Michel (1486), vv. 28794-29087.
"underwent an early realistic development due rather to dramatic considerations than to theological or narrative influences." 61

The prayers of Longinus illustrate such a development. More than either a beggar or knight, Longinus represents a person who is spiritually sightless, one who is estranged from God and humankind. 62 Interestingly, his "final" act of defiance (i.e., piercing the side of Christ with a lance) becomes the conduit of healing and salvation. The lance now symbolizes the means of restitution and forgiveness, much as it does immediately following

61. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in the Medieval French Drama, 22.

62. Cf. La Passion d'Arras (1414), vv. 17862-69, where Longinus switches from a first-person narrative to a third-person plural narrative prayer. Also, cf. La Passion de Semur (1430), v. 7850: mon corps et m'am ranlumine; La Passion de Greban (1452), v. 26699: pour tous pecheurs enluminer; and La Passion de Jean Michel (1486), v. 29062: qui [Jesus] tout cuer languissant esjoye; v. 29077-78: et sanc dont grace supernelle / nous est venue.
Christ’s prayer in Gethsemane. The prayers of Longinus afford the audience, whether spectator or reader, insight into the mind and heart of a man who is, according to legend, the first benefactor of redemption by the blood of Christ. There are others forgiven by Christ in the passions, but Longinus receives an immediate and binary blessing of the redemptive act at the actual moment of its occurrence:

physical healing and forgiveness of sins.

The prayers increase in length and substance from the Passion du Palatinus (ca. 1300) to the Passion de

63. See Chapter 3, below. Cf. La Passion de Greban (1452), vv. 19164-68; 19181-85: Pierre, reboute ton espee:/ cil qui de glave frapper a/ de glave aussi pardu sera; / du glave as la commission / mes non pas l’execucion; (. . .) [to the soldier who just lost his ear to Peter’s sword] Mon amy, approche de moy: / j’ay grant compassion de toy/ du cop qui t’a esté donne, / et pour ce tu seras sané / maintenant sans quelque moyen.

64. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the Resurrection in Medieval French Drama, 2.

65. Referring to the sufferings of the Messiah, Isaiah 53:4-5 says, “And yet ours were the sufferings he bore, ours the sorrows he carried. But we, we thought of him as someone punished, struck by God, and brought low. Yet he was pierced through for our faults, crushed for our sins. On him lies a punishment that brings us peace. And through his wounds we are healed” (New Jerusalem Bible).
Jean Michel (1486). Following is an examination of the prayers of Longinus, subsequent to his healing and forgiveness in a sampling of chronologically-ordered passions. The first is the Passion du Palatinus ([ca. 1300], vv. 1055-63):

Dou Jhesucrist, roy de puissance, 1055
Pardonez moy si voirement
Com j'a [sic] de tout repentement.
Bien voi vous estes Dieu sans dote:
Je ne veoie maintenant goute;
Or m'a rendue ma lumiere 1060
Vostre saint sanc, biax tres doux pere.
Roy de gloire, trop ai pechie
Vers vous, aiez de moy pitié.

Longinus's prayer in this passage is simple and direct: he prays for forgiveness. He admits his sinfulness (vv. 1057; 1062-63) after having his physical sight restored miraculously. He is now capable of seeing that the claims of Christ were true and therefore confesses that Christ is God (vv. 1058; 1061-62).

It is with a confession of comparable significance that the prayer in the Passion de Ste-Genevève (1360) begins:

Roy, au cuer te fier sans faintise. 3025
Combien que j'ay perdue la veue,
Sentiras tu ma lance ague.
Longin plonge la lance dans le côté droit de Jésus.
Du sang et de l'eau en jaillissent.
Bien sçay que je t'ay la char route;
Je sens sang ou yaue qui degoute
Sus mes mains contreval ma lance.
Ne sçay sy m'en venra meschance,
Mais mes yeulz en vueil nettoier.
Doulx Dieu, chacun vous doit proier!
Diex estes, ce sçai je de voir!
Je m'en doy bien apercevoir.  
Vous m'avez fait honneur et grace,  
Enluminé avec ma face,  
Dont je suis moult lié et joians,  
Car je estoie non voians.  
Fort vous fery, pas ne failly,  
Tant que vostre sang en sailly.  
Le sang, qui en est descendus,  
M'a mes .ii. yeulz tous clers renduz.  
Je vous fery. Ce poise moy!  
Doulz Diex, aiez mercy de moy,  
Et ne vous vueilliez courroucier,  
Quant je vous ay osé blecier!  
Les Juifz, qui sont deputaire,  
Le me commenderent a faire,  
Et je l'ay fait par mon oultrage.  
Beau sire Diex, qui mon visage  
M'avez esclarcy en pou de heure,  
Ains que la mort me coure seure,  
Mon meffait car me pardonnez!  
Dieu, de qui tout bien est donnez,  
De cuer humble mercy requier.  
Jamais mal faire je ne quier.  
Les faulz Juifz sy m'amenerent;  
A vous ferir me commenderent.  
Hors de foy sont et renoyé!

The beginning of this prayer is addressed to the Roy (v. 3025). Longinus thus expresses his feelings toward Christ. They are feelings of bitterness at having gone blind (v. 3026, combien que j'ay perdue la veue), and perhaps at having become poor, as in the Passion de Roman ([ca. 1470], vv. 690-696). In either case, his feelings of anger are expressed by his intention to act: Sentiras tu ma lance agüe (v. 3027). Following the promised thrust of his lance, Longinus monologues the events between the piercing of Christ and his healing. This is doubtlessly done for heightened dramatic effect. By stating that he simply ne scay sy
m'en venra meschance / mais mes yeulz en vueil nettoier
(vv. 3031-32), Longinus prepares his audience for the
ensuing miracle, i.e. the healing of his blind eyes.

That miracle is introduced by an exclamation in
recognition of the deity of Christ (doulx Dieu, v.
3033). Whereas his address of Roy in verse 3025 is
said with scepticism by a man who has given his life
(and sight) in service to imperial authority, the doulx
Dieu alludes to submission of a higher order. His male
arrogance is reduced to pleas for mercy (vv. 3026-27).
It is not only Longinus represented by this dramatis
persona, it is the spectator who has been drawn into
the most intimate moments of the event (i.e., those
immediately preceding the actual healing). Longinus
subsequently enjoins the entire human race to pray via
his direct, second-person recognition of Christ's deity
(chascun vous doit proier!, v. 3033), intended for the
eyes and ears of the audience.

After couching a personal account of the physical
miracle and its importance (vv. 3036-3044) between two
groups of three verses that acknowledge Christ as God
(e.g., Diex estes, v. 3034)—each commencing with Doulx
Dieu (vv. 3033 and 3045)—Longinus resorts to blame
displacement, as does Adam when he searches for a
reason behind his sin in the Garden of Eden. In this instance, the sin (i.e., wounding Christ’s side) was not as much the result of temptation as it was of commandment. Longinus blames the Jews (les Juifz, v. 3048 and les fauilx Juilz, v. 3058) for having ordered him to pierce Christ’s side (le me commenderent a faire, v. 3049; a vous ferir me commenderent, v. 3059). Then, as if to further distance his Self from personal responsibility, Longinus slanders the Jews who put Christ to death, referring to them as deputaire (‘méprisables’, v. 3048) and hors de foý sont et renoyêl (v. 3060). Longinus, however, hints at his own guilt once again in verse 3050 when he claims having done the act (et [...] par mon oultrege).

In the Passion de Semur (1430), Longinus displaces blame, not on a physical, outside force, but on his own ignorance—his darkened mind before its salvific illumination by the grace of God (vv. 7845-53):

Heel doulx Jhesu, filz de Dieu le Pere, 7845
Par ton sang ay receu lumiere,
Mout es douilx et misericordz
Que moy quil t’ay perciere le corps
Ta haultime grace divine
Mon corps et m’ame ranlumine; 7850
Mes tu sceis bien par ta science,
Que je le fix par ygnotance.

Mercy te cry, Roy debonnaire.

It is ignorance that caused him to do what he did—and he justifies his claim by declaring in his prayer that God, in His sovereignty, knows this to be true (vv. 7851-52). In the Passion de Ste-Geneviève (1360), Longinus closes his prayer with a pledge to lead a life worthy of the grace that has been shown to him (jamais mal faire je ne quier, v. 3057).

In the Passion d'Arras (1414), Eustache Mercadé further expands the prayer of Longinus following his healing. The tone of this prayer is much more hurried. It is prayed by a dramatis persona who is overcome, something signified by the frequent use of interjections (vv. 17830-92): 67

Ah! vray Dieu pere, quesse cy! 17830
Ah! qu'ay je fait? vray Dieu, ay my!
Vueillez avoir de moy pité,

67. See Larthomas, Le langage dramatique, 74-78. In this chapter on "les éléments paraverbaux du langage dramatique", the author says concerning exclamations (gestes vocaux): "Il s'agit de modes d'expression de formes très diverses qui vont du simple soupir, c'est-à-dire d'une réaction corporelle, à un élément verbal comme 'Attention!' qui est au seuil du 'discours', en prenant ce dernier terme au sens le plus étroit. ( . . . ) Ce qui caractérise ces interjections, c'est qu'elles ne signifient pas, au sens strict du terme; ( . . . ) elles ont le plus souvent une valeur purement affective, valeur qu'il n'est pas toujours facile de dégager, ce dont un bon auteur dramatique peut tirer parti ( . . . )" (74-75).
Vo miracle avez ci montré
Sur moi, car aveugles estoie
Et goutte nulle n'y veoie,
Or maintenant suis je garis
Par vo sang que j'ai dessus mis.
O vray Dieu plain de charité,
O vray Dieu pere de pité,
Humblement vous requier pardon.
Je congnay que j'ay mal ouvré
De vous avoir ainsi frappé,
Cause n'y avoit ne raison,
Las! j'ay fait moult grant desraison,
Vers moy ne l'aviez desservi,
Cause n'y scay n'occasion,
Ne pour prière ne pour don
Pour quoy deusse avoir fait ce cy.
Helas, helas! mon bon Jhesus,
J'aperçoys que je suis deceus
Par les faulx et mauvais Juifz,
S'a ta grace ne suis receus,
De male heure je fu conceups
Et de male heure je nasquis.
Helas! j'ay bien ce fait acquis,
Bien m'en pouoir deporter,
Car quant du fait je fu requis,
Se j'eusse bien de vous enquis
Cause n'avoie de vous frapper.
Vous estes du monde sauvour,
Vous estes mon vray redempteur,
Pour nous volez la mort souffrir,
Helas! vous n'estes pas debteur
Du pechë dont a grant doleur
On vous a fait la mort souffrir.
Pour nous avez volu offir
Vo corps pour nous tous racheter
De servitude, car perir
Nous falloit sans gloire veir,
Se mort n'eussiez volu porter,
Benignement l'avez porté
Sans en riens estre deporté,
On le puist bien apercevoir
Car partout vous estes navré.
Las, las! regardez la pité,
N'est cuer qui ne s'en deust doloir.
Ha! faulx Juifz vous pouez voir
L'horreur et pechë concevoir
Vueillez vo pechë qu'avez fait,
Pour grace et pardon recevoir,
Si non vous en serez deffait.
O bon Jhesus, tres humblement
De cuer contrit, de cuer dolent,
De ce que j'ay vers toi mespris
Requier pardon pour sauvement
Avoir en temps et lieu decent
Lassus avec tes saintcs eslis,
Car tu es de Dieu le vray filz
Qui donnes consolation
Plaine de joie et de delis,
Ou tes amis seront toudis
En toute jubilation.

Two new elements are introduced in this play by Mercadé. Much like the previously mentioned prayer passages, Longinus represents not only the humbled and submissive knight, but all humankind who has wounded, even killed, Christ by its participation in original sin. Here, however, the protagonist more frequently, blatantly, and successfully coerces his audience into the dramatic event. The shift from a first-person singular to a first-person plural narrative marks the moment when this prayer is no longer solely the prayer of Longinus but of nous, the spectator (and/or reader). Longinus confesses to Christ that it is pour nous volez la mort souffrir (v. 17862) and pour nous avez volu offrir / vo corps pour nous tous racheter / de servitude, car perir / nous falloit sans gloire veir [sic] (vv. 17866–69).

Secondly, this play deals with Longinus's reason for piercing the side of Christ at a deeper level than previously done in Passion dramaturgy. For example, in verses 17843–44, Longinus acknowledges that he has
acted against reason: *Cause n'y avoit ne raison* / Las! j'ay fait moult grant desraison. The *dramatis persona* is searching for a reason, a *cause*. He finds none (cause n'avoie de vous frapper, v. 17859; cause n’y sçay, v. 17846). Instead, Longinus "prays" that, instead of a reason, he has found grace whose efficacy supersedes reason, or non-reason. Longinus stops short of placing the responsibility for his act on the Jews, as he does in the *Passion de Ste-Geneviève* (1360). 68 He does mention, however, that they deceived him (J'aperçois que je suis deceus / Par les faulx et mauvais Juifz, vv. 17850-51), though this represents quite a development since the *Passion de Ste. Geneviève* (1360) where it is the Jews who commanded him to do what he did. Thus, an element of reasoned personal responsibility is brought into focus, representing a marked tendency toward character development, for good or bad—a thematic trait most fully evolved in the late fifteenth-century *passions*. Longinus directly addresses the Jews, but rather than blaming them directly (though he does refer to them as faulx Juifz [v. 17877]), he shares his personal testimony and the

68. Cf. above, 125, vv. 3048-50; 3058-60.
"good news" with them (vous pouvez voir / l’horreur et peché concevoir / pour grace et pardon recevoir, vv. 17877-79).

In the Passion de Greban (1452), Longinus pleads ignorance (ne jamès n’avoye pensé / que tu feusses si haute chose / comme Centurion propose, vv. 26687-89), but confesses that his reason now demands that he praise Christ (Raison veult que louer te doye, v. 26700), especially now that his reason has been regenerated, as has that of all sinners (et salut qui point ne desvoye / pour tous pecheurs enluminer, vv. 26698-99).

This evolution toward a more reasoning penitence is most clearly seen in Longinus’s prayer found in the Passion by Jean Michel ([1486], vv. 29028-87):

O Jesus saint et bienheure

de qui j’oy tant de plainte faire,
onigne saulveur honnoré

pour toute chose a grace attraire,
las, sire, a toy me vuelles traire
et me pardonne mon offence,
car je t’ay trop voulu desplaire,
dont je reprens ma conscience. 29035

O divine essence,
haultaine puissance,
benigne clemence,

j'ay en toy parfaicte fiance
pour ta bonté!
Si, par arrogance,
t'ay fait violence,
c'est l'outrecuidance,
l'erreur et la malivolence
de ma volonté.
Je n'ay excusance de ma decepavance,
car, par insolence,
t'ay fait ceste oultrance
tant que de ma propre science
je t'ay tourmenté.
Mais, sire, las, par ta pitié,
prens de ce pecheur pacience
et enlumine la clarté
de ma tenebreuse ignorance,
car, en icelle confidence,
qu'une tres precieuse goute
du sanct qui de ton costé goute
humblement mectray sur mes yeulx,
[esperant qu'i m'en soit de mieulx
et que plus clerement te voye.
Voy mect du sanct de Jesus dedans ses
yeux et puis dit:
O Jesus qui point ne desvoye,
qui tout cuer languissant esjoye,
que te ay je faict?
Graces me donnes que je voye
celui qui navrer desiroye
par mon forfait.
Las, sire, je te voy desfaict,
je congnoys et voy en effect
la playe mortelle
dont moy, miserable imparfact,
t'ay blecé, meurtry et desfaict
de playe cruelle.
T'ay je faict ouverture telle,
si grande, si large que d'elle
en est yssee
clere eaue supernaturelle
et sanct dont grace supernelle
nous est venue?
Las, sire, par toy m'est rendue
lumiere et a grace m'ordonne.
O haule et divine personne,
o saincte croix dine et bonne,
je t'adore de tout mon cuer.
O sire, tout mon cuer te donne
et pour toy le monde abandonne
[et te repute mon seigneur].
The prayer is divided into two parts: vv. 29028-60, which is the prayer immediately following the wounding of Christ’s side, and vv. 29061-87, where Longinus, after receiving his sight rejoices in his forgiveness and in the miraculous restoration of his eyesight. As Longinus is powerfully moved by his physical and spiritual renewal, his utterance is consequently replete with apostrophe and exclamations.  

Jesus is identified as God by a variety of expressions: *saint et bienheure* (v. 29028); *divine essence / haultaine puissance / benign clemence* (v. 29036-38); *haulte et divine personne* (v. 29081).

In view of who Christ is and Longinus’s own personal conversion, the *dramatis persona* begins to analyze his reason for doing such a deed (i.e., stabbing Christ with his lance). He now speaks as a changed, regenerated being (*je reprends ma conscience*, v. 29035). He offers no excuse for his action, but rather a scathing self-renunciation (*par arrogance / t’ay fait violence / c’est l’outrecuidance / l’erreur / la malivolence / de ma volonté / Je n’ay excusance de*

---

ma decepance / par insolence / t'ay fait ceste
oultrance / tant que de ma propre science / je t'ai
tourmenté, vv. 29041-50). Longinus accepts full
responsibility for his actions. It is his conversion
to Christ that has caused him to see himself as a
"cruel individual, a hater of God." 71

This evolution in the character of Longinus is
consistent with the character portrayal often found in
the Passion de Jean Michel (1486). The structure of
the prayer follows closely other presentations of
miracles in the mystères de la Passion:

Toujours du point de vue structurel, la
composition dramatique des miracles obéit,
dans les Mystères, à certaines lois, et l'on
retrouve partout un découpage identique en
trois phases: la présentation du miraculé,
le miracle lui-même et l'action de grâces. 72
(. . .) [L]a présentation des individus est
toujours plus importante que le miracle. 73
(. . .) Les portraits initiaux deviennent
donc le moment essentiel des miracles, comme
l'était la mondanité des pécheurs. Ils sont
eux-mêmes une suite de mondanités, car les
malades rejoignent les charnels dans la
galerie morale du Mystère. Le mal dont ils

71. Jean Wright, A Study of the Themes of the
Resurrection in Medieval French Drama, 5.

72. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age,
266.

73. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age,
269.
So it is in this prayer of Longinus. Jean Michel gives the spectator thirty-three lines (vv. 29028-60) to make known the interior struggles of the protagonist before actually presenting the miracle. Twenty-six lines (vv. 29061-87) are then devoted to recounting the miracle (par toy m’est rendue / lumiere et a grace m’ordonne, vv. 29079-80), giving praise to God for the miracle (je t’adore de tout mon cueur, v. 29084), and a pledge to serve the Christ who is the Source of the miracle (tout mon cueur te donne / et pour toy le monde abandonne, vv. 29085-86). Such character portrayal allows the spectator and/or reader to readily identify with the dramatis persona. Accarie assesses Jean Michel’s contribution to this process dramatic union by saying:

On doit reconnaître que Jean Michel a cherché à caractériser beaucoup mieux que ses prédécesseurs les individus et le mal dont ils souffrent. Ce n’est plus une simple désignation fonctionnelle, mais un portrait véritable. Les miraculés en gagnent un poids humain, de silhouettes fugitives ils deviennent des êtres de chair auxquels, comme à tous les personnages du Mystère, le

74. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 270.
spectateur peut s'identifier, qu'il peut du moins sentir comme proches de lui. 75

Summary

In analyzing both the prayers of Adam and of Longinus, one must conclude that the prayers of each demonstrate the evolution of prayer within the confines of medieval religious theater from those found in the chansons de geste to prayers more fully developed as to their potential for projection of character, and their ability to lend verisimilitude to the dramatis personae of most Passion dramaturgy. From the early dramas to the later ones there is a development of individual character, whether good or evil, that is made known by the monologic prayer acts of these characters. Prayer is used, no longer just to recount Biblical history in preparation for a request for deliverance, as in the Biblical-creed-narrative prayers of the chansons de geste, but it is becoming a medium for developing the scope of a personality: a persona that is perhaps known historically, but not existentially by the

75. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge, 271.
spectator. The maleness of the prayers examined in this chapter is manifest at an obvious level not only by the gender of the dramatis personae (e.g., Adam [the first created man] and Longinus [a knight]), but also by the content of the prayers, not solely through an assertion (i.e., presence) of the male Self, but through its self-denial (i.e., absence) and subsequent submission to the narrative event.

In the earlier prayers of Adam and Longinus, we see men who pray as do the protagonists of the medieval epics: as warriors and dominant male/father-figures. In the later passions, however, beginning in earnest with the Passion d'Arras (1414), both Adam and Longinus (as dramatis personae) shift the responsibility for their actions back onto their Selves, via an increased reliance on human reasoning, contrary to the practice of male protagonists in earlier literature. It is no longer satisfactory for a man to pray on the basis of patriotism or loyalty to his king, or to expect to receive an answer to that prayer simply because of whom he represents within a dramatic context. A persona must now submit to having her/his character revealed by what she/he says in connection with hidden actions. Prayer is a theatrical medium that allows this
unveiling to occur; for this is the common medium that most closely links the protagonist with the spectator.
CHAPTER II
THE PRAYERS OF WOMEN IN THE PASSIONS

Most playwrights of Passion dramaturgy have not neglected to give a substantial place to the prayers of women, though most roles written for female dramatis personae were performed by male actors, not without presenting some difficulties. Gustave Cohen recounts, "Le plus étonnant est que, à Mons, en juillet 1501, le rôle de Marie-Magdeleine fut confié au chanoine Maisnard, comme celui d'Eve ailleurs à Colin Rifflart, ce qui, avant la feuille de vigne, ne laisse pas de faire difficulté."¹ Since religious theater was strongly influenced by the Roman Catholic Mass ("on n’a jamais admis que des femmes se mêlissent directement à

la célébration du culte"), it was consequently, and in general, an all-male domain. Probably the first appearance of an actress in a mystère was in the Jeu de Sainte Catherine in Metz in 1468. She was about 18 years old and was given a respectable 2,300 lines. According to Cohen, actresses were used much less frequently in Northern France, "ou peut-être nous restent-elles simplement inconnues, à cause de

2. Gustave Cohen, Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1951), 206. Cf. Cohen’s Le livre de conduite du régisseur et le compte des dépenses pour le mystère de la Passion joué à Mons en 1501 (Paris: ISTRA, 1925), xcix-ciii. In that book he says, "D’une façon générale, on peut affirmer que les rôles de femmes étaient tenus par des hommes, je suppose des jeunes gens. Cela tient certainement aux origines liturgiques des mystères; la femme, considérée de tout temps et par toutes les religions comme un être impur, ne saurait prendre une part active aux rites; c’est la seule raison de son exclusion du théâtre médiéval comme du théâtre antique. Mais, parce que, en 1501, nous sommes éloignés de plus de quatre siècles du moment où le drame naissait au pied des autels, la règle souffre quelques exceptions, et Waudru, fille [de] Jorge de le Nerle, se voit confier le personnage de MARIE À XIII ANS (pp. 53,55) et peut-être celui de FLORENCE-SALOMÉ (p. 189) et de VICTORIA, IIIIe fille de Sion (p. 356), à moins qu’il ne s’agisse dans ce dernier cas de Waudru Rogerie, qui joue ELDERGONDE, fille de la Cananée (p. 183). Signalons encore qu’à la fille [de] George de le Motte est confié le rôle de MARIA DE VII ANS (p. 48)"

l'insuffisance des documents que nous possédons."  

However, in the Valenciennes presentation of the Passion the role of the Virgin Mary was played by a young woman, Jeannette Caraheu, while her friends, Jeannotte Watiez, Jennette Tartelette, Cécile Gerard, Cole Labequin, were secondary figures and therefore not included in the list of regular and principal actors.  

Such theatrical exclusivism began to diminish toward the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th centuries.  

Whomever was chosen to speak the lines written for female personae, the sex of the individual was/is not crucial; rather, it is the audience and the "theater" created jointly by it and the words of the playwright. Henri Rey-Flaud purports, "... il n'y a pas véritablement de spectacle mais bien au contraire,  

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7. Cohen claims that in the Mystère des Trois Doms (1508), "les rôles de femmes furent tenus par des femmes" (Histoire, 206).
création collective [emphasis mine], dans laquelle chacun avait sa part du 'jeu' dramatique. In his book Pour une dramaturgie du Moyen Age, Rey-Flaud affirms the spectator's active participation in the drama that unfolds in front of and around him/her: "Dans un théâtre du moyen âge le spectateur est actif: c'est lui qui crée l'espace et le temps à chaque moment de l'action." Whether a female or male represents the dramatis persona of the Biblical account of the Passion, the interaction between the parole and the spectator is paramount.

8. Le cercle magique: Essai sur le théâtre en rond à la fin du Moyen Age (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), 293. Here he also defines the very purpose of the mystères: 1) un acte de la foi; 2) une affirmation de la foi; 3) une fête de la foi (280).


10. "To understand how such meaning is made in the theatre we must distinguish between what happens on the stage and what happens in the imagination of the spectator. He takes from the detail of the scene (Footnote continues on next page)
During the dramatic presentation, the spectator is given the opportunity to hear the "dramatic" voice of various women involved in the events surrounding the Passion of Christ. Dramatic information concerning these ahistorical characters is conveyed by the various "systems" involved (i.e., staging, gesture, discourse). Speaking of Old English authors in particular, Donald Bzdyl says that they "used prayers in several ways to create a distinct character." The three methods delineated by Bzdyl were, for these authors, 1) to exaggerate one aspect of the prayer, 2) to have prayer reveal a special virtue in the one praying, and 3) to have prayer provide insight into a character's emotional state at a specific point in the

(Footnote continued from previous page)

impressions that are sown and ripened in the mind. These impressions may be independent of what the character on the stage is doing: the significance of what he is doing is what only the audience may know," John L. Styan, The Elements of Drama (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), 49.


narrative.\textsuperscript{13} Of great importance is the way in which the various playwrights convey such information via a medium of internal disclosure. Manfred Pfister comments:

\begin{quote}
All explicit-figural characterisation techniques are verbal. They may be divided into two categories; the self-commentary, in which a figure functions simultaneously as both the subject and the object of information transmission, and the outside commentary, in which the subject of the information transmitted is not identical with the object. (. . .)

In turn, self-commentaries must be divided up into those that are monological and those that are dialogical since each of these two types of explicit self-characterisation possesses a different level of credibility.\textsuperscript{14}

What do the monologic and dialogic\textsuperscript{15} prayers (the medium I have chosen to examine) of these female
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 142. He also mentions the one governing principle in literary or dramatic prayer: through prayer "... man's heart is stimulated and turned to God" (139). Would not effective use of female prayer and prayer language facilitate the identification of female spectators with the dramatis persona?

\textsuperscript{14} Pfister, \textit{The Theory and Analysis of Drama}, 184.

\textsuperscript{15} I define a dialogic prayer as one that is part of a dialogue between a supplicant and prayer object, such as Eve and God, or Magdalene and Christ. Such a distinction is necessary in religious theater where the object of prayer is frequently visible on stage simultaneously with those that pray.
characters display, not only about themselves, but about the way in which the process of self-divulgence evolves from the earliest to the latest? To help answer these questions, I will explore the dramatic prayers of Eve (Adam’s wife, see Chapter 1) and of Mary Magdalene.

The Prayers of Eve

Aside from the Jeu d'Adam (ca. 1150), not much of what Eve says, or prays, is revealed in medieval religious drama until the passions of the fourteenth century and later. Her name is frequently mentioned in the chansons de geste within the Biblical-creed-narrative prayers, especially in those verses that speak of the Fall and subsequent banishment of humankind from the Garden of Eden. A few examples of


references from the *chansons de geste* include: Adam formas et puis Evain sa per (*Couronnement de Louis* [1170], v. 698); Adam fëis de terre et de limon / Et sa moillier, Evain nos l’apelon, / Tot paradis lor meïs a bandon / Fors d’un pomier dont lor fëis le don / Puis en mengierent ne lor fist se mal non (*Girart de Vienne* [ca. 1240], vv. 5686–90); Tout lor abandonastes par le vostre commant, / Fors le fruit d’un pumier dont ne fuissent goustant; / Eve l’en fist mengier par le dit du serpent (*Fierabras* [ca. 1250], vv. 922–24); Tot lor abandonastes fors i. fruit solement, / Mais Eve en

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(Footnote continued from previous page)


menja, ce fu dolor mult grant, / Par engin del dyable
en fist manger Adant (Gui de Bourgogne [ca. 1270], vv. 2638-39). 21

One of the first examples of prayers by Eve within the corpus of Passion dramaturgy is found in the Passion Ste-Geneviève (1360). 22 The occasion for the prayer is the Harrowing of Hell. 23 Upon arriving and smashing down the gates of Hell, Christ s'adresse à tous les saints qui sortent de l'Enfer (narrative lines between vv. 4077-78): Venez a moy, beneiré! / Venez a moy! J'ay endure / La mort pour vostre delivrance / Mes sains, qui avez ma sanblance, / Yssez hors trestuit de cest estre! (vv. 4078-82). Les derniers à sortir sont Adam et Eve, premières victimes de Satan (narrative lines between vv. 4082-83). Here the personae of Adam and Eve are identified as the first victims. The first


23. See Chapter 1, above.
victims (albeit, victims of their own misdeed) are the last to leave their subterranean abode.

Once the identity of Eve's persona has been established, along with that of her husband, prayers begin to be formulated in response to Christ's invitation to the long-awaited liberation from Hell. In the Passion Ste-Geneviève (1360), as if to establish a sense of order (perhaps "creative order", i.e. the order in which they were created in the beginning), Adam prays first, then Eve (vv. 4101-8):

Tres doulz Dieu qui nous en menez,
J'ë pechë trop vilainement
Contre vostre commandement
Ou fait de desobeïssance.
Souffert en avez penitance
Jusqu a la mort, ce sçay je bien.
Vous m'avez pour mal donné bien!
Jhesu Crist, je vous en merci!

Unlike Adam, who devotes only two lines (vv. 4092-93) to the actual confession of his sin, Eve devotes five (vv. 4102-6) of her eight-line prayer to an admission of guilt and a recounting of penalty (vv. 4105-6). This octosyllabic prayer poem, with rhyming couplets, begins and ends with a direct address to Jesus, identified as God. It ends on a note of praise to Him.

for having exchanged her evil for good (i.e., deliverance from torment [vous m'avez pour mal donné bien!, v. 4107]). It is the prayer and its mention of the pêché (v. 4102), the desobeissance (v. 4105), in combination with the narrative directions identifying the last couple to leave Hell as Adam and Eve, that allow Eve to become the dramatic allusion to the final resting place of guilt for the Fall of humankind. Eve provides insight into her emotional state, thus creating a distinct character.25 As the last ones to exit Hell (if the order of the scenic indications is followed on the stage, i.e., les derniers à sortir [between vv. 4082-83]), Eve is identified as the principle reason for the Incarnation of Christ and His Passion.

The author of the Passion d'Arras (1414)26 further notes in his version of the aforementioned scene (in a narrative passage between verses 21045-46): Adonc quant ilz sont hors Adam et sequelle se mettent en

Following Adam's French prayer, Jesus responds (vv. 21056-60), the Archangel Michael worships Christ (21061-64), St. John praises Christ (vv. 21065-68), Gabriel worships (vv. 21069-74), Michael praises (21075-77) and is joined in song by a chorus of angels (narrative line between vv. 21077-78): Adonc chantent les angles et rendent graces a Dieu pour le salut d'humain linage.27 With the singing of angels waning, or perhaps continuing for background effect, Eve prays (vv. 21078-21091):

Ha! Dieu fontaine de pitié,28
De douceur et d'humilité,
Plain de carité et d'amour,
Je vous remercy à mon tour
Quant nous jettes de la prison
Ou nous avons longue saison
Souffert paire, sire, mercy,
Je connois que ce fu par my,

27. This is significant in view of Mercadé's skill and fondness of music and its use in his drama. Cf. Cohen, Le livre de conduite du régisser, XCVI-XCIX.

Vo commandement trespassay  
Quant du fruit del arbre mengay  
Que vous nous aviez defendu.  
O sire tout puissant Jhesu,  
Pour tant que je desobey,  
De tout mon cuer je vous mercy.  

With candor, Eve confesses (je congnois, v. 21085) that it is she that is responsible for the past four thousand years of banishment in Hell (ce fu par my, v. 21085; je desobey, v. 21090). She plainly explains to the viewing audience exactly what the original act of disobedience was (du fruit del arbre mengay, v. 21087). Note that, in verse 21080, Eve expresses herself to her Deliverer a mon tour. She thus acknowledges a societal order that must ironically be obeyed. Very submissively, Eve confesses that she is responsible for her weakness, which she contrasts with the strength of Christ (O sire tout puissant Jhesu, v. 21089), after highlighting His submissive qualities in verses 21079-80: de doulceur et d'humilite / plain de carite et d'amour.

In the Passion de Greban (1452),29 the role of Eve is expanded beyond her prayer offered at the Harrowing

Greban, in his search for a more realistic, believable presentation of the passion, deems it crucial to the Passion of Christ to fully present the one event that made the Passion necessary, i.e., the Fall of humankind vicariously through Adam, and through the initial disobedience of Eve. The first enunciation to be examined (actually a part of the Prologue) is that which immediately follows Adam's prayer subsequent to God's sentence of banishment from the Garden of Eden after their act of disobedience (vv. 851-58):

Je suis cause de cest excés, 851
cher espoux, je le congnoy bien:
par moy est pardu nostre bien,
par moy sommes mis en misere,
mes ou nom de Dieu, mon cher frere,
As in the previous prayers, Eve readily admits that she is the reason for the judgment of God (*Je suis cause de cest excés*, v. 851; *par moy*, v. 853-54; *moi indigne*, v. 856), through frequent use of *je* and other references to the Self. This is not only a personal admission of responsibility for her act, but an enumeration of its consequences (*pardu nostre bien*, v. 853; *sommes en misere*, v. 854). Eve's internal musing guides her quest for a reason for her action, the guilt of which she places neither on the Self, nor on some outside entity, but on *fragilité femenyne* (v. 857). Eve seeks to excuse her action by asking her Other (i.e., Adam) to take this feminine trait into consideration (*ung peu considerer*, v. 858) when he himself is seeking a reason and, in doing so, may tend to blame her. She uses this same diversionary device in a portion of her prayer which she prays just prior to her death (vv. 1662-1681):

```
Mes membres s'affoiblissent tous
et sens bien que ma fin s'advance.
Je n'ay mais force ne puissance,
dont je me puisse soustenir;
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a la mort me faut parvenir
briefment par le cours de nature.
Prends pitié de ta creature,
hault roy qui tout prens en ta garde,
et ta grant bonté ne regarde
le vice que je perpetray
quant de celle pomme goustay,
contre ton command, Dieu mon pere.
Ma fragilité considere,
car j’ay trop meffait en cecy;
juge, je te requiers mercy
et a ton vouloir me submès;
ma cause en ta grace je mès
par si que pitié la termine
en tant que la bonté divine
a esté par moy offencee.33

Eve not only asks her husband to take into
consideration her weakness as an inherited feminine
characteristic, but she asks God to do the same (ma
fragilité considere, v. 1674; cf. a ton vouloir me
submès, v. 1677). She elaborates on this fragility
with an objective consideration of her imminent death
(e.g. mes membres s’affoiblissent, v. 1662; par le
cours de nature, v. 1667). Eve labess her sin le vice
(v. 1671), and comments thereon (quand de celle pomme
goustay, v. 1672).

33. Following the death of Eve, l’acteur who is giving
the prologue to the play enjoins the audience to
identify with their premiers peres, thus preparing them
for a more profound and sobering unity with Adam and
Eve during the first day of Greban’s Passion (1452).
They cry out to God from Hell, in punishment for their
sins in the Garden—the sins for which all humankind
must pay.
The occurrence of gender-specific language appears again in a prayer by Eve while in Hell awaiting the birth of Messiah on the first day of the passion (vv. 1796-817):

Doulx Messias, quand sera faitce
la redempcion ou tendons,
et que tant tristes attendons?
Il est bien temps que l’eure viengne:
tres doulx Dieu, de nous te souviengne; 1800
icy languisson en grant peine
qu’a la vision souveraine
ne poons venir ne atteindre;
en tenebres sommes pour plaindre,
livres a desolacion, 1805
sans bien, sans consolation,
se n’est espoir qui nous conforte
qu’enore verrons nous la porte
casser qui nous tient en ces las.
Helas! et quand sera ce? helas! 1810
Cinq mille ans y a que cy sommes
sans lumiere, femmes et hommes,
tenus a desolacion.
O bon Dieu, pren compassion
de nostre griefve perte et dure: 1815
la dilacion trop nous dure;
pourvoyes y quant te plaira.

The mother of the human race identifies those held captive as a result of her sin as femmes et hommes (v. 1812). This development in use of gender-specific language represents a plenary development from that found in the Passion des Jongleurs (1243),34 where there is virtually no mention of the presence of women.

in the place that Christ was about to liberate: Adan
nostre pere le veuz / Si regarda vers ses neveuz / Les
patriaches, les prophetes (vv. 2466-68). Her prayer
continues to expand in vv. 1940-63 of the Passion de
Greban (1452):

O tres souveraine lumiere
qui sans terminer toujours dures
nos peines ennoyans et dures
vueilles regarder en pitié.
Monstre nous signe d’amitié,
le tresor de grace descueuvre,
et ne desprise point ton oeuvre
formee a ta propre samblance.
Je congnois ma povre ignorance;
je congnois que par moy dampnés
sont tous ceulx qui sont d’Adam nés;
par moy ceste perte reçoivent,
par moy paient ce qu’ilz ne doivent,
par moy lamentent sans conduite.
Helas! mon Dieu, je fus seduite
du faulx serpent ambitieux
qui par ses tours malicieux
me fit a la pomme toucher,
dont le gout m’est vendu tant cher
en regrès durs et douloureux.
Ne me soies pas rigoreux,
ma fragilite considere,
et l’arc de Justice amodere
qui si long temps nous est tendu.

Eve’s recognition and acceptance of personal
responsibility is emphasized through repetition: je
congnois (vv. 1948-49); par moy (vv. 1951-53). Eve
also hints at a certain equality of men and women
before the Creator (ton oeuvre, v. 1946; a ta propre
samblance, v. 1947). In addition, as if to provide
cathartic relief, we have the first mention of the
Serpent’s role in the act of disobedience. In this
play Eve prays using the first-person direct object pronoun in combination with the causitive voice (me fit a la pomme toucher, v. 1957; and also le gout m'est vendu, v. 1958; ma fragilité considere, v. 1961) instead of the first-person nominative je. To conclude her prayer, she pleads for moderation of justice based on consideration of gender (ma fragilité considere / et l'arc de Justice amodere, vv. 1961-62), further highlighted by contrasting modifiers such as dures (vv. 1941-42; 1959) and rigoreux (v. 1960).

Though generally the Passion de Troyes (ca. 1490) represents a very close reworking of the Greban’s Passion (1452), there is an interesting prayer passage in the first volume,\(^{35}\) where Eve prays following the death of Adam, just prior to her own physical demise (vv. 3141-56):

```plaintext
Helas, helas! pere haultain, 3141
Console moy par ta clemence;
  tu es de toute bonte plain,
  comme je voy par evidence.
O Eve, par ton insolence 3145
  as causee aux humains la mort,
  dont j'ay au cuer grant desplaisance,
```

35. In the first volume are included events from the Fall in the Garden of Eden to the birth of Christ. The second volume includes events of Christ’s ministry to His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. Volume three consists of the events surrounding the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.
par contriction et remort.
Or est present mon mary mort.
Helas! je suis bien esperdue!
Femme, femme, tu as grant tort
d'avoir telle peine conceue.
Par moy est toute joye perdue,
par moy morrons tous les humains.
Tres doulx Dieu de haulte value,
rejoy jusques a toy mes durs pleins.

As Eve contemplates the goodness of God (de toute bonte plain, v. 3143), she establishes distance between the persona and the Self who committed the act of disobedience in the Garden of Eden by addressing the historical Self, prefaced by an apostrophe (O Eve, par ton insolence, v. 3145). However, she quickly re-establishes the present moment and the atemporal dramatis persona to the point of acknowledging personal responsibility by admission of guilt (j'ay au cueur grant desplaisance / par contriction et remort, v. 3147-48; par moy, vv. 3153-54). The repeated address to the female Self (Femme, femme, tu as grant tort / d'avoir telle peine conceue, vv. 3151-52) not only identifies the dramatis persona as Eve, but serves to displace responsibility on femaleness as the generic source of Evil's conception (telle peine conceue, v. 3152), in both the physical and the spiritual sense. No longer is Eve's act of disobedience solely an act of Self, but of woman: it becomes an act of gender. The effect of this identification is two-fold: to place
responsibility on the female for the Fall (symbolically through Eve), and to demonstrate near the close of the Middle Ages the increasing importance of woman as a source of greatness (albeit, negative in this instance).

Also worthy of note is the change in rhyme scheme from that found in the Greban Passion (1452). Whereas in the latter rhyming couplets are used almost exclusively, here the rhyme is more complex (ababcbccdcddddede). Also, there is a substantively greater emphasis placed on death: mort (v. 3146; 3149), remort (v. 3148), morrons (v. 3154). This stands in stark opposition to conceue (v. 3152), denoting life and beginning (albeit, in this instance, the inception of evil: tele peine, v. 3152). Maurice Accarie writes:

La pensée de la mort a hanté tout le Moyen Age, et l'homme de cette époque a toujours vécu comme s'il allait mourir demain, qu'il espère ou redoute ce passage, qu'il soit pour lui promesse de vie ou crainte de la décomposition charnelle, espérance du salut ou horreur de l'Enfer. (. . .)

Il faut néanmoins admettre que, si les chrétiens redoutent alors la mort, c'est la mort spirituelle du châtiment infernal, non la mort physique de la décomposition
In the Jean Michel's Passion (1486) there is a solitary prayer by Eve found in Addition VII (between vv. 28647-76 of MS. A). The occasion for the prayer is the arrival of Christ at the Harrowing of Hell (vv. 73-80):

Benoist soit la digne ancelle
et le ventre en Dieu conforté
et la bienheuree pucelle
qui si digne fruct a porté!
Bien soit venu l'auctorité
qui de servaige nous delivre,
car par elle est huy presente
le hault bien qui tous nous fait vivre!

The gender of the dramatis persona is made evident here, not by reference to the Self, but by reference to the woman who, rather than being the conceiver of sin, is the mother of the Deliverer, i.e. Mary. Instead of a tirade against herself, as we see in prayers antecedent to this play, we see and hear Eve praise the woman who represents femininity as the bearer of


38. Jodogne, La Passion (Angers 1486), 472-73.
responsibility for good (car par elle est huy présenté / le hault bien qui tous nous fait vivre!, vv. 79-80).

Focus is now placed on the responsibility of woman in the act of deliverance from servitude (qui de servaige nous delivre, v. 78) and the bearer of the authoritative One (l'auctorité, v. 77). As the digné ancelle (v. 73) is never given a specific referent, it is likely that the spectator is capable of seeing Mary as a representative member of a long-suppressed sector of society, i.e. woman. The female persona is now viewed as a source of good, not just evil. Attention is drawn away from group identification to the individual.

In addition to a rhyme scheme different from its predecessors (ababcbcb), the language itself is extremely positive, in contrast to that used before (la bienheuree pucelle, v. 75; qui si digne fruict a porté, v. 76).39 This passage is representative of the evolution of thought within society concerning the role of women: that of binary possibility for both good and evil. This prayer of Eve gives credence to the idea

39. Cf. La Passion de Troyes (ca. 1490): la mort (v. 3146) and grant desplaisance (v. 3147).
that Jean Michel was "... an innovator whose creations portend the individualism and humanism of the coming Renaissance." 40

The Prayers of Mary Magdalene

In contrast to the prayers of Longinus as representative of penitent man, the evolution of Mary Magdalene's role serves as an additional expression of femininity within the context of redemptive history.

Like Eve, Magdalene is frequently referred to in numerous works of medieval French literature; so much so, that she may be considered an archetype of the repentant sinner: a female complement to the archetypal figure of Longinus. A typical example of such an allusion may be found in *Aliscans* (ca. 1150) we read (vv. 7088-96):

```
La Madelaine fesistes le perdon,
Quant ele vint par deseur un leson.
Deseur tes pies mist ses iex a bandon, 7090
Illuec plora par bone entention,
Si les lava entor et environ,
A ses ceveus en fist essuiison;
Apres les oint sans mauvais enchoison
D’un ongement presiëus et molt bon 7095
Qui te rendi saintisme flairison
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41. I will refer to this persona as Magdalene, to avoid confusion with the other Marys common to the passions, as well as other religious literature of the Middle Ages. Also, as her name is often spelled differently in the passions, a standardized reference will facilitate the reader’s task.


Introductory sentences such as *la Madelaine fesistes le perdon* (v. 7088) appear repeatedly in this early literature. It is because of Christ's forgiveness that Magdalene is known, and it is always in connection with this aspect of their relationship that she is portrayed. This facet of Magdalene's personal characterization by dramatists is most vivid in the *Passion d'Arras* (1486). "Au contraire de l'ancienne tradition, qui ne faisait de la mondanité qu'un prélude rapide à la conversion, la fin du Moyen Age la saisit comme une période historique, ayant sa valeur et sa fonction propres dans l'économie du destin magdalenien." It is Jean Michel who most uniquely

44. E.g., Girart de Vienne, v. 5704; Gui de Bourgogne, v. 2558.

45. It is Gustave Cohen's claim that Greban's innovation, insofar as the role of Magdalene is concerned, is that she becomes a personal comforter to the *Mater dolorosa*, whereas Michel's innovation lies in the fact that he develops Magdalene through use of other characters (especially her suitor, Rodigon, and her two suivantes, Pasiphee and Perusine) in the *château de Magdala* (Études d'histoire, 217; 220). Cf. Edelgard DuBruck, "The Perception of Evil in Jean Michel's Mystère de la Passion (1486)," *Michigan Academician* 15 (1983): 255.

and thoroughly develops the character of this repentant female, and subsequently provides a detailed cadre for the expression of femininity in male-authored literature.

Due to the wide variety of situations centered around the life, conversion and discipleship of Magdalene, and the concomitant number of prayer occurrences, the prayers of her persona examined in this chapter are those either immediately preceding or immediately following her initial conversion experience, i.e., the moment when Christ forgives her many sins after she washes His feet in the home of Simon.47 Following is Königson's perception of how

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47. The direct reference to Magdalene in the canonical Scriptures is found in Luke 8:2: "With him went the Twelve, as well as certain women who had been cured of evil spirits and ailments: Mary surnamed the Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out . . .". In the passions she is exclusively associated with the woman who, in repentance for a sinful life, washed Christ's feet with her tears, then dried them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50). However, it appears this association is purely legendary. The commentators of the New Jerusalem Bible claim there is no necessary connection between the two individuals or incidents. Concerning the incident found in chapter seven of Luke's account, they contend, "There is no reason to identify the sinful woman with Mary of Magdala, 8:2, and still less with Mary, sister of Martha, 10:39; Jn

(Footnote continues on next page)
In the Passion de Ste-Geneviève (1360), Magdalene arrives at the home of Simon and pleads with the valet to allow her to see the Christ (vv. 168-201; 210-13). Once inside, she addresses herself directly to Christ

(Footnote continued from previous page)


in a dramatic prayer dialogue (vv. 216-27): 49

Beau doulez pere, car m'entendez;
Je vien a vous mercy crier
De mes pechiez, et depreier.
Donner m'en veilliez penitence,
Car j'ay bien bonne repentance!
Le fez de mez pechiez m'esmaie.
Sire, combien que meffait aie,
Pardon demant devotement.
De cest precieux oignement
Le chef, le corps je vous veile oindre.
De bonne volante, sanz faindre,
De moy toute vous faiz hommage. 50

After anointing His head with an ointment upon
which she places great value (de cest precieux
oignement, v. 224), and washing His feet, drying them

49. I refer to this as a dialogic prayer due to the
imminently visible presence of the prayer Object (i.e.,
Christ) on stage during the prayer. The expectation of
a response on the part of the Object is heightened for
the audience, if not demanded.

50. The commentators of the New Jerusalem Bible do not
think the anointing of Christ's head in Matthew 26:6-
13, from which this passage apparently was taken by the
playwright, is in any way linked with the anointing
passage in Luke 7:36-50. "This episode [referring to
the Luke 7 anointing, insert mine] is not the same as
the anointing of the Lord's head at Bethany. Mt 26:6-
13 and par., although that incident may well have
influenced some of the details of the narrative here"
(New Jerusalem Bible, 149). In either case, there is
no connection with either incident, or with Magdalene
(149).
with her hair,\textsuperscript{51} which is evidence of the humble submission of the Self to Christ (vv. 228-88),\textsuperscript{52} Magdalene is praised by Christ for her action in front of Simon and is subsequently forgiven for her sins. In return, she prays a prayer of response and gratitude (vv. 290-298):

\begin{verbatim}
Beau sire, sy a grant avoir
Que vous m'avez ycy donne,
Quant mez pechiez sont pardonne.
Je vous rend graces humblement,
Que autre richesse ne demant.

Lors chante Super quod chorus vatun

Dieu le tout puissans,
De tout bien congoiissans
M'a pour .i. petit don
Rendu grant guerre don.
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{51} This is an even more poignant act in that some playwrights spend a great deal of time having Magdalene fix her hair and apply her make-up with great care and detail. E.g., \textit{La Passion d'Angers} (1486), vv. 8469-9717.

\textsuperscript{52} This represents a synthesis of Matthew's (Mt. 26:6-13) anointing incident and that found in the Gospel of Luke (7:36-50).
Magdalene, named after the wealthy estate where she lived (Magdala), is so overwhelmed by Christ's forgiveness of all her wickedness that she readily equates its acquisition with great personal gain. She is now content (que autre richesse ne demant, v. 294). Her modus operandi is one of exchange. She is surprised at the exchange she has received for her simple act of worship and anointing (m'a pour .i. petit don / rendu grant guerredon, vv. 297-98). In light of what Christ has done for her (i.e., pardoning her sins), her esteem for material wealth and emphasis on personal beauty have been put into humble perspective.


54. E.g., vv. 219-20: Donner m'en veilliez penitence / car j'ay bien bonne repentance! For her repentance, Magdalene expects something in return. Cf. vv. 292-93; 297-98. One reason audiences were so interested in Magdalene is also because of her association with the sin of prostitution (=exchange). See Edelgard DuBruck, "Changes of Taste and Audience Expectation," 70-71.
The *Passion de Biard* (1470) displays an interesting development in Magdalene’s prayer as she washes Christ’s feet (vv. 148-197) during the Last Supper.56


56. Here, as in other passions, the playwright is confusing the anointing of Christ by Magdalene with other such events, by other people, on occasions prior to the Last Supper with His disciples. The importance of the event does not lie in its faithful historicity, but rather in the event per se (regardless of historical errors, or even unfaithfulness to the canon of Scripture, on which these plays are based).
En pechier et ordure,
Je te prie doucement
Qu'ayes de moy cure.

Sire, enten mon plaint,
Que tant est en doubtance!
O vraye Dieu souvraint,
De mes pechiers ayt repentence!

Dieu en qui je croy,
En qui tout bien s'acorde,
Ayes mercy de moy,
Par ta misericorde!

Syre Dieu, de mon corps
Ayt longtemps pechiers;
Tu es misericors,
Ayes de moy pitié!

Dieu, entent mon champs
Et aussi ma clamour!
Ne me aîst point?
Je te requier pardon,
Syre Dieu debonnayre,
J'ay pechier a abandon.
Vous piez je laveray
Des larmes que ploré j'ay.

Après les necteyra
De mes blont cheveulx,
Doucement les oindra
D'oingnement precieulx.

The poetic structure of this prayer is likely to strike
the reader, especially when reading the passions in
chronological sequence. The versification and rhyme
scheme are much more diversified than in previous
works. The prayer begins with a stanza of nine lines
of octosyllabic rhymed couplets ([a]bbccdde), followed
by six quatrains (abab), most lines of six syllables
The six
sixains are then followed by a huitain (abcdedff), with
alternating lines of five and six syllables, ending
with a quatraine of six-syllable verses (abab). Very
effective use is made of the huitain (vv. 186-193),
whose erratic rhyme scheme and interlacing
syllabification serve to intensify the already
heightened emotion of the penitent Magdalene.

Immediately following the prayer, Christ forgives
her and commands her to not sin henceforth (vv. 218-
21): Puis se tourna vers Magdelene, De grant doleur
et contriction plainne; Magdelene, leve toy sus! D'oure en avant ne peche plus. With gratitude,
Magdalene prays in conclusion (vv. 224-29):

Treschier seigneur, plain de grand bonté,
Je feray vostre volenter. 225
D'oure en avant obeïra,
Jamais ne vous courroucerà.
Sire, en quelque lieu que tu soye, 228
Sen pechier fere tiendray ta voye.

The similarity between this prayer and that of Longinus
subsequent to his healing and forgiveness must not be

57. I suggest the following rationale: verse 177, des mes pechiers ayt repentence, is almost the virtual
center of the prayer monologue and it contains the very
heart of Magdalene's prayer (i.e., a plea for pardon of
sin).
Confessing the Messiah to be her Saviour, Magdalene now pledges to do what He has asked of her (d'ouëre en avant obeïra / jamais ne vous courroucera, vv. 226-27), going even further by offering to become a disciple, in a very literal and practical sense (en quelque lieu que tu soye / tiendray ta voye, vv. 228-29). Unlike the prayers of men—even those that mention an allegiance to their newly-confessed Lord—this prayer overtly exposes the feminine gender of its vessel in its pledge to follow, with its emphasis on obedience.

In the Passion of Arnoul Greban (1452) the role given to Magdalene is greatly embellished. As she arrives at the home of Simon to anoint Christ and plead for the pardon of her sins, she enters into a rather lengthy dramatic monologue, which serves to unveil the character of Magdalene. I will reproduce this monologic "prayer" here (vv. 13872-931) for the sake of introduction to the later passions, and I will only indicate substantive developments in subsequent ones.

such as in the *Passion d'Auvergne* (1477)\(^{59}\) and the *Passion d'Angers* (1486). In Greban's *Passion* we read:

```
Helas! or suis je parvenue 13872
a l'ostel que tant desiroie,
e et parçois mon bien et ma joie
le recours de ma grant destresse,
e et si n'ay cuer ne hardiesse
de lui declairer mon affaire.
Povre fame, que dois tu faire?
seras tu hardie d'entrer
et ta maladie montrer
a cil qui en est le vray mire?
Entrer! comment l'as osé dire?
pecherresse desordonnee,
a tout mal faire habandonnee,
se doit elle trouver en place
devant tant digne et sainte face
comme le benoit filz de Dieu?
suis je digne d'occuper lieu
devant le tresor de tous biens,
qui suis puante comme fiens
par peché qui ainsi m'attourne?
c'est mon meilleur que je retourne.
Retourner! femme, que dis tu?
cueur vide de toute vertu,
qu'est il de ta bouche sailly?
arus tu donc le cuer failly?
veulz tu faire ta demourance
au chasteau de desesperance?
veulz tu prendre ta mansion
au puteau de perdicion?
mourras tu de soif asservye
devant la fontaine de vie?
Nennil, il n'yras pas ains:
tu l'iras requerre mercy
franchement, puisque tu l'as dit,
car oncques il ne l'escondit
a cuer confes et repentant;
helas! et je me repens tant
qu'a mal ay volu consentir!
Ne tendra il qu'au repentir?
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\(^{59}\) La *Passion d'Auvergne*, ed. Graham Runnalls (Geneva: Droz, 1982).
ha! si fera, car vecz cy honte
et paour qui si fort m'affronte
qu'a peu qu'ilz ne me font retraire.
J'ay deux poins de sorte contraire:
l'ung est que se j'entre dedens
esclandrir pourray plusieurs gens
et le saint homme qui y dine,
et aussi que j'en suis indigne;
et d'autre part se je remain,
mes pechés vilz et trop grevains
me demourtont, et en fin mort
eternelle, qui me remort.
Le meilleur sens que je y voie
c'est de tenir moyenne voie:
j'entreray dedens voirement
mes ce sera secretement,
et ne seray pas au dessus,
mes aux piez du tres doulx Jhesus
m'iray geter tout en pleurant,
humblement mercy requerant
du meffait qui me griefve moult.

Magdalene's dramatic monologue resembles a prayer in
that she vacillates between a first-person and second-
person dialogic discourse. Note that in verses 13872-
77 she addresses herself as _je_, but in verses 13878-81
and again in verses 13893-907, she, as if in a state of
total objectivity with toward the Self, addresses
herself as _fame_ (vv. 13877; 13803) and frequently in
the second-person singular _tu_.

60. This technique is typical of scholasticism and goes
back to Abelard (early 12th century). All of Chrétien
de Troyes monologues are based on this principle. Cf.
the manner in which Lavine argues concerning her love

(Footnote continues on next page)
a woman who is indecisive, faced with two facets of a very important decision (j'ay deux poins de sorte contraire, v. 13914): should she risk scandalizing Christ in front of His friends (vv. 13915-18) or should she risk not obtaining what she has come for (i.e., forgiveness of sins by the Son of God, vv. 13919-22)? She decides on a middle course (moyenne voie, v. 13924): she will go in secretly and wash Christ's feet under the table where He is seated at dinner (vv. 13925-31).

After carrying out her plan of washing Christ's feet in secret humility, Magdalene's sins are forgiven by the Saviour: Femme, pars toy et va en paix / pardonnes te sont tes meffais / et remis, je te le denonce (vv. 14008-10), upon which she offers a prayer of thanksgiving (vv. 14019-32):

Je vous remercy humblement, sire, de la misericorde qui par vostre doulceur s'accorde que grace me soit departie, et des maintenant je vous prie que bien souvent nous venez voir:

(Footnote continued from previous page)

corps et biens et tout nostre avoir pour vous servir obliyeron, Marthe, ma seur, et Lazaron, mon frere, qui ne vous het pas; logis avons de grant compas et richesse assés, Dieu mercy; encore serons plus enrichy de vostre visitacion.

The pledge of service (cf. the prayer in the Passion de Biard [1470], above) is expanded to include an invitation for Christ to visit in her home. Magdalene identifies herself as related to persons already known and respected of Christ, Martha and Lazarus. To coax Christ into accepting her invitation, as if her sense of self-worth has not yet returned following her very humble act of washing Christ's feet beneath the table, and drying them with her hair, she describes their home as de grant compas (v. 14029) and their material state as richesse (v. 14030), yet simultaneously acknowledging lack. Christ's visit would increase her personal sense of self-worth (enrichy / de vostre visitacion, v. 14032).


Magdalene, in this prayer found in Greban's Passion (1452), recounts the will of one woman in her attempt to find personal contentment through forgiveness of a sordid past. Her will is manifest in her reasoning to find a way to get to the source of her solution, i.e. Christ. In the Passion d'Auvergne (1477) Magdalene is portrayed quite differently. Rather than salvation coming as a result of will on the part of the supplicant, it is rather an act of grace on the part of God. Her prayer of response (vv. 1690-97) follows:

Saulveur, a quy me suis donnee, 1690
je vous rans graces et mercy.
Onques ne fiz melheur journee que d'estre venue ycy.
Dieu vous sault, souverain raby;
corps et biens je suis toute vostre. 1695
Mon frere, Lazer, est vostre amy;
je vous supply que soyés le nostre.

In this prayer, Magdalene refers to Christ as the Saulveur (v. 1690) and souverain raby (v. 1694). As in Greban's prayer, Magdalene pledges her unswerving allegiance to Christ (corps et biens je suis toute vostre, v. 1695). She, as in Greban's Passion,

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63. Cf. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge, 181-86, and his discussion of the dual role of grace and volonté in the conversion of Magdalene.
mentions Lazarus as her brother, who is Christ's friend (vostre amy, v. 1696). As a woman, Magdalene cannot ask Christ to be her friend, especially in light of her past (i.e., prostitution). Rather, she invites Christ to be her friend by inviting Him to be her and Lazarus's mutual friend (je vous supply que soyés le nostre, v. 1697).

The most pronounced evolution in the prayers of Magdalene are those found in the passion by Jean Michel (1486). "... On peut tout aussi bien saisir la Passion d'Angers comme un point d'aboutissement, le signe de la reconnaissance enfin acquise du monde et de l'homme." The prayer that immediately follows her conversion to Christ is referred to in the Angers Passion (1486) as the conversion de la Magdaleine. Aside from its obvious growth in number of verses and in the extent of its content, there are other important structural developments. The versification and rhyme

64. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 363.

65. This is the name given this dramatic monologue by the author in the text (narrative line between vv. 12265-66).
are elaborate. The confession itself (vv. 12082-193) consists mainly of 16-line stanzas, each beginning with six octosyllabic verses, followed by two groups of five lines alternating three- and two-line intra-stanzaic groupings (multiples of six) of alternating eight-syllable and six-syllable verses. Within the first six lines of each stanza the rhyme is aabaab, followed by ccc/cd/ccc/cd. It is interesting to consider the possible symbolism of such poetics. Cirlot contends that the number six is symbolic of the human soul, appropriate in this prayer of confession.

66. See Omer Jodogne’s introduction to Le Mystère de la Passion de Jean Michel (Angers 1486), especially his thorough treatment of Jean Michel’s use of a diversified poetic structure (xcix-cix).


(Footnote continues on next page)
Of the number six, Chevalier and Gheerbrant say it symbolizes as a mark of opposition between creator and created. "Cette opposition n'est pas nécessairement de contradiction; elle peut marquer une simple distinction, mais qui sera la source de toutes les ambivalences du six: il réunit en effet deux complexes d'activités ternaires." More interesting is a consideration of the multiples of six (three and two). The number two is a symbol of opposition, conflict, reflection. "Il est le chiffre de toutes les ambivalences et des dédoublements; ... il désigne le principe féminin," whereas the number three symbolizes spiritual and intellectual order in humanity

(Footnote continued from previous page)

singulièrement le un et le trois,— parce qu'indivisibles et donc incorruptibles, sont symboles de pureté et de perfection, ils connotent volontiers le bien, l'éternel et le divin (15).


69. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, Dictionnaire des symboles: "Et parmi ses redoutables ambivalences, il peut être le germe d'une évolution créatrice aussi bien que d'une involution désastreuse. Le nombre deux symbolise le dualisme, sur lequel repose toute dialectique; ... un antagonisme, qui de latent devient manifeste; une rivalité . . ." (286).
and in the cosmos. Magdalene is herself a symbol of fallen, despairing humanity coming to terms with ambivalence: a symbol of the human struggle. She is a human soul in search of order. Her entire soliloquy is a testimony to her attempts to reorder her existence following a crisis spiritual experience.

Perhaps the most striking component of the prayer is, in addition to Magdalene’s acknowledgement of guilt, a detailed listing and confession of the sins. "Le mea culpa se termine par une Confession des cinq sens de Nature où Marie-Madelaine, comme elle a détruit un à un les sept péchés à l’aide des sept vertus, rectifie un à un les sens corporels, les détournant de leur vocation charnelle pour les faire servir à la pénitence et à la piété." The actor/speaker in fact "merges with this persona" through the medium of prayer.

70. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, Dictionnaire des symboles, 772.
71. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 220.
What follows is the monologic confession of Magdalene, divided into seven parts, each having to do with a different sin (vv. 12082-193), followed by the confession of the five senses (vv. 12194-253), each detailing acts of self-imposed penitence to rectify her past wrongdoings:73

Confession du peché d'orgueil:
Premier, je congnoys qu'en orgueil ay toujours eslevé mon vueil, voulant dominer en tout lieu, dont j'ay present tristesse et dueil et en pleure de cuer et d'oeul, en me humiliant devant Dieu. J'ay este mondaine, pertinance et vaine, pompeuse et haultaine et de toute jactance pleine, fiere et presumptueuse. Or suis je certaine que telle vie maine a damnable peine: mais estre vueil humble et humaine a tous doulce et gracieuse.

du peché d'ire
Bouche ne sgaroit assés dire le courroux et la rage de ire qui m'a fait appeter vengeance. Las, j'en suis des pires la pire et est bien temps que j'en souppire et que j'endure en pacience. En contumelie, rixe, blaphemye

73. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 182: " Parmi les Passions et les Mystères français, dont le caractère propre est de rencontrer une Madeleine déjà convertie, seules les oeuvres d'Arras et d'Auvergne avaient traité cet épisode. " Cf. La Passion d'Arras (1414), vv. 10207-10228; La Passion d'Auvergne (1477), vv. 1690-97.
ay dit infamye
a chascun, amy ou amye,
par ma despite fureur.
Mais mon Dieu supplye
que soye assimplye,
en tous lieux remplye
de actrempance et acomplye
de pacience en mon cueur.
  du peché de paresse:
Oysiveté, mere des vices,
m'a induyte a toutes malices
sans quelques vertus adquerir.
Mes les negligences trop nices
veul laisser et les benefices
de Dieu diligamment querir.
Ma crasse ignorance,
tyede nonchaillance,
du bien l'ombliance
et puis l'ennuy de bienvueillance
m'ont gardee de bien faire:
dont j'ay desplaisance
et en diligence
et perseverance
feray bien selon ma puissance,
pour a mon Dieu complaire.
  du peché d'envye:
J'ay esté si pleine d'envye
que je ne voulu en ma vie
aultruy veoir en prosperité:
donc me desplaist de ma follye
et mon despit cueur amollye,
meue de fraternelle amytie
Par detraction,
sursurracion,
simulacion,
j'ay conceu indignacion
a veoir aultry prosperer;
mais dilection,
gratulacion,
excusacion
d'aultruy mal et compassion
font mon envye moderer.
  du peché de luxure:
Ja n'est besoiing que je recense
l'orde luxure tant intense
qui a toute honte me livre.
Las, je m'en repens de l'offence,
requerant la haute clemence
que je puisse en chasteté vivre.
Humaine nature,
qui se desnature
par ordre luxure,
commence tant d'espèces d'ordure
qu'elle vit comme une bête.
Las, j'ay mis ma cure
en mainte laydure:
mais mon Dieu j'ajure
qu'en continence chaste et pure
vivray désormais honnête.

du péché de gloutonnie:
Le superflu nourrissement,
que j'ay pris curieusement,
mais Dieu me doint si sobrement
me nourrir que finalement
puisse avoir l'éternelle vie!
Par ma friandie
et castrimerie
me suis trop emplie
sans ordre et mesure en ma vie,
en excessive despence;
mais [ma] chair polye,
tendrement nourrie,
ay tant enhaye
que par jeune sera matyé
en sobresse et en abstinence.

du péché d'avarice:
Si j'ay désiré biens mondains,
moult appetés mais trop soudains
et y ay trop mis mon plaisir,
desormais je estendray mes mains
aux povres indigens humains.
Pour satisfaire a mon désir,
contractz usuraires,
exessifz salaires,
fauder populaire,
retenir gaing de mercenaire
m'ont faict amasser richesse;
mais de chere hylaire,
liberal affaire
et don voluntaire,
mettray peine de satisfaire
en liberale largesse.

Confession des cinq sens de Nature:
Helas, or fusse ay je enfouye
ou en si lointain pays fouye
que jamais ne fusse congnue!
Onques je ne prestay l'ouye
qu'a ouyr ou estre ouye
pour estre de plaisir repeue.
Puis après, j'ay presté ma veue
a folz regards comme impourve.
185
de regards humbles et piteux.
Et puis par odeur tant deceue
que j'ay toute ma plaisance eue
a sentir balmes precieux.
J'ay gouste morceaux savoureux
et parle langaiges oyseux
dont j'ay par ma langue offence.
J'ay touche aux tactz curieux
et, en tous objectz vicieux,
j'ay par mes cinq sens offence.
Satisfacion en g e n e r a l ;
Las, comme sera compense
le mal que j'ay faict et pense
envers Dieu, pour luy satisfaire?
De sa grace, m'a dispence
pardon et a ja commence:
ne me reste plus qu'a bien faire.
Satisfaction en p articulier:
Si j'ay prins plaisir a ouyr
divers sons pour me resjouyr,
je m'en repens de cueur contrict.
Tous telz folz delictz veul fouyr
et de rien ne veul plus jouyr;
fbrs de lamenter il souffist.
Satisfacion de la v e u e ;
Ha, mes yeulx, qui vos folz regards
aves ga et la tant espars
en voulant estre regardee,
ploures, ploures de toutes pars;
souppirs et larmes je depars
tant que terre en est arousee.
74
Satisfacion de l'oudeur:

12205

12210

12215

12220

12225

74.
"Madeleine sera toute sa vie poursuivie par les
parfums:
ils sont sa marque, son ornement
distinctif, son attribut, et l'art represente toujours
la sainte portant le vase des onguents.
Mondaine, elle
utilise les parfums pour satisfaire sa coquetterie;
convertie, elle en oint Jesus chez Simon; elue de la
Resurrection, elle les apporte au Sepulcre" (Accarie,
Le theatre sacre de la fin du Moyen A g e , 157).
Emile
Male, in L'art r e l k i e u x du XIIe au XVIIle siecle
(Paris:
Armand Colin, 1945) purports, "Les tableaux,
(Footnote continues on next page)


Pour satisfaire de l'odeur
ou mon nez a prins son ardeur,
qui tout mondain plaisir procure,
je ne veul plus fleurer que horreur,
sentant pour mes grefz maulx doleur,
et envers Dieu mettre ma cure.

Satisfacion du goust:
Langue lecheresse et maudite,
detracteresse et interdicte,
cut tant de peches sont escrips,
jamais vers Dieu ne seras quit
s'en piteux regrez ne t'aquite
et en souppirs et devotz cris.

Satisfacion du tact:
Povre Magdaleine, comment
muras tu ton fol touchement
en vertus ou tout bien s'acorde?
Jesus serviray humblement
et a genoulx devotement
je luy requiers misericorde.
Sept dyables avoye en mon corps,
enemys de tous bons accords,
pueit estre ou une legion:
mais Jesus, par ses bons record,
les a huy jectes tous dehors
et m'a donne remission.

Exhortacion aux pecheurs obstinés:
O cueurs en peches endormis,
regardes ou vous estes mis
et le danger ou peche maine!
Convertissés vous, mes amys,

(Footnote continued from previous page)

les vitraux, les miniatures, les retables nous offrent sans cesse l'image de ce qu'on voyait au théâtre"  (102). Also, in L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge (Paris: Armand Colin, 1908), Male makes the point that corollation between the arts and the theater should not be thought of as unusual, as not only did artists attend mystères, they collaborated with playwrights in their production (42). Cf. Henri Rey-Flaud, Le cercle magique, 267 (in reference to the relationship between the arts and theater): " .. il y a eu osmose entre tous ces arts qui puisaient à un fonds commun."
et voyés les biens qu'a promis
le doux Jesus a Magdaleine!
Venés a la douce fontaine!
Delaissés vostre pensee vaine
et plourés en ferme esperance!
Requerés la grace haultaine,
faisans penitence certaine,
et vous trouverés allegiance.

Conclusion de la conversion de la Magdaleine:
Ha, mondaine, habis dissolus,
tant coxinqués et pollus,
sans estre de moy plus voulus;
j'en quicte la mondanité.
Il nous faut en humilité
prendre habis de simplicité
et devers ma seur retourner.

The spectator is given opportunity to see and hear
the internal reasoning of Magdalene by medium of this
prayer monologue and its highly revelatory language.
Magdalene has been converted, touched deeply by the
grace of God in Christ. The grace of God is a
prominent theme by way of contrast—a differentiation
between the former and the present life. Thus the
importance of personal morality and character is
enhanced within the drama itself. Accarie, writing of
the predominant role of grace in Magdalene's
conversion, revealed by her subsequent parole and
geste, purports:

"[M]ais peu à peu, et on ne faisait en
cela que se conformer à l'évolution des
mentalités, il semble qu'on ait voulu trouver
des raisons psychologiques à la conversion,
pour donner à la conscience morale un peu de
ce qui était jusqu'alors attribué au seul mérite de la grâce."75

Initially, it must be noted that the resemblance of Magdalene’s prayer to the prayer of confession found in manuscript 42 of the Bibliothèque Ventimiliana de Catane, edited by Edith Brayer, is striking.76 The prayer is, like that found in the Angers Passion (1486), divided into categories according to the specific sins being confessed. For example, the prayer in the Catane manual of confession is divided thus:

Dou peché mortel qui naist de envide / Dou peché mortel

75. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 183. Also, Sister Mary Faith McKean, in The Interplay of Realistic and Flamboyant Art Elements in the French Mystères, The Catholic University of America Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 60 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1959; reprint, New York: AMS press, Inc., 1969), asserts that the psychological reaction, verbal expression, and broken rhythm (such as one finds in this confessional prayer of Magdalene) combine to create conversational realism (23). Cf. Henri Rey-Flaud, Pour une dramaturgie du moyen âge, 167, where the author speaks of the element of realism and verisimilitude as "cette illusion où naissait une réalité plus vraie que la réalité quotidienne, toujours évanouie mais toujours renaissante."

76. Brayer, Edith, "Un manuel de confession en ancien français conservé dans un manuscrit de Catane (Bibl. Ventimiliana, 42)," Mélanges d’Archéologie et d’Histoire 49 (1947): 155-98. She gives the 14th century as a likely date of origin for the manuscript. The traité de confession (f. 27-39) is reproduced in full on pages 173-93 of Brayer’s article.
d’ire / Dou peché mortel de acside / Dou peché mortel
d’avarise / Dou peché mortel de luxure / Dou peché de
la goule. Compare these topics with those in this
prayer of Magdalene: du peché d’orgueil / du peché
d’ire / du peché de paresse / du peché d’envye / du
peché de luxure / du peché de gloutonnie / du peché
d’avarice. Similarly the content of each section
parallels the other.

In contrast to the sudden, miraculous conversion
of Longinus (see Chapter 1, above), "celle-ci ne
pouvait être miraculeuse, comme l’effet de la seule
infusion de la grâce, mais devait être le fruit d’une
volonté entraînée par le poids d’une vocation longtemps
restée inconsciente."77 Here, a much more in-depth
revelation of personal character of the penitent is
divulged by the playwright.78

This prayer is different from most examined
heretofore in that the object of the prayer is not an

77. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age,
181.

78. For the continuing saga of the post-conversion
Magdalene, see Jacques Chocheeyras and Graham A.
Runnalls, eds., La Vie de Marie Magdaleine (Geneva:
Droz, 1986).
external object, or person, but rather it is a self-addressed monologue that functions as a prayer, similar to a prayer of confession.\textsuperscript{79} This is precisely what we have in this passage: the already familiar character of Mary Magdalene is reflecting subjectively on her recent experience of conversion. The monologic confession, a soliloquy making use of a variety of rhyme and versification schemes, is used by the playwright to develop a persona.\textsuperscript{80} What is already familiar becomes more detailed, and thus more familiar. Pfister refers to monologues of this type as commentative soliloquies, which he defines as one in which " . . . an event or situation that the audience is already familiar with is interpreted subjectively

\textsuperscript{79} Cf. Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 139. A confessional prayer consists of the following elements: acknowledgement of guilt for sins; an account of sins committed; and a petition for the intercession of Christ. Though technically it is monologic in nature, it is understood that Magdalene is simultaneously engaged in dialogue with her audience. The spectator must now accept a role similar to that of a priest in a confessional. He or she must listen to the detailed confession of the convert and then must pass along God's forgiveness to the persona in proportion to his/her own desire, or need, to be forgiven in the same measure as the protagonist.

\textsuperscript{80} Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 139.
from that figure's perspective.”\textsuperscript{81} This is certainly the case with Magdalene.\textsuperscript{82} Pfister continues concerning prayers of this type:

As far as the commentative soliloquy is concerned, the epic effect increases in proportion to both the distance between the commentary and the dramatic situation and that between the speaker and his active role within the plot. In extreme cases, the result might be a speech ex persona in which the commentary goes way beyond the figure's level of awareness and develops into a commentary that can be detached from the speaker and convey the authorially intended reception-perspective in epic form. In such cases, the soliloquy assumes the functions of the mediating commentary in much the same way as the chorus in classical drama.\textsuperscript{83}

Regardless of the label one chooses to categorize it, this prayer-soliloquy marks a high-point in the evolution of prayer in medieval French literature: namely, prayer and prayer language as a medium of dramatic character definition.\textsuperscript{84}

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\textsuperscript{82} Cf. La Vie de Marie Magdaleine, 8-10. Here the editors address the question of "le culte de Marie-Madeleine à la fin du XVII\textsuperscript{e} siècle."

\textsuperscript{83} Pfister, The Theory and Analysis of Drama, 137.

\textsuperscript{84} Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 142.
During the course of the prayer, as Magdalene confesses and repents publicly, she divulges a past to her audience that reveals her to be a very strong-willed, self-centered individual. In verses 12242-243 she has dissected her Self to the point that she addresses the Self in the second-person singular (Povre Magdaleine, comment / muras tu ton fol touchement). Such a reference is indicative of a dialogical tendency within this essentially monologic discourse. Pfister elaborates:

A more pronounced dialogical tendency occurs when the speaker is split into two or more conflicting subjects. This form, which might be described as an interior dialogue, often emphasises the contrasting positions of two subjects by the use of particular pronouns—that is, by apostrophising the self in the second person singular—and it thus expresses the split between the rational philosophical self and the self that is caught up in a real situation. 85

Magdalene overemphasizes the role of the Self in asserting the importance of her will (vv. 12083; 12131; 12172; 12180). She contrasts seven virtues she now possesses (humble, v. 12096; pacience, v. 12113; diligence, v. 12126; compassion, v. 12144; chaste, v. 12160; sobresse, v. 12178; largesse, v. 12193) with

those she possessed formerly (orgueil, v. 12082; ire, v. 12099; oysiveté, 12114; envye, v. 12130; luxure, v. 12147; gloutonnie, v. 12164; avarice, narrative line between vv. 12177-178), and thus allows the spectator insight into her Self to the fullest extent. This is probably due to the fact that this late 15th-century play by Jean Michel is demonstrating a late-medieval Christianity that is moral and a lifestyle that is more than just doctrinal and perfunctory—it is personal.86

More than just an address to herself, Magdalene has now granted the role of confessor to the spectator. Yet, rather than simply a sacerdotal role, the spectator is now forced to see and hear her/himself mirrored in the praying dramatis persona. "Il s'agit donc, dans un premier moment, d'un retour sur soi dans le recueillement de son intimité, de se regarder dans le miroir de l'âme pour bien connaître ses péchés

86. Jean-Pierre Bordier, "Jean Michel contre les mystères? A propos d'un livre récent," Tréteaux 3 (1981): 37. Bordier makes the point that Jean Michel has abandoned the grand episodes of the Christian myth and the act of redemption that one finds in Greban’s Passion (1452) in favor of a moral sense (rather than literal).
et prendre conscience de son humilité." Not only is Magdalene confessing her sin and declaring her penitence, she is now in a mediating position vis-à-vis the audience and God. As she confesses, she gives the audience ground for identification and allows individual viewers to see themselves in her. She becomes, via the prayer act, an embodiment of human mortality and deference to evil.

As Magdalene contrasts her formerly sinful life with her new life as a converted follower of the man Christ, her language becomes noticeably more malleable and submissive. Language frequently associated with maleness, such as eslevé mon vueil (v. 12083), dominer (v. 12084), vaine (v. 12089), and hautaine (v. 12090), dissolves into signifiers marked for femaleness: humble (v. 12096), douce (v. 12097), and gracieuse (v. 12097). Magdalene thus assumes feminine qualities to replace those of her pre-conversion life. She has struggled against her impetuous will (folle volonté, v. 12267) and has won.

Before bringing her prayer monologue to a close and returning home (devers ma seur retourner, v. 12274), Magdalene takes time to directly address and evangelize (convertissés vous, v. 12256; venés, v. 12260; delaissés, v. 12261; requerés, v. 12263) those that are yet unconverted (cœurs en pechés endormis, v. 12254). Though having enveloped the audience in her inclusive speech act, Magdalene engages the individual spectator in dialogue by calling, through use of the second person plural, for a response. Concerning this strategy, Pfister asserts:

[T]here is a further dialogical tendency that attempts to establish a dialogue partner by addressing the audience. Since the speaker is not addressing another character on stage and the communication process is one-way, the situational criterion of the soliloquy is fulfilled. However, the speaker departs from the internal communication system . . . By addressing the audience and taking its semantic context into consideration, the dramatist has created a dialogical soliloquy. The dialogical tendency is even felt when the audience fails to react to the speaker’s remarks ad spectatores in an appropriate manner (by applauding or heckling, for example) because the addressee is in fact not
the empirical audience but a fictional one that only exists in the remarks ad spectatores in the first place. 88

It is a moment of heightened oneness with the spectator, and of intense transcendence, as now the audience is drawn into the persona's temporal experience via language used by the actor (or possibly the actress). 89 The audience is now beckoned to respond, as did Magdalene, to the call of Christ.

Magdalene concludes her prayer soliloquy by using the imagery of clothing to be inclusive of all that has preceded (vv. 12266 and 12273). This is highly appropriate for Magdalene, given the importance she placed on personal appearance prior to her conversion. 90 Now, however, she uses the allusion to depict a much more profound reality: her personal conversion. The protagonist’s spiritual status is now


89. Cohen, Histoire, 207.

defined and manifested in terms of outward apparel. Rather than an allusion to her riches or social status, Magdalene's clothes now become associated directly with her pre- and post-conversion statuses. She describes her former apparel as dissolus (v. 12266) and pollus (v. 12267), which she ultimately rejects as unacceptable (de moy plus voulus, v. 12270). Henceforth, she will clothe herself with clothes more becoming her conversion experience of salvation: habis de simplicité (v. 12273).91

Summary

By the end of the fifteenth century, the Passion plays had evolved into a theater of individualism.92 Their personae became independent, reasoning entities that shared a self-identity far more detailed and complex than those often found in earlier literature, both narrative and dramatic. The dramatic personae are

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92. Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age, 432.
much more developed than the Biblical-creed-narrative *figurae* on which they are based.

Part of that individual humanistic expression is the divulgence of gender-specific traits. Though the roles of Eve, Magdalene, and others were most often played by males, playwrights such as Mercadé, Greban, and especially Jean Michel were able to craft monologic and quasi-dialogic prayers that display, not only the spoken word of the *dramatis persona*, but the *parole* of female *dramatis personae*.

This evolution ( . . . ) reflects the changing emphasis from 'geste' to 'parole'; the earlier texts are mainly narrative and demonstrative; there is little moral content, since their task is simply to 'corrober la foi'. The later Passion Plays, though owing a lot to their forerunners, try to give their material a more didactic function; the words spoken by the characters assume a much greater importance.\(^93\)

As the passions develop, the role of Eve, for example, evolves from that of a cursory mention by her husband that it was she who was responsible for the

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present predicament (i.e., being in Hell),\(^\text{94}\) to a complex direct recounting of her personal involvement in and responsibility for the Fall of humankind. Such an admission, rather than underlining Eve's feminine frailty (fragilité) serves to enhance her moral and spiritual strength, now increasingly equal in worth (for good or bad) to her male counterpart, Adam. It discloses an ascension to equality with man, at least before the God who created humans with equality. After all, in Michel's Passion (1486), the Incarnation, Ministry, and Passion of Christ are made possible through a woman (i.e., the Virgin Mary)!

Magdalene represents a different evolution, though her predominant role in the 15th-century passions certainly does nothing to diminish ground seemingly gained by Eve. Magdalene is the prominent female in Passion dramaturgy, not because she has done evil, but because, through grace coupled with an act of her will, she has forsaken evil and chosen a life of discipleship to Christ. Rather than deliverance from a literal Hell, she is delivered from a Hell much like many

\[^{94}\text{E.g., Le Fragment de Sion (ca. 1300), v. 15: Eve me mit en cele voe, in Joseph Bédier, "Fragment d'un ancien mystère," Romania 24 (1895): 87.}\]
humans create for themselves: the hell of self-indulgence, excess, etc. Magdalene represents the increasingly important feminine voice of reason, especially that found in the Angers Passion (1486). There, at the zenith of Passion dramaturgy, Magdalene, via prayer, evidences her evolution from an archetype of a humbled, forgiven woman who washed the feet of Christ, to a reasoning woman who, because of love and will, made the decision to change her life—to take control of her destiny. Her post-conversion prayer is one of reason, demonstrating from a position of godly strength, that woman has made her peace with the Creator in Christ, the God-Man, and has thus gained a non-differentiated place among those, both male and female, who are called His disciples. It is in the Christ, the embodiment of both male and female, that we will see this evolution of prayer and prayer language at yet another level.
CHAPTER III
THE PRAYER OF CHRIST IN GETHSEMANE

The evolution of prayer is nowhere more apparent within medieval French literature (specifically, Passion dramaturgy) than it is in the Gethsemane prayer scenes of the mystères de la Passion. This is especially true of those written and rewritten in the second half of the fifteenth century.\(^1\) The purpose of these prayers, as those we have examined to this point, therefore, appears to be two-fold: to move the spectator and to clearly unveil the character of the praying person. It will be my purpose in this chapter to demonstrate that the structure, language, staging and didacticism of the various Gethsemane prayer scenes

\(^{1}\) For an interesting discussion of alternative linguistic dating of passion manuscripts, see Graham Runnalls, "The Linguistic Dating of Middle French Texts with Special Reference to the Theatre," Modern Language Review 71 (1976): 757-65. The dating is based on a tabulation of percentages of "old forms" in Middle French plays of uncertain date (see Table IV, ibid., 763). All dates in this dissertation are of dates of probable origin, not necessarily of extant manuscripts. Therefore, I will use the dates proposed by Runnalls.
found in a chronologically diverse sampling of French medieval passions do indeed validate Bibolet’s postulation. I will examine the narrative content and discourse used by individual passion playwrights, the language and poetic structure they use to foment this process, the staging techniques and their contribution to the evolution of the prayer scenes, and probable, if not evident, didactic intent to reveal the dual nature of the Christ-figure in detailed fashion: a nature of deity and humanity deeply meshed and marked for both masculinity and femininity.

Poetic Structure

As we have seen, prayers in much of Medieval French literature, including the mystères de la Passion, follow a strikingly similar structure. Most are introduced by narrative passages of varying

length. The prayer itself follows, with its own internal structure (e.g., the confessional-petition prayer). The passages containing the prayers often begin and conclude with some type of transitional device, such as a narrative insert by a main or secondary character indicating that either a change of place is occurring, or that a new phase of the play is beginning. The Gethsemane prayer scenes in the mystères de la Passion are likewise introduced by a statement of intent, or pupose, given by the narrator or protagonist to serve as a contextual preface to the actual prayer act. Such introductory passages are


already frequently used in earlier, epic literature (cf. Introduction, p. 19, above). They serve to prepare the reading or viewing audience for the act of prayer. In fact, these gestures are acts (i.e., metalanguage) of prayer within the narrative context.

Consider the following introductory remarks made by Christ to announce His imminent prayer in the garden:

Perron, Jehan, venz avant,
En ce jardin a moi venez
Qui du Mont d'Olivete est prez.
Je vois devant, venez après.
(Palatinus [ca. 1300], vv. 153-57)\(^7\)

Mes treschier amis, venés
Avecque moy prier,
Pour ce depellerons nous ennemis.
(Roman [1470], vv. 222-24)\(^8\)

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8. The Passion de Biard (1470) and the Passion de Roman (1470), named after their copyists (Frank, La Passion d'Autun, 7), are together called the Passion d'Autun. See Grace Frank, ed., La Passion d'Autun (Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1930) for a discussion of both passions and the reason they are placed within the Passion d'Autun (1470). Cf. p. 109, n. 42, above.
A la mort me convient aler.
Pour ce va je mon pere orer.
(Biard [1470], vv. 284-85)⁹

D'aler est temps puis que sui prest
Lassus ou jardin d'olivet,
Pour vous tous y veul labourer
En priant mon pere et orer.
(Arras [1414], vv. 11266-69)¹⁰

Mes disciples o moy venés
Ou jardim quil est d'Olivet pres [sic],
Je vais devant venés après.
(Semur [ca. 1430], vv. 6184-86)

Allons droit a Gethsemanny
prier dieu, mon pere. . .
(Angers [1486], vv. 19298-99)¹¹

It is not only gesture (geste), but speech acts
(parole) that prepare the audience for prayer. In each
instance it is Christ, the Protagonist, who requests
the relocation of his disciples (amis, disciples) with
the Gethsemane prayer in mind. Some passions include
narrative stanzas to explain procedural details, such

⁹. Ibid.


as the absence of a heretofore present character, as in
the Passion des Jongleurs (1243). The narrator,
after announcing the transition from the Upper Room to
the Mount of Olives (Alez de ci, passez cel pont, v. 439), parenthetically mentions the absence of Judas
(vv. 440-42):

Tuit ensembler passez s'en sont,
Fors Judas qui s'en ert emblez;
Ne sai ou il estoit alez.

In the Passion by Greban (1452), it is the
Apostle John who serves as narrator, giving the
audience the reason for Christ's directive to go to the
Mount of Olives. He pronounces his lines as an aside,
either to the audience or to a nearby disciple on stage
(vv. 18499-506):

JHESUS

Puis que le jour est advespré,
mes amys, nous nous partiron
d'icy, et a la part tyrons
que bien de coustume nous est.

12. See Amari-Perry's discussion of dating of this
Passion based on its inclusion and subsequent dating in
the Bible des sept estaz du monde by Geoffroi de Paris

13. Le mystère de la Passion, Arnoul Greban, ed. Gaston
Raynaud and Gaston Paris (Paris: F. Vieweg, 1878;
St JEHAN

Il dit au jardin d'Olivet:
voulentiers s'i va detirer
pour Dieu, son pere, deprier,
tousjours quand le soir est venu.

In each case Christ, the narrator, or a secondary
center character (or, as we have seen, a secondary character
acting as narrator) establishes purpose; in this
instance, it is to pray to the Father.\(^\text{14}\) The
expressions \textit{que bien de coustume nous est} (v. 18502)
and \textit{tousjours} (v. 18506) indicate to the audience that
these times of prayer in Gethsemane were customary.

The introductory directives closely follow the
narrative of Scripture.\(^\text{15}\) There is an invitation to go
to the Mount of Olives, followed by an invitation given
by Christ to three disciples who will follow Him to the
actual \textit{locus amoenus} (i.e., Gethsemane), while the

\(^\text{14}\) It is interesting that in the Arras Passion (1414),
Christ states His intention to labourer ("toil") in
prayer for His disciples (v. 11288), though none of the
Gethsemane prayer lines actually mentions the
disciples.

\(^\text{15}\) Cf. Mt. 26:36, Mk. 14:32, Lk. 20:39-40, and Jn.
18:1. The reference in the non-synoptic Gospel of John
is a parallel relocation directive, but it takes place
after the equivalent of Christ's garden prayer. Though
the passions follow the geography of the Bible, there
are no invitation passages in any of the references
cited above, only statements that Christ and the
disciples went to the garden.
remaining eight are told to remain at the entrance to the garden. In the Passion des Jongleurs (1243), Peter, James, and John are invited into the garden with Christ. The jongleur informs his audience that these are ceus qui li erent plus privez;/ Li uns de ceus ot nom saint Peres,/ Saint Jaques et saint Jehan, ses freres (vv. 456-58). Greban’s Passion gives a parallel directive in the form of an imperative spoken by Christ to the three disciples: Pierre, venez avecques moy,/ vous, Jehan, et Jaques, vostre frere (vv. 18685-686). The playwright of the Ste-Geneviève Passion (1360) gives a distinctively different perspective to his audience on the matter: James and John are related to Christ (though not through His mother, Mary): Pierre, vien t’en sans demorer! / Jaques, Jehan, sus vous levez! / My cousin estez; moy debvez / Suivre et garder . . . (vv. 1102-05).

In these passages which serve as preludes to the actual prayer, a developing metalanguage of invitation and scenic relocation mark both a departure and an arrival for the medieval audience: a departure from public ministry and an entrance into the accomplishment phase of the Passion. After explaining to the disciples that the purpose of this separation was that He might pray to His father, Christ announces yet one
more separation: that of Himself from the group of three.

After leaving Peter, James and John, Jesus goes encore plus loing et se met a genoux (Passion by Greban [1452], v. 242). The separation from human interaction is now complete: Christ is separated from the world, from the fellowship of His eleven remaining disciples and from His three closest confidants. There is now no other person to address but the Father, who is Himself physically distanced from this ultimate place of separation, this highest created point on the immediate, visible earth (i.e., the stage). 16

Following this initial posturing for prayer, the prayer monologue begins. The Gethsemane prayers found in the various passions seem to follow a general thematic pattern evolved from prayer forms found in

earlier literature:¹⁷ 1) address, 2) statement of being,¹⁸ 3) request, and 4) closure.¹⁹ Below are several examples of the Gethsemane prayers that adhere to this organizational structure.

The *Passion des Jongleurs* (1243) begins with an address and a statement of God's deity and omnipotence:

« *Pere*, fet il, « *ce croi tres bien / Que tu puez fere toute rien* » (vv. 471-72). The *Passion du Palatinus* (ca. 1300) begins simply with *Biax douz pere, ce ne puet estre!* (v. 190), the latter a very common

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¹⁸. This term is being used in the same way that Bzdyl, in "Prayer in Old English Narratives," uses "comment" (138). It is meant to describe a statement of the existential Self by the Self.

¹⁹. Ruth Crosby makes the point that if a work was intended for oral delivery (as these dramas certainly are, by definition), they begin and end religiously, with an invocation of blessing, and a benediction at the end. See "Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 11 (1936): 108. I believe the same thing may be pointed out concerning the evolution of narrative prayers. Those found in the passions seem to add a closure of some kind, in addition to the general pattern invocation-comment-petition. Cf. Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 138.
opening address in early medieval prayers. Similar forms of address are found in the following examples:

Doulz pere, a toy, roy celestre,
(Geneviève [1360], v. 1115)

Pere du ciel, createur souverain,
de ces beaux cieulx ornateur primerain,
qui tout connois par ton hault presçavoir,
(Greban [1452], vv. 17005-07)

Beaul [sic] doux Pere, bien est credible
Que toute chose t'est possible,
(Semur [1430], vv. 6215-16)

Doulx pere, qu'onque ne fite mal
(Biard [ca. 1470], v. 288)

Treschier pere, que oncque filz mal,
(Roman [ca. 1470], v. 225)

Pere puissant, createur souverain,
de tex beaulx cieulx ornateur primerain,
qui tout connois par ton hault persavoir
(Angers [1486], vv. 19850-52)

In each instance God the Father is addressed by Christ as pere. The Father's omnipotence and His otherness are professed in descriptive phrases such as createur.

20. See Jean Sonet, Répertoire d'incipit de prières en ancien français (Geneva: Droz, 1956), 33-37. Among the numerous examples given by Sonet are biaus dous sire, beaus peres puissans, beaus sire Dex (all 13th-century examples), beau sire Dieus, biau sire Dieux, biaus sire Dieux, biaux sire Dieux (all 15th-century examples).

souverain, ornateur primerain, qui tout connois, hault
prèsçavoir, bien, credible, toute chose t’est possible,
pere puissant, and qu’onque ne fite mal. One can
readily see the resemblance to those prayers found in
earlier French literature. There, as well, we find
numerous examples of the confessional-petition
prayers.\(^\text{22}\) Many, after the initial address to God as
Father, begin with a confession of the omnipotence of
God. Roland, in the Chanson de Roland (1150), prays
just prior to his death on the battlefield (vv. 2384–
87; see Introduction, p. 12, above). In Chancun de
Guillelme or l’Archamp (ca. 1080),\(^\text{23}\) as Vivien battles
the Saracens alone, he prays (vv. 802–11):

\begin{align*}
\text{Cest oreisun dist li quens en la presse} \\
\text{"Deus, reis de glorie, ki me fefistes né,} \\
\text{e de la virgene fustes, sire, enfantez,} \\
\text{en treis persones fut tis cors commendez,} \\
\text{en sainte croiz pur pecheurs penez,} \\
\text{ciel estelé fefis e terre e mer,}
\end{align*}

\(^{22}\) See Bzdyl, "Prayer in Old English Narratives," 139
and Marie Pierre Koch, An Analysis of the Long Prayers
in Old French Literature with Special Reference to the
'Biblical-Creed-Narrative' Prayers, The Catholic
University of America Studies in Romance Languages and
Literatures, 19 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic
University of America Press, 1940; reprint, New York:

\(^{23}\) Jeanne Wathelet-Willem, Recherche sur 'la Chanson
de Guillaume'. Études accompagnées d’une édition, 2
The Gethsemane Prayer as a Discourse of Disclosure

Unlike earlier literature where the address is followed by request, the Gethsemane introductions are first followed by a statement of being (i.e., comment). It is following His address to the Father that Christ orally indicates to His audience how He feels, what it is that He actually perceives as temporal, physical reality. To further demonstrate this evolution, examine the following statements of being found in the Passion des Jongleurs (1243) and the Angers Passion (1486), the first an example of early Passion dramaturgy and the latter of the late fifteenth century:

Se toi plaisoit, pas ne morroie,  
Aingois la mort trespasseroie.  
Mes cors a paör de morir.  
Ceste douleur m'estuet soufrir:  
(Jongleurs [1243], vv. 473-76)

Regarde moy, ton filz humble et humain,  
agonizé d'un ennuy tres grevain  
qui n'est en cueur d'omme de le scávoir.  
J'aperçoy bien la passion honteuse,  
la dure mort et paine doloreuse  
qui s'aparest pour mon corps consommer.  
19853

Terrible m'est et la mort plus cruelle  
19863
qu'oncques portast creature mortelle.
Je la congnois, je la sens, je la voys;
la deité la me presente telle;
la fresle chair la refuyt et chancelle
et tant la craint que n'a plus que la voix. 19868
L'ame recourt a ta protection,
qui du corps prent telle compassion
que son grant dueil ne sceit ne veult retraire ...
(Passion d'Angers [1486], vv. 19853-71)

It is here that the humanity of Christ becomes an
autonomous agent and confesses itself as a part of the
God-man duality. Characteristics not normally
associated with deity are confessed: paör, dolor,
agonizé, fresle, craint, dueil. Christ admits to all
the weakness that all humans sense and deal with in
anticipation of la dure mort (v. 19857). One can
readily see the tradition of medieval prayer in such a
structure, but is seen in flux and evolution. There is
an identification with sinful humanity inherent in
these passages, as there are in earlier literature, but
to a much greater degree. For epic heroes to admit
existential weakness to the extent seen in the
passions, would seem unbefitting such legendery
figures. Therefore, such admissions are generally
brief. For example, the Duchess in Orson de Beauvais
moments prior to being burned at the stake, recounts the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (vv. 2071-78), then summarily interjects: Nous meîmes por elz qui sommes lor anfans (v. 2079). As the mighty warrior and saint, condemned to die, approach certain death, they frequently divulge their intensely human fears and anguish to a God they believe will understand and help them. Christ, as the Epic-Hero of the passion, recites similar, though more elaborate and complex, confessions in the passages cited above.

After confessing human weakness in His statement of being, Christ addresses His requests to the Father. The requests fall into two categories: 1) requests to be delivered from death on the Cross and 2) requests to be given the strength to submit to the will of the Father if deliverance cannot be granted. Consider the following lines from the Greban Passion ([1452], vv. 18727-811):

Si te requier, pere tres debonnaire, pere piteux et des begnins le plus, passe ce point s’il se peut ou doit faire: j’ay moult de peine, suffise le surplus. Je suis tout prest et à toy me submés; 18737

le sensuel qui n'y consent jamais
raison survient et le corps n'y rebelle;
L'esprit est prompt, non obstant la char frelle
et se submet à ta benignité,
ja mon vouloir sensuel ne s'en mêle:
soit faîte donc ta haute volonté.

que ce calice point ne boive

ne la passion ne reçoive
que forment crains en mon courage;
soit soubmise ma volonté
et la tienne faîte et tenue.

soit veai a tes commandz,
mes ceste passion me meult;
mon père, se faire se peult,
allegiez moy ceste sentence.

The parallel passage of lines 18808-811 in the Passion
d'Angers (1486) reads (vv. 20055-58):

Obeyr veai a tes commandz,
mais ceste passion me meult,
mon père, s'i faire se peult,
que ne porte telle doleur.

The prayer of Christ in the much earlier Passion des
Jongleurs (1243) reads similarly (vv. 473-80):

Se toi plaisoit, pas ne morroie,
Aingois la mort trespasseroie.

Mes neporquant li mien desirs
Ne soit pas fet, mes tes plesirs.
Le teue volonte otroi,
Or fait tot ton plesir de moi.25

Following the request portion of the prayers,
there are frequently lines of praise commonly used as

25. This prayer is repeated in vv. 516-19.
closures. These lines often speak of a Christ that has been comforted, either spiritually (i.e., inwardly), or by the external, physical presence of angelic messengers. In either case He is now resolutely intent on accomplishing the will of the Father. Consider the following excerpt from the Passion (1486) by Jean Michel (vv. 20119-128):

O juge pacient et fort,
you ne m'avez pas oublé
quant present m'avez envoyé
vos messagiers dont je me efforce;
et prens en moy vigueur et force
de payer le sumptueux pris
que pour les humains ay empris,
car a vostre vueil me conforme
celon la maniere et la forme
que le m'avés constitué.

The Passion Nostre Seigneur (1360) of the Ste-Geneviève manuscript contains the following lines spoken by a now resolute Christ: Beau pere, je vueil bien souffrir, / Puisqu'il vous plais, ce grief martire (vv. 1170-71).

In addition to the thematic emphases of the individual components of passion prayers which Christ prayed in Gethsemane, there is a pronounced evolution in the number of lines devoted to such prayers from the earliest passions (i.e., Jongleurs [1243], Palatinus [ca. 1300]) to the late fifteenth-century plays of
Arnoul Greban (1452) and Jean Michel (1486). To more fully appreciate this evolution, we will examine the Gethsemane prayer of Christ as found in the *Passion* (1486) by Jean Michel.

In Michel's *Passion* (1486) the prayer of Christ is divided into five distinct parts, each consisting of a prayer and either an exhortation to the disciples to awaken and to pray with Him, or of an exhortation by a God-sent messenger to comfort Christ. This is not uncommon, even in the earlier passions.

Following is the basic thematic composition of the *Passion* of Jean Michel (1486) prayer scene (vv. 19850-20128):

26. Following is a table of the number of lines the principal *passions* devote to the Gethsemane prayer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passion</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Palatinus (ca. 1300)</td>
<td>0 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livre d.l.Passion (ca. 1300)</td>
<td>6 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semur (1430)</td>
<td>8 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provençale (1345)</td>
<td>10 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jongleurs (1243)</td>
<td>17 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autun (B + R)(1470)</td>
<td>22 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geneviève (1360)</td>
<td>23 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystères inédits (ca. 1496)</td>
<td>26 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercadé (1414)</td>
<td>33 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greban (1452)</td>
<td>129 verses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michel (1486)</td>
<td>189 verses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. For example, see *Semur* (1430), vv. 6223-30, and *Geneviève* (1360), vv. 1162-69.
1) vv. 19850-86  
(narrative lines)  
Prayer (I)  
Christ goes to disciples
2) vv. 19888-96  
(narrative lines)  
Admonition to pray (I)  
Christ returns to prayer
3) vv. 19908-16  
(narrative line)  
Prayer (II)  
Christ goes to disciples
4) vv. 19917-20  
(narrative line)  
Admonition to pray (II)  
Christ returns to prayer
5) vv. 19929-80  
Prayer (III)
6) vv. 19981-20044  
(narrative line)  
Interlude in Paradise\textsuperscript{28}  
Angels descend to comfort
7) vv. 20047-58  
Prayer (IV); Comfort
11. 20059-106  
Angelic worship & comfort
8) vv. 20107-128  
Prayer (V); Closure

This elaborate structural expansion within the drama stands in stark contrast to the rather cursory presentation of the same events in the Passion de Semur (ca. 1430):

\textsuperscript{28} See page 219-21, below.
In the later passions there appears to be an effort on the part of the playwright to make sure that no possible detail of interest is overlooked from the original Vulgate, apocryphal accounts or liturgical tradition, especially in the case of Jean Michel, where there is an evolution of character development in an attempt to render the ahistorical Protagonist (i.e., Christ) as historically human as possible. Maurice Accarie, speaking of the inspirational influence of the Méditations of the Pseudo-Bonaventure and the Vita Christi, says "... il est clair que seul Jean Michel en retient l'esprit et le but [emphasis mine], quand on n'en avait jusqu'à lui retiré que des images."\textsuperscript{29}

For example, we now see the perspective of the Father as he observes His Son in agony, collaterally

\textsuperscript{29} Maurice Accarie, \textit{Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Age: Étude sur le sens moral de la "Passion" de Jean Michel} (Geneva: Droz, 1979), 429. Accarie highlights Michel's ability to render his characters real people, especially in his chapter entitled "La mondanité et la conversion" (155-92).
with the Interlude in Paradise, a scene commonly interjected into the later passions. Interwoven into the Gethsemane prayer is the shift of audience attention to Paradise where there is the lament of God the Father concerning the predicament of Christ, the discussion between God the Father, Saint Michel, Raphael, and Uriel, and finally the decision to send Saint Michel to comfort and strengthen the Son of the Father (*La Passion d'Angers* [1486], vv. 19981-20040):

**DIEU LE PERE**

Je voy la grande humilité de mon filz bien euré Jesus qui ses plainctz a vers moy promise, soy recommandant a ma grace. C'est bien raison que je luy face comme pere a son filz amé, Mais, combien qu'il me ait reclamé, toutesfoys, divine justice quiert amende du malefice du forfait d'humaine nature. Et, pour ce qu'i n'est creature qui sceust dignement satisfaire sinon lui, pas ne se peut faire que je l'exempte de la peine.

**S. MICHEL**

Juge de justice haultaine, considerés l'anxieté

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30. The Breton Passion (ca. 1490) treats it rather as a conversation between Christ and Reason. There we see the inner thoughts of Christ as He struggles internally during His prayer to the Father. See Hersard de la Villemarqué, *Le Grand Mystère de Jésus* (Paris: Didier, 1865), 65-69.
que vostre cher filz a porté
depuis son incarnacion.
Voyés la dure passion
dont jamais il ne fut exempt;
voyés la grand douleur qu'i sent
et sa parfonde humilité.

RAPHAELE

O hault juge, prenés pitié
de cil qui porte le meffaict
d'autry, qui en rien n'a mal faict,
et suppliés le residu.

URIEL

Vostre filz avés entendu,
lequel en craincte doloreuse
redouble la peine angoluse
dont il est auprés de la porte.
Regardés la doleur qu'i porte
et l'angoisse de son couraige;
voyés comme de son visage
le sanc jusq'en terre degoute.

S. MICHEL

Il n'y a si petite goute
dont on sceust tauxer la valleur.
C'est si precieuse suer
que une goutte pourroit suffire
pour tous les enfers desconfire.
Doncques, si tant il en respand,
divin juge, soyés content
et ne souffrés que en croix il pende;
amoderés ung peu l'amende
pour l'amour de vostre seul filz.

DIEU LE PERE

Le taux de l'amende est prefix:
il sera en croix estendu,
tiré, cloué, mort et pendu
et courra son precieux sanc
de lui comme ung ruseau d'estanc,
tant qu l'ame sorte du corps;
et adonc feray les accors
avecques humaine nature.
Mais, en l'agonie tres dure
que mon filz endure comfort,
je luy vueil bien donner confort
pour soulager ung peu sa peine.
Pour ce, anges de la court haultaine,
vers mon filz vous transporterés
et en moy le conforterés
pour montrer toujours ma bonté. 20040

Whereas the early Passion poems and plays include the basics of the original account, Greban and Michel give a great amount of importance to this intimate moment between Christ, the Father and the viewing public. Eustache Mercadé, in the Passion d'Arras (1414), includes similar interpolations. Though God the Father says much less than in the Passions of Michel (1486) and Greban (1452), there are three monologues by Saint Michael. These passages tend to enhance the linguistic imagery of the passages, which will be discussed in the next section.

Language and Imagery

The increasingly complex and divergent structure of the Gethsemane prayer scenes is partially due to the increased poetic capabilities of the later medieval dramaturgists. It is their increasing use of a variety of poetic structures and language that likewise

31. Verses 11652-670; 11700-711; 11732-752.
enhances the potential for dramatic imagery. Whereas the Passion du Palatinus (ca. 1300) barely alludes to the Gethsemane prayer, both Greban and Michel give the audience as much time and experience with it as reasonably feasible (129 verses and 189 verses, respectively). To elaborate on this point, the reader’s attention is directed to the following excerpt from the Passion (1414) by Eustache Mercadé (vv. 11641-51):

JHESUS

Mon vray pere, mon esperance, 11641
Qui donne m'as la congoissance
Du torment qui m'est advenir
Pour la totale delivrance
Des humains, par ton ordonnançe
Je te pry ce tourment souffrir
Ne me laisse la mort sentir,
Se possible est, mais sans morir
Me delivre par ta puissance,
Neantmoins ton gre vueil acomplir 11650
Non pas le mien: fay ta plaisance.

Interestingly, this prayer from the Passion d'Arras (1414) is repeated word-for-word three times, once for each of the three times Christ prayed in Gethsemane—a poetic device that stands in stark contrast to the greatly expanded and diversified prayers of the Passion plays written later in the fifteenth century. Each of the three repetitions is embedded in a stanza of twelve lines. The rhyme scheme (aabaabbbaba) is also identical in each. Verses 1 through 5 form a
relatively complex sentence structure, containing two adjectival clauses, both beginning with qui, the first modifying the Father (vv. 11642-45), and the second modifying the torment to come (v. 11643). Verses 6 through 11 represent a request on the part of Christ to be spared the pain of death (v. 11647). As in most of the passions, verses are octosyllabic, but there is markedly less richness of rhyme compared with the later poetry of Greban and Jean Michel. Torment (v. 11643), morir (v. 11648) and their derivatives (i.e., torment, mort) are repeated (vv. 11646 and 11647, respectively), revealing the internal state of Christ and the nature of His prayer. Interesting is the recurring inverted assonance of sans and -ance throughout the poem (vv. 11641-42; 11644-45; 11647-49; 11651), highlighting the frequency of /säs/ (i.e., sens). Note also the interlaced repetition of the phoneme /ir/ (vv. 11643; 11646-48; 11650), the future stem of the verb aller, as if Christ is stating His desire to leave, or to escape His impending fate. As one listens to these lines as they are read aloud, the phoneme /m/ is a seemingly lugubrious bilabial, giving the passage a tone similar to that of a Gregorian chant, or a funeral dirge.
To comprehend the extent to which the later plays expanded these passages, compare the parallel prayer passages spoken by Christ in the Passion of Jean Michel (1486). As indicated previously in the discussion of structure, this particular author divides the Gethsemane prayer scene into five prayer passages. I will note each with a corresponding roman numeral (I–V).

Jesus (I)

Pere puissant, createur souverain,
de tes beaulx cieulx ornateur primerain,
qui tout congois par ton hault persavoir,
regarde moy, ton filz humble et humain,
agonizé d'un ennuy tres grevain
qui n'est en cuer d'omme de le sçavoir.
J'aperçoy bien la passion honteuse,
la dure mort et paine doloreuse
qui s'aparest pour mon corps consommer.
Las, le calice m'est durement amer!
Pere piteux, s'il te semble possible,
oste le moy, qui tant me veulx amer,
car le gouster me semble moult terrible.
Terrible m'est et la mort plus cruelle
qu'oncques portast creature mortelle.
Je la congois, je la sens, je la voys;
la deite la me presente telle;
la fresle chair la refuyt et chancelle
et tant la craint que n'as plus que la voix.
L'ame recourt a ta protection,
qui du corps prent telle compassion
que son grant dueil ne sceit ne veult retraire.
Si te requiers, pere tres debonnaire,
pere piteux et des begnins le plus,
passe se point s'i se peult ou doibt faire:
j'ay moult souffert, souffise le sourplus!
Le surplus est de la mort tres soudaine
qui me banist de la vie mondaine;
et mes amys me procurent cecy.
Et moy voyant toute nature humayne,
tant obligee a domaigeable peine
que, sans cecy, ne peult avoir mercy,
raison subvaint, mais le corps y rebelle;
l'esprit est prompt, non obstant la chair fresle,
et se soubmect a ta benignité
et mon vouloir sensual ne se mesle.
Soit faitce donc ta haute volonté.

Jesus (II)
Pere, par ton divin plaisir,
pour la grand paour qui me maistrie,
encore de rechef te prie
que ce calice pointe ne boyve
et la passion ne recoyve
que si fort crains en mon couraige!
Combien que si l'humain lygnage
par autre point n'est rachaté,
soit submise ma volonté
et la tienne faitce et tenue.

Jesus (III)
En moy sens le plus fort debat
qu'onques endurast creature
pour le faict d'humaine nature,
qui ceste passion piteuse
actend, tant triste et doloreuse
qu'a peu que l'esprit n'y peut mettre
raison qui s'i vueille soubzmettre,
tant crainct la sensualité.
Regarde ma penalité,
pere qui tout peuple assoufis,
regarde ton bienheure filz
et la tristesse de son ame
qui tres humblement te reclame
a son besoing tres singulier
Ycy sue sanc par le visage.
Regarde les goutes couler
de sueur penible a merveille,
de sueur comme sanc vermeille,
de tout le corps me depart
pour la douleur qui de moy part
et me tient en anxieté.
La sensuelle volonté
et toutes les basses parties
sont en moy de craincte esbaýes.
L'umanité non confortee
crait la passion presente
en l'humaine apprehension.
Mais la plus haute porcion
de mon ame pas ne la fuyt,
car de la deite fruyt
et veult obeýr a rayson.
Doncques, par prolixe oraison,
suys en une grande agonie
quant moy mesme me exinnanie,
obeissant jusqu'a la mort.
D'autre part, tristesse me mort
car j'ay presente souvenance
de toutes et chascunne offence,
tant mortelle que venielle,
et ay en memoire actuelle
tous les pechés et tous mesfais
qui furent, sont et seront fais,
souffrant peine pour yceulx deue.
Donc, n'est merveille se je sue
habondamment de sanc meslé
et si le corps a rebellé
et l'ame en ses parties basses.
Merveille n'est c'elles sont lasses.
Mais la plus haute porcion
et l'esprit se mect a raison
tant que tout moy, suppost divin,
vueil obeýr et suis enclin
soffrir en toute extremité.

Jesus (IV)
Pere, regarde l'agonie
en quoy tu m'as constitue.
Tel sanc ne peult estre sué
que la cause ne soit active.
Ma peine est si penetrative
que le cure n'en peult plus souffrir.
O pere, a toy me viens offrir;
o pere, a toy me recommandis!
Obeyr vueil a tes commands,
mais ceste passion me meult,
mon pere, s'i faire se peut,
que ne porte telle doleur.

Jesus (V)
O divine essence
qui ma doleance
et mon eloquence
voulés par vostre sapience
considérer,
je prens asseurance
quant j'ai congnoissance
de vostre puissance,
et vueil en toute obeissance
mort endurer.
Ma crainte je vueil asseurer
et prendre en moy bon reconfort.
O juge pacïent et fort,
yous ne m'avés pas oublïé
quant present m'avez envoyé
vos messagiers dont je me efforce;
et prens en moy vigueur et force
de payer le sumptueux pris
que pour les humains ay empris,
car a vostre vueil me conforme
celon li maniere et la forme
que le m'avés constitué.

Each of the five Gethsemane prayer passages is unique. The poetic structure and language of the passages closely follow that of the parallel passages in the Greban Passion (1452). The first prayer (I), divided into three sections (vv. 19850-62; 19863-75; 19876-86), is decasyllabic and 36 lines in length. Regular versification is often abandoned to create dramatic effect. The rhyme is complex but repetitive and mnemonic. The rhyme schemes of the first two

32. Cf. the parallel passage in Greban’s Passion (1452) is divided as follows:

- Prayer (I) : vv. 18705-43
- Disciples : vv. 18744-53
- Prayer(II) : vv. 18760-69
- Disciples : vv. 18770-810
- Interlude : vv. 18812-927
- Comfort : vv. 18946-90
- Prayer(III) : vv. 18991-19003

33. For additional examples, see Graham Runnalls, The Passion d’Auvergne (Geneva: Droz, 1982), vv. 2320-35; 2360-70. Also, Runnalls’ discussion of versification, ibid., 20.
(comprised of vv. 19850-72, inclusive) is identical:
aabaabccdede/ffgffghhiiij. The third section as a
scheme somewhat more irregular: kklkklmmnmn. There is
a caesura following the fourth syllable in each line,
often indicated by a comma (e.g., vv. 19852-53; 19865).
There is a hemistich after the fourth syllable in each
line, except in the second and eleventh lines where it
falls after the third syllable. The eleventh line of
the first stanza begins the same as the eleventh line
of the second. Every third line of the first section
is a relative clause, beginning with qui or que (vv.
870-71; 877; 881), a syntactical structure that is less
frequent in the second and third stanzas of this first
prayer (I).

The second (II), third (III), and fourth (IV)
prayers are structurally different. Each is composed
of ten-line stanzas of octosyllabic verse, with caesura
following the fourth syllable and followed by four
syllables.34 The rhyme scheme, with enjambement of
lines from previous and following stanzas for mnemonic

34. Only decasyllabic lines have caesura (i.e., 4 //
6). Cf. the discussion of Jean Michel’s versification
by Omer Jodogne, ed., Le Mystère de la Passion (Angers
1486), xcix.
purposes, is identical in each: (a)abbccddeef(f). The fifth prayer (V), the final prayer passage prior to the betrayal by Judas and Christ's arrest by the Roman soldiers, is different in structure. It consists of two stanzas (vv. 20107-18; 20119-28), each beginning with three six-syllable verses, followed by one octosyllabic verse, ending with one four-syllable verse. The remaining verses are octosyllabic. The rhyme scheme is identical, after the first ten lines, to that of prayers II-IV: (a)aaaabaaaabbccddeeffggh(h).

The same prayer in the Passion de Ste-Geneviève (1360) is much less complicated, but follows the same basic pattern of rhyme and syllabification, i.e., octosyllabic verse with rhyming couplets. The major difference is the alternately diminishing length of each of the three individual prayers (vv. 1115-71):

```
Doulz pere, a toy, roy celestre, 1115
Pour ce c'est chose qui puit estre
Que je n'aie pas ceste mort,
Qui ja jusques au cuer me mort,
Que toute fait ma char douloir;
Et nonpourquant le mien vouloir
Ne facez mie, mez le tien,
Qu'a ton plaisir du tout me tien.
Tout prest est le mien espris
De mort souffrir pour l'esperis,
Mai ma char sy ce deult forment,
Car elle attend cruël tourment.
Encor te prie je, beauz doulz peres, 1138
Se le tourment qui sy m'esmaie
Ne puis eschapper que ne l'aie,
Que tu faces ta volenté
Beau pere, de ce grief tourment 1154
```
The evolution in stanza size, as well as in rhyme and syllabic schemes, is significant. In Michel’s *Passion* (1486) Christ begins His prayer in decasyllabic verse. The poetic structure of prayers II-IV is less complex and grandiose. The rhyme scheme is simplified to rhyming couplets as the intensity of the prayers increases (cf. prayer II), and the same becomes more complicated as the intensity decreases following the comforting of the Messiah by the Archangel Michael (cf. prayer V).

It is the language and poetic structure in the Gethsemane prayers that is most striking. Probably the most pronounced characteristic of the prayer found in the Angers *Passion* (1486) is its oppositional character. Christ begins his prayer by addressing the *pere puissant*, *createur souverain* (v. 19850), including in the opening lines vocabulary of height and "otherness", such as *cieulx* (v. 19851), *hault* (v. 19852) and *couraige* (v. 19912), opposing it with *filz*, *humble*, *humain* (v. 19853), and *crains* (v. 19912).
Here, the author establishes a debate format. In line 19929 Christ prays, "En moy sens le plus for debat . . . ". Christ is at war, albeit, within Himself—the rebellious flesh against the willing Spirit (e.g., raison subvaint, mais le corps y rebelle [v. 19882], la grand paour qui me maistrie [v. 19908], raison qui s'i vueille soubzmettre [v. 19935]). It is at this juncture in the passion that the dual nature of Christ becomes a divided entity.

Within the first (I) of the five prayer sections, adjectives predominate the syntax and message relayed by the parole of Christ in these final moments just prior to His death. Adjectives of a similar semiotic field are numerous. The majority are marked rhyme-wise for masculinity, with endings such as -ain, -eux, -er, and -oux. Among others one finds the following:

- souverain
- primerain
- engoissé
- grevain
- hault
- amer
- doux
- piteux
- humain

The list of words that convey the depth of the struggle in which the Protagonist finds Himself is slightly different in the second and third stanzas. There the semiotic field is one of the sens. Most of
the repeated words have feminine markings, such as

-elle, -e, and -e. Among them are:

cruelle | mortelle | fresle
frelle | paine | ame
sensualité

Distance, already established between Christ and the world, is now established between Christ and the Father. It is the flesh (i.e., the senses) that is given linguistic precedence. Adjectives such as cruelle, mortelle, and fresle give the audience the distinct impression that the flesh is now alone in its

35. Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg" Renaissance Quarterly 39 (1986): 423, says concerning the dual nature and sexuality of Christ, "Not only was Christ enfleshed with flesh from a woman; his own flesh did womanly things: it bled, it bled food, and it gave birth." Cf. Leo Steinberg, The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1984). Steinberg makes the case that Christ's sexuality was the confirmation of His "humanation": "Therefore, to profess that God once embodied himself in a human nature is to confess that the eternal, there and then, became mortal and sexual. Thus understood, the evidence of Christ's sexual member serves as the pledge of God's humanation" (13). Bynum, in her response to Sternberg, claims that Christ's sexuality is more female than male, as it is a nourishing, fleshly Christ that is seen in the Gospels, i.e., the Mother of Mothers, his sexual member serving only to remind us of His suffering (i.e., circumcision): "... [the] holy church is our mother because she cares for and nurtures us and that Mary the Virgin is even more our mother because she bears Christ. But Christ is mother most of all" (417).
cosmic struggle against evil and death. The recurrence of words of height, such as cieulx, souverain, and hault serve to further distance the incarnate deity from the transcendent God, the Father. Not only has Christ physically separated Himself from the world and from His disciples, but now He is separating internally: flesh from divinity (i.e., female from male).

At a different level (i.e., that of the audience-actor relationship), it is Jean Michel’s choice of words that allows his modern reader to identify with the medieval spectator striving to share fully in the sufferings of her/his Redeemer. To do so, he uses such words as sens, redoubte and sautelle, verbal expressions of sensually-oriented humanity, descended from fallen Adam sensing separation from deity. This separation is made most vividly expressed in the following passage (vv. 19949-58):

La sensuelle volonté
et toutes les basses parties
sont en moy de craintce esbaÿes.
L'umanité non confortee
creaint la passion presente
en l'humaine apprehension.
Mais la plus haulte porcion
de mon ame pas ne la fuyt,
car de la deite fruýt,
et veult obeyr a rayson.

Here we see the flesh-spirit opposition (a dual-natured character in crisis, i.e., Christ) quite vividly: la
sensuelle volonté, les basses parties, de crainte
esbayes, l'humanité, l'humaine apprehension (vv. 19949-54) and la plus haute porcion, mon ame, la déité,
rayson, obeyr (vv. 19955-58).

Additionally, a unique element is present in religious theater of this kind: faith. Medieval playwrights composed dramas "... not from the ashes of the past, but from the warmth of their faith and the desire to give it a visible, dynamic expression."36

At times, during the Gethsemane prayer, the spectator is given the distinct impression that the dialogic becomes monologic and vice versa. At times Christ is talking clearly to the Father, but because there is no response, the dialogue appears to be a monologue. Yet, readers of these plays must remember that the medieval viewing audience is able to also see the Father on His throne in Paradise, and Christ

simultaneously. In Christ’s first prayer, for example, the dialogic "conversation" (i.e., prayer) is directed vertically to the pere through use of apostrophe, which becomes highly intense (La Passion d’Angers [1486], vv. 20107-16):

O divine essence
qui ma doleance
et mon eloquence
voulés par vostre sapience
considerer,
je prens asseurance
quant j’ay cognoissance
de vostre puissance
et vueil en toute obeissance
mort endurer.

The rhyme here (aaaabaaaab) is unusual, though appropriate for such a moment of anguish. Notice the repetition of the phoneme /ans/, which gives the impressions one is hearing, or feeling, sens— a word being intensified by what is being visualized on stage. This is even more likely to have an effect upon a medieval audience when we remember that medieval minds

37. See Gustave Cohen’s excellent work dealing with the staging of, not only the Gethsemane scene, but medieval Passion theater in general, Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1951).

38. Cf. the Passion d’Arras (1414), vv. 11689-90; 11692-93; 11694-95; 11697.
were "... d'ailleurs plus exercés que les nôtres à l'art des interprétations subtiles."\textsuperscript{39}

The Gethsemane prayer in the Breton Passion (ca. 1490)\textsuperscript{40} affords the spectator/reader yet another interesting aspect of the internal struggle of Christ. In this particular play the struggle is presented dialogically in a give-and-take between Jesus and the allegorical figure of Raison. The first prayer is addressed to the Father (i.e. \textit{mon bon et saint Pere, créateur du monde}),\textsuperscript{41} but Raison interrupts and takes it upon herself to explain to Christ the \textit{pour quoi} of the crucifixion He is about to experience:

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\textsuperscript{40} Cohen feels that, due to influence of the Jean Michel's Passion (1486) on the Passion Bretonne, there is no way it can be dated prior to 1486. Cf. \textit{Études d'histoire du théâtre du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance} (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), 388.

\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Le Grand Mystère de Jésus}, 65.
Il faut que tu finisses par mourir pour l'homme, et que tu ailles au tombeau. Oui, tu mourras impitoyablement, car tu as été tiré d'Adam. La froide mort t'attend, c'est dans l'ordre, et personne ne t'en sauvera.42

Jesus responds that he is indeed aware of what he must do, but the point is that "... moi seul je suis sans tache; je n'ai jamais péché, je n'ai point mérité le blâme ... ; je ne dois donc pas mourir, puisque je suis pur de tout péché et que je ne puis le commettre."43 Christ and Raison continue to acknowledge the truth of each statement made by the other, and to offer counterarguments introduced by the conjunction mais (hoguen, in Breton). The passage concludes with Raison winning this "internal" debate in cool, objective fashion: "Il faut que tu portes une

42. Ret eu ez mirvy en divez
Eguyt den, hac ezy en bez;
Hep truez da finvez vezó,
Rac maz out a Adam lamet;
Dit an marv yen so ordrenet,
Na den en bet nez remedo
(Ibid., 65)

43. Hoguen me hep muy so dinam;
Ne pechis, ne dellezis blam,
Eguyt bout a Adam lamet;
Mervell quet oarse ne dleaff,
Pan ouf a pep pechet net scaff,
Na perpetraff ne allaff quet.
(Ibid., 63-65)
peine qui ne finira qu'à la mort la plus sanglante." This assertion of Raison's victory in the debate is immediately followed by an angelic consolation of Christ. The prayer in the Angers Passion (1486) intensifies to the point that "Vcy sue sanc par le visage" (v. 19943). Also, in the Passion Isabeau (1398) the Virgin Mary asks Gabriel: "O Gabriel, je te commande et de toute l'auctorité que j'ay sur toy..."
que tu veilles recueillir toutes les gouttes de sang qui de présent yssent du précieux corps de mon fils ou que tu me portes là où il est, afin que je puisse de ma bouche baiser et succier toute la terre ou sont cheutes ses dignes gouttes de sang. Et que je puisse prendre celle terre de son précieux sang et l'emporter avec moi (vv. 1609-18). Gabriel mentions taking the drops of blood and presenting them before the Father (je les ay presentees a Dieu, votre pere, en la presence de toute la court celestielle, vv. 1644-46). After His prayer, Christ ... se leva de celle place où il avoit fait la tierce priere et s'en ala vers ses disciples en tordrant son visage qu'il avoit tout couvert de ses grosses goutes de sang qu'il avoit tant sué. Et peut estre qu'il se lava en l'eaue du torrent donc le jardin estoit environnés où il estoient (vv. 1686-92).

Christ alludes to the awful physical and mental anguish of the moment, further highlighting the separation process, i.e. His internal fluids begin to leave His body of flesh (Passion d'Angers [1486], vv.
Regarde les goutes couler  
de sueur penible a merveille,  
qui de tout le corps me depart

Note the detached manner in which Christ speaks of His body and His blood (i.e., use of the definite article le, v. 18797, instead of mon). It is at this point that the language of His prayer is presented to the audience in metonymic thrusts of desperate anguish and appeals for assistance from the Father. In verse 20053 of Michel's Passion (1486) we see the metaphoric "o" used in the prayer, which has the effect not only of intensifying the anguish, but of linguistically marking

47. "As scholars such as James Marrow and Lionel Rothkrug have recently shown, blood became an increasingly powerful symbol in late medieval art and devotion. But blood in this period became more than symbol. It literally appeared, on walls and wafers, hands and faces. Blood miracles proliferated. And they took place primarily in the bodies and the experiences of women. (. . .) Stigmatic women clearly saw themselves as imitating Christ's bleeding flesh both as it hung on the cross and as it was consecrated in the wafer. Indeed stigmata sometimes appeared as a result of taking communion. Thus it was women's bodies almost exclusively that bled as Christ bled, and this blood not only purified the woman of her sin but also saved her fellow Christians by substituting for the expiation they owed in purgatory. Holy women imitated Christ in their bodies: and Christ's similar bleeding and feeding body was understood as analogous to theirs" (Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," 423-24).
and intensifying the "prayer-ness" of the garden
divine/human dialogue. An interesting effect is
obtained by the poet's use of the word obeyr, the first
word of line 20055. After two lines beginning with "O"
(vv. 20053-54), Michel maintains the effect of
assonance by beginning a third line with obeyr. Again,
here is an example of phonemic (i.e., /o/) repetition
for effect. It is the nature of the language of prayer
that separates humanity from divinity. The repetition
of this "cry" (i.e., 0) highlights the moment in the
Passion where the Protagonist's humanity progressively
realizes this separation. The use of apostrophe serves
as an attempt by Christ to move the Father to action on
His behalf. Jonathan Culler states that "... the
function of apostrophe would be to make the objects of
the universe potentially responsive forces: forces
which can be asked to act or refrain from acting, or
even to continue behaving as they usually behave. The
apostrophizing poet identifies his universe as a world
of sentient forces." 48 Pierre Fontanier asks, "Mais
qu'est-ce qui peut donner lieu à l'Apostrophe? (...)

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48. Jonathan Culler, The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics,
Literature, Deconstruction (Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press, 1981), 139.
Ce n'est que le sentiment, et que le sentiment excité dans le coeur jusqu'à éclater et à se répandre au dehors, comme de lui-même ... comme l'expression d'une émotion vive ou profonde, comme l'élan spontané d'une âme fortement affectée."

Perhaps the recurrence of the phoneme /s/ (e.g., vv. 20056-57; 20107-15) is also used by the playwright as a device to help his viewing audience see and hear the departure of the very soul of Christ as it separates Itself from fear of torment and death to the will of the Father concerning the soteriological death of the Flesh on the Cross.

In conjunction with an intensely separation-oriented language Jean Michel uses a fluid versification. Christ's first prayer (I) begins in verses of ten syllables, while the rhyme is both poor and masculine. When He addresses His disciples, the versification becomes octosyllabic. His final prayers become octosyllabic as well. The more time Christ spends in prayer, the more His lines become self-addressed, i.e. addressed to His humanity. His

attention, both mental and sensual, is introverted. As a result, His address to surrounding humanity is of more enlivened pace—so is His address to the Self. The changes in language and versification are representative of the internal struggle between Christ's humanity and His divinity. It is as if a third person has entered the prayer dialogue-monologue and is "mediating" a debate, as if the words have become independent actors/agents.

In some passions much of the anguish seems to pale through use of language as well, such as one finds in lines 235-38 of the Passion de Roman (1470):

\[
Pere, si estoit tont plesir
Que tont calice ne fu pas —
Mes ill est ton pleysir!
Je te vodroit bien obeyr.
\]

Notice the effect that \textit{ill est ton pleysir} (v. 237) has on the reading (or viewing) of the Passion of Christ. The use of the indicative declaration, rather than use of a \textit{si}-clause followed by a statement of intent in a contrary-to-will context,\textsuperscript{50} as that used in many of the prayer passages of the various passions, a cool, submissive tone to the passage, unlike the turbulent,

\textsuperscript{50} See the Passion de Semur (1430), lines 6220 and 6231, in regards to the playwright's use of \textit{puis que}. 
heart-wrenching struggle we sense as we see/read Jean Michel's version. In verse 20126, Christ "asks", in the form of an imperative, the Father to conform Him (me conforme) to the Father's will. The parallel passage in the Passion des Jongleurs (1243) reads: ne porquant li mien desirs, (. . .) , le teue volenté otroi (vv. 477-80).

The narrative passions, such as the Passion des Jongleurs (1243) and Le Livre de la Passion (ca. 1300), are different from Michel's account of the Gethsemane prayer. They are earlier paradramas, recited with use of gestures. Within the body of the works, there are frequent invocations to prayer, moments when the audience is enjoined to pray. The following excerpt is found in the Passion des Jongleurs ([1243], vv. 491-501):


De la paör que Dieus avoit.
Goutes de sanc sa char suoit
Si granz qu'aval son vis couroient,
Et jus a la terre chaioient.
Beau Sire Dieus, pour quoi soufroies
Se pour ce non que tu vouloies
Ceste angoisse, ceste dolor,
Ceste painne pour nostre amor.
Pour nous racheter de forfet
Que nostre premier pere ot fet.
Or se leva de s'oroison

The language of this passage is very similar to a
dramatic representation of the Passion, but the nous
(v. 499) and nostre (vv. 498 and 500) of this prayer
identify it not as the actual prayer of Christ to the
Father but of the jongleur, including his listening
audience as participants in the invocation (i.e., his
prayer of acknowledgement and confession). A good
portion of this passion is in direct discourse. At
this point in the recounting of Christ's final hours,
the storyteller and his audience are brought in
together as actors/agents, as the cause of Christ's
sufferings, pour (v. 499) identifying the reason for
His anguish. This passage serves also as a delineation
of purpose. The jongleur attempts, for the audience's
sake, to make sense of the suffering of Christ. At the

54. Grace Frank, "Vernacular Sources and an Old French
moment that the jongleur utters introductory words of prayer (Beau Sire Dieus, v. 495), the dramatic action becomes intensely mimetic by broadening to include himself and those that listen as part of the "mental" re-enactment of Christ's Passion, thus a "re-incarnation" of Christ Himself.

A similar effect is accomplished in Le Livre de la Passion (ca. 1300) by a different method. As the jongleur tells of the drops of blood falling as sweat 
qui desus la pierre cheoient (v. 555), he goes one step beyond the narrative, introducing the element of legend into his recitation. Consider the following excerpt (vv. 556-57): Pellerins qui i vont lez voient; N'est nus qui lez en puis oster. Here the language of legend becomes mixed with that of the Christian myth, 55

55. I use the word "myth" and "mythology", when speaking of the Christian myth, to denote conceptualizations of the beginning of historic Christianity. This term is not intended to comment on "truth" or lack thereof. In his article entitled "From the Sacred to the Profane," Alan Knight sees the Passion plays as "... dramatizations of the liturgical year and (...) thus reactualizations of the creation of the world and of the historical origins of the Christian community" (42). Bordier uses the same terminology as I when saying that, whereas most mystères prior to Michel explore Christian myth,
including the audience to a greater degree in the reality of the Passion. Women and men, according to legend, who had the good fortune to visit this extant geographical location, could see with their own eyes the stains caused by the drops of blood that fell during Christ's prayer, which cannot be removed from the stone. This serves principally to assert the truthfulness of the dramatic material under consideration. How must a typical medieval audience have reacted to discover that tangible traces of such a far-removed event, so holy and utterly important in Christian mythology, were available to the senses of present-day (i.e., medieval) man? Modern-day analogies may perhaps be found in the fascination with the Shroud of Turin, the "discovery" of the the remains of Noah's ark in Turkey, or the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Palestine. Whatever the reaction, this

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subordinating the word to the visual element of "play", Michel " . . . affranchit le texte et plie les données du mythe à une conception nouvelle de l'homme" ("Lectures du Palatinus," 36).

metalinguistic combination of word and visual property becomes "... the language of liturgy, dissolving time, superimposing past, present and future." 57

The Stage and Visual Re-creation

Staging and visual language (i.e., gestures, placement of actors, movement of actors) played an important role in distinguishing prayer scenes from common dialogic or monologic discourse. The Garden of Gethsemane and Mount of Olives were standard stage settings, a raised area on the stage to the spectator's left, near the area designated for God and the angels. According to Königson, it was theatrical tradition to place it at the foot of Paradise "... où sa place est commandée par les effets de nuées ... ". 58 The area was usually covered with greenery and raised slightly higher than the stage and lower than the first balcony.


The garden was located on the Mount of Olives, though, in the rhymed Bible of Macé de la Charité (ca. 1300) we read (vv. 29878-86):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dou mont Olivét descendi} & \quad \text{29880} \\
\text{Jhesus et vint en une ville} & \\
\text{Qui siët, ce nous dit l'évangile,} & \quad \text{29880} \\
\text{Au pié desoz en la vallée,} & \\
\text{Gesseméni est apelee.} & \\
\text{Gesseméni, cis nons se passe} & \\
\text{A entendre "vallée grasse",} & \quad \text{29885} \\
\text{Et là en autelle meniere} & \\
\text{A il fet autelle priere.} & \\
\end{align*}
\]

The exact geographical location is unimportant to playwright and audience. Though Christ prayed at other times (e.g., the Last Supper, the resurrection of Lazarus), this is the place, the locus amoenus—the designated place of prayer. It is the visual language of posturing for prayer that establishes the ambiance for prayer as the physical properties on stage set the


context for the drama. It is all part of the "growing emphasis on church ritual and the visualization of prayer that marked the artistic and religious climate of the late Middle Ages."\textsuperscript{61} The bended knee, the lowering of the body to the ground, the joined hands, angels singing:\textsuperscript{62} all communicating to the audience that the dialogue or monologue taking place is distinct from the many lines of dramatic monologue and dialogue heard and visually witnessed prior to this moment. This is a special moment. It is the moment of absolute reckoning with the Passion's purpose: the soteriological sacrifice of Christ.

In \textit{Le Livre de la Passion} (ca. 1300) we read:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Desus la roche a nus genous} / \textit{S'ajenoula Jhesus le dous,} / \textit{Encontre le ciel jointes mains,} /... (vv. 545-47). Two very visual semiotic elements are added to the narrative, further reiterating to the audience that Christ is about to enter into prayer: Christ kneels (\textit{s'ajenoula}), He looks heavenward (\textit{encontre le

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\textsuperscript{62} Peter Durbin and Lynette Muir, eds., \textit{The "Passion de Semur"}, xxii.
}
ciel) and He folds His hands (jointes mains). This is the position most often portrayed by Passion artists. This is also similar to the positioning of Guillaume in the Couronnement de Louis. There, as here, the protagonist physically positions himself (and, in the case of Christ, physically relocates by a significant distance) resulting in a change of visual focus. Guillaume looks to the east (l'orient), whereas Christ looks encontre le ciel. Other passions add their own vocabulary to this especially dramatic moment. The Passion Bretonne (ca. 1490) indicates that "il tomba soudain sur la terre nue, en songeant à son sort cruel et inique, déjà en proie aux angoisses de la mort dont il mourut." The Passion de Biard (ca. 1470) informs

63. See Émile Mâle, L'art religieux du XIIᵉ au XVIIIᵉ siècle (Paris: Armand Colin, 1945), 96-103. Artists now painted "... l'image de ce qu'on voyait au théâtre" (102).

64. Cf. Le Couronnement de Louis, vv. 687-88.

65. Le Grand Mystère de Jésus, 64. The original Breton version reads:

    A coese tizmat
    Oar ann douar plat,
    Ouz coufhat e cas,

(Footnote continues on next page)
viewers that Christ's prayer is one of great emotional torment (pitieusement, v. 78).

A distinguishing characteristic of Jean Michel's craft is his effective use of simultaneous action interwoven into the dialogue of the play. In Königson's *La Représentation d'un mystère à Valenciennes* (1547), the reader is given a detailed account of staging procedures used in the presentation of what is probably an edited version of Greban's or Michel's *Passion*, presented in twenty-five days. It is on the nineteenth day of presentation that we read:

... comme le Seigneur Jesus fist sa prière au Jardin dolivet ou il sua son sang et eaue quon voyait degouster appertement de son corps. Item come lange le

(Footnote continued from previous page)

Peter Meredith and John Tailby describe the opening of the Gethsemane prayer scene in the Lucerne *Passion* (ca. 1500) in *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the Later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982), 171: "The Savior goes right up to the Mount of Olives, prostrates himself in the shape of the cross, lies still for some time, gets up onto his knees, and with upraised hands looks up into heaven, ..."
vint conforter. Item fut veu come a la parolle du
Seigneur les gendarmes cheurent a la Renverse, come
Judas le vint baiser come il fut liet et prins. 66 The
simultaneous staging of the Gethsemane prayer and the
treachery of Judas was an elaborate feat, necessitated
by single-stage theater. The dichotomies of good and
ever within the prayer become strikingly obvious as a
result of effective staging. Consider the staging plan
reproduced by Königson: 67

Fig. 3

66. Königson, La représentation d'un mystère de la
Passion à Valenciennes en 1547, 124.

67. Ibid., 125.
Paradise (P) in Medieval Passion theater is commonly on the left, and the place where Judas has betrayed the Messiah to the high priest (i.e., maison de Cayphe) is on the right, each standing in geographical opposition to the other. It is to the right of the stage that Hell is usually found with its demons, smoke, fire and gaping mechanical jaws. Even within the garden, which is the stage location nearest to Paradise, there is a division of the garden area.

68. Cf. Gustave Cohen, Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du Moyen Age, 81-82.

69. Ibid., 92-99. Cohen gives a full description of Hell, the gaping jaws, fire, mechanical thunder, etc. Remnants of these staging devices are also found in later theater (cf. Molière's Don Juan). Also, see Königson, Représentation d'un mystère (125) and his discussion of the elaborate Hell of the Actes des Apôtres in Bourges (1536). There he mentions serpent tongues, fire, smoke, and a Hell capable of holding up to 19 persons at a time. In Il quaderno di segreti d'un regista provenzale del Medioevo: Note per la messa in scena d'una Passione, ed. Alessandro Vitale-Brovarone (Alexandria: Edizioni Dell'Orso, 1984), 51, we read: "E poi si farà la cosa ancor più divertente a for loro gettare fuoco dalla bocca; bisogna che le maschere questo comportino, che bisogna che fra la bocca e la faccia di quello che la . . . porterà ci sia uno spazio separato che tolleri il fuoco, di dimensione che possa tenere due o tre carboni, e che quello spazio bisogna che sia tutto coperto di fango dalla parte di dentro affinché il fuoco non bruci la maschera" (vv. 1-17).
into Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives. The lieu where the actual treason takes place is itself nearly at the pinnacle of evil (i.e., l'enfer) to the right of the stage. Note also the visual progression from geographical locations of lesser to greater evil in the procession from the brasier (indicated as #5), Anne's house (#3) and Caiaphas's house (#4).

As Christ and the disciples advance across the stage toward Gethsemane in the direction of Paradise, Judas advances toward Caiaphas's house (#4). As Christ and the disciples (i.e., the archetypes of good) move toward God the Father, Judas (i.e., the archetype of evil) moves symbolically toward his father, the Devil. Finally, as Christ prays (i.e., addresses) to His Father, Judas addresses those seeking the arrest of the

70. The Bible also makes the distinction. In Mt. 26:30 we read "... they left for the Mount of Olives." Then, in verse 36, "Then Jesus came with them to a plot of land called Gethsemane, ..." (New Jerusalem Bible). Cf. Königson, La Représentation d'un mystère, 245.

71. Runnals makes a convincing argument for the use of lieu instead of mansion, stating that the latter may not be used to denote a structure, as there are only two examples in one manuscript, in one very early play (i.e., La Seinte Resurrection), and that the former may refer either to a station or structure, in "'Mansion' and 'Lieu': Two Technical Terms in Medieval French Staging?" French Studies 35 (1981): 392.
Following Christ's initial prayer posturing (*Angers* [1486], narrative lines between vv. 19449-50), Saint John establishes this as a positioning for battle (*la chair assault, l'esprit defend*, v. 19454), the attention of the playwright, and certainly the audience, is shifted to the temple where Caiaphas, Nason, Anne and others of the Jewish élite are discussing the treason of Christ and its accomplishment by one of the disciples, i.e., Judas. The entire plot is discussed, planned and the execution begun before the attention of the audience is allowed to return to Christ and His prayer in the garden, beginning on line 19850, introduced by a narrative line: *Et Jesus est seul en oraison.*

As Peter, James and John follow Christ to the Mount of Olives (#1), according to the Valenciennes play (1547), Malcourant and his men head for the *Jardin dolivet* (#5). Judas joins them and, grabbing a lantern, takes his place at the head of the procession (a). With Christ on the Mount, to the left of the stage, and the advancing hoard of captors to the right of the stage, the moment becomes dramatically tense as

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the suffering Christ in anguish and the impending capture advance to the climactic arrest in the garden.

In the Passion de Ste-Geneviève (1360) it is not until the prayer is finished that a narrative line indicates that Judas et les soldats s'assemblent; lorsqu'ils seront prêts, ils s'approcheront de Jésus (between vv. 1171-72). After Christ's final direct address to the Father and the ministering visit of the angels, He awakens the sleeping disciples and tells them to prepare for the moment of His arrest, coinciding with the arrival of His captors at the entrance to the garden.

The entire staging of this scene is the outplay of the war metaphor evident in the language of the prayer. Not only is Christ at war spiritually with the flesh and the cosmic forces of darkness (i.e., Satan), but His temporal, visible enemy, Judas, approaches as if going to war, followed by armed men, in the middle of the night, intent on catching his enemy (i.e., Christ) in a moment of extreme vulnerability.

What information profitable pour nostre ame is being conveyed by the prayer of Christ in Gethsemane? Much of what one reaps didactically from the various passions depends on one's level of reading. The Gethsemane prayer found, for instance, in the Passion
d'Angers (1486), teaches, at a very literal level, 1) the importance of prayer (vv. 19891-96; 19919-20), 2) the complex nature of Christ (vv. 19853-55; 19864; 19866-68; 19882-85; 19908; 19912; 19929; 19936; 19940; 19949-54; 19955-58; 20107), 3) the existence of an ongoing, eternal spiritual struggle among the forces of the cosmos (vv. 19908; 19929; 19972), 4) the availability of divine assistance in spiritual struggle (vv. 19869; 20119-128) and 5) the sovereignty of God and the predestination of events leading to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as essential to the scheme of salvation history (vv. 19850-52; 19881; 19886; 19907; 19916; 19913-14). At a more practical level, the Passion plays "were dramatizations of the liturgical year and were thus reactualizations of the creation of the word and of the historical origins of the Christian community." 73

73. Alan Knight, "From the Sacred to the Profane," Tréteaux 1 (1978): 42.
Summary

The Gethsemane prayer of Christ represents the zenith of prayer language and structure in the history of French literature. Like the prayers of the epic hero of the 11th and 12th centuries, Christ sought divine guidance and assistance from the Father. Following a pattern established early, the playwrights blend the content of the prayers (i.e., theme, language, poetic structure) with verse to be spoken before a viewing audience (i.e., staging) and created a vehicle through which truth, the hidden truth of the Self, could be transmitted (i.e., didacticism) in an understandable, though elaborately dramatic, fashion. Though perhaps seeming simplistic and dry to the modern reader, this prayer serves as a Biblically-based archetype of medieval French prayer.

It is in Gethsemane that the spectator of the Passion (and passion) sees her/himself mirrored in the Protagonist, who Himself is in process of realizing the full implications of the Incarnation. Christ, through geste and parole, within a re-created ahistorical environ (i.e., the stage), magnifies the mind of the Man-God/God-Man. It is a mind, in a male body, that is subjected to internal feelings that, as a result, cause
him to divulge that part of all humankind that is frail and obliged to submit. Rather than the voice of epic hero, the audience is allowed to see and hear the voice of a Christ overcome, a Christ now visibly exposed as divided and weak—as God and man, male and female.

Thus the Gethsemane prayer allows full identification of humanity with the sacrificial Provision sent by God to redeem it. There is now a reunion of maleness and femaleness, separated at the creation and fall of humankind. Now, in Christ, humanity is portrayed as a unity: all, male and female, suffer with the man, Christ. Caroline Walker Bynum concludes:

Theologians and natural philosophers assumed considerable mixing of the genders. From the patristic period on, those who saw the female as representing flesh while the male represented spirit wrote of real people as both. To say this is not to deny that men were seen as superior in rationality and strength. Clearly they were. But existing, particular human beings were understood as having both feminine and masculine characteristics. (. . . .) Thus not only did devotional writers mix gender images in describing actual men and women; they also used female images to attribute an inferiority that would—exactly because it was inferior—be made superior by God. 74

CONCLUSION

Quelle chose est orayson? Orayson est un eslevement de pensée à Dieu par religieuse et humble affection pour parvenir à gloire. Orayson a comme deux regards: l'un est à la miséricorde ou libéralité de Dieu, qui peut et scet et veult aider humaine creature; l'autre est à sa fragilité, misère et nécessité.
---Jean Gerson (ca. 1404)

The evolution of French medieval drama is possibly nowhere more pronounced than in the domain of religious theater, comprised of sub-genres such as the mystères, miracles, and saint plays. As religious and secular thought evolved from the era of the great epics to that of early Renaissance theater, so did the content and emphases of literary expression within the bounds of a Biblically-based dramatic genre. "Drama in the 15th century reflects the aspirations, preoccupations and limitations of the society which portrays itself
therein.¹ Prayer itself, as a viable medium of
discourse, changed progressively from a primarily
didactic recitation of commonly-believed Biblical
events to a dramatic device of diversified structure
and purpose, though probably still didactic in
texture.² The prayers in early medieval French
literature and drama have different emphases. For
example, the steady increase of attention given to Mary
corresponds with the increasing infusion of mariology
into the dogma of the Church. The mystères of the late
15th and early 16th centuries seem to be more
Christocentric, addressing major themes, such as the
Trinity, the mystery of the the Incarnation and the
dual nature of Christ, sin, redemption, and the
practice of prayer itself.

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¹ Jonathan Beck, "Ideological Drama in 15th Century

² "[P]rayer within drama must allow a Christian
lesson to predominate, whatever the locale or period of
the story." Perry J. Gethen, "The Staging of Prayer
in French Theatre of the Seventeenth Century," Papers
on French Seventeenth Century Literature 9, no. 16
In early epic literature the Biblical-creed-narrative prayer, among other purposes, served to define the heroes who prayed them. Their inclusion in poetic and prosaic works enhanced the personal standing of the epic hero—being one of many, dating back to those of early Biblical historical records. The praying person, identified with a commonly accepted and practiced act of piety, is thus closely identified with all who participate in dialogue with deity and with those who are victorious as a result of such dialogue. The prayers themselves inspired the religious faith of the viewing, or listening, audience through their provision of examples of God's deliverance in the past and the assumption of His present capabilities to do the same.

Such strict reliance on supernatural deliverance is greatly tempered in the romances. A greater sense

3. Marie Pierre Koch asks the following question: "Does it not follow logically, then, that the biblical-creed-narrative type prayer belonged to the devotional life of the people of France and Spain and was not an artificial creation of the poets?" An Analysis of the Long Prayers in Old French Literature with Special Reference to the "Biblical-Creed-Narrative" Prayers, The Catholic University of America Studies in Romance Languages and Literatures, 19 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1940; reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1969), 181.
of trustworthiness is given the protagonist (i.e., the knight). His reasonings, revealed via a discourse of prayer, monologic in nature, are more indirectly God-oriented and much more confident of the human element and its potential for success. The miracles further readjust the focus of prayer by directing it to Mary, the mother of Christ, rather than directly to God/Christ Himself—Mary, the traditional symbol of humanity deified. She is perhaps more closely identified with humanity than Christ Himself, as she was once fully human.

The Passion plays (i.e., mystères), expanded narratives largely based on Biblically-recorded events, necessarily contain extensive prayer passages. This is not to say the dramatis persona therein engaged in prayer simply because her/his Biblical referent did, but also because dramatic prayer becomes a vehicle for the playwright to narratively expand otherwise cursory Scriptural excerpts into logically developed essential scenes that contribute to the Passion's narrative
sequence. The dramatists likewise made use of the "voice" of prayer to reflect the "voice" of a frequently-shifting theological, philosophical, and/or societal paradigm. Drama was "an essential part of the rhythm of life, the constantly recurring rhythm of fast and feast, constraint and release, work and play." The evolution of the female voice, for example, is certainly indicative of a changing view of women in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French society. Whereas the early passions showed women to be the source of responsibility for weakness and the original sin, the later plays clearly delineate a shared culpability, both male and female— a role indicative of increased female strength and moral character. What

4. "What was important for the playwrights, however, was to be true to the literal or historical sense of the scriptures as interpreted by the medieval exegetical tradition," Alan Knight, "Processional Theater in Lille in the Fifteenth Century," Fifteenth-Century Studies 13 (1988): 355. Furthermore, of the processional plays themselves, Knight adds that they "functioned not only to teach historical and moral lessons, but also to reaffirm the relationships between leaders and people and to reinforce their identity as future citizens of the heavenly city" (358).

5. Alan Knight, Aspects of Genre in Late Medieval French Drama (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 121.
was formerly relegated to theological debate now serves as substance for prayer dialogue and monologue, which in turn serves the didactic purpose of the medieval playwright. Subtle differences are incorporated into the expression of the male voice as well. Rather than prayers of the heroic epic male, in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century *passions*, we see maleness humbled and openly admissive of its own frailty.

Prayers found in the Biblical record serve as creative springboards for writers of medieval dramaturgy. The prayers of Christ, for example, are fleshed out in the fifteenth-century *passions* to emphasize and embellish, i.e. to emphasize the dual nature of Christ and to allow the reader to visually and aurally experience the anguish of Christ, reported quite matter-of-factly in some Gospel accounts.\(^6\) In

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6. "By the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, with the development of the mystères [emphasis mine], there is a visible change in style in the presentation of the action proper. The separate episodes in the life of Christ are magnified by being placed in a cosmic framework and carefully surrounded by peripheral events until they form one vast whole. Such enlarging and emphasis, such aggrandizement, can perhaps best be described by the term used in art history for a parallel development in architecture:

(Footnote continues on next page)
such cases, prayer becomes an emotional impetus for edification through spiritual identity. The discourse of prayer serves to reinforce the concept of a listening and responsive deity. During moments of dialogic prayer, as in the case of Longinus, insight is transmitted as to the personality of Biblical personages—actual people, like the spectator, who commune with a God that is visible (to the spectator) and a God that hears.

(Footnote continued from previous page)


7. In his introduction to the Breton passion, Hersard de la Villemarqué comments on the emotional fervor expended at performances of various passions: "... partout j'ai entendu parler des magnificences du Grand Mystère, des sanglots qu'il faisait pousser, des regrets qu'on éprouve de ne plus le voir représenter. Un mot frappant, devenu proverbial, peint bien l'effet qu'il produisait: «Les foules y vont en chantant et s'en reviennent en pleurant»," Le Grand Mystère de Jésus. Drame breton du moyen âge avec une étude sur le théâtre chez les nations celtiques (Paris: Didier, 1865), lxxvi. He also speaks of a Celtic legend that told of "...un chef irlandais [qui] devint fou de douleur au récit de la Passion" (lxxxvii).
Monologic prayer—most instances of which occur in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century plays—serves a dual purpose: to engage the gaze of the audience and to divulge the inner character of a known persona. Mary Magdalene, especially in the Angers Passion (1486), directs her dramatic energy toward the viewing audience. This is as a result of a direct dialogic encounter with deity (i.e., the Christ), but the major intent of the prayer is communication with the audience. Herein lies the rudiments of a developing individualism (i.e., self-ism) observed in dramatic literature toward the end of the Middle Ages. "Seul demeure comme point de rencontre cet individualisme commun à toutes les recherches de la fin du Moyen Age, politiques et intellectuelles, religieuses et artistiques. C'est le signe d'une époque, un fait de mentalité observable."^8

Wherein, then, lies the evolution? At several levels. The first is the quantitative expansion of language. From the Arras Passion (1414) to that of

Jean Michel (1486), the dialogic and monologic encounters with deity literally explode in frequency and in content. Secondly, there is a departure from strict adherence to the Scriptural canon. The prayers in the later passions embellish, often unsubstantiatedly, their canonical source. Acceptance of this practice was confirmed at the Council of Sens (Paris, February 3–October 9, 1528), which gave license to writers of religious drama saying, "La Foi n'est pas seulement dans l'Écriture mais elle est également dans la Tradition" (article 5), and that people should believe "même ce qui n'est pas expressément dans l'Écriture pourvu que l'Eglise catholique l'affirme . . . car tout n'est pas dans l'Écriture. Tout ce que le Christ nous a dit n'est pas dans les Evangiles."9 Thirdly, there are subtle philosophical, societal, and theological shifts seen in the language of prayer. Paul Zumthor puts it quite aptly: "De tous les arts, le théâtre est sans doute le plus réceptif aux changements de structure sociale, et le plus révélateur

As the theater mirrors the changes of its environment, so do the individual components of which the theater is comprised (i.e., its various levels of discourse). The passions embody the evolution of medieval Christian France. As the dramatic prowess of playwrights and the astuteness of audiences developed, evidenced by the multiplicity of religious dramas being composed and remaniés, especially during the second half of the fifteenth century, so did the need for more finely-attuned prayer dialogue and monologue within the plays.

Prayer, therefore, became a highly susceptible component to evolutionary forces at work within French society and literature. Prayer is language, but it is dramatic language—language originating with people that "functioned not only to teach historical and moral lessons, but also to reaffirm the relationships between leaders and people and to reinforce their identity as future citizens of the heavenly city."11 It is an

element, common to all, that speaks communally the most forcibly and directly. "C'est bien là ce qui fait, en définitive, la spécificité de cette littérature médiévale dont la fascination ne cesse de s'exercer sur nous." 12

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