

THE LATE TWELFTH-CENTURY KNIGHTLY ETHIC
IN NORTH-WESTERN EUROPE IN LIFE and IN LITERATURE

A Master's Thesis

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To Zelal

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The Institute of Economics and Social Sciences
of
Bilkent University

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in

THE DEPARTMENT OF
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BİLKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA

September 2008

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in History.

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ABSTRACT

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By the end of the twelfth-century, a new type of literature had come into being in North-western Europe, combining an older warrior ethic with the newly formed refined culture of the courts. This literature centred on a knightly ethic that was presumed to have been practiced by King Arthur and his knights sitting at the legendary Round table. In the various examples of this literature in different genres, this knightly ethic interacted with and attempted to influence the real knights of the twelfth century. Because these works embodied many fictional elements in their nature, they have generally been disregarded by historians as masking or distorting the everyday reality with an idealistic approach. This study aims to discuss how this interaction between this knightly ethic, promoted by the literature, and the knights of real life worked. By using evidence both from fictional and non-fictional works of the period, it tries to see the similarities between the fact and the fiction, and the sometimes common perceptions expressed by both fictional and factual narratives. This thesis reaches the conclusion that twelfth-century knights did come to regulate

their behaviour within limits set by this knightly ethic and that, to an extent, they learned to do so from the literary works of the period. However, at the same time, to varying degrees, those fictional narratives were inspired and influenced by the actual social practices of the knights.

Keywords: Chivalry, courtesy, courtly love, chivalric literature, knights, twelfth century, romance, literature.

ÖZET

GERÇEK YAŞAMDA ve EDEBİYATTA
GEÇ ONİKİNCİ YÜZYIL KUZEY BATI AVRUPA'SINDA
ŞÖVALYELİK ETİĞİ,
Keskin, Ayşegül
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12. yüzyılın sonuna doğru, Kuzey-batı Avrupa'da asırlardır süregelen bilindik savaşı etiğini yeni şekillenmekte olan rafine saray kültürüyle birleştiren yeni bir edebiyat türü oluşmaya başlamıştır. Bu edebiyat, Kral Arthur ve efsanevi yuvarlak masa şövalyelerinin uyguladığı varsayılan bir şövalye etiğini konu etmekteydi. Değişik edebi janrlarda çok çeşitli örneklerine rastladığımız bu tür, 12. yüzyıl şövalyesi ile karşılıklı bir etkileşim içinde gelişerek gerçek şövalye figürünü etkilemeye de girişmiştir. Bu edebi gelenek, içinde birçok kurmaca ögeyi de barındırdığından genellikle tarihçiler tarafından gerçeği yanlış yansıttığı bazen de gölgelediği gerekçesiyle göz ardı edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, çağın edebi ürünleri tarafından lanse edilen şövalyelik ülküsü ve gerçek şövalye figürü arasındaki etkileşimin nasıl vuku bulduğunu araştırmaktadır. Dönemin kurgusal ve kurgusal olmayan yazılı eserlerinden örnekler kullanarak gerçek ve edebiyat arasındaki benzerlikleri ve ortak algıları görmeyi amaçlar. Bu tez, bütün bu incelemeler

sonucunda 12. yüzyılda şövalyelerin davranışlarını bir şövalye etiği sınırları çerçevesinde sınırlamaya başladıkları ve bir ölçüde de bunu dönemin edebiyat eserlerinde öğrendikleri sonucuna varır. Ancak aynı zamanda, bu kurmaca anlatılar da şövalyelerin günlük yaşamından ilham almış ve etkilenmişlerdir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Şövalyelik, şövalye edebiyatı, saray kültürü, 12. Yüzyıl, şövalye, edebiyat, romans.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

And the gentleman took the sword, girded it on him, and kissed him and said that in giving him the sword he had conferred on him the highest order that God had set forth and ordained: that is, the order of knighthood, which must be maintained without villainy.¹

Chrétien de Troyes, known as the father of romance, composed these words in his *Perceval or The Story of the Grail*, which is supposed to have been written around 1180.² This short quotation can give us some good hints about the order of knighthood at that time. First of all, it suggests that by the end of the twelfth century, knighthood had, from a certain point of view, come to be the highest order of feudal society's three orders, and that the knighting ceremony gave the knight the license of this order. Besides, one can also deduce that this order had its own rules that were supposed to be followed faithfully. The gentleman who is dubbing Perceval also hints that knighthood had religious connotations because it was

¹ "Et li prodrom l'espee a prise/Se li ceint et si le beisa,/Et dit que donee li a/ la plus haute ordre avoec l'espee/Que Dex a fete et comandee./ C'est l'ordre de chevalerie/ Qui doit estre sans vilenie," Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Conte du Graal* in *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Daniel Poirion (Paris, 1994) ll. 1632-38 ; Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Chronicles*, trans. William W. Kibler (Penguin, 1991), 402.

² William W. Kibler, "Introduction" in Chrétien de Troyes, *Arthurian Chronicles*, 5.

ordained by God. The knighthood which had attracted all these things to itself by the late twelfth century had lacked any of them before the eleventh century; it had also then been far from the highest order of society.

The literary sources of the period draw us a certain stereotype of a knight who is noble, brave, elegant in manners and in appearance, and faithfully devoted to God. This thesis will analyze how this image corresponded to the real knightly figure and its representation in more conventional historical sources. Before starting to discuss this, it would be useful to have a look at the development of knighthood and the knightly ethic up until the early twelfth century.

By looking at what knighthood meant in the previous centuries, one can easily talk about a considerable rise in the status of knighthood; it suggested no more than a mounted soldier before the eleventh century and perhaps even for much of that century. There is no doubt that the emergence of chivalry as a sublime ethical code, adopted by the highest members of the nobility, played an important role in the rise of the knighthood by the twelfth century. However, before starting to discuss how chivalry as a code of behaviour developed in the twelfth century, it is essential to give some general background information and to examine the developments that paved the way for the fusion of nobility and knighthood under the prestigious title of “chivalry”.

First of all, the history of knighthood can be traced as far back as the eighth century when *miles* and in plural *milites* — that later became the Latin equivalent of “knight” — was used in the meaning of a soldier almost everywhere in continental Europe. Gradually however, *miles* started to be used to express a more limited meaning, a mounted soldier, having its equivalents in vernacular languages that

suggested a man on a horse: the equivalent of *miles* was *chevalier* in French, *Ritter* in German, *cavaliere* in Italian, and *caballero* in Spanish. In any of these languages or in any usage, we do not see *miles* used to refer to a socially high-ranked person before the eleventh century, and often not very high even then.³ It is true that his military skill and the rising significance of cavalry for the Frankish army after the ninth century gained *milites* a respectively higher degree among the other members of the army, but this relatively distinguished place did not bring along with it a high social degree to the mounted soldiers. Only after the new military tactics and equipment of the eleventh century did the mounted soldier gain his supremacy over the other members of the army, who were greater in number. In the eleventh century, the most common tactic gradually came to be to hold the spear or lance tucked tightly under the right armpit, and by doing so this left the left arm free to have the control of reins and shield. The longer and heavier the lance was, the more fatal the strike was. While the stirrup enabled the knight to be stable on the saddle and to have the greatest control of the horse, the knight was becoming the inseparable part of the army by holding his lance and using it mercilessly.⁴ Without doubt, this kind of fighting required a high level of professionalism and fighting skill, which distinguished the mounted warrior from others. In this sense, the cavalymen who had already taken their place in the Frankish army since the eighth century began to be more professional in fighting and to have an indispensable position, with the new methods and materials of the eleventh century. Here, the material was an important criterion; because the equipment for mounted warfare was very expensive; only those who could afford it, or were given the equipment by someone of substantial means, could

³ Frances Gies, *The Knight in History* (London, 1984); Richard W. Barber. *The Knight and Chivalry*. (Woodbridge, 1995); Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (London, 1984).

⁴ Maurice Keen, *Medieval Warfare: A History* (Oxford, 1999), p. 188; in general see Philippe Contamine. *War in the Middle Ages* Cambridge, 1984).

become a knight.⁵

To understand the circumstances under which the mounted warriors of humble origin began to be a part of aristocracy, the first thing that should be discussed is what nobility had been before it wrapped itself in the armour of chivalry. First of all, it is certain that nobility and knighthood were two different things. One could only be born noble; it was not something that could be obtained later. Without doubt, being a noble brought along with it many privileges besides having a high rank in social structure. However, being a knight did not necessarily mean a high rank, although it provided some kind of privileges. Although it is very difficult to give a certain time when knights begin to be considered as a part of the nobility because of the variety of regional differences, it would not be wrong to claim that it was only after the twelfth century for at least most of France. However, one must be cautious about the rising status of the knights. The common misassumption is that the simple mounted soldier climbed the social ladder and entered into nobility at the end of the twelfth century; this was not what actually happened, though. It is true that the nobility expanded to include more modest members of the society but they were petit landlords who were humble in rank but not poor, either. What happened in the twelfth century was these petit landlords coming from humble origins started to adopt the title of “knight” which was also adopted by the high nobility owing to the literary and religious connotations associated to it.

Perhaps the best example to understand the juxtaposition of nobility and knighthood is the county of Namur, examined deeply by George Duby in terms of the social status of the inhabitants.⁶ At the beginning of the twelfth century, there were no

⁵ Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 16.

⁶ Georges Duby, “The Nobility in Medieval France” *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cythia Postan (London, 1997), 94-111. All articles by Duby has been taken from this book.

more than twenty families who were considered as nobles in Namur. These people were definitely free; and the words 'noble' and 'free' were used interchangeably. Moreover, there were no other free men outside this noble class. This small group of very rich men had obviously established their fortunes and status several generations earlier. Besides these well-established noble families, Duby shows the existence of another group that were referred to as *familia*. The people in a *familia* were serving a master in the master's household; they were not all coming from a servile origin. This master might be a count or other noble, or might be a religious establishment. Our concern in this roughly two-levelled social structure is to find out the place of the knights. In fact, they belonged to *familiae* in the early twelfth century. However, as Duby suggests,

...about 1150, we begin to notice some of them [knights] being distinguished by a special epithet – they were decorated by the title of *chevalier* or 'knight'. Apparently mounted military service was an honour. The prince had need of them; at all events they appear to be in comfortable circumstances.⁷

Therefore, these knights began to form a distinguished class with the endowments they received from the local ruler~~s~~ which means that they were landed— although they were still inferior to nobles. The absence of primogeniture yet made the lands of these nobles smaller as a result of deaths and the division of inheritance among brothers. As time went by, while these nobles were becoming greater in number, they were becoming less rich. So, when it came to the late twelfth century, knighthood had already become associated with nobility because of the privileges and lands bestowed by the ruler. However, one needs to be cautious about this picture because there were always geographical variations.

Moreover, the rise of knighthood the fusion of knighthood and chivalry was

⁷ Duby, "The Nobility in Medieval France," 95.

also the result of a downward movement whereby the highest members of the feudal nobility aspired to adopt the title of knight. When the contemporary vocabulary was analyzed in different regions of France, it can be noticed that there was a voluntary adoption by the nobility of knightly values as a whole. For that reason what should be asked is not how the knights managed to be a part of the nobility — because it was not the real case everywhere — but the atmosphere in which the virtues of the military class seemed appealing to the greater nobility, and why they internalized these values so willingly. The reason for this willing absorption was the rising prestige of knighthood through the impact of religious propaganda that started in the eleventh century and the literary representation of knighthood that took shape in the twelfth. So, it was the connotation of the word “miles” which was changing simultaneously with or perhaps more dramatically than the changing status of the mounted soldier who had borne the same title once.

In the eleventh century, the Christian Church started to change its ideas regarding those who fought. Although the knights were a ferocious threat to the Church as plunderers of the Church’s estates, the notion of *miles Christi*, formulated in the eleventh century by the ecclesiastical authorities aimed to divert the violence of the knights against the infidel by promoting the idea that fighting was not sinful if it was against the enemies of the Church. Therefore, Urban II, in his famous speech, was directly addressing the knights to stop fighting among themselves and divert their attention to the infidel who was violating the land of the Eastern Christians and the Holy Land in the East. The religious overtones in the concept of *chevalerie* were generally the product of this process, which gained knighthood a prestige by appointing the knights as the defenders of the Church. The place of this process in the history of knighthood is quite important because this new image of the knight that was

acceptable to the Christian Church could easily become the subject matter of a newly flourishing chivalric literature that was being written by the clerics in the early twelfth century.

Although *chevalier* was a common word to describe the mounted soldier of the feudal army in the early middle ages, from the twelfth century onwards *chevalerie* came to be an ethical code peculiar to knights and distinguishing them from the other classes of society. The rise of courtly literature, imposing the virtues of the ideal knight, created a new image of knight who was a gentleman. The *chevalier* in his new image was noble, wealthy, courteous, and willing to adjust himself to adopt the ideals of King Arthur and his knights. These ideals were popularised by the literary narratives of the period: the romances, epics, lyrics or *lais*.

When Chrétien de Troyes created his chivalric romances in the second half of the twelfth century, there had already been a literary taste and an audience which had developed among those familiar with those tales through a well-established oral literature. The old warrior ethic of the *chansons de geste* and the refined culture of the courtly literature were combined within the framework of the chivalric ideal. However, Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France, who is presumed to be writing slightly after Chrétien, were indebted to Geoffrey of Monmouth and Wace for the basis of their Arthurian myth.⁸ Geoffrey of Monmouth, in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* that was written around the 1130s, created the story of Arthur by inventing many elements that are familiar to modern reader. Geoffrey's Arthur was endowed with many knightly virtues, such as generosity, courtesy, and bravery. Wace not only

⁸ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth, 1980); Wace and Layamon, *Arthurian Chronicles*, ed. and trans. by Eugene Mason (London, 1962); R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian Literature in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1959); R. S. Loomis, *Arthurian Tradition and Chrétien de Troyes* (New York, 1949); Jean Frappier, *Chrétien de Troyes, The Man and His Work*, trans. Raymond J. Cormier (Athens, 1982); L.T. Topsfield, *Chrétien de Troyes, A Study of the Arthurian Romances* (Cambridge, 1981).

translated Geoffrey's work into French but also supplemented it with many details. He dedicated his book, *Brut*, to Eleanor of Aquitaine, who is known as the great patroness of chivalric literature.

Eleanor was the granddaughter of William IX, the first troubadour. After her marriage, first to Louis VII of France, then to Henry II of England, many of the minstrels or clerks of the south started to frequent the northern courts.⁹ Not only Eleanor, but also her children, became the grand patrons of the chivalric narratives of northern France and England. Even more influential than Eleanor was her daughter by Louis VII, Marie de Champagne, who was married to Count Henry the Liberal. Just like his wife the count also assisted the flowering of chivalric literature. From his own words we can easily understand that Chrétien was patronised by Marie de Champagne; and his last romance *Perceval* was written under the patronage of Philip of Flanders, who had quite close connections with the Plantagenets, and Flemish knights often served in England. William W. Kibler claims in the introduction to *Arthurian Romances* that Chrétien might have written his early romances, *Erec and Enide* and *Cligés* at the court of Henry II of England. Although our knowledge about Marie de France is somewhat hazy, she is generally believed to have been patronised by Henry II of England and his wife Eleanor of Aquitaine. By looking at the historical background of these writers and the social milieu within which they wrote their works, we can see that they were roughly contemporary with each other and frequented the same courtly circles.

Out of the combination of enthusiastic patrons and talented poets chivalric literature bloomed in the second half of the twelfth century. In the works of Chrétien,

⁹ Amy Kelly, "Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Courts of Love" *Speculum* 12, no. 1 (1937): 3-19; Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings* (Cambridge, 1950).

knighthood was presented as the highest order of the society and chivalry was formulated as the ethics of the knightly class. Chrétien combines the warrior ethics of the epic form and the refined manners of the troubadour lyrics and creates a new court of Arthur as the centre of an ideal chivalry. He dispenses with Arthur as the main character; instead he tells the story of knights-errant who have to prove their “chivalry” by passing through many tests. Once the knights prove their prowess they manage to receive the love of a lady, and their chivalry is approved by everyone. The romantic figure of the knight was portrayed with the virtues of generosity, hospitality, courtesy, nobility, loyalty and prowess, but this ideal was not completely detached from the real social practices. We can say, thus that chivalry is a period in the history of knighthood, but, at the same time, it is an image which was mostly created by the literary conventions of the age. What is intended in this study is to combine these two sides of chivalric studies, which is to analyse literary texts that created this image and to historicise them by discussing their influence on and from the knightly class. In other words, the core of this thesis is to explore chivalry as a historical phenomenon that was considerably affected by its literary image.

However, there is an inherited mistake among some historians about the historicity of chivalry and the courtesy of the real knight passed down from Johan Huizinga, who claimed that “this illusion of society based on chivalry curiously clashed with the reality of things.”¹⁰ Because of the idealizing attitude of the literary works, chivalry or the knightly ethic has generally been treated as code of etiquette that lacked its counterpart in real life. Joachim Bumke, for example, after giving a detailed description of the difficulties of ordinary life in medieval society, notes that “The courtly poets constructed an image of society that lacked everything that made

¹⁰ Johan Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1955), 67-68.

life difficult and oppressive, and from which all economic and social pressures and all political conflict were excluded...Clearly, this extremely unrealistic picture of society was conceived as the opposite of real life, and must be interpreted as such.”¹¹ As these words explicitly reveal, he categorizes courtly literature as being unrealistic and even escapist as if the courtly poets had deliberately masked the everyday reality. Stephen Jaeger, who has quite a similar attitude, points out that “courtly literature is not a mimetic mirror but, rather, a mask hiding the reality that produced it.”¹²

However, as Kaeuper suggests, “we cannot expect this literature or any other to serve as a simple mirror to social reality in the world in which it emerged.”¹³ In this regard, chivalric literature should be evaluated by the historian not as a source from which one can deduce some meaning and apply it to explain the period, but as “an active social force helping to shape attitudes about basic questions”.¹⁴ In other words, what we called the chivalric literature is generally a prescriptive piece of writing that was written for those in the age of chivalry; they should not be read as descriptive texts to define the social tendencies of the time.

This thesis is divided into three chapters each of which is intended to discuss how far the literary representation of the knights corresponded with its counterpart in the real life. The first chapter deals with some general concepts and aims to give background information about how the knightly ethic developed in the twelfth century. The general discussion of the chapters centres on the concepts of courtesy, courtly love and chivalry. Indeed, the chivalric literature of the twelfth century

¹¹ Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 4.

¹² Stephen Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Courtly Ideals, 939-1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), x; “Romance is not a safe guard to realities of the twelfth and thirteenth century knighthood”: Peter Noble, “Perversion of an Ideal” *Medieval Kinghood IV*, 177-186.; and also “the courtly romance is not reality shaped; and set forth by art, but an escape into fable and fairy tale”: Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of reality in Western Literature*, trans. W.R. Trask (Princeton, 1951), 107-124.

¹³ Richard W. Kaeuper. *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 2006), 33.

¹⁴ Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence*, 33.

combined these three concepts in such a manner that they became inseparable strands of the knightly ethic. Nevertheless, it is essential to make a distinction between them because they had different origins and developments. *Courtoisie*, for example, originated in the eleventh century among the educated courtly clerics who developed a behavioural ideology peculiar to court. At the end of the eleventh century, the courts of France and England were represented as the centres of a refined and polished culture. With the absorption of this culture by the lay courtiers, courtly culture was conveyed into the fictional world of the knights and found its representation in the poetry of the Troubadours. In the works of the Provençal poets, the motivation of the knight was to regulate and moderate himself within the limits of this newly formed culture. After the amorous knight was endowed with the refined culture of the court, *chevalerie* began to take its shape after the second half of the twelfth century with the romances of Chrétien de Troyes. This section also explores the educational background of the courtiers who acted as the audience for the sophisticated tales of the romance writers.

After discussing the origins of *chevalerie* and how it was merged with the concepts of courtly love and courtesy, the following chapters deal with the details of this ethic. The second chapter deals with how *chevalerie* functioned indoors, that is to say at court. The romances of Chrétien de Troyes and the *lais* of Marie de France are used to give the literary representation of the knightly ethic and some non-fictional material is used to compare and contrast this representation with the image of real life. The first section of the chapter deals with the court which is represented as the centre of chivalry in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes. The luxurious ceremonies or feasts and extravagant expenditure of the kings or princes are discussed as the main characteristics of the court in romance. The examples from court satires are used to

prove how these texts also give the same picture as the romantic representation. Flattery and slander are also dealt with in respect of common attitudes of the courtiers both in the romances and also in satires. The second section intends to discuss the theme of love in chivalric romances and how love becomes a virtue in the knightly ethic. Whether the love of the romance hero has a counterpart in real life is also discussed in the section.

The last chapter is reserved for the discussion of the knightly ethic outside. The chapter limits itself within the confines of tournaments and sometimes real war in order to discuss how chivalry functioned while the knight was in action. Different from the other strands of knightly ethic, the tournament is the one which has the closest link between the romances and real life. Both the romances and also the historical sources give us a detailed description of twelfth-century tournaments. However, these sources need to be treated cautiously because many of the “histories” may follow a quite a similar attitude to that of the romances.

By discussing the knightly ethic in romances in comparison with the other historical evidence, this thesis intends to display the validity of the knightly virtues in real life too. As a reaction to the assumption that assesses chivalric literature as an ideal detached from the realities of ordinary life, this study aims to show that there are similarities between the fact and the fiction. The examples from historical material, when they are analysed in parallel with the fictional narratives, inevitably draw us to the conclusion that the knightly ethic of the twelfth century chivalric literature was not detached from the social practices of the period. On the contrary, there was such a close interaction between the fact and the fiction that, when the tournament was narrated for the first time in a fictional work, it was already a well established institution in the lives of the knights; similarly, the thirteenth century witnessed the

emergence of round tables imitating the ones in the romances. Therefore, the fact and fiction served the development of the knightly ethic together by feeding one another.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE EMERGENCE OF THE KNIGHTLY ETHIC: FROM COURTESY TO CHIVALRY

In the literature of the late twelfth century the concepts of *courtoisie*, courtly love, and *chevalerie* are so intermingled that it is not always very easy to separate them. Although each of these concepts has different origins and functions, they were fused in the works of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France; and became inseparable parts of the knightly ethic. However, as Aldo Scaglione points out these codes did not only belong to literary spheres.¹⁵ In other words, these were not made-up literary conventions that lacked any counterpart in real life. Before starting to discuss how these codes functioned in real life quite in parallel with the literary representations of Chrétien and Marie in the following chapters, this first chapter explores the origins and the natures of these concepts.

It would not be wrong to suggest that there is a linear and a correlative sequence in the emergence of these concepts. *Courtoisie* emerged first in the

¹⁵ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 7.

eleventh century as an ethical code which regulated social life at court.¹⁶ So, this code covered any kind of behaviour from table manners to hairstyles, from how to speak to how to dress. With the integration of knights into the world of the *courtoisie*, courtly love took shape in literary representation with a teaching and a civilizing role that aimed at assimilating the harsh warrior into the courtly culture. In the convention of courtly love, *courtoisie* is represented as a “virtue that arises from love” and as “a source of all goodness and worth.”¹⁷ By the end of the twelfth century, *chevalerie* had bloomed out of the chivalric romances as a standard of manners and mores fitting to an ideal knight, combining *courtoisie* and courtly love within the same framework.¹⁸ Aldo Scaglione, making a deep analysis of the twelfth century, points out the dominance of

three separate but coexistent codes: (1) the courtly, (2) the chivalric/heroic, and (3) the chivalric/*courtois*. The third code combined the other two, adding to them the element of love, represented by a courtly mannered knight who was motivated by both heroism and love in a state of harmonious symbiosis. The three codes belong to both social and literary spheres, and they often conspired in a tense, unstable mixture within various literary genres.¹⁹

The most important thing in Scaglione’s suggestion is that the courtly and the chivalric codes belong to both “social and literary spheres”. Therefore, in order to find out how these concepts were functioned in literature and in life, it would be better to analyse them separately so that we can assess the factuality and the fictionality of these concepts.

¹⁶ In general see C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*; Jaeger, “Courtliness and Social Change” in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (Philadelphia, 1995), 287-309; Scaglione, *Knights at Court*.

¹⁷ Alexander J. Denomy, “Courtly Love and Courtliness” *Speculum* 28, no.1 (1953): 44-63, p.49.

¹⁸ Although there are many speculations on the origin of chivalry and its accuracy in the twelfth century society, the integration of love into the world of the knights is generally considered as the most distinctive feature of chivalry. For general information, see Sidney Painter, *French Chivalry: Chivalric Ideals and Practices in Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1940); Leon Gautier, *Chivalry* (London, 1965); Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven, 1984); Richard W. Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Woodbridge, 1995); Jean Flori, *L’Essor de la Chevalerie* (Geneva, 1986); Georges Duby, *The Chivalrous Society*, trans. Cynthia Postan (London, 1997).

¹⁹ Scaglione, *Knight at Court*, 7.

2.1 *Courtoisie*

Courtoisie is the counterpart in the French vernacular of the term courtesy; and it suggests a code of courtly etiquette which regulates the life at court. Although there are some variant nuances between the terms courtesy and courtliness, they both roughly signify a system of behaviour appropriate to court. Stephen Jaeger explores the origin of the courtliness and comes to the conclusion: "The western consciousness of courtliness was shaped by educated aristocratic clerics. . . The worldly clergy admired and practiced 'courtliness' well before this became embodied in the knight and lover of courtly romance and lyric"²⁰ For him the courtly ethic originated in the tenth and the eleventh century from the figure of the imperial bishop of the German royal court. In the time of the Ottonian kings and their royal court, the chaplains had started to get a good position at court due to their administrative skills and intellectual background. In the course of time, the court chapel became the first step to getting close to the king and being invited to his court.²¹ There was a gradual tendency for the emperors to select notable clerics from monastic or cathedral schools, and inviting them to court to appoint them to the bishoprics after spending time in the court chapel.²² The frequency of giving a good position at court to the members of the royal chapel became so marked that the chapel started to be considered as the first step to a clerical, governmental career.

The "courtier bishop" or "curial bishop", very frequently from a monastic background, became an important figure under these circumstances. Peter Damian defined for the first time the courtier bishop with these words: "[Episcopi], qui

²⁰ Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 157.

²¹ Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 21-3.

²² C. Stephen Jaeger, *Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), 44.

ecclesiae militando promoti sunt, vocantur ex more pontifices; ita qui famulando principibus fiunt, dicantur a curia curiales.”²³ In the biographies of these courtier bishops, a standardization of manners and mores prerequisite for court offices played an important role. This is considered by Jaeger as the origin of the *courtoisie*. However, the rise of the cathedral schools, particularly in the twelfth century, undermining the earlier dominance of monastic education, was to have important consequences for the way in which the courtly ethic developed.

In the tenth century, the monasteries were the main centres of education, while the cathedral schools were often in a poor state or dormant. The curriculum applied in the monastic schools was generally based on “the rudiments of letters and the liberal arts, the reading and understanding of the Bible within the traditions of patristic scholarship; preaching and converting; a Christian life according to the Benedictine rule; other more specific purposes within the sphere of church functions, among which music and the performance of the liturgy were especially prominent.”²⁴ From the mid-tenth century onwards, the cathedral schools started to become educational centres for the secular clergy both in Germany and in France. Although the convention of training young talented men, often initially monastically educated, in matters of administration, as loyal supporters of the king, had originated in the court chapel, beginning from the mid-tenth century cathedral schools gradually increased their role in the production of educated men, with no monastic education, destined to live and work in the world, as opposed to the cloister.²⁵ Since the motivation behind the growing interest in learning was mostly the possibility of having an administrative office from the Church, or from a secular lord or the king, the schools attracted young

²³ qtd in Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 23.

²⁴ Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 21.

²⁵ Jaeger, “Cathedral Schools and Humanist Learning, 950-1150” *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 61, no. 4, 575.

members of the lesser nobility who could not inherit the lands of their fathers.

The cathedral schools, patronised by the kings and bishops, developed in the eleventh century; for many well-known bishops, intellectuals or statesmen were employed there to train the young clergy for good positions. These teachers, who had courtly experience, provided examples for their students. The character and virtues of these schoolmasters, who also held good positions at various princely or royal courts, were imitated by the students and their personal life experience was taken as an example. The schoolmasters were the direct model for the student to see the combination of letters and mores in practice.²⁶

The cathedral schools and their schoolmasters were very important for the formation of the courtly ethic in the twelfth century, for they were considered by the students as a “preparation for court life and court service, both worldly and ecclesiastical.”²⁷ Therefore, the manners and mores suitable for a typical court life had an important place in the educational program; thus the schoolmasters “emphasized the coupling of letters and virtue, *litterae et mores*, aiming at character formation rather than mere instruction or Christian doctrine.”²⁸ Physical appearance came to be seen as a virtue as important as inner beauty. Elegance, refined manners, inner and outer beauty were greatly emphasized in the biographies of model bishops whose careers were taught as an example in the schools. In the eleventh century, in the most popular cathedral schools in France and in Germany, *elegantia morum* was taught as the most important virtue that a statesman or a bishop should have. This gradual emphasising of *mores* as well as *litterae* was peculiar to the cathedral schools;

²⁶ Jaeger, “Cathedral Schools,” 589.

²⁷ Jaeger, “Cathedral Schools,” 614.

²⁸ Scaglione, *Knight at Court*, 48.

and it did not penetrate monastic education.²⁹ However, the idea of elegance of manners in its heyday in the eleventh-century cathedral schools, conveyed through the model of courtier bishops, found its counterpart in practice too in the ecclesiastical or princely courts. It was visible in the Latin literature of the early eleventh century that elegance, refined manners and spiritual and physical beauty had already been accepted as the ideal social behaviour of the court.³⁰ Gerbert of Aurillac declared that he saw no difference between the art of speaking well and the art of living well.³¹

These clerical members of the court were spending so much time at the court that they generally ignored their pastoral and episcopal duties conducting religious life in the dioceses.³² The monastic reaction to courtier bishops and clergy so involved in worldly life was acute. Peter Damian was revealing his attitude towards the worldly clergy by giving an interesting example. In the story he told, a cleric of the church of Cologne saw an apparition, St. Severin, while he was passing through a river. He asked the saint what he was doing such a miserable place although he was a saint. They clasped hands so that the cleric could learn St. Severin's story. The cleric tells,

only one thing was found punishable in him: that as a cleric at the king's court, he had taken so keen an interest in the affairs of state that he had neglected chanting the liturgy at the prescribed hours. For this sin he now suffers, and he begs the cleric and his fellows to pray for him, so that he can be released and enter heaven.³³

All these things show, in parallel with Jaeger's thesis, that before *courtoisie* had its place in French vernacular literature, it had already evolved through the biographies of the imperial bishops. Taking these as examples it had also been practiced by the courtier clerics of the German royal court. The case was so common

²⁹ Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 74.

³⁰ Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 310.

³¹ Jaeger, "Cathedral Schools," 582.

³² Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 293.

³³ Jaeger, "The Court Criticism of MGH Didactic Poets: Social Structures and Literary Conventions" *Monatshefte* 74, no. 4 (1982): 398.

and so penetrated the life of the courtly clergy that Peter Damian accused those secular clerics of ignoring their original duty.

According to this suggestion, the origin of the courtliness lay in the *vitae episcoporum* rather than in French vernacular literature. Jaeger's thesis attempts to displace the origin of courtesy from France to Germany and makes a valuable contribution to the studies of courtesy and chivalry by underlining the role of the courtly clerics in the formation of the courtly code. However, there is still room for much discussion. As Scaglione mentions, Jaeger makes use of the biographies of German bishops but ignores the Frankish, German, or Italian ones, while a comparative analysis is needed to prove German bishops as the origin of the idea.³⁴ By the time courtesy reached Germany as a fixed sublime code through the *minnesingers*, many of the notions they expressed came from Provençal poetry, and courtoise had already established itself in court circles before then. Thus, in Germany "the literary superimposed itself upon the practical."³⁵

Although it is ambiguous whether *courtoisie* spread into France from German *vitae episcoporum*, it is a fact that *courtoisie* in the courts of England and of France displayed itself as a fashion among the lay nobility by the end of the eleventh century.³⁶ Different from the German royal court, in France courtliness flourished at the courts of wealthy local rulers who imitated the political positions of kings in their own households. The courts of Champagne and Flanders in the north and the court of Aquitaine in the south were the intellectual, political and social centres in France. It is not surprising that the structure of the courts in those places was quite similar to the formation of royal courts.

³⁴ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 61–3.

³⁵ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, 61.

³⁶ Frank Barlow gives a vivid picture of William Rufus' court where the *elegantia morum* was also displayed by the lay aristocracy, in *William Rufus*, (Berkeley, 1983)

The structure of this court formation is straightforward, in a sense. The Carolingian model of the court was generally preserved later in the Middle Ages. We have the earliest description of this model through the account of Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims.³⁷ According to the model Hincmar constructed, the royal court was composed of two separate parts: the court chapel and the secular court offices. The chaplains said mass for the king and lay courtiers, gave religious guidance and were also responsible for duties requiring the ability to read and write. Although there were many lay offices, the four most important were the chamberlain (*camerarius*), seneschal (*senescalcus*), butler or steward (*buticularius*), and marshal or constable (*marescalcus, comes stabuli*).³⁸ The representatives of these offices were the *ministeriales*, the king's servants, and did not have a high position in the social scale.

By the eleventh century, Hincmar's model had been adopted by the powerful local rulers, that is to say the dukes or the counts who aspired to be the ruler of an area they dominated. In the 1030s, the duke of Normandy, Robert I, constructed his court with a similar structure by giving the titles of seneschal, chamberlain, butler, and constable to his retinue.³⁹ Although Hincmar's model provided a basis for the following centuries, the position of the representatives of these offices gradually changed. In the court of Duke Robert I, the holders of these titles were his magnates, who had their own households.⁴⁰ By the twelfth century, court offices started to be a ceremonial title; many lofty nobles had the title of seneschal or marshal, for example, but performed their duties only in ceremonial times. The representatives of these

³⁷ David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain* (London, 1992), 281.

³⁸ Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 20; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 56; Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, 282.

³⁹ Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, 283.

⁴⁰ Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy*, 283

ceremonial secular offices were inclined to keep their office as an inheritance for their sons. This had not been the custom earlier though. However, this was neither an abrupt nor a fundamental change: while those offices were held by the princes in the ceremonial occasions, there were of course permanent *ministeriales* in the household to oversee the duties.⁴¹ Once the local rulers had started to establish their own households, they preserved the old notion of appointing clerics to important positions in the court administration. In twelfth-century France, secular clerics were quite common candidates for offices at princely courts in order to fulfil the duties requiring the ability of reading and writing. These educated members of the princely courts were highly influential in the formation of *courtoisie* through their educational background, just as Jaeger claims. Indeed, the educated courtly clerics in France contributed to the formation of the *courtoisie* by being creators of it as well as being practitioners of it.

After the eleventh century witnessed the rise of the cathedral schools as intellectual centres, they continued to be educational centres alongside monastic schools in the twelfth century too. However, from the early twelfth century onwards, the cathedral schools started to follow different educational goals; and the intellectual revival that is known as the “Renaissance of the twelfth century” bloomed in those centres.⁴² Therefore, the princely courts replaced the cathedral schools as the centres for the teaching of “manners” for the schoolmasters of the cathedral schools became frequent attendees at princely courts.⁴³ As Jaeger says, “if William of Conches, John of Salisbury, Andreas Capellanus, Wace, Benoît de St.-Maure, Chrétien de Troyes,

⁴¹ Jaeger, *Origin of Courtliness*, 20.

⁴² For general idea on the origins of the so-called twelfth century renaissance, see Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1979); Robert Louis Benson, *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1982); Robert N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (Manchester, 1999)

⁴³ Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 296.

Gottfried von Strassburg, and all other clerics engaged in the formulation of court ethics and literature had found employment in the schools of France, Germany, and England – and not in the secular courts – courtly society and literature would be very different from what they are, or from the way we see them at present.”⁴⁴ With the arrival of these schoolmasters, the courts started to be a centre for the teaching and the application of courtliness or *curialitas* in Latin: “the social qualities of the good chaplain and bishop, and by extension the good lay courtier.”⁴⁵ However, one must also note that all the educated members of the court were coming from cathedral education; there were also many clerics coming from monastic background.

Undoubtedly, these educated people conveyed their refined culture to the courts they attended. The role of the courts was to act as an environment in which these clerics and the members of the higher and lesser nobility coalesced. From this cohesion, a new culture of court, which was neither predominantly clerical nor knightly but a mixture of both, started to be shaped by the end of the eleventh century?⁴⁶ In the origin of this new culture, the secular clergy played such an important role that they changed the atmosphere of the court through the courtly ethic they created from the late tenth century onwards. As Benton states, “the remarkable literary flowering of the twelfth-century France grew from the fruitful meeting of representatives of different intellectual traditions, the collaboration of the laymen of the feudal courts and of those trained in monastic and cathedral schools”⁴⁷

Jaeger’s thesis is that “the French chivalric class had nothing to do with the ‘creation’ of courtliness... They were the first among the European feudal nobility to

⁴⁴ Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 296.

⁴⁵ Scaglione, *Knights at Court*, p. 65.

⁴⁶ Ad Putter, “Knights and Clerics at the Court of Champagne: Chrétien de Troyes’s Romances in Context” in *Medieval Knighthood V: Papers from the Sixth Strawberry Hill Conference 1994*, ed. Stephen Church and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge, 1995), 244-45.

⁴⁷ Benton, “Court of Champagne,” 551.

adopt these values and effect their integration into the values of the warrior class.”⁴⁸ However, what escapes Jaeger’s attention is that the code of behaviour that shaped the courtier bishop became *courtoisie* only after it was adopted by the laity. It would not be surprising for courtly clerics to be refined and elegant both in manners and in speech. As we can easily expect a well-educated cleric to behave gently and virtuously, the behavioural tendency of the courtly clerics should not be taken as the origin of the *courtoisie*. Therefore, it would not be wrong to claim that the *courtoisie* took its real shape with the imposition of these long-existing refined manners to the lay courtiers and also with the absorption of this behavioural ideology by the laity. Therefore, wherever the origin of the courtliness is, the innovation of twelfth-century France lies in the fact that *courtoisie* became a phenomenon with its adoption by the lay courtiers at the princely courts. Here, it should be underlined that *courtoisie* emerged out of social practises; but it should also be admitted that it took its place in literature to regulate and shape the manners.

In the literary representation of the *courtoisie*, the role of the courtly clerics was the training of the lay courtier in courtly manners. This educative mission was quite visible in the literature of the period. An anonymous poet, writing in French, reveals the teaching mission of the clergy and civilizing mission of rhetoric with these words:

The art teaches this: it holds kings and laws to the rule of moderation,
It reforms the knighthood, who bear the weapon of Mars,
Teaching them the doctrine of vigilance and lordly ways.
It regulates manners of youths and instructs the mature,
Holding them to civil laws in constant moderation.⁴⁹

The poem reveals that the aim of art is “to regulate the manners of knights and kings

⁴⁸ Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 209.

⁴⁹ qtd in Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, 310.

by restraining them in moderation.” Chrétien, who was a cleric, begins his first romance *Erec and Enide* with quite an elucidative preface explaining his intention in writing: “to teach and to delight”:

The peasant in his proverb says that one might find oneself holding in contempt something that is worth much more than one believes; therefore a man does well to make good use of his learning according to whatever understanding he has, for he who neglects his learning may easily keep silent something that would later give much pleasure. And so, Chrétien de Troyes says that it is reasonable for everyone to think and strive in every way to speak well to teach well, and from a tale of adventure he draws a beautifully ordered composition that clearly proves that a man does not act intelligently if he does not give free rein to his knowledge for as long as God gives him the grace to do so.⁵⁰

It is no accident that Marie de France begins the prologue of her twelve *lais* using a similar tone. By maintaining the same teaching mission, she commits herself to retell the old stories which can be beneficial for the society she is addressing:

Anyone who has received from God the gift of knowledge and true eloquence has a duty not to remain silent: rather should one be happy to reveal such talents. When a truly beneficial thing is heard by many people, it then enjoys its first blossom, but if it is widely praised its flowers are in full bloom.⁵¹

It is explicitly revealed by these two authors of chivalric literature that their aim was to give lessons. So, it would not be wrong to claim that chivalric romance emerged as educational propaganda that aimed to regulate and moderate the behaviour of the knights within the limits of the courtly culture. However, before the emergence of a *chevalerie* highly influenced by courtly culture, the other component of *chevalerie*, courtly love, had also to be included.

⁵⁰ Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, trans. Carleton W. Carroll, in *Arthurian Romances* trans. William W. Kibler (Penguin Books, 1991) p. 37. “Li villains dit an son respite/Que tel chose a l’an an despit/Qui mout valt mialz que l’an ne cuide./Por ce fet bien qui son estuide/Atorne a bien quel que il l’ait;/Car qui son estuide antrelait,/Tost i puet tel chose teisir/Qou mout vandroit puis a pleisir./Por ce dist Crestiens de Troies/Que reasons est que totevoies/Doit chascuns panser et antandre/A bien dire et a bien aprendre;/Et tret d’un conte d’avanture/Une mout bele conjointure/Par qu’an puet prover et savoir/Que cil ne fet mie savoir/Quil s’escience n’abandone/Tant con Dex la grace l’an done.” *Erec and Enide*, p. 3. ll. 1-18.

⁵¹ Marie de France, *Prologue*, in *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (London, 2003), 41.

2.2 Courtly Love

Before the quixotic love between the knight and his lady became the centre of chivalric literature, it had been developed as a prerequisite for courtly life in the poetry of the Provençal lyrics. The modern literature calls this relation between the knight and the lady as “courtly love.” In fact, since Gaston Paris issued the term *amour courtois*⁵² to refer to the adulterous relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere, there has been much said on the matter of courtly love.⁵³ The Provençal love poetry is generally considered as the origin of the courtly love convention. However, Gaston Paris, when he defined courtly love, applied it specifically to *Lancelot* and only says that the treatment of love in the troubadour poetry is similar to Chretien’s *Lancelot* because of its adulterous nature of love. “He does not call the love of the troubadour *amour courtois*.”⁵⁴ Even if the poetry of the troubadours were different from the romance of an amorous knight, it is undeniable that the Provençal poets were highly influential on the integration of love into the fictional world of the knight; and on the attempt through the figure of the amorous knight to realize the civilizing mission of the courtly cleric, since love was “a kind of moral and spiritual

⁵² Gaston Paris, “Etudes sur les romans de la Table Ronde” *Romania*, XII (1883) : 459-534.

⁵³ See C.S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study of the Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1936); F. X. Newman ed., *Meaning of Courtly Love: Papers of the First Annual Conference of the Centre for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies*, (Albany, 1968); Roger Boase, *The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love* (Manchester, 1977); Keith Nickolaus, *Marriage Fictions in Old French secular narratives: a Critical Re-evaluation of the Courtly Love Debate Based on Secular Narratives from 1170-1250* (London, 2002); Herbert Moller, “Meaning of Courtly Love” *The Journal of American Folklore* 73, no. 287 (1960): 39-52; For a synopsis of the discussion, see John C. Moore, “Courtly Love: A Problem of Terminology” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no. 4 (1979): 621-632

⁵⁴ Moore, “Courtly Love,” 622.

education through emotion” in the love lyrics of the troubadours.⁵⁵

The common mistake in studies of courtly love is that the troubadours are doomed to very rough generalization in terms of their concepts of love. However, troubadour poetry stretches from the late eleventh century to the early thirteenth and its tone and the attitude of the poets is far from homogenous. In the matter of courtly love each troubadour had his own distinctive treatment, while particularly for the earliest troubadours, William of Aquitaine and Jaufré Raudel, we can talk about neither a fixed common system of courtly love nor a courtly code. The approach becomes more consistent later, only in the second half of the twelfth century with Bernart de Ventadorn when chivalric romance was already in the process of formation. Thus, one should be specific about the period of the troubadour before making generalisations.

Although C. S. Lewis’ suggestions on the origin and the nature of courtly love are quite valuable, the same rough generalization is dominant in Lewis’s suggestions too. He claims that courtly love suddenly appeared around the end of the eleventh century in Languedoc and he shows Troubadour poetry as its origin. However, he does not distinguish these early troubadours from their subsequent followers. He describes courtly love as a “love of highly specialized sort, whose characteristics may be enumerated as Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love. The lover is always abject...There is a service of love closely modelled on the service which a feudal vassal owes to his lord.”⁵⁶

The earliest troubadour, William IX of Aquitaine (1071-1127), besides being the greatest duke of France at that time, was one of the leaders of the disastrous 1101

⁵⁵ Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 71.

⁵⁶ Lewis, *Allegory of Love*, 2.

crusade. His contribution to the emergence of the figure of the amorous knight lies in his highly secular tone that conveys earthly love into the world of the courtly knight. Indeed William's tone is highly obscene, and his attitude to love is quite different both from the later troubadours and from the amorous knights of Chretien de Troyes. He is in search of physical love that will bring him pleasure:

I still remember one morning when we put an end to our warring, and she gave me so great a gift, her love and her ring. May God let me still live long enough to have my hands beneath her cloak.⁵⁷

For William of Aquitaine, the personal pleasure of love is important. He neither defines love nor philosophizes it. However, another early troubadour Marcabru is much more important in this sense of feeding the later troubadours and the love convention of chivalric romances with his themes and motifs. For him, love is not a source of joy and pleasure; on the contrary it brings pain and suffering:

Worse still is the love that deceives, that stings like a wasp, cruel, burning and treacherous, hot and freezing, for the man who is scourged by this love suffers great ill and turns yellow [with jaundice].⁵⁸

The impact of these early troubadours on chivalric romance lies in the fact that they detached love from its earlier religious overtones and conveyed it into the world of the courtier, whether it brought joy or suffering. Apart from that, the early troubadour poetry, "is not normally tied down by courtly ideas of behavior;" as it is clear in the small example from the poetry of William of Aquitaine, "it is concerned for personal quest for joy and the absolute ideal of an ultimate happiness than with conformity to social convention."⁵⁹ It is only after the second half of the twelfth century that the Provençal lyrics gained a fixed courtly tone and praises the standard behavior peculiar to the court. In this sense, Bernart de Ventadorn was the first troubadour whose poetry

⁵⁷ qtd. in L. T. Topsfield, *Troubadours and Love* (Cambridge, 1975), 27.

⁵⁸ qtd in Topsfield, 79.

⁵⁹ L. T. Topsfield, 2.

was largely imitated by the northern poets, troubadour poetry merging with heroic courtly literature there. Bernart put the lady on a pedestal and willingly surrendered himself to her service:

Noble lady, I ask of you nothing that you should accept me as your servant, for I will serve you as I would a noble lord, whatever reward may come to me. Behold me at your command, you who are noble, kind, joyous and courtly.⁶⁰

In Bernart de Ventadorn, love is for the first time presented as a courtly custom that has its own rules and practices. He talks about the service of love which will be quite a common motif in Chretien de Troyes and Marie de France.⁶¹ Because of the superiority of the lady in courtly manners — if not always or even usually in social status — a reciprocal love was impossible. Therefore, the lover showed his love by good service to her; and also by his “behavioural restraint and refinement of manners.”⁶² Lewis describes this relation as the “feudalisation of love”. He considers this “amatory ritual” as a part of courtly life.⁶³ Although Lewis counts courtesy as a feature of courtly love, he also admits that courtly love is a strand of courtesy: “It [love] is possible only to those who are, in the old sense of the word, polite. It thus becomes, from one point of view the flower, from another the seed, of all those noble usages which distinguish the gentle from the villain: only the courteous can love, but it is love that makes them courteous.”⁶⁴ As was mentioned at the very beginning, these terms are quite intermingled.

The proposition that “only the courteous can love” inevitably carries with it a kind of civilizing mission, because the knight has to be an ideal “courtier” to be an ideal lover. This is quite explicitly revealed by Bernart de Ventadorn:

⁶⁰ qtd in Topsfield, 115.

⁶¹ The courtly love in the chivalric romance will be handled in detail in the following chapter.

⁶² Herbert Moller, “Social Causation of Courtly Love Complex” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 1, no. 2 (1959): 137-163.

⁶³ Herbert Moller, “Social Causation,” 137.

⁶⁴ *The Alegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1992), 2.

There is only one being in the world through whom I could have happiness, and from her I shall never receive it, but from another I could not even want it. Through her, however, I have personal worth and good sense, and I am more joyous and take better care of my body; for if it were not for her, I would not make any effort.⁶⁵

Here, Bernart reveals that he shall not receive the love of the lady, but still he continues to love her because he realizes his personal value through her love and this makes him more joyous. Her love brings him into physical moderation; for he wishes to be admired by her.

If we come back to C. S. Lewis's definition of courtly love, it is not difficult to see that this definition covers the period after Bernart de Ventadorn. So, it would not be wrong to claim that courtly love — although earthly love had already been the main subject matter of the early troubadours — became a fixed convention and gained the overtones we perceive today, only after the second half of the twelfth century by combining with *courtoisie* and *chevalerie*.

Although the impact of early troubadours is undeniable on the interference of love into late twelfth-century chivalric literature, the zenith of the courtly love theme was realised after Chrétien de Troyes, and Marie de France. Both of these authors set their material on to pre-existing conventions: sensual love between the two sexes, the luxurious and colourful life of the court, and the knight-errant, who is refined as a gentleman in order to keep up with the courtly manners of the lady. Therefore, the transference of southern poetry into the works of the northern poets allows the beginning of a genre of chivalric courtly love.

2.3 Chevalerie

The clerical members of the princely courts, having been patronised by the

⁶⁵ qtd in Moller, "Meaning of Courtly Love," 49.

count, duke, or sometimes the countess, created a literature peculiar to the court. In this courtly literature, eloquence, the refinement of manners, as well as physical and inner beauty were represented as the ideals of the courtiers. The new manners and mores, bolstered by the literary representation, created their own culture, known to us the *courtoisie*. This new trend, having already started in the eleventh century, combined with the theme of earthly love in the lyrics of the troubadours. In Provençal poetry, the amorous knight, who pursued the life of a gentleman to catch the eye of a lady, settled down to be the centre of the narrative. When it came to the second half of the twelfth century, chivalric romance emerged as a new genre combining courtesy and courtly love in the adventurous stories of knights-errant. From the romances of Chrétien de Troyes, the ideals of *chevalerie* bloomed as a knightly ethic that inevitably influenced the self-perception of the knights and created for them an identity.

Besides being highly influenced by the twelfth-century concepts of courtesy and courtly love, these chivalric romances carried many traces of various genres in which these concepts functioned in different ways. Robert W. Hanning describes the twelfth-century chivalric romance as “the high point of generic synthesis in twelfth-century courtly literature, since some examples contain elements from the love-lyric, *chanson de geste*, *roman d’antique*, Ovidian *conte*, *fabliau*, and *lai*.”⁶⁶ Thus, there is no need to say that chivalric romance was a product of a highly sophisticated mind. It was not very surprising for a cleric to be so sophisticated, but following these texts required a considerable intellectual development from the lay audience too.⁶⁷ So, the

⁶⁶ R.W. Hanning, “The Audience as Co-Creator of the First Chivalric Romances,” *The Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 11, *Literature and Its Audience*, II Special Number, 1981, p.10.

⁶⁷ Duby suggests that the chivalric literature was written for the amusement of the young knights at the court, “Youth in Aristocratic Society” p. 121; Benton, “Court of Champagne,” p. 551; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 426; R. W. Hanning, “Audience as Co-Creator of the First Chivalric Romances,” 1-28.

patrons of this literature, and sometimes its lay audience had either a Latin education or they were self-taught people arising from a well-established oral culture.

By the twelfth century, the princely courts, by hosting many good schoolmasters, became centres of lay education. The custom of sending sons to faraway courts for physical and military training and to be educated in courtly life was gradually becoming a fixed custom among the landed nobility. Although knightly education was first limited to being trained in martial activities and courtliness, “by the mid-twelfth century, warfare and chivalry were no longer adequate for the education of knights, and a third discipline — letters — was becoming essential.”⁶⁸

Accordingly, literacy or learnedness without literacy was represented as a prerequisite for a good ruler and a virtue for the courtiers. John of Salisbury in his *Policraticus*, advocates the significance of literacy for the prince,

It is necessary for princes, who are commanded to reflect daily upon the text of divine law, to be proficient in letters... of course, an illiterate would not be able to do this without difficulty. And thus in a letter which I recall that the King of Romans transmitted to the King of Franks, who was exhorted to procure for his offspring instruction in the liberal disciplines, it was added elegantly to the rest that an illiterate king was like a crowned ass.⁶⁹

Similarly, by giving the example of Philip of Macedon, John of Salisbury offers the combination of the virtue of literacy with courtesy; even Philip’s victory at war and military superiority was directly related to his intellectual capacity:

in the Attic Nights, I recall having read that, when Philip of Macedon’s notable moral qualities were singled out, among other things his devotion to studies had coloured his conduct of war and exultation on victories, the liberality of his dining table, the refinement of his performance of duty, and whatever was aid or done splendidly or courteously.⁷⁰

The literacy, knowledge and wisdom of the prince are represented as the basis of the

⁶⁸ Ralph V. Turner, “The Miles Literatus in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England: How Rare a Phenomenon?” *The American Historical Review*, 83, no. 4 (1978): 941.

⁶⁹ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. and trans. by Cary J. Nederman (Cambridge, 1990).

⁷⁰ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 45.

government by John of Salisbury. For him, “by languishing of the virtue of letters among princes, the hand of the military arm is impaired and government itself is virtually cut off at the root.”⁷¹ Gerald of Wales emphasizes the same virtues: learnedness and military ability in his *On the Instruction of Princes*:

how a knowledge of letters, and liberal studies, are things worthy to be desired by princes, the examples of those princes which are selected show, and most evidently invite to this pursuit; who, the more literary and learned they were, the more courageous and active they proved themselves in warlike affairs.⁷²

The ideal prince of John of Salisbury and Gerald of Wales found its counterpart in the twelfth-century feudal nobility. The king of France, Louis VII, and the English king, Henry II had knowledge of Latin.⁷³ Further than having the ability to read, Henry II of England “enjoyed presiding over legal wrangles between abbots and bishops in his court, as it gave him an opportunity to scrutinize their charters and demonstrate that he was their master in intellect.”⁷⁴ The examples of the kings motivated their vassals, Henry I of Champagne, Thibaut V of Blois, Count Philip of Flanders to acquire the knowledge of Latin too. It is not surprising that the chivalric ideas patronised by these educated wealthy men encompassed the virtue of learnedness and wisdom besides the ability to fight. Chrétien de Troyes, at the beginning of *Cligés*, reveals the fusion of chivalry and learning,

Through the books we have, we learn the deeds of the ancient peoples and of bygone days. Our books have taught us that chivalry and learning first flourished in Greece; then to Rome came chivalry and the sum of knowledge, which now has come to France.⁷⁵

A similar attitude was followed by Gerald of Wales, too. His account is quite a good

⁷¹ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 45.

⁷² Gerald of Wales, *On the Instruction of Princes*, trans. Joseph Stevenson (Felinfach, 1991).

⁷³ Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 427.

⁷⁴ M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307* (Oxford, 1993) 235.

⁷⁵ “Par les livres que nos avons/Les fez des anciens savons/Et del siegle qui fu jadis./Ce nos ont nostre livre apris/Qu’an Grece ot de chevalerie/Le premier los et de clergie./Puis vint chevalerie a Rome/Et de la clergie la some./Qui or est an France venue.” *Cligés*, ll. 27-35; in *Arthurian Romances*, 123.

example of the way chivalry and knowledge were melted in the same pot,

Also it is noteworthy, that the pursuit of knowledge and chivalry always accompany one another. So it was in Greece under Alexander, in Rome under the emperors, and one in France under Pippin, Charlemagne, and still in our days under the regal descendants.⁷⁶

Clanchy points out that “when a knight is described as *litteratus* in a medieval source, his exceptional erudition is usually being referred to, not his capacity to read and write”⁷⁷ Moreover, “reading and writing were not automatically coupled at the end of the twelfth century.”⁷⁸ As we understand from the account of Lambert of Ardres, while he was writing about Count Baldwin II of Guines, even if a ruler was *illiterate*, he might not be indifferent to intellectual activities:

Although he was a layman and completely illiterate... although he was, as I have just said completely ignorant of the arts; he neither restrained his tongue nor kept silent, as he had made use of liberal tools more and more often... it often happened that the count, as he was educated and instructed by his teachers in some little questions and was a most diligent retainer of what he had heard, answered his men as though he were a lettered man and inspired others to respond. And properly, since he was more instructed in many things than he needed to be by the clergy, he contradicted and opposed the clergy in many matters.⁷⁹

What Lambert of Ardres meant by emphasizing the count’s illiteracy was that he did not know any Latin. However, it is clear in the example of Count Baldwin that lack of literacy did not necessarily mean lack of education or cleverness or eloquence; so being illiterate did not necessarily equal ignorance.⁸⁰ On the contrary, in spite of his lack of Latin knowledge, he was learned enough to argue with the clergy on some matters.

⁷⁶ qtd. in Putter, “Knights and Clerics at the Court of Champagne,” 249.

⁷⁷ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 231.

⁷⁸ Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 232.

⁷⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, trans. Leah Shopkow (Philadelphia, 2001), 113.

⁸⁰ For general information on *litteratus* and *illiteratus*, see H. Grundmann, “*Litteratus – illiteratus*” in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* xi, 1958, 1-65; M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1307*, 224-252.

In fact, a limited knowledge of Latin could only help a knight practically to read the documents rather than cultivating their intellectual capacity.⁸¹ Therefore, the reason why Clanchy calls twelfth-century knights educated and cultured regardless of whether they were literate⁸² is because there was a well-established oral tradition so that a lofty knight could easily make his cleric read a source when he wanted to learn it. If the source was not in the vernacular he could make the cleric translate it. Beyond the written material to be read, twelfth-century courts were also frequented by many minstrels or schoolmasters who disseminated the stories and ideas from memory.⁸³ From the account of Lambert of Ardres, we are provided with quite valuable information about the oral culture and how chivalric ideals were disseminated through oral literature. While he was talking about how Arnold of Guines spent his time at Ardres, Lambert tells that,

He respected old men and even decrepit ones kept them with him, because they told him the adventures, fables, and histories of the ancients and added serious matters of morality to their narrative and included them. For that reason, he kept these men with him as members of his household and his cronies, and he willingly listened to them: a certain old soldier named Robert of Coutances, who instructed him and pleased his ears on the subject of the Roman emperors and on Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver, and King Arthur of Britain, and Philip of Montgardin, who told him to his ears' delight of the land of Jerusalem and of the siege of Antioch and of the Arabs and Babylonians and deeds done overseas; and his relative named Walter of Le Clud, who diligently informed him of the deeds and fables of the English, of Gormond and Isembard, of Tristan and Isolde, of Merlin and Morolf...⁸⁴

Lambert gives an account of this in his "History" a few years after when Arnold was knighted; so, an approximate date for these past time entertainments is the 1180s, which means that there was a quite a good oral literature of chivalry that supplemented Chretien's chivalric ideal. The audience for this oral or written

⁸¹ Turner, "The Miles Literatus in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century England," 19.

⁸² Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 250.

⁸³ Charles Homer Haskins, "The Spread of Ideas in the Middle Ages" *Speculum* 1, no. 1 (January, 1926): 23.

⁸⁴ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 130.

literature of chivalry consisted of the clerics, educated women and the layman.⁸⁵ As it is clear in the example of Arnold of Guines, chivalric literature was an important part in the life of a knight errant; it was a part of an educational process.⁸⁶ For Arnold, and many others like him, the chivalric stories were important sources out of which they learned from the cleric the rules of *chevalerie*; and regulated their manners according to the requirements of this code.

However, by looking at this edifying role of the clerics and the civilizing mission of the chivalric narrative, one must not evaluate the chivalric knight as an ideal solely present in fantasy. On the contrary, the chivalric ideal shares a lot in common with its counterpart in real life. The romance writers of the twelfth century, while putting the knight, endowed with many virtues and martial abilities, into a fantastic world, did not completely detach his ties with the real knightly figure. In the two following chapters, certain parallelisms between the knight of romance and the knight of the real world will be discussed.

⁸⁵ Hanning, "Audience as the Co-Creator of the Chivalric Romance," 7.

⁸⁶ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lards of Ardres*, 130.

CHAPTER THREE

CHIVALRY INDOORS: COURT and LADY

In most of the chivalric romances, the court was the common ideal setting in which beautiful young ladies dwelled, luxurious ceremonial feasts were given, costly gifts were delivered and the legendary knights showed off their virtues. As it has already been discussed in the previous chapter, there was a code of etiquette shaping the behaviour of the knights: *courtoisie*. The requirements of this etiquette for the knights drew them into standardization in their manners and mores. The knight of a romance is typical: he is extremely handsome, eloquent in his speech, in his manners and in his appearance, polite towards friends, especially towards the ladies, as generous as possible, and loyal both to the lord and to the lady. All these virtues make the knight courteous as all knights should be. The court, thus, is the centre of chivalry in romances as an ideal setting where the knights may prove how courteous they are.

Once the rough, unsympathetic figure of feudal society, the knight came to be endowed with the newly formed, refined culture of the court; he was predestined to be a gentleman fitting to courtly culture. In the process of integration of the knights into the refined life of the court, the presence of the lady played an important role; for it

was the motivation of being loved by the lady which moulded the knight into the form of a courtier. This theme is quite at the centre of chivalric narrative; that which draws the knight from one adventure to another is the consuming desire to be appreciated by the lady.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss how *courtoisie* functioned for the knights indoors, as a knightly virtue that included all the others. Examples from chivalric narrative will be used to find out what is expected from the knight's behaviour at court. In accordance with the general argument of this thesis, non-fictional materials such as religious treatises, chronicles and biographies will also be used to see how the models of chivalric literature interacted with real life. By using the evidence deduced from these sources, it is the intention to point out that the courtesy of the knights was not only a literary convention, but also social custom, in some cases applied in a manner quite parallel to the chivalric literature.

It should also be mentioned that many of the virtues attributed to the knights had undoubtedly predated the twelfth-century chivalric literature. However, the significance of this literature in the twelfth century is the conveying of those virtues into the world of the knights specifically by giving him an ethical superiority not only among the masses of those who fight but also among other social groups. By exploring the chivalric ideals of the twelfth century, this study aims to discuss how far these ideals were in parallel with the social practices of the time.

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section explores the representation of the court in romances and historical sources. By analysing those sources comparatively, it is intended to find out how the representation of court is similar to the real image of it. The luxury of the court entertainments and the representation of the court as a source of pleasure will be explored in detail both in the

romances and in historical material.

While the court is praised and glorified by the chivalric romances as a centre of the chivalric life, twelfth-century literature also witnessed the emergence of a new genre that is known to us as court satire.⁸⁷ In these narratives, contrary to the chivalric romances, the court is the centre of wickedness and corruption. The moral reaction against the vices of courtiers is apparent in these works. Although the attitude of these narratives towards the court is completely different from the chivalric romances, this does not suggest that they give a different picture of the court. In the chivalric romances, the court is pleasant, the courtiers are eloquent, and their manners are polished. The picture delineated by the satires is the same; but the romances praise this refined, luxurious, pseudo-joyful picture of the court, whilst the satires condemn it. In this chapter I am going to use John of Salisbury's *Policraticus: Of the Frivolities of Courtiers and the Footprints of Philosophers*, Walter Map's *Courtiers' Trifles* and Gerald of Wales's *On the Instruction of Princes* in order to show how the chivalric courts of the romances were also to an extent the social realities of the period, by looking at the criticism from these writers.

The second section explores the place of the lady and love both in chivalric literature and in the life of the knight in twelfth century. In the works of Marie de France and Chrétien de Troyes love is represented as a virtue that an ideal knight should have. Besides the other virtues such as hospitality, generosity, prowess, and eloquence; love and devotion to a lady take their place in the chivalric ethic.

The material from historical sources about the application of love in real life is not as plentiful as it is in romance. However, by using the treatise of Andreas Capellanus, who theorized love; and by using that scarce material from historical

⁸⁷ Jaeger, *The Origin of Courtliness*, 54-66; Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 415-424.

sources, the section intends to discuss the parallelism between fact and fiction in the matter of love too.

3.1 The Court

The function of the court in chivalric romances is to be an active centre for the display of the chivalric virtues. The most common feature of the court in the romances is the joyful atmosphere in the ceremonies, feasts, or other celebrations which combine all the members of the court. These gatherings in the court, with their descriptions of luxury and the richness and abundance of gifts, are typical in the romances:

No wicket or door was closed: the entrances and exits were all wide open that day; poor man nor rich was turned away. King Arthur was not parsimonious; he ordered the bakers, cooks, and wine-stewards to serve bread, wine, and game in great quantity to each person – as much as he wished. No one requested anything, whatever it might be, without receiving all he wanted.⁸⁸

Such kind of ceremonies or feasts held at court represented a means for the king to show his power and his richness. The most important virtue that becomes prominent in those feast days is the generosity of the king. Largesse, as a knightly virtue, is one of the main themes of the chivalric romances; and the more generous the king is, the more virtuous a knight he is. King Arthur then is represented as the most generous of all. Geoffrey of Monmouth, who fed Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France with his Arthurian myth, related Arthur's generosity to his bravery:

⁸⁸ “N'i ot guichet ne porte close:/ Les issües et les antrees/Furent le jor abandonees,/N'an fu tornez povres ne riches./Li rois Artus ne fu pas chiches:/Bien commanda as penetiers/Et as queuz et aus botelliers/Qu'il livrassent a Grant planté,/Chascun selonc sa volanté,/Et painet vin et vineison./Nus ne demanda livreison/De rien nule, que que ce fust,/Qu'a sa volanté ne l'eüst. *Erec and Enide*, ll. 2016-2028; *Arthurian Romances*, 62.

Once he had been invested with the royal insignia, he observed the normal custom of giving gifts freely to everyone. Such a great crowd of soldiers flocked to him that he came to an end of what he had to distribute. However, the man to whom open-handedness and bravery both come naturally may indeed find himself momentarily in need, but poverty will never harass him for long. In Arthur courage was closely linked with generosity, and he made up his mind to harry the Saxons, so that with their wealth he might reward the retainers who served his household.⁸⁹

For Geoffrey, the generosity and courage are two closely related knightly virtues because a knight can regain through his prowess what he distributes. Arthur never falls into poverty because he gains more by fighting the Saxons and taking their wealth to himself.

It is quite common in the romance descriptions that the court is a pleasant place in which joy and celebration rule. Especially when the court is gathered for a coronation or a marriage ceremony, the luxury of the court, the generosity of the king, and the joyous tone of the poet is doubled. For example; after the death of his father Erec becomes the king of Lac, and King Arthur undertakes the coronation ceremony. While describing the coronation ceremony of Erec, Chrétien praises Arthur for his extreme generosity:

The mantles were spread out freely though all the rooms; all of them thrown out of the trunks, and anyone who wished could take some uninhibitedly. On a tapestry in the middle of the courtyard were thirty hogsheads of white sterlings, for at that time the sterling was in use throughout Brittany and had been since the time of Merlin. There everyone helped themselves; each person carried off that night as much as he wished to his lodgings.⁹⁰

Because the generosity of a knight is directly related to his courage and prowess, Chrétien compares Arthur with Alexander and Caesar. Arthur's court is so luxurious and the king is so generous that even emperors as rich as Alexander and Caesar could

⁸⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of Kings of Britain*, trans. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1966), 212.

⁹⁰ "Li mantel furent estandu/A bandon par totes les sales/Tuit furent gitié hors des males,/S'an prist qui vost, sanz contrediz./En mi la cort, sor un tapiz,/Ot trante muis d'esterlins blans,/Car lors avoient a cel tans/Coreü des le tans Merlin/Par tote Bretaigne esterlin./Iluec pristrent livreison tuit:/Chascubs an porta cele nuit/Tant com it vost a son ostel." *Erec and Enide*, ll. 6678-6689;., *Arthurian Romances*, 119.

not dare to spend as much as Arthur:

Alexander, who conquered so much that he subdued the whole world and was too generous and rich, was poor and miserly compared to him. Caesar, the emperor of Rome, and all the kings you hear about in narrative and epic poems, did not give so much at a celebration as King Arthur gave the day he crowned Erec; nor did Caesar and Alexander between them dare to expend as much as they spent at the court.⁹¹

It is noteworthy here that Chrétien prefers two most renowned army commanders to compare to Arthur. By doing so he implies again how generosity is dependent on the courage and the military ability of the knight because Arthur is quite sure of himself in that he will regain what he gave by fighting. So, it would not be wrong to claim that generosity might also be the encouragement of a knight to fight; for *largesse* is a knightly virtue, and to be generous he has to fight.

In the romances, the days of feasts and great ceremonies are generally the days when the sons of the kings and other nobles are knighted, because it is believed that the knighting ceremony increases the joy of the court. And also it is an opportunity for the king to show his *largesse*:

Now hear if you will of the great joy and the great ceremony, the nobility and the magnificence that were displayed at the court. Before the hour of tierce had sounded, king Arthur had dubbed four hundred knights and more, all sons of counts and kings; he gave each of them three horses and three pairs of mantles, to improve the appearance of his court.⁹²

As we learn from the biographies of kings, dukes, or less wealthy local rulers, a similar attitude is adopted in real life, too. It means that the great feasts or gatherings at court were opportunities for the display of the power and richness of the king; and

⁹¹ "Alixandres qui tant conquist,/Que desoz lui tot le mont mist,/Et tant tu larges et tant riches,/Fu anvers lui povres et chiches!/Cesar, l'empereres de Rome,/Et tuit li roi que l'en vos nome/An diz et an chançons de geste,/Ne dona tant a une feste/Com eli rois Artus dona/Le jor que Erec corona./Ne tant n'osassent pas despandre/Antre Cesar et Alixandre/Com a la cort ot despandu." *Erec et Enide*, pp. ll. 6665-667; *Arthurian Romances*, 119.

⁹² "Or oez, se vos comandez:/Quant la corz fu tote asanblee,/Einçois que tierce fust sone,/Ot adobez li rois Artus/Quatre cenz chevaliers et plus,/Toz filz de contes et de rois:/Chevax dona a chascun trois/Et robes a chascun trois peire,/Por ce que sa corz mialz apeire." *Erec et Enide*, ll. 6650-6658; *Arthurian Romances*, 118-119.

they were also the occasions where the young men were knighted. As we learn from the biography of William Marshal, he was knighted at a great court gathering in Drincourt.⁹³ Similarly, Lambert of Ardres narrates how Arnold of Guines was knighted at a similar great court gathering. According to his *History* Arnold of Ardres is knighted at a great court gathering at Pentecost,

He [Baldwin II of Guines] called his sons and acquaintances and friends to his court at Guines on the holy day of Pentecost in 1181 a.d. and the man who must not be struck in return gave Arnold the military accolade, and initiated him into full manhood with oats. Along with Arnold, Baldwin also honoured Eustace of Salperwick, Simon of Nielles-lez-Ardre, Eustace of Nord-Ausque, Walo of Preures with oats, military equipment and supplies.⁹⁴

After the knighting ceremony, Lambert of Ardres recounts the entertainments at the court, which has the same role as being the centre of joy and amusement. As a knightly virtue, the generosity of the newly knighted Arnold is also discussed by the author:

They spent the solemn day with noble and refined food and drink, whiling away and passing the day of sempiternal joy in as much pleasure as they could. Then Arnold, newly clad in knightly garments, jumped into their midst and gave money to the minstrels, mimes, players, clowns, servants, attendants, and performers, and all those who called and cried out his name, until he received the reward of their praise and their thanks as recompense. In fact he gave away with generous hand whatever he could own or acquire as though he were throwing it away...⁹⁵

This praising, obsequious tone of the romancers contrasts with the condemnatory, reproachful attitude of the satirists. Knightly generosity is considered as over-lavishness; and the extravagance in the expenses is criticized in the satires. The common feature of these critical treatments is dissatisfaction with the princes and with the prelates who should have instructed them with virtue. Gerald of Wales explicitly states in the preface of his *On the Instruction of Princes* that the reason he wrote is

⁹³ *History of William Marshal*, ed. A.J. Holden and trans. S. Gregory (London, 2002-2006) II: 816-820.

⁹⁴ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 124.

⁹⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 124.

this dissatisfaction:

That which especially impelled me to forth a treatise on the Instruction of a Prince, is this: that, in the manners of princes and of prelates who are appointed to govern and instruct others, as well by their example as by their power, I find so much which is worthy of reprehension. For what prince is there, of the present day, who does not indiscriminately use the power granted to him from above for the gratification of every inclination of his mind, for every carnal desire and luxury, for every atrocity of a depraved despotism?⁹⁶

Here, the princes are criticized not only for being despotic but also for their tendency to worldly pleasures and luxury, which are the features of the court in romances. Thus, the representation of King Arthur as a very generous king and of the court as a centre of pleasure and entertainment is not without foundation.

In addition, we can understand from the criticisms of John of Salisbury that trying to be generous, gentle, polite, namely courteous is not only the behaviour of a romance hero, because Salisbury condemns the courtiers not only for their extravagance but also for all their effort to imitate being refined:

Among all the courtly fools, those who do harm most perniciously are those who are accustomed to glossing over their wretched frivolities under the pretext of honour and liberality, who move about in bright apparel, who feast splendidly, who often urge strangers to join them at the dinner table, who are courteous at home, benign when abroad, affable in speech, liberal in judgement, generous in the treatment of kin, and distinguished in the imitation of all virtues. For as the moralist says, "Of all injustices, none are more serious than those in which, when a person is most deceitful, he behaves in such a fashion that he appears to be a good man."⁹⁷

Salisbury has quite an apparent attitude towards the courts and the courtiers. He considers the knightly virtues of being gentle in speech and in behaviour, of being generous to others in splendid feasts, as hypocrisy. For him the power of the court increases the wickedness in it:

The more distinguished and powerful the court is, the more plentiful and pernicious are these scourges of mankind and the torturers of the innocent. For

⁹⁶ Gerald of Wales, *Concerning the Instruction of Princes*, trans. by Joseph Stevenson (London, 1991), 7.

⁹⁷ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 87.

in fact, it is a frequent occurrence that a court either receives or creates vicious men, among whom transgressions increase in audacity since their vices are indulged by reason of their intimacy with the powerful. And also it is useless to take for granted whatever was done earlier in life, since it is hardly possible to retain one's innocence among courtiers. For who is it whose virtue is not cast aside by the frivolities of the courtiers?⁹⁸

Contrary to Salisbury, chivalric narrative suggests that the more powerful a court is the better it is, for it shows off the strength of the king and his knights. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, Arthur's court is considered as a threat to the neighbouring kingdoms:

At last the fame of Arthur's generosity and bravery spread to the very ends of the earth; and the kings of countries far across the sea trembled at the thought that they might be attacked and invaded by him, and so lose control of the lands under their dominion. They were so harassed by these tormenting anxieties that they re-built their towns and the towers in their towns, and then went so far as to construct castles on carefully-chosen sites, so that, if invasion should bring Arthur against them, they might have a refuge in their time of need.⁹⁹

As it is implied by Chrétien, the function of those luxurious ceremonies and extravagant giving is to enhance the king's power and show this power to others. The richness of the court and the generosity of the king is not only related to his prowess but also his military power; for the courtly ceremonies also allowed the king to display his knights. In the history of Lambert of Ardres, the luxurious ceremonies and the entertainments at court with the valiant knights undertake the same mission. After a long chapter that describes the physical appearance of the tower of Sangatte that was built by Count Baldwin, he tells how the tower became a threat to Count Reynold:

Truly, when Count Reynold of Boulogne saw and observed that the tower of Sangatte had been built and that Count Baldwin of Guines often amused himself in it with delicious banquets and feasts with his knights and arms and was glorified in an unprecedented manner, he feared for himself as well as for his territory and set every sort of rage and indignation ablaze.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, 90.

⁹⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of Kings of Britain*, 222

¹⁰⁰ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 117

In the chivalric romances the court is not only a centre for entertainment and pleasure, but also a school for chivalric learning. Arthur's court for example, is represented as a school for chivalry where the young knights are taught in knightly virtues by taking King Arthur and his nephew Sir Gawain as example for themselves. Chrétien's Erec is the son of King Lac and comes to the court of King Arthur to be trained in chivalry. Similarly, in *Cligés*, Alexander comes to the court from Greece, having heard of the court's fame. Although his father wanted to persuade him against this by saying that he will be crowned soon, he prefers to be perfect in chivalry to being the king:

If you wish to honour me according to my request, then give me vair and miniver, good horses, and silken cloth; for before I become a knight I wish to serve King Arthur. I am not yet worthy enough to bear arms. No pleading or flattery can keep me from going to that distant land to see the king and his barons, who are so greatly renowned for courtesy and valour.¹⁰¹

What draws Alexander to such a distant place is King Arthur's fame, and the courtesy and valour of his knights. After Alexander comes to the court of King Arthur and becomes a prominent knight in the court, he returns to his country and dies there. But before he dies, he advises his son with these words:

My dear son, Cligés, you will never know the extent of your valour and might if you do not go to test yourself against the Bretons and French at King Arthur's court.¹⁰²

Against the will of his father, when Cligés becomes a young man, he wants to go to the court of King Arthur to test himself as a knight. He requests permission from his uncle, who is the king of Greece,

¹⁰¹ "Se vos feire volez mon buen/De ce que je vos ai requis,/Or me donez et veir, et gris./Et boens chevax, et dras de soie;/Car,einçois que chevaliers soie,/Voldrai servir le roi Artu./N'ai pas ancor si Grant vertu/Que je pois armes porter./Nus ne m'an porroit retourner,/Par proiere ne par losange,/Que je n'aïlle en la tere estrage/Veoir le roi et ses barons,/De cui si granz est li renons/De corteisie et de proesce." *Cligés*, . ll. 140-153; *Arthurian Romances*, 125.

¹⁰² "Biax filz Cligès, ja ne savras/Conuistre con bien tu vaudras/De proesce ne de vertu,/Se a la cort le roi Artu/Ne te vas esprover einçois/Es as Bretons et as Einglois." *Cligès*, ll. 2587-25-92; *Arthurian Romances*, 154.

Just as they the rub gold against the touch stone if they want to test its purity, so I assure you that I wish to try myself there where I believe I can find a true test. In Britain, if I am bold, I can rub against the true, pure touchstone where I shall test my mettle.¹⁰³

As it is clear in Cligés' words, the court of King Arthur is considered as the centre of true chivalry. As Frank Barlow points out, "the theme of a young man entering royal service abroad, then returning to his family in order to take up an inherited position, is common in epic and in romance, and must sometimes have occurred in real life."¹⁰⁴ As we learn from Lambert of Ardres, Count Arnould of Guines was sent to the court of Philip of Flanders "to be trained in morals and to be diligently introduced to and steeped in military responsibilities."¹⁰⁵ Similarly, William Marshal was sent to "Tancarville in Normandy to be with the Chamberlain... as is fitting for a nobleman setting off abroad to win an honourable reputation."¹⁰⁶

Just as it is clearly expressed in the quotations above, the court and its role in the knightly ethos are also quite explicitly dealt with in *Erec and Enide*. In his first romance, Chrétien describes the luxurious celebrations at the court, the extravagance of the king in his giving, the pleasant atmosphere of the court in length. However, he also has an ironic attitude towards courtly life, which is apparent in Erec's last adventure. While he is in his way with Enide, Erec comes across an adventure which is quite challenging for him. When he asks to receive details about the adventure, Guivret replies,

I can not keep silent and avoid saying what you wish to hear. The name is beautiful to speak, but it is painful to achieve, for no one can escape from it

¹⁰³ "Por ce toche an l'or a l'essai/Que l'an conoisse s'il est fins./Ausi voel je, c'en est la fins./Moi essayer et esprover./La ou je cuit l'essaie trover./En Bretagne, se je sui preuz,/Me porrai tochie a la queuz/Et a L'essai fin et vrai,/O ma proesce esproverai," *Cligès*, ll. 4232-4240; *Arthurian Romances*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Frank Barlow, *William Rufus*, (Berkeley, 1983), 25.

¹⁰⁵ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 123.

¹⁰⁶ "En Normandie a Tarkarville... come a gentil home estuet feire qui s'en vet en estrange tere por pris e por onor conquere."; *History of William Marshal*, ll.744-752.

alive. The adventure, I assure you, is called the Joy of the Court.¹⁰⁷

The name of the adventure is “The Joy of the Court” but it overawes everybody as soon as they hear it. The irony in the name of the adventure and how it terrifies people is revealed by the words of the by-passers who sees Erec preparing to undertake the adventure:

This knight who is passing by is coming to the Joy of the Court. He will suffer from it before he leaves! No one ever came from another land to seek the Joy of the Court without meeting with shame and loss, and forfeiting his head there.¹⁰⁸

It is not difficult to see that Chrétien hints that the actual court, which seems quite joyous and pleasant at first sight, can easily turn into a misfortune for somebody who comes from distant lands in the search of that joy. In other words, slander is so common in the courts that it is quite possible for a favourite courtier who enjoys the court to the utmost to fall into disfavour immediately. Both the romances and the court satires give us quite a vivid picture of both flattery and slander. Although these are not virtues, as both romance and satire prove they were realities in the life of the knight indoors.

Marie de France, in *Eliduc*, tells the story of a knight, who is loved deeply by his king. However, because of the slander and the flattery of the other courtiers, the king disfavours Eliduc without giving him the opportunity explain himself:

Eliduc’s lord, the King of Brittany, loved him dearly and cherished him. He served the king loyally and, whenever the king was away, the land was Eliduc’s to guard. The king retained Eliduc for his prowess and as a result many advantages accrued to him. He could hunt in the forest and no forester was bold enough to oppose him or even grumble at him in any way. The envy of his good fortune, which often possesses others, caused him to be embroiled

¹⁰⁷ “Ne puis teisir,/Que ne die vostre plaisir./Li nons est mout biax a nomer,/Mes mout est griés asomer,/Car nun n’an puet eschaper vis./L’avanture, ce vos plevis,/La Joie de la Cort a non.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 5457-5463; *Arthurian Romances*, 104.

¹⁰⁸ “Cist chevaliers, qui par ci passe,/Vient a la Joie de la Cort./Dolant an iert einz qu’il s’an tort:/Onques nus ne vint d’autre tere/La Joie de la Cort requerre/Qu’il n’i eüst honte et damage/Et n’i leissast la teste an gage.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 5508-5514; *Arthurian Romances*, 104.

with his lord, to be slandered or accused, so that he was banished from the court without a formal accusation.¹⁰⁹

Slander is quite a common vice in the court. The biographer of William Marshal also narrates how William is disfavoured by the Henry the Young King upon the slander of the envious courtiers.¹¹⁰ They make the king believe that William is doing wrong to him. As the biographer accounts,

So, now the Marshall was in a position to know that Sir Peter had told him the truth, for the King really showed him, not secretly, but for all to see, that he hated him with all his heart, and he was not in such a great favour at court as he used to be, not so cherished by the King or in such a position of influence.¹¹¹

William's experience is not that different from what is described in the Joy of the Court adventure in *Erec and Enide*. The court of Henry the Young King, which was a source of joy for William once, is now the reason of shame and disgrace. He, thus, leaves the court just like Marie's Eliduc. The favour or disfavour of the king decides the place of the knight at court; he might be in a very good position, or quite the opposite. In such a place flattery comes to be the most common feature of the courtiers. Interestingly enough, Chrétien does tell of flattery as a necessity of the court rather than presenting it as a vice or sin. In *Cligés*, when Cligés decides to go to the court of King Arthur to test himself, Fenice laments with these words:

If he is skilled in the use of flattery, as one must be at court, then he will be rich before he returns. Whoever wishes to be in his lord's good graces and sit at his right hand, as is the custom and habit of our days, one must pick the

¹⁰⁹ "Elidus aveit un seignur/Reis de Brutaine la meinur/Que mut l'amot e cherisseit/E il læument le serveit./U que li reis deüst errer,/Il aveit la terre a garder/ Pur sa prüesce le retint./ Pur tant de meuz mut li avint:/Par les forez poeit chacier ;/N'i ot si hardi forestier/Ki cuntredire li osast/ Ne ja une feiz en gruscäst./ Pur l'envie del bien de lui,/ Si cum avient sovent d'autrui,/Esteit a sun seignur medlez /[E] empeirez e encusez./Que de la curt le cungea/ Sanz ceo qu'il ne l'areisuna. *Eliduc* in Marie de France, *Lais*, ed. Alfred Ewert, London, 1995; ll.29-46;*The lais of Marie de France*, trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby (London, 2003), 111. All the quotations, both in English and in Old French, are taken from these editions.

¹¹⁰ *History of William Marshal*, ll. 5126-5427.

¹¹¹ "Lors pout li Mareschals saveir que sire Pierres li dist veir, quer li reis l'en fist vien semblant, veiant toz ne mie en emblant, qu'il haeit de tot son cuer, ne qu'il n'ert pas de si boen fuer a cort comme il i soleit ester ne si cher del rei ne si mestre." *History of William Marshal*, ll. 5427-5434

feather, even when there isn't one. But there is a contrary side to this: even after, he has smoothed down his lord's hair the servant does not have the courtesy to tell his lord of any wickedness and evil within him, but lets him believe and understand that no one is comparable to him in valour and in knowledge, and his lord believes he speaks the truth... Even if he is wicked and cruel, cowardly and spineless as a hare, stingy, crazy, and misshapen, and evil in both word and deeds, still someone will praise him to his face and then laugh at him behind his back... anyone who frequents courts and lords, must be ready to serve with lies.¹¹²

In fact, Fenice's words are neither very consistent with the general theme of the romance nor is it necessary to the story even to reveal her anxiety. So, it can be argued that Chrétien raises his own voice here from the mouth of Fenice to give a more realistic picture of a court life. As is quite explicitly revealed in the last sentence, flattery is a requirement for serving the king and achieving his favour. It would, of course, be wrong to claim that Chrétien represents flattery as a virtue of a knight, but one might claim that he appreciates the necessity of it for survival at court. So, Wace's creating a Round Table to emphasize the equality of the knights at Arthur's court is quite understandable under these circumstances. He aspires to an ideal that he could not find in real life. In this sense, the description of the Round Table is important:

Because of these noble lords about his hall, of whom each knight pained himself to be the hardiest champion, and none would count him the least praiseworthy, Arthur made the Round Table, so reputed of the Britons. This Round Table was ordained of Arthur that when his fair fellowship sat to meet their chairs should be high alike, their service equal, and none before or after his comrade. Thus no man could boast that he was exalted above his fellow, for all alike were gathered round the board, and none was alien at the breaking of Arthur's bread.¹¹³

¹¹² "S'or set bien servir de losenge,/Si com an doit servir a cort,/Molt iert riches, einz qu'il s'an tort./Qui vialt de son seignor bien estre/Et delez lui seoir a destre,/Si com il est us et costume,/Del chief li doit oster la plume,/Neis quant il n'en i a point./Car il aplainne par deforts,/Et se il a dedans le cors/Ne malvestié ne vilanie,/Ja n'iert tant cortois qu'il li die,/Einz fera cuidier et antendre/Qu'a luine se porroit nus prandre/De proesce ne de savoir,... Car quant il est fel et enrievres,/Malvés et coarz come lievres,/CHiches et fos et contrefez/Et vilains an diz et an fez,/La prise par devant et loe/Tiex qui derriers lif et la moe;... Qui les corz et les seignors onge/Servir le covient de mançonge." *Cligés*, ll. 4513- 4548; *Arthurian Romances*, 178.

¹¹³ Wace, *Roman de Brut*, in *Arthurian Chronicles* trans. by Eugene Mason (Toronto, 1996) , 55.

Here Wace creates an ideal court in which slander and flattery cannot change the knights' places because they are fixed as equal. It is important to note that Chrétien does not talk about the Round Table although he adopts many themes and motifs from Wace. In this matter, it is possible to see Chrétien as more realistic than Wace.

Depending on whether a courtier obtains favour from the king or suffers the king's disfavour, there is a constant change at the court in terms of courtiers who are arriving with the hope or promise of advancement or leaving the court in despair and disgrace. Therefore, while the court remains the same the courtiers change. Walter Map explicitly develops this idea by accounting his astonishment upon the changing nature of the court:

I do know however that the court is not time; but temporal it is, changeable and various, space-bound and wandering, never continuing in one state. When I leave it, I know it perfectly: when I come back to it I find nothing or but little of what I left there: I am become a stranger to it, and it to me. The court is the same, its members are changed.¹¹⁴

The last sentence of Walter Map is quite important, for he suggests that it is not the nature of the court that changes but the courtiers. We can say, thus, that there is an established courtly culture which can easily assimilate the newcomers. In this courtly culture, generosity, luxury, gentle manners, refinement in appearance and in speech are all the virtues attributed to the ideal knights in the chivalric narrative. Geoffrey describes this courtly culture with a great admiration:

By this time, Britain had reached such a standard of sophistication that it excelled all other kingdoms in its general affluence, the richness of its decorations, and the courteous behaviour of its inhabitants. Every knight in the country who was in any way famed for his bravery wore livery and arms showing his own distinctive colour; and women of fashion often displayed the same colours.¹¹⁵

As the passage shows, the appearance of the court and the courtier are so important

¹¹⁴ Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers' Trifles*, ed. and trans. by M. R. James (Oxford, 2002), 2-3

¹¹⁵ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of The Kings of Britain*, 229.

that Geoffrey praises Arthur and his courtiers for being quite polished and gentle. Their garments and behaviour all correspond with the code of courtesy. Both the knights and the ladies adjust themselves to the courtly culture and create a harmony, according to Geoffrey.

The historical evidence shows that the courts of the twelfth century were not so different from their literary representation. The luxurious ceremonies, generous and sometimes over-lavish kings are the social practices of the twelfth century as well as the flattery and slander which were both described by the romances and historical accounts. The kings and powerful princes undoubtedly imitated the pleasant descriptions of the court in the romances as well as vice versa, and kings and lords tried to show off their power and richness by embellishing the appearance of their court. Also, the chivalric narratives represented the flattery and slander of the real courts which they attended. So, courtly life and courtly literature flourished simultaneously, interacting with one another.

3.2 The Lady and Love

The relationship between the lady and the knight claiming her love was represented as a courtly custom in the chivalric narrative. Especially, in the time of important social gatherings such as coronations, marriage ceremonies, or religious feasts, the court is represented as an environment that combines various members of society: the lords, barons, less powerful knights, ladies, clerics, etc. The most important element in this milieu is the meeting of the knight and the lady, two inseparable strands of chivalric literature. So, the courtly gatherings are important for

the meeting of these two components of chivalric life. How Chrétien emphasizes the importance of this meeting in *Erec and Enide* is noteworthy:

On Easter day, in spring time, at Cardigan his castle, King Arthur held court. So rich a one was never seen, for there were many good knights, brave and combative and fierce, and rich ladies and maidens, noble and beautiful daughters of the kings.¹¹⁶

In the description, the knight is brave and combative while the lady is rich, noble and beautiful. Chrétien here hints that the beauty of the lady inspires the knight to be combative and fierce to claim her love. He also hints that why he is so brave and combative is because she is so rich and noble. When we analyze the theme in a realistic context the prowess of a knight can be an opportunity for him to raise his status by the favour of a lady. In fact, in medieval society where marriages were often little more than political contracts¹¹⁷, a noble lady, sometimes a daughter of a duke or a widow of a count could easily help a lesser knight to raise his status, just like William Marshal, who became earl of Pembroke after his marriage to Isabel de Clare. Life in a castle in the absence of a husband may not have been boring and gloomy for a noble lady. Lambert of Ardes introduces us the example of Countess Ida, who experienced many love affairs with different people. She was the daughter of Count Mathew of Boulogne; and she took the title of countess after the death of her father. She was quite liberal in her affairs; but Lambert assesses this as a common feature of a widow;

She had earlier been betrothed to Count Gerard III of Ghelria, and then

¹¹⁶ “Au jor de Pasque, au tans novel,/A Quaradigan, son chastel,/Ot li rois Artus conrt tenue./Einz si riche ne fu veüe./Que mout i ot boens chevaliers,/Hardiz et conbatanz et fiers,/Et riches dames et puceles,/Filles de roi, gentes et beles;” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 27-34; *Arthurian Romances*, p. 37.

¹¹⁷ For medieval marriage in general see Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100-1300* (Woodbridge, 1997); Georges Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, trans. Jane Dunnett (Chicago, 1994); Georges Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-century France*, trans. Elborg Forster (Baltimore, 1991); Christopher N.L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford, 1991)

afterward, upon the advice of the venerable Count Philip of Flanders, her paternal uncle, to Duke Bertulf of Aeringhen. Events intervened around this time so that she was bereft of both, and she indulged in pleasures and worldly delights of the body, like a widow without a husband.¹¹⁸

Even in the life of a wealthy noble, a possible marriage to a wealthier woman could easily allure a knight. Likewise, a courageous knight could be an ideal lover or husband for a noble lady even if he was less wealthy than her. Lambert of Ardres accounts the love of Arnold of Guines and Ida of Boulogne,

And hence she enticed Arnold of Guines as much as she could and loved him with a sexual passion, or at least, she pretended she did out of feminine frivolity and deception. Thus, as messengers and secret signs went back and forth between them carrying tokens of true love, Arnold loved her with a similarly loving return—or pretended to love her out of manly prudence and caution. But he did aspire to the land and the dignity of the county of Boulogne once he had won the favour of this countess through his exhibition of real—or feigned—love.¹¹⁹

Here, a romantic and a realistic face of love come together. At first sight their love seems not different from the ones in the romances: there are secret signs, messengers, tokens of love, etc. However, Lambert of Ardres does not hesitate to reveal that Arnold aspires to the title and the lands of the lady. Even if he had loved her honestly — but there was a possibility that he might not have — her possessions allured him greatly.

The title of this particular chapter in Lambert's *History* is also interesting: "How Arnold, while he was going to tournaments, delighted Countess Ida of Boulogne because of his very great liberality."¹²⁰ As might happen in Geoffrey of Monmouth, the knightly virtues of Arnold attract the attention of Ida. His prowess, bravery, and his success at many tournaments bring Arnold such a great fame that "he became the hero and glory of Guines, that he acquired and won a famous name for

¹¹⁸ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 124.

¹¹⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Count of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 124.

¹²⁰ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Count of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 123

himself in many regions and came very much to the notice and into the mind of Countess Ida of Boulogne.”¹²¹ It is interesting to see that Ida is attracted by Arnold without seeing him; only by hearing of his deeds and knightly fame. This historical account is reminiscent of Marie de France’s *Milun*. In this particular *lai*, the lady “heard Milun’s name mentioned and conceived a deep love for him. She sent a messenger to tell him that, if he wished, she would be his love.”¹²² As these examples show, both in the romances and in real life the knightly virtues of men attracted women’s attention; and the dignity and wealth of the women attracted the men’s.

By taking his Arthurian material from Geoffrey of Monmouth, Chrétien follows the same theme as Geoffrey for whom the link between the prowess of the knight and the love of the lady were customary in the court of Arthur. Geoffrey of Monmouth narrates that the love of the lady can only be achieved by the knight proving himself in battle:

They [women] scorned to give their love to any man who had not proved himself three times in battle. In this way the womenfolk became chaste and more virtuous and for their love the knight were ever more daring.¹²³

Geoffrey presents this as if it was a well-established tradition; he neither condemns nor praises it, he just explains the custom. Here, a common theme of chivalric literature is apparent: “the thought of his loved one will lend strength to a knight’s arm, skill to his riding, and accuracy to his aim.”¹²⁴ In Chrétien, this effect of love on the prowess of the knight is quite a common theme. In *Cligés*, for example, while Cligés is fighting in a tournament, Fenice cries out because of the fear she feels; and Cligés hearing her voice becomes stronger in his jousts:

¹²¹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Count of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 126

¹²²“Ele ot oï Milun nomer;/Mut le cumençat a amer./Par sun message li manda/Que, si li plest, el l’amera.” *Milun*, ll.25-28; *Lais of Marie de France*,.97.

¹²³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of The Kings of Britain*, 229.

¹²⁴ Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 71.

Cligés distinctly heard Fenice when she cried out, and her voice gave him renewed strength and courage. He leapt quickly to his feet and rushed angrily at the duke, pursuing and attacking him with such fury that the duke was terrified, for now he found Cligés more eager to fight, stronger, more agile, and more aggressive than he had seemed to be when first they joined in battle.¹²⁵

It is clear that in romances, the existence of the lady motivates the knight to be braver and to fight better. What is common both in Geoffrey and in Chrétien is that love encourages the knight to be braver and stronger. So, a knight in love is stronger than a knight who does not have a lady whom he wants to attract. Therefore, all the knights of Chrétien are in love with a lady who stimulates the knight to be courageous, valorous, and strong. The biographer of William Marshal narrates quite similar scenery to that of the romances.

The countess came out of the castle... with her were married ladies and young girls, so beautiful and adorned that as regards their beauty there was no room for criticism, nor had they anything to learn about courtliness or good sense. The knights rose up from the ranks to meet them as was fit and proper. They were convinced that they had become better men as a result of the ladies' arrival, and so they had, for all those there felt a doubling of strength in mind and body, and of their boldness and courage.¹²⁶

The knights, who were preparing for a tournament, rejoiced at the arrival of the ladies. The ladies were courteous and the knights met them as was proper. It is important to note that the biographer underlines that this was quite a common thing and the knights did what should always be done under these circumstances. In parallel with the romances, the *Historie* also notes that the existence of the lady made them more courageous and the knights felt themselves better men.

¹²⁵“Clygès, quant Fenice cria,/L’oï molt bien et antendi;/Sa voiz force et cuer li randi;/Si resault sus isnelemant/Et vint au duc irieemant,/Si le requiert et envaïst,/Que li dus toz s’an esbaïst;/Car plus le trueve bateillant,/Fort et legier et combatant,/Que il n’avoit fet, ce li sanble,/Quant il vindrent premiers ansanble.” *Cligès*, ll. 4104-4114; *Arthurian Romances*, 173.

¹²⁶“La contesse s’en eissi fors... o lié dames e damiseles si acesmees e sibeles Qu’en beauté n’i out que rependre, n’els n’estoient mie a apendre de corteisie ne de sens. Li civalie saillent des rens contre eles si commē il durent ; molt lor fu vis qu’amendē furent por la sorvenue des dames : si furent il, quer cors e ames e hardemenz e cuers doublerent a toz asemble qui la erent.” *The History of William Marshal*, ll. 3455-3470.

Besides all this, the political role of the lady is quite an important part of the question of “the lady and love”. The twelfth century witnessed many prominent female figures who had outstanding political roles. Eleanor of Aquitaine is the best example of them, by taking part in the Second Crusade with many notable women of her entourage.¹²⁷ Her daughter Marie de Champagne is not only renowned for her great support for chivalric literature. In Chretien, we see Marie not only as a great patroness, but also as an educated lady who can give Chretien the *matière* and the *sens* of his romance. The same Marie de Champagne came to be an arbiter in Andreas Capellanus’s *De Amore*.¹²⁸ The examples of Eleanor and her daughter Marie are the most prominent ones, but not the only ones. It was quite possible to see many women who controlled territory in the absence of their husbands or after their husbands’ death. So it is not difficult to see how feudal servitude to the lord could be equal to servitude to the lady. This social status of the lady places the knight in service to her and makes her the source of admiration, and her favour becomes the motivation of knight in his deeds and virtues. As Maurice Keen suggests, the attempt of the knight to claim the love of the lady has a more practical reason than a solely romantic one:

The adoration of a great lady, the wife of a count may be or of a high baron, had more than simply erotic significance. Her acceptance of her admirer’s love (which meant her acceptance of his amorous service, not admission to her bed) was *laisser passer* into the rich, secure world of the court of which she was mistress. The courtly literature of the troubadours encapsulated thus an amorous ethic of service to a lady which was essentially comparable to the ethic of faithful service to a lord.¹²⁹

When the service of the lord is equated to the service of the lady, the knight aims to be appreciated not only by his lord but also by the lady. Although Chrétien

¹²⁷ See Georges Duby, *Women of the Twelfth Century*, trans. Jean Birrell (Chicago, 1997); Amy Kelly, *Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Four Kings*; D.D.R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen and Legend* (Oxford, 1993)

¹²⁸ Kelly, “Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Courts of Love”

¹²⁹ Keen, *Chivalry*, 31.

and Marie also emphasize the importance of devotion and loyalty, their female characters are not necessarily superior to the knight in rank. On the contrary, all of Chrétien's knights are higher in rank than their ladies, apart from Lancelot. Similarly, in Marie de France's *Equitan*, the king falls in love with his seneschal's wife; and in *Le Fresne*, a lord falls in love with le Fresne who is brought up by a woman after being found outside. Therefore, in the chivalric narratives of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France, the theme of servitude to the lord and lady alike comes to have a new shape. In this new form, the lady was the knight's superior in courtliness, though not necessarily in rank. Therefore, the lady is generally praised due to her courtly manners as well as for her status. Among the courtly virtues of a lady, love has an important part. It is a prerequisite not only for the knight, but for an ideal courtly lady: she must be in love too. Marie de France comments in *Equitan* from the mouth of the king: "How sad if such a beautiful woman were not in love or had no lover! How could she be a true courtly lady, if she had no true love?"¹³⁰ It is clear that Marie sees love as a social necessity of courtly life in general, and where it is missing both the lady and the knight cannot be true courtiers.

All these discussions above show us that: love is a virtue both for the knight and for the lady, but feudal marriages are far from being based on love; the service to the lord is the same as the service to the lady; and the knight should be loyal to his lady as much as he is to his lord. Under these circumstances, adultery becomes a common theme in courtly literature.

In *De Amore*, there is an interesting letter which claims to have been written to Countess Marie of Champagne. The letter is written by a noble woman A. and Count G. to ask for help from the Countess about a quarrel on which they could not come to

¹³⁰ Keen, *Chivalry*, p.57

an agreement. They disagree about love between married couples; what they wonder is whether true love and jealousy can exist between married couples. The pseudo-answer of the countess is interesting:

Love cannot acknowledge any rights of his between husband and wife. But there is still argument that seems to stand in the way of this, which is that between them there can be no true jealousy, and without it true love may not exist, according to the rule of love itself, which says, "He who is not jealous cannot love."¹³¹

The answer reveals that love between a married couple is impossible; which may easily lead us to the argument that the possibility of a marriage between an unmarried couple is also a hindrance to true love. This would seem to suggest that true love can only be achieved when it is adulterous. It is no accident that in the *lais* of Marie de France adultery is the most common theme. Each of her *lais* tells the story of an illegitimate love affair. However, the frequency of adulterous love in the fantasy should not be taken to represent social life in the twelfth century, when adultery was a taboo even more than it is today. But it should also be noted that adultery was punished more severely in the case where it was committed by the woman. We have some accounts which show us how the woman and her lover are punished because of their illegitimate love. Philip of Flanders, who is always praised for his knightly virtues, discovers one day that his wife, Isabelle of Vermandois, has an adulterous relationship with one of his knights. After he has caught them together, he kills the knight by holding his head down a sewer; and confines the countess to her apartments.¹³²

Joachim Bumke argues that in the penitential handbooks adultery is discussed quite frequently, which could lead one to argue that it was frequent in real life too.

¹³¹ Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. by John Jay Parry (New York, 1969), 107.

¹³² Sarah Kay, "Courts, Clerks, and Cortly Love" in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance* ed. by Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge, 2000), p.82.

Bumke points out that, “the authors of these hand books considered all kinds of scenarios: that both adulterers were married or only one of them, that the adultery was committed with a cleric or a nun, with a widower or a widow, with the sister of the wife, with a virgin, with a maid, with the wife or daughter of a neighbour, with a Jewess or a pagan woman, and so on.”¹³³ It is interesting that very similar cases are dealt with by Marie de France in her *lais*. In *De Amore*, after Andreas mentions the possibility of love in many different cases, he talks about love involving the clergy, nuns, peasants and prostitutes. His comments on love involving the clergy:

Since hardly anyone ever lives without carnal sin, and since the life of clergy is, because of the continual idleness and great abundance of food, naturally more liable to temptations of the body than that of any other men, if any clerk should wish to enter into the list of Love let him speak and apply himself to Love’s service...¹³⁴

It is impossible to see the same tolerance when he is talking about love involving a nun. He denies absolutely the possibility of a love with a nun. He tells us that “we should condemn absolutely the love of nuns and reject their solaces just as though they carried the plague. We do not say this with the idea that one cannot love a nun, but by such love body and soul are condemned to death.”¹³⁵ However, what is more important in Andreas’s treatise is that he analyzes love amongst different social groups and different ranks.

One could argue from the examples in penitential books that the love described in the romances is not so detached from social practices. This does not of course mean that a lady or knight in love were regarded as virtuous regardless of whether their love was adulterous or not. Nevertheless, true love affairs quite similar to the ones in romances seem to be described in real life as well, as has been shown in

¹³³ Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 393.

¹³⁴ Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 142.

¹³⁵ Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 143.

the example of Ida of Bolougne and Isabel of Vermandois. Although it would be wrong to claim that Chretien de Troyes or Marie de France mirrored the true love affairs of their societies, one can argue that their audience aspired to live the pleasures of romantic love that the characters in romances lived. So, as in the case of the court, we cannot consider the theme of courtly love to be completely detached from real courtly life.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHIVALRY OUTDOORS: THE TOURNAMENTS

There is no doubt that knight belongs to an outer world more than he does to the inner. The common figure of a knight wandering around, generally in search of adventure was not only a romantic illusion. The real life of a knight in the twelfth century was not completely different from that of the knights of Chrétien de Troyes and Marie de France in some respects. He may not, of course, have encountered terrible giants, speaking beasts, werewolves, or huge knights while passing through a forest; but it was the real wandering knights who inspired Chretien and Marie to write their chivalric tales. The previous chapter discussed how similar the romance hero was to the figure of the knight-errant indoors; this chapter explores the same relation in the outer world.

Although knighthood was a broad category that encompassed men from different lineages, the training of a knight was similar whether it was in romance or in real life. After a child reached five or six, he was delivered to his father to be

instructed about weapons and horses.¹³⁶ Simple weapon-using exercises and horse riding were the main practices of a male child. He generally left home to be trained in more serious fighting methods and practices. The knighting ceremony was the most important event in a knight's life, because his knighthood was approved only after he was knighted by another knight. If the knight had lands to be inherited he could turn back to his homeland after being knighted; but if he had not, his years of errantry started. Those young men just knighted, running after adventure and a wealthy heiress were the main participants of the tournaments. Georges Duby calls these itinerant young men wandering around in band *juvenes* for whom "the good life was to be on the move in many lands in quest of prize and adventure, to conquer for reward and honour. It [the good life] was thus the quest for glory and prize which was to be achieved in war and even more often in tournaments."¹³⁷ For Duby these "young men" were both a source of inspiration for the chivalric literature and also the audience for it. This postulate leads us to think that the life of these *juvenes* influenced the romance writer; but at the same time that life was affected by the romances. The aim of this chapter is to discuss how far the military practice of these young knights affected the creation of the knightly ideal; and also how far this ideal transformed the real knights into the knightly figures they heard of in the chivalric tales.

It is necessary to point out that military practice is a broad and an ambiguous expression, which encompasses much knightly experience such as hunting, jousting, *behourd*, *pas d'armes*, tournaments, and of course the real wars. However, to discuss all of these practices far exceeds the scope of this study. Therefore, this chapter will

¹³⁶ Catherine Hanley, *War and Combat 1150-1270: the Evidence from Old French Literature* (Cambridge, 2003), 24.

¹³⁷ *juvenes* is generally translated as "youth" in English, and Duby defines the term as "the period in man's life between being dubbed knight and his becoming a father" in "Youth in Aristocratic Society", in *Chivalrous Society*, 113-4.

concentrate specifically on the tournaments, which represented the closest link between the real and the fantastic worlds of the twelfth-century knight. Nevertheless, it is essential to distinguish between the tournaments and the joust, the *behourd*, and the *pas d'armes* which are sometimes used interchangeably.

First of all the tournament was a *mêlée*, or a team sport, while the joust was a single combat. The *pas d'armes* was also a military sport in which the knights chose a place, a castle, or a town to defend it against the other team. The *behourd* was a simpler and friendly practice of knighthood, generally preparing for a tournament. However, sometimes in romances we can find all these practices intermingled. For example, while Chrétien is describing fighting at a tournament in *Erec and Enide*, because his description directly centred on Erec and his deeds, he narrates a single combat between Erec and the King of the Red City:

They held their reins by the knots and their shields by the straps; they both had beautiful armour and excellent, swift horses. They struck one another with such strength on their fresh new shields that both their lances flew to pieces... all those who saw this combat were filled with wonder, and said that the cost of fighting against such a fine knight was too dear.¹³⁸

This kind of attitude is quite a common feature both in the chronicles and also in romances. Indeed, single combat was an inseparable part of fighting whether it was in a tournament or a real battle. Therefore, jousting always existed within the context of the tournament and it is discoursed in the romances more often than the tournament itself because the aim is to glorify the particular knight.

In the early twentieth century, the studies of Robert Coltman Clephan¹³⁹ and

¹³⁸ “Les resnes tindrent par les neuz/Et les escuz par les enarmes;/Endui orent mout beles armes/Et mout boens chevax et isniax./Sor les escuz fres et noviax/Par si grant vertu s’antre fierent/Qu’andeus les lances peçoierent... Tuit cil qui cele joste virent/A mervoilles s’an esbaïrent,/Et dient que trop chier li coste/Qui a si boen chevalier joste.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 2154-2173; *Arthurian Romances*, 64.

¹³⁹ Robert Coltman Clephan, *The Tournament: Its Period and Phases* (New York, 1919)

Francis Henry Cripps-Day¹⁴⁰ draw a picture of the tournaments as a completely living institution of medieval social life. Clephan cites the definition that was given by Du Cange for the word *tornamentum*: “military exercises carried out in a spirit of comradeship, being practice for war and display of personal prowess.”¹⁴¹ For Clephan the medieval usage of the word “*tourneamentum*” or “*tournoi*” referred to a French original derived from the verb “*tournoi*.”¹⁴² However, as Ruth H. Cline has already been pointed out the picture drawn by historical evidence has much missing because it did not comprehend the literary representation.¹⁴³ It is evident in the works of Clephan and Cripps-Day that the tournament was a factual medieval phenomenon; and also the attitude of Cline shows us that this medieval institution was highly influenced by its literary representation.

Although we have many “factual” sources to compare and contrast with the chivalry of the romance; many of them need to be treated cautiously. First of all, the authors of the chronicles or biographies were highly influenced by the romance genre, so their tone and attitudes were not so different from the fictional narratives. Because the intention was generally to glorify the hero or sometimes the king or a count, the representations and descriptions were far from always credible, even in supposedly factual accounts.. Both in the chronicles or biographies, the rival knight was always described in terms of his superior physical appearance and dreadful strength. Nevertheless, when we put aside the treatment of the writers, “the histories” may help us to have an idea about the military practices in real life. The anonymous *The History*

¹⁴⁰ Francis Henry Cripps-Day, *The History of the Tournament in England and in France* (London, 1918)

¹⁴¹ Clephan, *The Tournament: Its Period and Phases*, 1; Clephan points out that the definition comes from Roger de Hoveden.

¹⁴² Clephan, *The Tournament: Its Period and Phases*, 1.

¹⁴³ Ruth H. Cline, *Tournaments of English and French Literature compared with Those of History, 1110-1500*, unpublished diss. (Chicago, 1939).

of William Marshal and Lambert of Ardres's *The History of the Counts of Guines and the Lord of Ardres* will be used as historical material to compare the life of a knight in real life and in romance. As Sidney Painter says, in *The History of William Marshal*, "one can see chivalry as a living institution rather than as a mere inspiration for chivalric romances."¹⁴⁴ Likewise, the account of Lambert of Ardres gives many details about noble behaviour in general.

Although there is no clear evidence to show when exactly the first tournament was held, it is generally believed to have emerged by the end of the eleventh century related to the involvement of the couched lance in warfare. Until the early twelfth century, the evidence from the chronicles, apart from a few exceptions, is very poor.¹⁴⁵ However, the technique of outmanoeuvring an opponent while fighting with a couched lance needed much practice and training. Therefore, a mock battle between teams was a golden opportunity for this practice.¹⁴⁶

Starting from the first decades of the twelfth century, we can see the mention of tournaments in the chronicles more often and more openly. Galbert of Bruges, who wrote in the early twelfth century, notes that there was a great competition among the rulers to prove themselves in knightly exploits:

At a time when we saw the rulers of neighbouring kingdoms displaying the greatest zeal in winning glory and praise for themselves by knightly exploits as well as a disposition for ruling well, count Charles, marquis of Flanders, exceeded in fame and power the emperor of the Romans, Henry, who after reigning for many years died without heirs; he also surpassed in fame and strength the King of the English...¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Sidney Painter, *William Marshal, Knight-Errant, Baron, and Regent of England* (Toronto, 1982), vii

¹⁴⁵ For more information about the eleventh century accounts of the tournaments see Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*

¹⁴⁶ Richard Barber and Juliet Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2000), 14, Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*(Woodbridge, 1995), 155; In general see David Crouch, *The Tournament* (London, 2005)

¹⁴⁷ Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, ed.and trans. James Bruce Ross (Toronto, 1982), 79.

It is clear in the passage that “knightly exploits” were already a passion among the rulers as early as the 1120s. Although Galbert does not reveal what those “knightly exploits” were, by reading the following lines, it is not difficult to see that they at least included tournaments:

when he wanted to perform deeds of knighthood, he had no enemies around his land, either in the marches or on the frontiers and borders, either because his neighbours feared him or because, united to him in the bond of peace and love, they preferred to exchange offerings and the gifts with him. So he undertook chivalric exploits for the honour of his land and the training of his knights in the lands of the counts or princes of Normandy or France, sometimes even beyond the kingdom of France; and there with two hundred knights on horseback he engaged in tourneys, in this way enhancing his own fame and the power and glory of his country.¹⁴⁸

The most significant thing about this passage is that Charles frequents the tournaments because “he had no enemies around his land”, which means that the tournament was needed if there was no chance of making real war. So, the tournaments, from their early days, were a peace-time event both for practice and for earning glory and fame. When it comes to the late twelfth century, the same idea is underlined in the *History of William Marshal* too. After Marshal became the tutor of the young King, he was responsible for teaching him all aspects of chivalry. However, “at that time, there was no war, so the Marshal took him through many a region as a man who knew well how to steer him in the direction of places where tournaments were to be held.”¹⁴⁹

The tournament, then, was an alternative to war, designed to provide the knights with military practice as well as being a test for the knight to prove his prowess. The tournaments of the twelfth century differed very little from real war. The fighting was between two teams and in an open field just like the real battles.

¹⁴⁸ Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, 92.

¹⁴⁹ “Ilores n’esteit point de guerre; cil le mena par meinte terre, qui bien le saveit aveier la ou l’en deveit tornier.” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 1959-63.

Although the aim of the participant was not to kill his rival knight, killings may have occurred, even though accidental.¹⁵⁰ Because the participants of the tournament extended from the Count to the simple mounted warriors, the expectations from the tournament were also varied. Success and prestige were the common motivations for any participants, but material gain was important for the poorer knights. Indeed, twelfth-century warfare could also be a profitable business for the youth just like the tournaments. Rather than killing a knight, taking him a prisoner was more profitable for the knight in the real battle too. We can see this custom in the *History of William Marshal*.

The biographer reports a real battle between the English and the French knights. He tells how King Henry of England and King Louis of France were in conflict and all the knights in England were alarmed and all the castles were fortified. Just the day when William was knighted the French assaulted the town where William was coincidentally present. William performed so well at the battle that the English won. Although William took many prisoners, “he had no personal profit in mind, seeking only fully to deliver the town.”¹⁵¹ William of Mandeville’s reaction towards William Marshal’s treatment of the prisoners was quite noteworthy. He wanted William to give him a gift from the booty he took that day; and when William answered that he did not take any, he says “Marshal, what’s that you say? It’s a trifling thing you refuse me. Today you got forty of them before my very eyes, or even sixty, and now you refuse to give me one!”¹⁵² Upon these words, everyone around started to laugh because they all knew that William of Mandeville meant William Marshal did not know something that everybody knew very well: “the war

¹⁵⁰ Ruth H. Cline, *Tournaments*; Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 158.

¹⁵¹ “Ne tandi pas al gaeingnier, fors a bien delivrer la vile.” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 1140-1142.

¹⁵² “Mareschal, que est ce que vos dites? De poi de chose m’escondites. Hui en avez eü quarante, Veiant mes els, veire seisante; Or si m’en volez escondire!” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 1153-1157.

was a profitable business and he does not need to spell out how foolish William was in not taking any booty.”¹⁵³

Although the battle and the mock-battle were quite different in theory, the difference was not very clear in practice. Because of this war-like nature of the tournament, it was unacceptable to the Church, which had already been trying to divert the violence among the knights to the East through the crusading movement. When we consider Bernard of Clairvaux’s treatise “In Praise of New Knighthood” in this context, we can see that what St. Bernard means by “worldly chivalry” covers the tournaments too. While he was praising the establishment of the Templars, whose aim was to fight in the name of Christ, he was criticising the worldly knight whose aim was material gain or worldly glory:

That chivalry is truly holy and safe, and is moreover free from the double danger by which another type of knight is habitually and regularly endangered, when Christ is not the sole cause of chivalrous doings. Every time you who live in the ways of worldly chivalry gather to fight among yourselves, you need fear killing your adversary in body and yourself in soul; even more, you need fear finding yourself killed by him, both in body as well as soul.¹⁵⁴

Assuming that tournaments were quite popular at the time when St. Bernard wrote this treatise, we may suggest that he was addressing the participants of the tournaments by saying, “you who live in the ways of worldly chivalry gather to fight among yourselves”. Although it is not clear that St. Bernard is only talking about tournaments, but considering the fact that tournaments were already an important part of knightly life at that time, it is probably not mistaken to claim that he was including tournaments in his condemnation. Moreover, as has been discussed in the example of Galbert of Bruges, “chivalric deeds” or “chivalric exploits” referred to fighting in general, whether in a real or a mock battle. In the chronicles, these chivalric exploits

¹⁵³ Catherine Hanley, *War and Combat* (Cambridge, 2003), 62.

¹⁵⁴ For all quotations from Bernard of Clairvaux “In the Praise of New Knighthood” see <http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/chivalry/bernard.html>. (Last visited September 2008)

are represented as a requirement of the knightly life, and a knight is praised for his prowess in chivalric deeds. These chivalric exploits existed in St Bernard's treatise, too; but in a different tone from the romances and the chronicles:

What error, knights, so incredible, what madness so unbearable draws you to chivalrous deeds at such expense and labor, all for no return but death or crime? You cover your horses in silks and dress your armor with swatches of flowing cloth; you figure your lances, shields and saddles; your bridles and your spurs you adorn with gold and silver and jewels; and with all this display, you rush only towards death, in shameful madness and shameless idiocy. Are these the tokens of chivalry or the trappings of women?¹⁵⁵

It is still unclear whether St. Bernard is describing the display of a tournament field or a battlefield. Indeed, they were not that dissimilar in real life. He explicitly states that those who preferred this life are sinful. Therefore, he creates a distinction between "worldly chivalry" that is running after worldly gains and the "new chivalry" that is fighting in Jerusalem in the name of Christ. It is not surprising that following St Bernard's treatise, the Church attempted to ban tournaments completely in 1130 at the Council of Clermont,

We firmly prohibit those detestable markets or fairs at which knights are accustomed to meet to show off their strength and their boldness and at which the deaths of men and dangers to the soul often occur. But if anyone is killed there, even if he demands and is not denied penance and the *viaticum*, ecclesiastical burial shall be withheld from him.¹⁵⁶

Although it is disputable how effective a deterrent this papal ban was for the tourneyers, there is no doubt that the punishment was quite severe: withholding ecclesiastical burial. Indeed, it was not only the Church that looked askance to the tournaments. Bands of knights wandering around searching for a possibility of fighting were sometimes considered by the royal authorities as a threat or a danger against the peace and control of the social order they wanted to establish. In England,

¹⁵⁵ Bernard of Clairvaux, "In Praise of the New Knighthood"

¹⁵⁶ qtd in Barber, *The Knight and the Chivalry*, 158.

for example, tournaments were prohibited under the rule of Henry I and Henry II.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the tournament was such an important part of knightly life that the prohibitions could only cover the island. Even Henry II's son, Henry the Young King, was one of the usual participants of the tournaments and knights from England continued to frequent the tournaments on the Continent. Henry the Young King's younger brother, Geoffrey, was actually killed in a Paris tournament in 1186.¹⁵⁸

It is interesting to see that the two creators of the Arthurian myth, Geoffrey of Monmouth writing under the patronage of Henry I and Wace under Henry II had quite an embracing tone towards the tournaments. The first account of the tournament in a fictional narrative was in Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae* written in 1130s; and this earliest fictional account drew a very different picture of the tournaments from the one delineated by St. Bernard. St. Bernard's critical tone was challenged by Geoffrey of Monmouth, who was a churchman too. While he was narrating what Arthur's entourage was doing just after a courtly feast, he tells that:

Invigorated by the food and the drink they had consumed, they went out into the meadows outside the city and split into groups ready to play various games. The knights planned an imitation battle and competed together on horseback while their womenfolk watched from the top of the city walls and aroused them to passionate excitement by their flirtatious behaviour. The others passed what remained of the day in shooting with bows and arrows, hurling the lance, tossing heavy stones and rocks, playing dice and immense variety of other games: this without the slightest show of ill-feeling. Whosoever won this particular game was then rewarded by Arthur with an immense prize. The next three days were passed in this way.¹⁵⁹

There is no doubt that Geoffrey's account is not a description of a "real" tournament but a recreation of it in the world of fantasy. No other account before Geoffrey mentioned the presence of the women. Similarly, he represents the tournament as a

¹⁵⁷ Larry D. Benson, "The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*", in Larry D. Benson and John Leyerle (eds.), *Essays on Relations Between Literature and Life in the Later Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, 1980), 4-5

¹⁵⁸ Crouch, *Tournament*, 91.

¹⁵⁹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The British History of the Kings of Britain*, 229.

courtly entertainment rather than a chivalric exploit for the first time. The emphasis he put on the expression “without the slightest show of ill-feeling” challenges the idea that there was any “bad intention” among the participants in fighting, which would make the fighting sinful. Wace, who developed Geoffrey’s Arthurian story, does not comment on the intention of the tourneyers but he also represents the tournament as a part of the courtly entertainment:

After the king had risen from the feast, he and his fellowship went without the city to take their delight amongst the fields. The lords sought their pleasure in divers places. Some amongst them jousted together, that their horses might be proven. Others fenced with the sword, or cast the stone, or flung pebbles from a sling. There were those who shot with the bow, like cunning archers, or threw darts at a mark. Every man strove with his fellow, according to the game he loved. That knight who proved the victor in his sport, and bore the prize from his companions, was carried before the king in the sight of all the princes. Arthur gave him of his wealth so goodly a gift, that he departed from the king’s presence in great mirth and content. The ladies of the court climbed upon the walls, looking down on the games very gladly. She, whose friend was beneath her in the field, gave him the glance of her eye and her face; so that he strove the more earnestly for her favour.¹⁶⁰

These two similar accounts taking their material from real life, specifically from the tournament, set this military practice into the courtly world. It was polished in the refined culture of the court and came to be a courtly entertainment performed after great feasts. This representation was important as being a basis for Chrétien de Troyes, who developed the Arthurian mythology that had already been popularised by Geoffrey and Wace, by embellishing it with a love and adventure story in the background.

In this scenario, the tournament has a quite a significant role, because it is an opportunity for the knight to apply his knightly virtues in practice. Therefore, the tournaments were events not only for showing off prowess, strength, or military ability, but also knightly virtues such as generosity and loyalty to companions.

¹⁶⁰ Wace, *Roman de Brut*, in *Arthurian Chronicles*, 67.

Besides, performance in the tournament indicates whether the knight deserved the love of his lady or not. In this regard, the tournament is represented in chivalric literature as a practical application by means of which the knight might prove his chivalry. So the greatest motivation of the knight for entering the tournaments is to prove himself an ideal knight, which is quite a hard task.

With the influence of the late twelfth-century chivalric romance, the tournament, whose origins can be stretched back to eleventh century, was transformed into a chivalric spectacle.¹⁶¹ The interaction between the tournaments and the chivalric romances brought such an important prestige to the tournament that it was depicted as the most important activity of chivalry. With the impact of the chivalric literature that presented the tournament as the entertainment of the nobles, the tournaments turned out to be “a distinctive class amusement, which the nobility found more exciting than any other.”¹⁶² Chrétien, addressing an audience which included the bands of those itinerant knightly youth mentioned earlier, was highly influential in helping to create for them a self-identity. The parallelism between the romances and the historical accounts gives us the scope of this interaction.

First of all, the knight of the romance does not have a settled life. On the contrary, he is always in search of “knightly deeds”. For that reason, marriage is one of the most important tests that a knight should pass. Both Erec and Yvain are subjected to this test and they ignore their chivalry because of the settled life that the marriage brings in. Erec is so content with his love and the married life that he gives up frequenting tournaments:

Erec was so in love with her that he cared no more for arms nor did he go to tournaments. He no longer cared for tourneying; he wanted to enjoy his wife's

¹⁶¹ Benson. “The Tournament in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes and *L'Histoire de Guillaume le Maréchal*,” 2.

¹⁶² Marc Bloch. *Feudal Society*, trans. by L.A. Manyon (Chicago, 1964), 304.

company, and he made her his lady and his mistress. He turned all his attention to embracing and kissing her; he pursued no other delight...All the nobles said that it was a great shame and sorrow that a lord such as he once was no longer wished to bear arms.¹⁶³

The tournament is such an inseparable strand of chivalry that it is the greatest shame for a knight not to enter a tournament. If a lord does not frequent the tournaments as he should, he starts to lose his fame and respectability. In *Erec and Enide*, this idea is quite explicitly revealed. Enide who is quite upset about what is said about Erec moans with these words: “the boldest and the bravest, the most loyal, the most courteous that was ever count and king - has completely abandoned all chivalry because of me.”¹⁶⁴ So, Erec’s not frequenting the tournament any longer is regarded as abandoning all chivalry even by his wife. Similarly, his household mourns that “he had profoundly changed his way of life.”¹⁶⁵ Likewise, Yvain makes the same mistake, and he ignores his knightly responsibilities because he does not want to leave his wife. But, Gawain warns and persuades him to return to his knightly life:

Break the leash and yoke and let us, you and me, go to the tourneys, so no one can call you a jealous husband. Now is not the time to dream your life away but to frequent tournaments, engage in combat, and joust vigorously, whatever it might cost you.¹⁶⁶

The same idea is emphasized many times in the *History of William Marshal* too. The author of the biography idealizes William due to his ambition to take part in every tournament regardless of where it is:

¹⁶³ “Tant l’ama Erec d’amors,/Que d’armes mes ne li chaloit,/Ne a tornoiemant n’aloit./N’avoit mes soign de tornoier:/A sa fame volt dosnoier./Si an fist s’amie et sa drue./En li a mise s’antendue./En acoler et an beisier,/Ne se queroit d’el aesierr... Ce disoit trestos li barnages/Que granz diax ert et granz damages,/Quant armes porter ne voloit/Tex ber com il estre soloit.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 2446-2474, *Arthurian Romances*, 67.

¹⁶⁴ “Meillor chevalier ne plus preu;/Vostres parauz n’estoit nul leu. Or se vont tuit de vos gabant,/Juesne et chenu, petit et Grant;/recreant vos apelent tuit.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 2563-2567; *Arthurian Romances*, 68.

¹⁶⁵ “Mout avoit changiee sa vie.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 2480; *Arthurian Romances*, 67.

¹⁶⁶ “Ronpez le frain et le chevoistre,/S’irons tornoier moi et vos,/Que l’en ne vos apiaut jalos./Or ne devez vos pas songier,/Mes les tornoiemanz ongier/Et anpanre, et tot fors giter,/Que que il vos doie coster,” *Yvain*. ll. 2502-2508; *Arthurian Romances*, 326.

Any man who wants his reputation to grow will never have a liking for prolonged inactivity. And this man [William] never once had such a liking, but moved about through many lands to seek fame and fortune.¹⁶⁷

William Marshal was aware of the fact that marriage could easily be an obstacle by providing a settled life. Therefore, when the lord of Béthune offered him his beautiful daughter on condition that William would fight for him, he refused politely saying that “he was not yet of a mind to marry.”¹⁶⁸ Here, William’s refusal of this proposal is noteworthy. For a knight like William who was coming from a modestly important, landed, curial family but who had not yet his own land, marriage was the best way to gain land and possibly a title. In that sense, the offer of the lord of Béthune could have been a good opportunity for William to climb in the social ladder. However, as he knew that marriage brought a settled life which could bring his errantly life to a standstill, he refused.

Whether it was because of marriage or another reason, settled life would certainly prevent a knight from performing his chivalry. One of the most important virtues of a knight was that he was always ready to fight. Lambert of Ardres, when he was praising Arnold of Ardres for his dedication to the chivalric life, recounts that

He preferred to go into exile in other places for the love of the tournaments and for glory than to spend time in leisure in his homeland without warlike entertainments. He did this principally so that he could live gloriously and attain secular honour.¹⁶⁹

Here, the tournament is contrasted to spending time leisurely at a specific place. Thus, sloth was a vice and he who was sluggish was a villain of chivalry. The biographer of William Marshal, for that reason, criticizes the rulers of his own time for breaking the rules of chivalry. He laments that, “...nowadays, high-ranking men have put chivalry

¹⁶⁷ “Que nus qui velt en pris monter n’amera ja trop long sejour, ne cist ne l’ama unques jor, ainz s’esmoveit en meinte terre por pris e aventure quere.” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 1890-94.

¹⁶⁸ “mais marriage ne li vint encore en corage.” *History of William Marshal* ll. 6271-6272.

¹⁶⁹ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, 126.

back in fetters; because of sloth, which makes them sluggish... errantry and tourneying have given way to formal contests.”¹⁷⁰ Although the military practice of the knights continued; even in the form of “formal contests”, the biographer was not satisfied with it because he found this form sluggish. Therefore, errantry and tourneying acted as a contrast to domestic knightly contests. Because a knight could only get his fame through his success in martial activities, he should run after any opportunity to show his fighting ability. In *Cligés*, Chretien mentions the relation between errantry and fame by putting idleness as a foil for them:

Many high born men through indolence have forfeited the great fame they might have had, had they set off through the world. Idleness and glory do nothing well together, it seems to me; a noble man who sits and waits gains nothing. Valour burdens a coward, while cowardice weighs down the brave; thus they are contrary and opposed. He who spends all his time amassing wealth is a slave to it.¹⁷¹

The passage reveals that even if a noble man were of a quite distinctive valour and military ability, he could not get fame because he was settled and refused to set off through the world for an opportunity to prove himself in chivalric exploits. As William’s biographer states, “any man seeking to win renown would go to the tournaments.”¹⁷²

In the chivalric romances, the tournaments were represented as a fashion. The description of the tournament field can easily remind the descriptions of luxurious court gatherings. Chrétien describes the tournament that is held after the marriage of Erec and Enide in such a tone that it seems as if he is talking about a feast. It is quite

¹⁷⁰ “Mais or nos ront mise en prison chevalerie li halt home; par perece, qui les asome, e par conseil de covetise nos ront largesse en prison mise; e l’esrer e le torneier si sunt torné al plaidier.” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 2686-92.

¹⁷¹ “Maint haut home par lor peresce/Perdent Grant los que il poroient/Avoir se par le mont esroient./Ne s’acordent pas bien ansanble/Repos et los, si com moi sanble,/Car de nule rien ne s’alose/Riches hom qui toz jorz repose;/Proesce est fais a mauveis home/Et a preuz est mauvestiez some./Ensi sont contraire et divers./Et cil est a son avoir sers/Qui toz jorz l’amasse et acroist.” *Cligés*, ll. 145-154; *Arthurian Romances*, 125.

¹⁷² “E qui son pris voldreit conquere irreit,” ll 1172-1173.

clear in the description that the preparation for the tournament takes a great deal of time because the field of the tournament is also a stage on which the nobles display not only the boldness of their chivalry but also their own wealth with the best equipment they could supply for their knights. This is how Chrétien describes the tournament field:

There were many bright-red banners, and many blue and many white, and many wimples and many sleeves given as tokens of love. Many lances were brought there, painted azure and red, many gold and silver, many of other colours, many striped, and many variegated. On that day was seen the lancing on of many a helmet, of iron, or of steel, some green some yellow, some bright red, gleaming in the sunlight, there were many coats of arms and many white hauberks, many swords at the left-hand side, many good shields, fresh and new, of azure and fine red, and silver ones, and silver ones with golden bosses. Many fine horses –white-stockinged and sorrel, fawn-coloured and white and black and bay –all came together at a gallop.¹⁷³

The display of the field, as it is described by Chretien de Troyes, is quite similar to St. Bernard's account in his treatise. However, St. Bernard's disapproving tone is replaced with admiration in Chrétien, although he too is a cleric. This does not definitely mean that attitudes toward the tournament had started to soften. On the contrary, the critical approach of the Church was still valid in the late twelfth-century. Walter Map, who wrote in the 1180s., preserved the same critical tone in his *De Nugis*

Curialium:

At Louvain in the march of Lorraine and Flanders, at the place called Lata Quercus, there were assembled (as it is the custom) many thousands of knights to play together in arms after their manner, a sport which they call a tournament, but the better name would be torment.¹⁷⁴

Although the tournament is represented in an idealistic manner in the

¹⁷³ “La ot tante vermoille ansaigne/ et tante bloe et tante blanche/et tante guimple et tante manche/Qui par amors furent doneez./Tant i ot lances aportees/D’azur et de sinople taintes,/D’or et d’argent en i ot mainte,/maintes en i ot dautre afeire,/mainte bandee et tante veire./Iloec vit anle jor lacier/Maint hiaume de fer et d’acier, / Tant vert, tant giaune, tant vermoil, /Reluire contre le soloil ;/Tant blazon et tant hauberc blanc, /Tante espee a senestre flanc,/Tanz boenz escus fres et noviax,/ D’azur et de sinople biax,/Et tant d’argent a bocdes d’or ;/ Tant boen cheval baucent et sor/Fauves, et blans, et noirs, et bais/Tuit s’antre vienent a eslais.” *Erec et Enide*, ll. 2098-2218; *Arthurian Romances*, 63

¹⁷⁴ Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium: Courtiers’ Trifles*, 164.

romances, there were still many — like Walter Map — who looked askance at it because of the undeniable violence. However, one should also notice that the romances do not ignore this violent side of the tournaments either. They represent this violence as an inseparable part of the tournaments. After Chrétien’s long descriptive passage above on how the tournament field is seen before the fighting starts, Chretien continues with a realistic picture out of which one can easily conclude that even if the tournament was a sport in the twelfth century, it was a very dangerous one:

The field was entirely covered with armour. On both sides the lines stirred noisily; in the mêlée the tumult grew; great was the shattering of the lances. Lances were broken and shields were pierced, hauberks dented and torn apart, saddles were emptied, knights fell, horses sweated and foamed. Swords were drawn above those who fell to the ground with a clatter, some ran to accept the pledges of the defeated and others to resume the mêlée.¹⁷⁵

It is obvious in the passage that Chrétien does not mention anything about death or fatal wounds. However, the war-like description shows that a death or serious injury would not have been a surprise. The same realistic picture is repeated by the minstrel of the *History of William Marshal*,

When the two companies met, on both sides they gave free reign to their horses, their shields in hand, their lances at the level. They struck another with great force, drawing on their might and main. Lances were broken and shattered, shields were holed and crushed, and all they had to strike at each other with were the stumps. Such were the din ad uproar created by the blows of combat that you wouldn’t have heard God’s thunder resounding. You should have heard helmets ringing and clanging and echoing around, as they were squashed right down to the coifs.¹⁷⁶

As the biographer explicitly reveals, it was a combat, so it would not be surprising to

¹⁷⁵ “D’armes est toz coverz li chans./D’anbes parz fremist toz li rans;/An l’estor lieve li escrois,/Des lances est mout granz li frois./Lances brisent et escuz troent,/Li hauberc faussent et descloent./Seles vuident, chevalier tument,/Li cheval süent et escument./La traient les espees tuit/Sor ces qui chieent a grant bruit./Li un corent por les foiz prendre/Et li autre por l’estor randre.” *Erec et Enide*. ll. 2119-2130. Chretien de Troyes, *Arthurian Romances*, 63-64.

¹⁷⁶ “Quant li uns conreiz l’autre encontre D’amedeus pars chevaux eslaissent, Les escuz pris, les lances baissent, si s’entreferent a deslax a la grant force de lor braz; les lances peceient e froissent e les escuz percent e croissent e s’entreferent des retrois tel fu la noise e li escrois des granz cops e del chapleis que Dex tonanz n’i fust ois; la oisiez haumez Soner e retentir e resoner e enbarrer de si que as coifes.” *History of William Marshal*, ll. 892-905.

see someone dead or injured. Lambert of Ardres, for instance, gives an account of the son of the castellan Henry of Boubourg, Gilbert, who “refused to become castellan, because he lost the acuity of his eyes fighting in tournament.”¹⁷⁷ Interestingly enough both in fiction and in real life the dangerous side of the tournament was silently admitted. Therefore, the picture drawn by romance was not an unsubstantial representation. In fact, the chivalric fictions may have given a much more brutal picture of a tournament than actually happened. Marie de France, for example, draws a bloody description of a tournament field in *Chaitivel*, which is her only *lai* mentioning a tournament in detail. In the *lai*, four lovers enter a tournament to prove their love for the lady but three of them die while one is fatally wounded.

Both in romances and accounts of the real tournaments, the participants showed considerable variety, their ranks ranged in the social scale from the count to simple *serviens*. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the expectations of the participants were quite different. Because the story in romance centres on a hero who always came from a high lineage, and it is unexpected that such a noble should fight for material gain, we can only see the idealized side of the tournament: a spectacle through which the knight proves his chivalry. Erec, for example, as fitting for a noble, “was not intent upon winning horses or taking prisoners but on jousting and doing well in order to make evident his prowess.”¹⁷⁸ Still, it is obvious in the quotation that winning horses and taking prisoners were the aims of some other participants.

In this sense, the History of William Marshal draws for us a more down-to-earth picture about the expectations by distinguishing between noble exploits and mundane expectations. The minstrel underlines many times that William Marshal, in

¹⁷⁷ Lambert of Ardres, *The History of Count of Guines and Lord of Ardres*, 154.

¹⁷⁸ “Erec ne voloit pas entandre/A cheval n’a chevalier prandre,/Mes a joster et a bien feire/Por ce que sa proesce apeire.” *Erec et Enide*. ll. 2175-2178; *Arthurian Romances*, 64.

spite of being the son of a landed man, does not have any land to his name. Nevertheless, he manages to increase his wealth through the numerous tournaments he has joined. In the very beginning of his career, William, who enters a tournament between Sainte-Jamme and Valennes as “a poor man as regards possessions and horses and now he had four and a half, fine mounts and handsome... He also had hacks and palfreys, fine pack-horses and harnesses.”¹⁷⁹

Admitting that William earned much through the tournaments, the minstrel also emphasizes that the material gain was not always William’s motivation. Thus, while he was regaining the favour of the young King, “not for a moment did he have gain in mind; rather his mind was so set on noble exploits that he had no concern for making profit.”¹⁸⁰ In these lines, it is important to note that he identifies William with high-ranking participants whose aim is undoubtedly “noble exploits” rather than money.

As we learn from the *History of William Marshal* again, “almost every fortnight tournaments were held from place to place.”¹⁸¹ And all of these tournaments were frequented by many high-ranking men such as the duke of Burgundy, the count of Flanders, the count of Clermont, the lord of Avesnes, the lord of Barres, etc.¹⁸² Undoubtedly, the aim of those men cannot have been primarily material, but the field of the tournament was the best place for them to recruit the best knights for their own retinues, because the bravery of a knight in the tournament foreshadowed his performance in real battle. In addition, there was also the desire to get the best knights

¹⁷⁹ “Povre d’aveir e de chivals, ore en a il quatre e demi, boens e beaus, Damnedé merci! Si a roncins e palefreis e boens sumers e bel herneis.” *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll.1368-72.

¹⁸⁰ “Unques al gaaing n’entendi, mais al bien faire tant tendi que del gaaing ne li chalut.” *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 3007-09

¹⁸¹ “Quer pres de chascune quinzene torneieut l’om de place en place” *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 4973-75.

¹⁸² *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 2910-2919.

on their entourage in order to gain more reputation through tournaments again. The *Histoire* reveals this as a concern among the nobles:

Those powerful men, ... , began to make up their mind to retain the services of worthy knights, through whose services they might keep chivalry at the height it should rightfully have a height which before it had not attained. Seeking to vie with the young King, those powerful nobles took care to retain the services of worthy knights, maintaining and advancing them. They gladly gave them horses, money, or land or handsome supplies.¹⁸³

Thus, when those high-ranking men learn that William Marshal had lost the favour of the Young King, they compete vigorously to recruit him. The more William achieves success in the tournaments, the more they offer for retaining William:

The count of Flanders offered him a full five hundred pounds in income from estate, and had him asked by many men to be a permanent member of his company. The duke of Burgundy did likewise, and the lord of Béthune made him a far higher offer: a full thousand pounds in fixed income, and his daughter too, a very beautiful girl.¹⁸⁴

As the passage shows, the field of the tournament is a stage on which the knights perform a stunt to attract the attention of the wealthy men who try to choose the best knights for themselves.

In the chivalric romances, the wealthy men were not the only group whom the knight urged to attract. The most creative invention of the romantic tournaments is the presence of the ladies to watch the fighting and give their favour to the most valiant one. In fact, the theme comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth who talks about ladies who “watched from the top of the city walls and aroused them to passionate

¹⁸³ “Lors comencierent a eslire li halt home... Boems chevaliers a retenir, per qui peüssent maintenir chevalerie en son dreit point, qui devant ce n’i esteit point. Par l’emvie le giemble rei pristrent li halt home conrei des bons chevaliers retenir e essaucier e maintenir. Li boens quens de Flandres por ve R, Pleins de proësce e de saveir, rei la proësce qu’il out en sei volt demonstrer a tot le monde, quer de cuer li vient e abonde. Li giembles reis aveit appris toz les boens bachilers de pris a retenir e a aveir; ce faceit proësce e saveir qui li halt home de la tere, qui enor voleient conquere, porçaçoent e reteneient les boens bachelers qu’il savoient;si lor doneient volunters chevaux e armes e deniers ou tere ou bele garison. *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 2658-2685

¹⁸⁴ “Li quens de Flandres li offri bien cinc cenz livrees de tere, si l’em fist a plusors requerre por estre a lui a remenant. Li dux de Borgoingne autretant, e li avoiez de Betune öolt greingnor ofre li fist une: De bien mil livrees de rente o sa fille, qui molt ert gente,” *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 6260- 6268.

excitement by their flirtatious behaviour.”¹⁸⁵ The women also took their place in Chrétien’s romances as the spectator of the knightly skills. However, the role of the women was of course more than as passive observers of the fighting. In the romances, the most important motivation of the knight, besides honour and glory is to achieve the love of the lady. And the ladies saw the tournament field as a place where the knight proves his chivalry. In *Perceval*, for example, Chrétien talk about a tournament between Tibaut of Tintagel and Meliant of Liz because Tibaut’s daughter wants Meliant to prove himself against her father to achieve her love. She said “you cannot have my love until you have jousted and performed enough feats of arms in my presence to earn my love... challenge my father to a tourney if you want to have my love.”¹⁸⁶

However, one should also note that the ladies of the romances did not attend every tournament. For example, Chrétien does not mention Enide in the tournament held in honour of her marriage with Erec. Similarly, in *Milun*, Marie de France praises Milun’s fame through the tournaments he has entered; and then she talks about a lady, who has heard his name and sends a messenger to him to offer his love. Although the lady and Milun are living in the same place, Marie de France does not mention that the Lady saw Milun in a tournament. Among Marie’s *lais*, only in *Chaitevel* does she talk about a direct involvement of a lady in the sense of being a spectator.

The presence of the ladies in real tournaments is an ambiguous issue. In the History of William Marshal, the biographer mentions the ladies quite rarely whether it is for a tournament or not. Even William’s wife is mentioned only a few times. However, there is one scene which tells of the presence of the ladies who come to

¹⁸⁵ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of King of Britain*, 229.

¹⁸⁶ “Jusque vos avroiz devant moi/Tant d’armes fet et tant josté/Que m’amor vos avra costé,... Prenez un tornoi a mon pere/Se vos volez m’amor avoir./Que ge vuel sanz dote savoir/Se m’amors seroit bien asise/Se je l’avoie or an vos mise.” *Perceval*, ll. 4858-4868. *Arthurian Romances*, 440-441.

watch the tournament. While William Marshal and his companions were waiting for a tournament,

The countess came out of the castle... With her were married ladies and young girls, so beautiful and adorned that as regards their beauty there was no room for criticism, nor they had anything to learn about courtliness or good sense. The knights rose up from the ranks to meet them, as was fit and proper. They were convinced that they had become better men as a result of the ladies' arrival.¹⁸⁷

The appearance of the ladies at the tournament field created joy and pleasure but not astonishment. On the contrary, they rose up to meet them as it was proper and fitting. This means that the knight were not unfamiliar with the presence of the ladies. Similarly, after that particular tournament the biographer notes that "the knights and the maidens, the married ladies and the young girls said that never had such a fine feat been performed at a tournament."¹⁸⁸ This statement reveals that the ladies were not alien to the fields of tournaments.

Although the prowess of the knight was the key to achieving the love of the lady, what is common in Chrétien and Marie de France is that they accept love and prowess as two separate strands of chivalry, and that a knight should balance them in his character. If one of those virtues became more important than the other, the knight failed to be an ideal knight. This dilemma is quite explicitly revealed by Chrétien de Troyes in *Yvain*. The romance starts with Yvain's excellence in martial activities and with praise of how valiant a knight he is. However, after Yvain falls in love with Laudine, he prefers his love to his knightly deeds. And Gwain has to warn him:

Would you be one of those men, who are worth less because of their wives?...
He who has a beautiful woman as wife or sweetheart should be the better for

¹⁸⁷ "La contesse s'en eissi fors, qui ert e de vis e de cors si a dreit, ç' ai oï retraire, come nature la sout faire, o lié dames e damiseles si acesmees e si beles qu'en beauté n'i out que reprendre, n'els 'estoient mie a aprendre de corteisie ne de sens. Li chevalier saillent des rens contre eles si come il durent; molt lor fu vis qu'amendé furent por la sorvenue des dames:" *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll.3455-67.

¹⁸⁸ "Li chevalier e les puceles, les dames e les damiseles distrent qu'il n'aveit imés fait el torneiement si beal fait." *History of Wiliam Marshal*, ll. 3517-3520.

her; for it's not right for her to love him if his fame and worth are lost. Indeed, you would suffer afterwards for her love if it caused you to lose your reputation, because a woman will quickly withdraw her love – and she is not wrong to do so – if she finds herself hating a man who has lost face in any way after he has become lord of the realm.¹⁸⁹

By saying these words, Gwain invites Yvain into adventure, and Yvain goes, receiving permission from his wife. Laudine wants him to give a promise to come back after a certain time. However, Yvain, who becomes very busy with knightly adventures, tournaments, exploits, etc, forgets his promise and does not return in time. He regains his fame but he loses his wife. The message is clear in the romance: the knight should balance love and adventure in his life.

Marie de France makes use of a similar theme in her *Chaitivel*. The four knights fight in a tournament to achieve the love of a lady. The idea of proving their worth for love was so strong an idea in their mind that they lose control and three of them die while the other is fatally wounded. The common theme in these two examples is that love and martial performance were two separate virtues of a knight, which should remain separate and be balanced. Although love is an important motivation for the knight to fight to prove himself to the lady, if the knight fails to balance these aspects of his character, he fails to be an ideal knight.

As has been discussed in the previous chapter, the knight indoors is gentle, refined, generous, and in love with a lady; he is courteous in short. The social gatherings of the court function as opportunities for the knight to show off his valour as a knight in the presence of all members of the court, especially of the lady. Although his refined life indoors inevitably affected his outdoor experience, it is

¹⁸⁹ “Seroiz vos or de çax?/Ce disoit mesire Gauvains, Qui por leur fames valent mains?... Amander doit de bele dame/Qui l'a a amie ou a fame,/Que n'es puis droiz que ele l'aint/Que ses los et ses pris remaint./Certes, ancor seroiz iriez/De s'amor, se vos anpiriez;/Que fame a tost s'amor reprise,/Ne n'a pas tort, sele mesprise/Celui qui de noiant anpire/Quant il est del rëaume sire.” *Yvain*, ll. 2486-2488, *Arthurian Romances*, 326.

important to note that the romancers and the chroniclers make a distinction between the two sides of the knight. Gerald of Wales' description of Henry II is interesting in this sense,

When he was unarmed and in private he was gentle and affable, mild and beloved; if any occasion were given of any injuries he was affectionately ready to forgive, and far more ready to pardon than to condemn, however guilty the offender might be. He had so regulated his mind, that he refused nothing worthy of being given to any one, esteeming it unworthy of himself that any one should go away from him sad, or with his wish ungratified. Moreover he thought that day lost in which, by every kind of liberality, he could not allure many to himself, and gain over, by a manifold profusion of kindness, both the hearts and even the persons of men.¹⁹⁰

Here Henry II is represented as an ideal king who has the virtues of the courtly knight. He is gentle, affable, generous, and courteous. He is ready to forgive and ready to meet everyone's wishes. These are all the requirements of courtly life, as has been discussed above. However, Gerald of Wales makes distinction between Henry's attitude when he is armed and unarmed. Although he is gentle and forgiving inside, he is not at all the same outdoors:

But when he was in arms, and engaged in military affairs with the helmet on his head, he was lofty, unbridled, fierce, and far more ferocious than any wild beast; everywhere, for the most part, triumphing by his valour more than by his fortune.¹⁹¹

This does not necessarily mean that chivalry indoors was completely different from that outdoors. Indeed, both were shaped according to the same knightly ethic in the chivalric literature. However, what is expected of a knight indoors is not the same as the ideal figure of a knight outdoors.

As all these similarities between the literature and history explicitly reveal, the life of a knight in the twelfth century was in some ways quite similar to that of the romance hero. Moreover, the tournament can be a good example to see how the social

¹⁹⁰ Gerald of Wales, *Concerning the Instruction of the Princes*, trans. Joseph Stevenson, (Felinfach, 1991), 23.

¹⁹¹ Gerald of Wales, *Concerning the Instruction of the Princes*, 23.

practices of the knight influenced the romance writer. It would of course be surprising to come across a knight in real life fighting the fantastic creatures and opponents that sometimes appear in the romances, for instance in Marie de France; but when we put aside these epic features, we can see that chivalric fiction has a lot to say about the real life of knights.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

By the end of the twelfth century chivalric literature bloomed out of the courts of northern France, acting as a social code that regulated and moderated behaviour. The ideals promoted by this literature composed a knightly ethic that is known as *chevalerie*. As has been discussed, this ideal was not a mere literary creation; on the contrary the virtues promoted by this literature were realised in real life too. Sometimes the established social practices influenced the literary representation; and sometimes the representation influenced and also shaped the real. It was the intention of this study to discuss the interaction between fact and fiction in the life of the twelfth-century knight.

Indeed, the chivalric ideal of the late twelfth century was the product of a long lasting process that started to take shape from the late eleventh century onwards. The emergence of *courtoisie* at the hands of courtly clerics defining a way of life peculiar to the court was the beginning of this process. This behavioural code represented the standardization of manners. More peculiar to the court, refinement in manners and in speech, elegance, physical and inner beauty, and gentility were all

the virtues that were attributed to an ideal courtier. In the course of the twelfth century these courtly manners were spread to the lay members of the courts too and started to be adopted. The absorption of these refined manners by the lay courtiers marked the beginning of a new trend in literature that praised this kind of behaviour and presented it as the prerequisite of the courtly life.

Because the troubadour poetry spans a long period of time from the late eleventh century to the thirteenth century, it would be wrong to over-generalize their attitudes and conventions, but still we can roughly say that the intervention of physical love into the world of the knight, at least in fiction, was an invention of the early troubadours. Taking this combination of knight and lady from the poetry of the Troubadours, often written in a highly secular tone, the courtly clerics adopted the figure of the amorous knight and made the lady the motivation for the knight to civilize and moderate himself.

Chevalerie flourished as the knightly ethic in the literature of the late twelfth century. Chrétien de Troyes and the roughly contemporary Marie de France were telling adventurous love stories about knights, placing their material into a sophisticated intellectual background. These poets were patronised by wealthy noble princes or sometimes the kings who had a considerable Latin education themselves. Marie de France, for example, was supposed to have been patronised by Henry II. Even if a ruler had no knowledge of Latin, the well-established oral tradition may have helped him follow those texts as orally performed tales. So the chivalric ideals were disseminated to the courtly audience either by reading or just listening, more often probably the latter.

Once the rough, unsympathetic figure of feudal nobility, the knight was endowed with the refined culture of the courtly clerics; he was destined to be a

gentleman fitting to the requirements of courtesy. However, the knight belonged to the military context as well as the social one; the knightly ethic was different from the original *courtoisie* although it embodied courtly manners too. The court's role in this process was twofold: it was a centre for the dissemination of the texts by providing the necessary audience and patronage for the writer; at the same time it was also a social arena for the practice of the etiquette popularised by those texts.

As has been discussed in the second chapter, the court was the ideal setting in chivalric romances. The court gatherings acted as a social milieu that combined the different members of that society. In addition, in those courtly gatherings the knight could find an opportunity for the expression of his knightly virtues. The luxurious feasts or marriage ceremonies displayed the generosity and the power of the king and, at a lower level, of the knight too. In order to explore the picture of the real court and the function of chivalry in the real courts, court satires have been used here as examples. While the romance writer delineates the court with such a great admiration, the court satirists, such as Walter Map, John of Salisbury and Gerald of Wales, satirize the court and the courtier in a harsh manner because of the lavishness and extravagance in its expenditures. Although the attitude of the romance writers and the satirist were different, they give us the same picture.

While Walter Map was criticizing the court because of the instability of its membership, we learn that courtiers come and go at the courts depending on the favour of the prince. In fact, both in romances and in the satires, getting the favour of the prince decides place of the courtier. Therefore, flattery and the slander come to be the realities of a life at court. Chrétien de Troyes admits, in an aside, that those are realities of courtly life and the satirists again condemn these.

Another strand of chivalry indoors was love. Although historical material is

very poor for the purpose of comparing and contrasting with the romances, we have still some accounts that display love for us as a social reality of the society. In the chivalric romances love is represented as the motivation of the knight for performing chivalric deeds. In fact, the presence of the lady is not always merely for a romantic reason; a widow or an unmarried lady who is landed may have been a good opportunity for a knight to marry. The love affair between Arnold of Ardres and Ida of Boulogne may give some hints about the conduct of love in real life. Lambert of Ardres recounts that Arnold is running after her, but Lambert is not quite sure whether Arnold really loves her or is just thinking of her wealth.

In this section, Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore* is widely used. This book is quite important in the sense that it gives a panorama of the potential love affairs in twelfth-century society. In this book, Andreas tells of many types of love between different classes and orders. He even talks about the love of nuns and of clergy. Although one should be cautious about the book's representation of social practices, he provides us with many details about the attitudes towards love.

Because the knight as a military man belongs to the world outside the court more than he does to the inside, his adventurous life outside is discussed in the third chapter. The life of a real knight outside was not totally different from that of the hero of a romance. He runs after adventure and booty and a wealthy heiress for himself. In the chivalric romances, the theme of love and the prowess of the knight are so much intermingled that "the knight who aspires to chivalric glory does not yearn to lead armies in Alexander's footsteps, does not dream of the gold of power, but longs to shine for his prowess as an individual, that he may earn the silver of his lady's

love.”¹⁹² The participation of the woman into the literary world of the knight brought a set of refined behaviour. The idea of having the love of the lady made the harsh warrior gentle and civilized, at least in fantasy. The motivation to achieve the love of the lady lies behind any kind of exploit of the knight. This motivation made the knight forget the old notion of “team spirit” in the *Iliad* or the *chansons de geste*; instead it led the knight into a greater individualism in which personal reputation and glory was above everything. That is why wars and battles are absent in the romances, while single combat is at the centre.

In fact, the real fighting by knights in the twelfth century was again not totally different from that portrayed in the romances. The primary aim of the knight was to take prisoners as much as possible, because the intention was ransom and booty rather than killing. However, the third chapter here deals with the tournaments, rather than the real wars because the tournaments are the closest link between life of knights and literature about knights in the twelfth century. The function of the tournament in the chivalric context is multiple. It was an opportunity for the knights to practice in the absence of war. At the same time, the tournament was a display for the high-ranking men to show off their own fighting ability and their wealth, as well as their ability to attract the best fighters to their retinues. The tournament functions therefore also as a marketplace where lords and lesser knights can make bargains. And as is clearly shown from the offer of the lord of Béthune to William Marshal, it could also help a poorer knight to elevate his status through a good marriage. All these features of the tournament are represented in parallel both in romance and in the non-fictional representations of tournaments.

The general intention of this thesis is to juxtapose the historical material and

¹⁹² Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry*, 71.

the literary material in order to find out how much they were similar. By discussing the knightly ethic in romance and in history, it intends to show that the chivalric ideal of the late twelfth century was not so detached from the figure of the real knight. The social practices of the twelfth-century knight sometimes acted as a source of inspiration for the romance writer; and sometimes the description of some knightly virtues or customs were imitated by the actual knights who aspired to the chivalric ideals. Therefore, the knightly ethic and the figure of the virtuous knight was not only an ideal limited to romances. In the twelfth century, chivalry, whether indoors or outdoors, represented both fact and fiction intertwined, different but mutually influential, and not always distinct.

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