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Gaia Gubbini

VULNUS AMORIS

THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF "LOVE'S WOUND" IN MEDIEVAL ROMANCE LITERATURES

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Herausgegeben von
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1 Introduction. *Vulnus amoris* and *Passio*: The Sacred-Profane Connection

1.1 *Vulnus amoris* and *Passio*: Sensibility, Vulnerability and Subjectivity

This book investigates the presence of the semantics of love's wound in medieval Romance literatures and its connections and interactions with the concept of *passio*. It will be seen how the *vulnus amoris* transforms itself and acquires different functions – as a metaphorical model, as a concept or as a diegetic element – in different texts and genres in the Romance languages of the Middle Ages. A first, basic difference between the various manifestations of love's wound in different genres is that between the metaphorical dimension of the wound, typical of lyric poetry, and its more concrete role as part of a narrative world in the fictions of romances and epics.

The book analyses texts written in Langue d'oc, Langue d'oïl, medieval Italian and medieval Latin, in different literary genres – both in sacred and profane texts – among the masterpieces of the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In particular, the texts that will be examined include: selected Passion Plays from medieval France and the *Laude* tradition of medieval Italian literature; medieval Latin poetry; medieval love poetry from France and Italy (Troubadours, Trouvères, medieval Italian poetry); the *Lais* of Marie de France, the Occitan romance in verses *Flamenca*, and the Old French romances, in verses and prose (in particular: *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas d'Angleterre and of Béroul; Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette* and *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*; the *Queste del Saint Graal* and *La Mort le Roi Artu*). Part of this tradition is reflected in illuminations and other artistic representations, which will be taken into consideration where necessary.

Beyond the questions relating to the different functions of love's wound in the various genres and repertoires, the analysis will involve other key literary issues, such as the relation between the spiritual realm and the body and the senses, conceptual links with the literary metaphor of love's malady and connections with the concept of melancholy.[1] The presence of *vulnus amoris* in medieval Romance liter-

1 On the body, the senses and the spirit, see Fattori/Bianchi (1984); Micrologus 10 (2002), *I cinque sensi / The Five Senses*; Casagrande/Vecchio (1999), Nichols/Kablitz/Calhoun (2008); Palazzo (2016);

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atures is particularly interesting because it seems to reconcile body and soul in a suggestive synthesis, as well as sensorial perceptions and spirituality, emotions and intellect. In a previous book on the sense of touch and desire in Troubadour poetry, I have defined this evocative synthesis of body and soul as 'spiritualised corporeality'.[2] It is closely linked to important cultural developments of that time, including the "renaissance de la passion psycosomatique au XII[e] siècle dans le monde latin, bien avant le grand réveil aristotélicien", as has been pointed out.[3] This aspect is also closely connected to the special relationship between body and soul in mystical love – where it remains unclear whether the unification with Christ is merely spiritual, or whether the body is affected as well. Therefore, the analysis of love's wound is of crucial importance for understanding medieval Romance literatures, either sacred or profane. Furthermore, for all the cultural dimensions that this theme involves and implies, the examination of the *vulnus amoris* seems to be a fundamental theme of intellectual history.

The wound of love is a metaphoric model which the poets and writers of the Middle Ages inherited from pagan antiquity[4] and the Bible. From an historical or diachronic point of view, this double inheritance offers rich potential for interplay and the crossing of borders between sacred and secular discourses. But it is not just the historical dimension that contributes to this situation, there is a more profound, epistemological reason for the fruitfulness of this metaphor in the Middle Ages.

From a systematic or synchronic point of view, the very nature of this metaphor, combining as it does a physical "vehicle" with a psychological "tenor" (to borrow Ivor Armstrong Richards's terminology),[5] makes it the ideal instrument for the purpose of aesthetic reflection on one of the central tenets of medieval anthropology: the psychosomatic view of man. The wound of love[6] can be interpreted as the

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Gubbini (2020a). On love malady, see Ciavolella (1970; 1976); Jacquart (1984); Wack (1990); Peri (1996); Tonelli (2015); Gubbini (2015; 2017a); Küpper (2018b); Robert (2020). On the four temperaments and melancholy see the classic Klibansky/Panofsky/Saxl (1979). All English translations of this book, unless otherwise noted, are mine. All highlighting in italics is also mine.

2 Gubbini (2009, 322).

3 Boquet/Nagy (2011, 17).

4 Another important pagan source for the metaphor of the wound of love can be found in the first two verses of the fourth book of Virgil's *Aeneid:* "At regina gravi iamdudum saucia cura / vulnus alit venis et caeco carpitur igni" (*Aeneis* IV, 1–2, https://www.loebclassics.com/view/virgil-aeneid/1916/pb_LCL063.423.xml) [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

5 Richards (1936).

6 Love's wound is, mostly, the wound caused by love as in a subjective genitive, whether metaphorically (struck by Cupido) or medically (the malady caused by love). But, in some circumstances, love can become the object of the act of wounding, as in the case of injured feelings or, metonymically,

very interface between the bodily and the spiritual, love as malady or religious experience, *amor carnalis* or *Amor-Caritas.* The fact that this systematic doubleness is so deeply rooted in medieval thought, ties in with the historical dimension mentioned above, the double tradition of love's wound in the secular poetry of antiquity and in the Bible, and renders it conceptually more relevant to the Middle Ages than would otherwise be the case. Diachrony and synchrony, tradition and systematic relevance meet in this time-honoured and epistemologically central metaphor, the *vulnus amoris.* The metaphorical model of the wound of love is a key element of what could be termed a "poetics of knowledge" (*poétique du savoir)* of love, in the sense suggested by Jacques Rancière,[7] comprising as it does a phenomenology, a psychology and a physiology of love. At the same time, it partakes of discourse systems or "archives" (in a Foucaultian sense)[8] as diverse as philosophy of nature, medieval medicine or love poetry. Our main focus, however, will not be on the formation of systems, the definition of their boundaries or their internal rules and regularities, but, rather, on the highly varied functions and forms taken on by the *vulnus* model itself, the individual contexts in which it appears and the poetic effects which it produces.

To state this as an abstract hypothesis is one thing, but the present study will ask some more detailed, in a sense, more literary questions: how exactly do medieval writers use this metaphor; how does it change from one author to another; are there dialogical phenomena; how are elements of vehicle or tenor or aspects and assumptions contained in this metaphorical model foregrounded or obscured, added or taken away? In which ways is it amplified in diegetic, more linear structures such as romances or epic poems, whether literal or allegorical? How does it tie in with theoretical writings and philosophical or medical texts of the period? Or where does it follow a more poetic or literary dynamics of its own? Thus, while our overarching interest is of a general, abstract type, the following pages will not just exemplify an overall hypothesis concerning a culture or an epoch, they will try to give weight to the single texts and their historical context.[9] Only by analysing in detail each individual context can we understand the nature of the correlations between the *vulnus* complex and the various cultural situations with which it inter-

as in the motto adopted in the early modern age by the order of the Bridgettines, "amor meus crucifixus est". I should like to thank Bernhard Teuber for pointing out to me that an early Greek version of this phrase "amor meus crucifixus est" was probably coined by Ignatius of Antioch.

7 Rancière (1992).

8 Foucault (1966).

9 I have already stressed the crucial importance of investigating the cultural context of medieval texts through an interdisciplinary perspective: Gubbini (2020c, 1–11).

acts, and only in that way can we understand what this model can achieve for intellectual life in any given era.

This book will also highlight the intimate connection between love's wound and the complex, "layered" concept of passion (in Latin: *passio*), which developed in Late Antiquity and flourished during the Middle Ages.[10] In particular, there are two important aspects linked to the concept of passion in the Middle Ages that I will analyse: passion as in the *Passio Christi*; and passion as in the word *passio* – one of the terms used in Classical and Medieval Latin to indicate what today is better known as 'emotion'. The encounter and the synthesis of these different aspects will illustrate certain dimensions of the concept of "passion" as we still use it today – an ardent affection, strongly connected with the concept of desire.

My investigation of the "passion" complex takes its cue from an influential article by Erich Auerbach, *Passio als Leidenschaft* – published in 1941.[11] In a deeply religious society such as the medieval one, a key role is played by the suffering body of Christ and those of the martyrs, those who are ready to die like "fools for the love of Christ" (*stultitia propter Christum*). Erich Auerbach in his study masterfully pointed out that thanks to the Passion of Christ – where *passio* approached ecstasy – the term *passio* acquired a double meaning, ambiguous and polarised – according to which pain is intimately linked to the concepts of rapture and enthusiasm.[12] The martyr for Christ glorifies himself through the wounds he received for the love of the Lord[13] – as Bernard of Clairvaux says in his comment on the *Song of Songs*, in a passage commented on by Auerbach,[14] the martyr does not feel his wounds, and he stays exultant and triumphant in spite of them: "Non hoc facit stupor, sed Amor".[15] Such "mystical passion" abounds in sacred and profane medieval Romance literatures, especially in the lyrical metaphor of love's wound. The motif is religious in its origins and, as such, was legitimised as a literary theme. It was then re-functionalised as a motif in connection with profane, worldly, secular love. This transition was facilitated by a semantic "zone of transition" present within religious discourse: "mystical love". From Auerbach's article onwards, the interaction between sacred and profane literature has been of particular interest to many scholars. It will be seen in the following chapters

10 For the considerations that follow see already Gubbini (2019a).

11 Auerbach (1941, vol. 56). Auerbach then recalled some of his considerations in the Appendix *Gloria Passionis* (1958, 54–63).

12 Within the purely religious sphere, there is the twofold tradition of the Seven Joys and the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

13 It would be interesting to follow this motif back to earlier, or even the first, accounts of the lives of saints and martyrs.

14 Auerbach (1958, 56).

15 Bernard of Clairvaux: *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*, LXI, *PL* 183, 1074.

that the wound of love is an important point of transition between the two spheres, and it will be stressed that this transition works in both directions, i. e. of secularisation and of sacralisation.

This transition from the religious sphere of Passion and martyrdom to secular love is one of two key aspects of the complex of *passio* investigated here.[16] The other aspect concerns, as stated above, the more "scientific" use of *passio*, together with the words *affectus* and *affectio*, as one of the Latin terms employed already by Classical thinkers, and then, with important innovations, in twelfth- and thirteenth-century monastic and scholastic literature to indicate what today is better known as 'emotion'.[17] In fact a new interest for emotions – and for their psychological and physiological dimensions – develops in these centuries, as documented by several studies.[18] Thomas Aquinas would include a systematic "Treatise on Passions" in his monumental *Summa Theologiae.* Here is a brief passage in which Thomas, quoting Augustine, discusses the different terms that refer to the "movements of the soul":

> Augustinus dicit quod motus animi, quos Graeci pathè, nostri autem quidam, sicut Cicero, perturbationes, quidam affectiones vel affectus, quidam vero, sicut in Graeco habetur, expressius passiones vocant. Ex quo patet quod passiones animae sunt idem quod affectiones.[19]

Medieval studies are now focusing more and more on the history of emotions; the analysis of *vulnus amoris* in its relationships with the layered concept of *passio* as offered in my book is intended to contribute to this field of investigation.

The contemporary discourse of "embodied emotions"[20] finds an important parallel in the phenomenon dubbed "la chair des émotions" in a special issue of the journal *Médiévales*,[21] which stresses the strong psychosomatic dimension of

16 The intertwining of sacred and profane concepts of love can be seen in the early discussion of a possible sacred usage of the word *eros* (rather than *agape*), for instance in Origen's comment on the *Song of Songs* ("Non ergo interest utrum amari dicatur Deus aut diligi, nec puto quod cuplari possit, si quid Deum, ut Johannes, *caritatem*, ita ipse amorem nominet", *In Canticum Canticorum*, Latin translation by Rufinus, *PG* 13, c70 and in Dionysius' *De divinis nominibus*, IV.12, 709B, in Luibheid/Rorem (1987, 81).

17 See Boquet (2005, 330 – 331).

18 Boquet/Nagy (2015); Casagrande/Vecchio (2015).

19 Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, Ia–IIae, q. 22, a. 2, s.c. Passage quoted and commented in Boquet (2005, 330). (Augustine writes: "The movements of the soul which the Greeks call *pathè*, some of ours, like Cicero, call them *perturbationes*, other *affectiones* or *affectus*; others finally, and with more rigor, call them *passiones*, like the Greeks". This text shows that the passions of the soul and the affects are identical).

20 LeDoux (1996); Panksepp (1998); Damasio (1995; 1999; 2003).

21 Boquet/Nagy/Moulinier-Brogi (2011).

emotions in medieval texts. A systematic investigation of the role of the *vulnus amoris* in this context has not been proposed before, and this book will try to close this gap, as the wound of love seems the ideal literary example.

The history of emotions, in turn, can be an important part of an "archaeology of subjectivity" as pursued by Alain de Libera and, before him, Michel Foucault.[22] The possibility of gaining awareness of the self by an experience of pain or pleasure, or even pleasure by pain, can be seen as a step towards subjectivity as self-awareness rather than an explicit reflection on the self or a theory of subjectivity. Vincent Barras has shown how an intuition of "intéroception" as "sentiment de la condition physiologique du corps propre, ou 'sens de soi'" can be found as early as in the writings of Galenus.[23] This complex of "proprioception" is based on positive or negative sensations like pain and pleasure as experiences of the self, and even on the perception of the boundary of the *Moi-peau* that can be transgressed by the encounter with other and thereby becomes tangible.[24] The metaphor of love's wound "embodies" this psychosomatic experience and, in some contexts, the very concept of the lyrical subject is based on it. Furthermore, in the world of romance, a type of hero can be found, whose actions are motivated by love and whose identity is defined by the experience of being wounded.

An episode recounted first in Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette* and then, with variations, in the anonymous prose romance *Lancelot* – which is part of the larger cycle called *Lancelot-Graal* – is a perfect example in this sense.[25] In order to save and free Guenevere, who has been taken prisoner by the evil Méléagant, Lancelot has to face a terrible trial: to cross a bridge in the shape of a sharp sword with perilous waters beneath it. Before beginning the trial, he raises his eyes to the tower where the queen is imprisoned and bows to her. He is perfectly equipped with his armour – nevertheless:

> Si ne remaint pas pour les fils de fer que des piés et de mains et des jenous ne saille li sans, mais pour le perill de l'espee sor coi il se traïne ne sor le perill de l'aigue bruiant et noire ne remaint pas que plus ne regart vers la tour que vers l'aigue, ne plaie ne angoisse qu'il ait ne proise il noient, car s'il a cele tour puet venir il garira de tous maus.[26]

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22 de Libera (2007); Foucault (2001).

23 Barras (2005, 56–57).

24 Anzieu (1995). See also the concept of "inner touch" in Heller-Roazen (2007). All these themes are discussed in connection with medieval literature and manuscript culture by Kay (2020).

25 For a discussion on these texts and for detailed bibliographical references see Chapter 5 of the present book.

26 *Lancelot*, §440, in Demaules (2003, 1375–1376). ('The wires do not stop the blood from squirting from his feet, hands and knees, but neither the peril of the sword on which he crawls, nor the danger of the roaring dark water do refrain him from looking more towards the tower than

Lancelot on the *Pont de l'Épée* and Guenevere, who watches him from the tower together with the father of Méléagant, the king Baudemagu, constitutes an episode of the prose romance that, for its incisiveness, has been represented several times in illuminations – in the one below, from the BnF, ms. Français 119 fol. 321v, the blood flowing from the wounds is prominently displayed:

In another example, the BnF, ms. Français 122, we find the episode of the *Pont de l'Épée* illuminated at the very beginning of the manuscript (fol. 1r) – the flowing blood is very much in evidence here as well. Moreover, the fact that this illumination occurs at the very beginning of the manuscript seems to attach special significance to its theme. As Alison Stones has highlighted, "Il n'existe pas à notre connaissance d'autre exemplaire commençant par cet épisode et l'on peut se demander si le commanditaire s'y intéressait particulièrement".[27]

The "anthropology of vulnerability" exemplified by this episode links man to God himself, who, in the second person of the Trinity, took it upon himself to suffer and die, thus offering a model for man as a vulnerable being. In the Church Fathers and in medieval theology, a whole complex of interpretations of the spiritual meaning of the wound develops from this concept.[28]

But, as opposed to modern conceptions of *trauma* and the like, the medieval concept of love's wound also contains an important option of healing, sometimes even by the same agent that struck the wound.[29] This confirms the polarity and at the same time complementarity of pleasure and pain in the medieval system of emotions.[30]

towards the water, and no wound, no pain matters to him, because if he can reach the tower, he will be cured of all his ailments').

27 Stones (2018, I, 150–153). For the artistic contextualisation of the ms. cf. the BnF webpage with the description of the manuscript, from which I quote: "Pour Alison Stones, le ms. Français 122 proviendrait de l'atelier de Piérart dou Thielt à Tournai (Stones, 1988, 89), qui a notamment décoré le ms. de la *Queste del saint Graal* conservé à la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, ms. 5218, exécuté pour Gilles le Muisis, abbé de Saint-Martin de Tournai entre 1331 et 1353" (https://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc43390b, last access: June 24th, 2022).

28 See Schwanberg (2018a); Bernhardt (2017). For the complexity of the artistic representation of the Incarnation and on the role of the blood in the *Passio Christi*, see Didi-Huberman (2007). On the image of Christ's Passion in art, see Hoeps/Hoppe-Sailer (2014).

29 On this theme, see Chapter 6 of the present book.

30 See Casagrande/Vecchio (2009).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Français 119

Figure 1: *Lancelot*, BnF, ms. Français 119 fol. 321v (« Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF ». The CC license terms for re-use do not apply to this image).

Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Français 122

Figure 2: *Lancelot*, BnF, ms. Français 122, fol. 1r (« Source gallica.bnf.fr / BnF ». The CC license terms for re-use do not apply to this image).

1.2 “Vulnerasti cor meum” (*Canticum canticorum* 4:9): Love’s Wound, the Heart and the Eyes

A particularly detailed and specific configuration of these elements can be found in the tradition of the wounding of the heart through the eyes, which is already to

be found in the biblical *Song of Songs:* "*vulnerasti cor meum* soror mea sponsa *vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum*".[31]

This complex will be analysed briefly in the following pages, as it undergoes a remarkable development and even systematisation in later texts, which shows the strongly physical tendency of psychological speculation in the Middle Ages.

The heart[32] is conceived in the Middle Ages as the "chair spirituelle" – following a beautiful image of Anita Guerreau-Jalabert[33]– which is the "receptacle" of *passiones* and *affectiones:* and it is also the privileged "aim" of the wound, as many love lyrics attest.

A rich and detailed analysis of this dynamics between heart and eyes[34] in the process of *innamoramento* can be found in Chrétien de Troyes' romance in verses *Cligès.* The narrative context of the passage is the following: Alexandre and Soredamors are in love with each other, but they have not yet had the chance to declare this to one another. Doubts and hesitations therefore, following the classical scenario, torture each of the two lovers. Here is Alexandre's complaint, in which he wonders how the arrow of Soredamors' beauty can have wounded him at the heart without damaging his eyes on the way:

Mes trop me bat, ice m'esmaie.
Ja n'i pert il ne *cop* ne *plaie.*
– Et si te plaing? Don n'as tu tort?
– Nenil, qu'il m'a *navré* si *fort*,
Que jusqu'au cuer m'a son dart trait,
Mes ne l'as pas a lui retrait.
– Comant le t'a donc trait el *cors*,
Quant la *plaie* ne pert de fors?
Ce me diras: savoir le vuel!
Comant le t'a il tret? – Par *l'uel.*
– Par *l'uel?* Si ne le t'a *crevé?*
– A *l'uel* ne m'a il rien grevé,
Mes au *cuer* me grieve formant.
– Or me di donc reison comant
Li *darz* est par mi l'uel passez,
Qu'il n'an est *bleciez* ne *quassez.*
Se li *darz* parmi l'uel i antre,
Li *cuers* por coi s'an dialt el vantre,

31 *Canticum canticorum* 4:9, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/biblia-sacra-vulgata/lesen-im-bibeltext/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/22/40001/49999/ch/0b465685c59c647ed847e0236f9ca406/ [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

32 On the heart in the Middle Ages see at least Micrologus (2003); Manzoli/Stoppacci (2020).

33 Guerreau-Jalabert (2003, quotation at 368).

34 See Favati (1967); Cline (1972); Paoli (1991).

Que li *ialz* ausi ne s’an dialt,
Qui le premier *cop* an requialt?
– De ce sai ge bien reison randre:
Li *ialz* n’a soin de rien antandre,
Ne rien ne puet faire a nul fuer,
Mes c’est li *mereors au cuer*,
Et par ce *mireor* trespasse,
Si qu’il ne *blesce* ne ne *quasse*,
Li sens don li cuers est espris.[35]

This passage is of great richness: among other aspects, Guido Favati has demonstrated that these verses – but also the ones that follow the quoted excerpt – have to be put in relation with the optical theories of the time.[36]

For the present book on the *vulnus amoris*, it is fundamental to highlight the dynamic between the heart and the eyes in the metaphor of love’s wound as developed here – an element that, as we have already recalled, is present also in contemporary lyric poetry, and that finds in this passage of Chrétien its most refined development. This relationship between the heart and the eyes in the *vulnus amoris* theme insists moreover on another dynamic crucial to the Middle Ages: the dynamics of external and internal senses, body and spirit. The striking insistence of the text on the physical paradox of an arrow that passes through the eye into the heart without in the least impairing the eye itself bears witness to the corporeality of medieval models of perception and passion as well as to the spiritual and psychological dimensions of medieval discourses on the body.

All of this goes to show that the semantic complex of love’s wound is an excellent “lens” through which to gain a richer understanding of some fundamental concepts of medieval literature and culture. Let us now look through this lens.

35 Chrétien de Troyes, *Cligès*, vv. 687–713, in Poirion/Berthelot/ Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 190). (‘But [Love] beats me so much and that worries me; no blow, no sore, however, is apparent. – Are you complaining? Are you not wrong? – No, because his wound is so cruel that he sent his arrow right through my heart without removing it afterwards. – How could he pierce your body since no sore is visible from the outside? Tell me! I want to know it! How did he stab you? – In the eye. – In the eye? And he didn’t puncture it? – The eye has not been injured but the heart is seriously damaged. – Explain to me how the arrow was able to pass through the eye without hurting and damaging it! If the arrow has penetrated the eye, why does the heart suffer in the chest while the eye remains unresponsive, which received the first attack? – The explanation is however simple: the eye does not have any concern of attention and it cannot do anything by itself. It is only the mirror of the heart; it is through this mirror that passes, without hurting or damaging it, the sensible image with which the heart is enamoured’).

36 Cf. Favati (1967, 390–391).

2 Love's Wound in Medieval Romance Love Poetry

2.1 The *ponha d'amor*, the *compunctio amoris* and Love's Wound: The Fathers of the Church, Jaufre Rudel and his Influence on Raimbaut d'Aurenga

In this section, starting from a poem of Raimbaut d'Aurenga, I will go back to what are probably the earliest "courtly" love's wounds present in Troubadour poetry – to be found in Jaufre Rudel's lyric production. I will comment on these ancient pages of poetry, connecting them to the Patristic tradition. Finally, I will return to the song of Raimbaut d'Aurenga, adding, moreover, some other examples from his corpus of texts, in order to show Jaufre Rudel's influence on Raimbaut's verbalisation of the theme of love's wound.

In the poem of the Troubadour Raimbaut d'Aurenga *Un vers farai de tal mena,* the rhyme word *gaug* ('joy') – a key term in the Troubadour lexicon of the *fin'amor* – stands out, repeated in the third-to-last verse of each *cobla.* The term *gaug* can suggest, as has been pointed out,[1] a bodily, carnal joy. In some verses of *Un vers farai de tal mena*, the rhyme word *gaug* is moreover inserted into expressions that seem to explicitly request amorous "fulfilment". However, an inner "fracture" seems to run through Raimbaut's entire text: that between desire, indeed excess of desire, and fulfilment of the same, as is emblematically shown, immediately after the two initial lines, by vv. 3–5: "mas tant ai rica entendensa, / per que n'estauc en bistensa / que non posca complir mon gaug".[2] In fact, oxymorons and paradoxes constitute the very fibres of *Un vers farai de tal mena* – as exemplified by the images of pain leaping and frisking within the heart at vv. 15–16 ("Per o si·n sofre'eu gran pena / qu'ins e mon cor sal e tresca"),[3] or the great desire that breaks the

Note: This paragraph follows for the greater part my argumentation in Gubbini (2005b).

1 Camproux (1965).

2 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Un vers farai de tal mena,* vv. 3–5, in Milone (1998, 103–107). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 83: "but I have so lofty an aspiration that I soon become doubtful that I can bring my joy to completion").

3 Raimbaut d'Aurenga *Un vers farai de tal mena*, vv. 15–16, in Milone (1998, 103–107). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 83: "But indeed I suffer great pain because it leaps and fisks within my heart").

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heart that "fishes without water" at vv. 50–51 ("Mas ben grans talans afrena / mon cor que ses aiga pesca").[4] In the middle of the song, two stanzas stand out that are entirely dedicated to the themes of the wound and the "chain of love", at vv. 22–28 and then immediately afterwards at vv. 29–32:

> Ben m'a *nafrat* en tal vena
> est'amors qu'era·m refresca,
> don nuls metges de Proensa
> ses lei no·m pot far *garensa*
> ni *mezina* que·m fassa *gaug:*
> ni ja non er que escriva
> lo *mal* que ins el cor m'esconh.
>
> Qu'amors m'a mes tal *cadena*
> plus doussa que mel de bresca:
> quan mon pessars encomensa,
> pois pes que·l dezirs me vensa.[5]

This close contiguity between the element of the *vulnus* and that of the *laqueus* recalls the analogous progression of the first two degrees of love-*caritas* in *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis* by Richard of Saint Victor:

> Ecce video alios vulneratos, alios ligatos, alios languentes, alios deficientes; et totum a caritate. Caritas vulnerat, caritas ligat, caritas languidum facit, caritas defectum adducit. (…) Vultis audire de caritate vulnerante? *Vulnerasti cor meum, soror mea, sponsa, in uno oculorum tuorum et uno crine colli tui.* Vultis audire de caritate ligante? *In funiculis Adam traham eos in vinculis caritatis.* (…) Caritas vincula habet, caritas vulnera facit.[6]

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4 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Un vers farai de tal mena*, vv. 50–51, in Milone (1998, 103–107). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 84: "But a very great passion restrains my heart which fishes without water").

5 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Un vers farai de tal mena*, vv. 22–32, in Milone (1998, 103–107). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 84: "Indeed this love, which is now renewed for me, has wounded me in such a vein that no doctor native to Provence can cure me, nor [is there] any medicine which can bring me joy, nor will there be anyone who can write the grievous suffering which I engrave in my heart. // Love has bound me with a chain sweeter than honey from the comb; when my grieving about it begins then I believe that desire for it overcomes me even more").

6 Richard of Saint Victor, *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis*, in Sanson (1993, cap. 4, 64). ('Here I see some wounded, others tied, others languishing, others exhausted and all by charity. Charity wounds, charity binds, charity prostrates, charity leads to swooning. (…) Do you want an authoritative word on charity that wounds? 'You have wounded my heart, my sister, my wife with only one of your looks and a single hair of your neck'. Do you want an authoritative word on the charity that binds? 'He will drag them with Adam's snares, with the bonds of charity. (…) Charity has its bonds, charity knows how to wound"). See the introduction of Sanson (1993, cap. 4, 9–41) for the analogies between Richard of Saint Victor and the Troubadours' poetry.

And further on:

> Primum enim gradum diximus qui vulnerat, secundum qui ligat.[7]

The *vulnus* and the *laqueus* seem therefore to be configured as fundamental elements of the *patiens*[8] dimension of amorous discourse, sacred, but also profane: that is to say the pain and suffering endured by the lyrical self. In this context, I shall confine myself to the aspects relevant to the present book and concentrate on the first of the two elements present in the song *Un vers farai de tal mena* – love's wound.[9]

Raimbaut d'Aurenga seems to be one of the first Troubadours to employ the verb *nafrar* ('to wound'). In particular, the presence of the verb in the song *Un vers farai de tal mena* seems to have a strong bodily dimension, as is shown by the closeness in the same verse (v. 22) of the rare term *vena*, which can mean 'blood vessel', but also 'vein, manner'. At vv. 22–23 "Ben m'a *nafrat* en tal *vena*/ est'amors qu'era·m refresca"[10] we can therefore translate, with Pattison: "Indeed this love, which is now renewed for me, has wounded me in such a vein"[11] stratifying, however, the term "vein" in the sense of a double meaning, the more abstract on the one hand, but also, on the other hand, a more physical one. This latter, more bodily meaning seems particularly relevant here in the context of the metaphor of the wound. The precedent of this bodily dimension of the wound seems to be found in the poetry of Jaufre Rudel, who was perhaps the first to introduce into the courtly lyric of the Troubadours the motif of the "joyful wound" present in contemporary Latin texts. In fact, we cannot count among the "courtly wounds" those

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7 Richard of Saint Victor, *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis,* in Sanson (1993, cap. 7, 70). (In fact, we have said that the first degree wounds and the second puts you in chains).

8 Here the formula "*patiens* aspect" is used with a value similar to that possessed by the "pathetic trait", used by Paul Ricœur in connection with the historical memory: "Prima di parlare, il testimone ha visto, sentito, provato (...), insomma è stato 'impressionato', colpito, choccato, ferito, in ogni caso raggiunto e toccato dal fatto. Ciò che il suo dire trasmette è qualcosa di quell'esser-impressionato da; in questo senso si può parlare dell'impronta del fatto anteriore, anteriore alla testimonianza stessa, impronta di una certa foggia trasmessa dalla testimonianza, che comporta una faccia di passività, di páthos (...). Questo tratto 'patico' si ritrova al livello della coscienza storica nella forma dotta assegnatale da Gadamer, quando parla della 'coscienza dell'effetto della storia' (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*), espressione che possiamo tradurre con l''esser-impressionato dalla storia'" (cf. Ricœur 2004, 18).

9 I have already offered a complete analysis of both the *vulnus* and the *laqueus* in the text of Raimbaut d'Aurenga in Gubbini (2005b).

10 Raimbaut d'Aurenga. *Un vers farai de tal mena,* vv. 22–23, in Milone (1998, 103–107).

11 English translation in Pattison (1952, 84).

present in William IX's obscene *Farai un vers pos mi sonelh*, where a red cat inflicts harsh wounds on the false pilgrim who has feigned dumbness in order to sexually possess the two women protagonists of the poem. Nor can we include the instances of the theme in the corpus of the moralistic Troubadour Marcabru, who condemns the *fin'amor*, representing it as the stinging "bitter love" (*amars:* with a word pun, thanks to perfect homophony, between *amar* as 'to love', and *amar* as 'bitter')[12] in contexts, therefore, respectively ironic and moralistic.[13]

We do, however, find an early "courtly" form of the wound of love in Jaufre Rudel, who, in two very important poems of his lyric corpus, verbalises this theme through the terms *ponha*, *ponher*, *colps*, *ferir*, *espina.* We have *colps*, *ponha*, and *ferir* in *Non sap chantar qui so non di*, vv. 13–18:

> *Colps* de joi me *fer*, que m'ausi,
> e *ponha d'amor* que·m sostra
> la carn, don lo cors magrira;
> et anc mais tan greu no·m *feri*
> ni per nuill *colp* tan no langui,
> quar no conve ni no s'esca. a a[14]

And we find *ponhens* together with the term *espina* in *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 22–28:

> De dezir mos cors no fina
> vas selha ren qu'ieu plus am,
> e cre que volers m'enguana
> si cobezeza la·m tol;
> que plus es *ponhens* qu'*espina*
> la dolors que ab joi sana:
> don ja non vuoill c'om m'en planha.[15]

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12 As Roncaglia (1969, 16) has beautifully highlighted: "per il ben noto giuoco sull'omofonia tra *amar* = amare e *amar* = amaro".

13 *Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh*, vv. 69–70, in Pasero (1973, 113–155). See also Marcabru, *Dire vos vuoill ses doptanssa*, v. 65, in Gaunt/Harvey/Paterson (2000, 237–263). On Jaufre Rudel's *ponha d'amor* compared to the "stings" of the moralist Marcabru, see Spitzer (1944, 48).

14 Jaufre Rudel, *Non sap chantar qui so non di,* vv. 13–18, in Chiarini (1985, 55–63). ('A stroke of joy wounds me, so much that it kills me, and a sting of love that consumes my flesh, so that the body will slim down; and never was I wounded so badly, nor has any blow ever so weakened me, because it is neither appropriate nor suitable').

15 Jaufre Rudel, *Quan lo rius de la fontana,* vv. 22–28, in Chiarini (1985, 73–84). ('My being does not cease to reach out in desire towards the creature I love supremely, and I believe that the will deceives me if concupiscence takes her away from me; but the pain that heals with joy stings more than a thorn: therefore, I do not want anyone to pity me').

In both cases, there is a remarkable link with the sphere of corporeality – strong, in particular, in the image of the 'sting of love that consumes the flesh' (*Non sap chantar qui so non di*, vv. 14–15: "e *ponha d'amor que·m sostra*/*la carn*, don lo cors magrira"). However, it is a bodily presence inserted in a suspended, enchanted, abstract dimension. The oxymoron of the *colps de joi* then seems to increase this paradoxical state and brings Jaufre's verbalisation of the wound closer to the Christian mystic production – as masterfully pointed out by Spitzer who spoke, in the case of Jaufre Rudel, of "amour chrétien transposé sur le plan séculier".[16] If in fact Love has always wounded, since Ovid, who represents Love as *pharetratus puer*,[17] the wound itself seems to become a cherished, desired – and probably necessary – suffering only after the advent of Christianity, as pointed out by Erich Auerbach, with considerations that are fundamental for the present work and that we have already recalled in the first chapter. In the passage from the Classical to the Christian world, therefore, a "mysticism of the wound" seems to be constituted, which also penetrates into the profane love lyric. But is it possible to find for Jaufre Rudel's "joyful wound", if not of a precise source, at least a persuasive parallel in the religious and patristic field? Perhaps it will be worthwhile to dwell on the question with an excursus, before coming back to the Troubadours.

Some years ago, Lino Pertile, analysing the sentence *la punta del disio* in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *Paradiso* XXII, v. 26, evoked Gregory the Great – in particular some expressions such as *compunctio amoris* or *desiderio compunctus*.[18] Pertile's analysis then continues in the examination of terms such as *acies* and *stimulus* in Bernard of Clairvaux, and in the Latin translation of Origen's work. He then goes back to the classic tradition of the motif of the "sting of love", which is used, as Pertile highlights, in a totally negative sense in Latin literature. At the end of his contribution, he comes back to the presence of the theme in Dante. It seems to me that until the early years of this century (and more precisely the publication of an article of mine in 2005),[19] no one had detected that the *compunctio amoris* of Gregory the Great is probably the model at the base of Jaufre Rudel's *ponha d'amor* ('sting of love').[20] However, it would be advisable not to

16 Spitzer (1944, 1–2).

17 Ov., *Met.* X, 525, http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/ovid/ovid.met10.shtml [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023]. On the fundamental role of Ovid in the Middle Ages, see at least Picone/Zimmermann (1994).

18 Pertile (2005, 164–166).

19 Gubbini (2005b), the argumentation of which is largely taken up in this section.

20 There is, however, also another meaning for the term *ponha*, as pointed out by the DOM: "a. 'effort, soin, peine'; b. 'retard, délai'" (see http://www.dom-en-ligne.de/dom.php?lhid=3vMXqdZEPMEScGDdyLzIFD [last access: July 14th, 2022]). This meaning, though plausible in some contexts, cannot be considered relevant to the passage from Jaufre quoted here. In fact, the intertextual

stop at the near equivalence of the respectively Latin and Langue d'oc expressions, *compunctio amoris*/*ponha d'amor*, and instead try to investigate whether there are other parallels between the attestations of the wounds in the lyric corpus of Jaufre Rudel just mentioned and the texts of Gregory the Great. On this last aspect, I will follow, in particular, the fundamental observations by Jean Leclercq and his analysis of the Gregorian *compunctio.*[21] Gregory the Great makes a distinction between *compunctio timoris* and *compunctio amoris:*

> Alia quippe *compunctio* est quae per timorem nascitur, alia *quae per amorem*, quia aliud est per supplicia fugere, aliud praemia *desiderare.*[22]

Those who, free from carnal vices, are affected by the *compunctio amoris*, burn with desire for the heavenly homeland:

> Alii vero, a carnalibus vitiis liberi, aut longis jam fletibus securi, *amoris flamma in compunctionis lacrymis inardescunt*, coelestis patriae praemia cordis oculis proponunt, supernis jam civibus interesse *concupiscunt.*[23]

This ardent desire, awakened by the *compunctio amoris*, seems to be echoed, albeit referring to a profane love, in some verses of Jaufre Rudel's already evoked song *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 22–28, which seems to have some traits in common

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web we have just uncovered confirms Chiarini's hypothesis that in this context *ponha* is to be read not in the sense of lat. *pugna* ('battle'), but, rather, as *ponhedura* ('wound').

21 Leclercq (2008), see in particular the following considerations at 35: "La componction devient une douleur de l'âme, une douleur qui a, simultanément, deux principes: d'une part le fait du péché et de notre tendance au péché – *compunctio paenitentiae, timoris, formidinis* –, d'autre part le fait de notre désir de Dieu, et déjà de notre possession de Dieu. S. Grégoire, plus que d'autres, a mis l'accent sur ce dernier aspect: possession obscure, dont la conscience ne dure pas, et dont, par conséquent, naissent le regret de la voir disparaître et le désir de la retrouver. La 'componction du coeur', 'de l'âme' – *compunctio cordis, animi*, – tend donc toujours à devenir une 'componction d'amour', 'de dilection' et 'de contemplation' – *compunctio amoris, dilectionis, contemplationis.* La componction est une action de Dieu en nous, un acte par lequel Dieu nous réveille, un choc, un coup, une 'piqûre', une sorte de brûlure. Dieu nous excite comme par un aiguillon: il nous 'point' avec insistance (*cum-pungere*), comme pour nous transpercer. L'amour du monde nous endort; mais comme par un coup de tonnerre, l'âme est rappelée à l'attention à Dieu."

22 Gregorius I, *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, *PL* 76, col. 1070. ('One type of compunction is that which arises from fear, and another type is that which arises from love – for it is one thing to flee from punishment, and quite another to want to be rewarded.').

23 Gregorius I, *Homiliae in Ezechielem*, *PL* 76, col. 1070. ('Others, in truth, free from carnal vices, or already made safe by long tears, burn with the flame of love with tears of compunction, see with the eyes of the heart the rewards of the heavenly fatherland, already long to be among the citizens of heaven').

with the passage from Gregory the Great, not least on the lexical level. In particular, in addition to the verb *ponher* ('to pierce'), which can be put in parallel with *compunctio*, we have the term *cobezeza* ('covetousness'), which can be compared to the Gregorian *concupiscunt*, and, pertaining to the same semantic field, also the key word *dezir* ('desire'). I repeat here the verses I have already quoted:

> De *dezir* mos cors no fina
> vas selha ren qu'ieu plus am,
> e cre que volers m'enguana
> si *cobezeza* la·m tol;
> que plus es *ponhens* qu'espina
> la dolors qu'ab joi sana:
> don ja non vuolh qu'om m'en planha.[24]

Furthermore, it should be noted that, together with the other elements found, the motif of the "fire of love" – represented with insistence in the Gregorian passages we have quoted through the double presence of the term *flamma* and the verb *inardescere* – is present also in the aforementioned song by Jaufre Rudel, *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, at vv. 15–16:

> Pois del tot m'en falh aizina,
> no·m meravilh s'ieu n'*aflam.*[25]

The "fire of love" is already a well-known classical theme, and in particular a prototypically Ovidian one, but Jaufre Rudel's passage seems to constitute one of the first courtly presences of the motif in Troubadour poetry.

The other song by Jaufre Rudel we have already mentioned, *Non sap chantar qui so non di,* dedicated to the *vulnus amoris,* shows us the *ponha d'amor* ('sting of love') together with the *colps de joi* ('blow of joy'):

> Colps de joi me *fer*, que m'ausi,
> e *ponha d'amor* que·m sostra
> la carn, don lo cors magrira;
> et anc mais tan greu no·m *feri*

24 Jaufre Rudel, *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 22–28, in Chiarini (1985, 73–84). ('My being does not cease to reach out in desire towards the creature I love supremely, and I believe that the will deceives me if concupiscence takes it away from me; but the pain that heals with joy stings more than a thorn: therefore, I do not want anyone to pity me').

25 Jaufre Rudel, *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 15–16, in Chiarini (1985, 73–84). ('Since I miss the opportunity of possession altogether, I am not surprised to be inflamed by it').

> ni per nuill *colp* tan no langui,
> quar no conve ni no s'esca. a a.[26]

As can be seen, in both passages from Jaufre Rudel's corpus which are specifically dedicated to the motif of love's wound, the crucial and recurrent element is that of the "sting", verbalised through *ponha* ('sting') and *ponhens* ('stinging'), and corroborated by the comparison with the *espina* ('thorn'); the other central components are the *colps de joi* ('blow of joy') and the *dolors qu'ab joi sana* ('the pain that heals with joy'). Here too, it seems possible to find a parallel in some passages from Gregory the Great, both on the lexical level – thanks to the "stinging" presence of terms like *spiculum*, comparable to Jaufre Rudel's *ponha* and *espina* – and on the conceptual level, as borne out by the presence of the motif of the "wound that heals":

> Occidit enim ut vivificet, percutit ut sanet (…). Sed vulnerantur ut sanentur, quia amoris sui spiculis mentes Deus insensibiles percutit, moxque eas sensibiles per ardorem caritatis reddit. (…) percussa autem caritatis eius spiculis, vulneratur in intimis affectu pietatis, ardet desiderio contemplationis et miro modo vivificatur ex vulnere quae prius mortua iacebat in salute.[27]

To these elements we can also add the idea that *compunctio* arouses *in moerore laetitia:*

> Sed hoc inter se utraque haec differunt, quod plagae percussionum dolent, lamenta compunctionum sapiunt. Illae affligentes cruciant, *ista reficiunt, dum affligunt.* Per illas in afflictione moeror est, *per haec in moerore laetitia.*[28]

In conclusion, it seems that behind the bodily presence of the *ponha d'amor*, which *sostra* / *la carn* ('consumes the flesh'), we can hypothesise a stratification of mate-

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26 Jaufre Rudel, *Non sap chantar qui so non di,* vv. 13–18, in Chiarini (1985, 55–63). ('A stroke of joy wounds me, such that it kills me, and a sting of love that consumes my flesh, so that the body will lean out of it; and never was I wounded so badly, nor has any blow ever so weakened me, because it is neither convenient nor suited').

27 Gregorius I, *Moralia*, VI XXV 2–26, *PL* 76, col. 752. ('In fact, he kills to vivify, he strikes to heal. (…) But they are wounded in order to be healed, since God strikes the insensitive minds with the stings of his love for him, and immediately afterwards makes them sensitive through the ardour of charity. (…) therefore struck by the stings of his charity, [the mind] is deeply wounded by the feeling of pity, it burns with desire for contemplation and in an admirable way is revived by the wound, having before laid dead in health').

28 Gregorius I, *Moralia*, *PL* 76, col. 275. ('But among them they are different, since the wounds of the beatings ache, the complaints of compunction are tasty. The former torture by afflicting, the latter refresh while afflicting. Through those there is sadness in affliction, through these there is joy in pain').

rials from different sources: the original medical meaning of *compunctio*, in which it "désigne les élancements d'une douleur aiguë, d'un mal physique",[29] and its reuse in a mystical sense, especially in Gregory the Great's *compunctio amoris*, "possession obscure, dont la conscience ne dure pas, et dont, par conséquent, naissent le regret de la voir disparaître et le desir de la retrouver".[30] All these elements appear to persist in the *ponha d'amor* and the *dolors plus ponhens qu'espina* of Jaufre Rudel's lyric production.

The *vulnus amoris* present in Raimbaut d'Aurenga's song *Un vers farai de tal mena*, from which we started, seems, in its bodily dimension, a possible "heir" of Jaufre Rudel's passages on love's wound.

But, beyond this sphere common to both texts, it is possible to identify in the song of Raimbaut d'Aurenga a clear trace of the influence of Jaufre Rudel's style. A limpid example is to be found at vv. 24–26, where there is an insistent reference to the semantic area of medicine:

> don nuls *metges* de Proensa
> ses lei no.m pot far *guirensa*
> ni *mezina* que.m fassa gaug.[31]

The parallel on a lexical and conceptual plan in Jaufre Rudel's corpus is to be found, as already pointed out,[32] in the song *Pro ai del chan essenhadors*, vv. 55–56:

> e d'aquest *mal* mi pot guerir
> ses gart de *metge* sapien.[33]

And in the text *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 10–11:

> e no.n posc trobar *meizina*
> si non vau al sieu reclam.[34]

More broadly, very similar to Jaufre Rudel's style are both the oxymoronic dimension present at vv. 33–34 of the song *Un vers farai de tal mena* ("don per que torn

29 Leclercq (2008, 35).

30 Leclercq (2008, 35).

31 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Un vers farai de tal mena,* vv. 24–26, in Milone (1998, 103–107). ('that no physician of Provence can heal me without her, nor (exists) any medicine which can bring me joy').

32 In Milone (1998, 203).

33 Jaufre Rudel, *Pro ai del chan essenhadors*, vv. 55–56, in Chiarini (1985, 65–72). ('and can heal me of this disease without the care of a wise doctor').

34 Jaufre Rudel, *Quan lo rius de la fontana*, vv. 10–11, in Chiarini (1985, 73–84). ('And I cannot find a medicine if I do not rush to his [Love's] call').

en plor mon gaug / e vau cum fai res pessiva?"),[35] and the strong position of the rhyme word *lonh*[36] at the end of the first *cobla*, as has been noticed.[37]

Returning to the use of the verb *nafrar* ('to wound'), it should be noted that Raimbaut d'Aurenga also employs the term in another interesting lyric for our concern of the *vulnus amoris*, namely in *Aissi mou un sonet nou:*

> Amors, rim co·s voilla prim
> pos m'es de latz
> en que poing, qu'ab *colp de loing*
> son pres *nafratz.*[38]

This occurrence of the motif of the love's wound seems once again strongly connected to Jaufre Rudel's style for the presence, as has been pointed out,[39] of the syntagm *de loing*, as well as for the reuse of term *colps* – on which, as we have seen, he already insisted twice within five verses in the passage related to the "joyful" wound of his song *Non sap chantar qui so non di.*

It should be noted that Jaufre Rudel's image of the *colps* ('blow') had an important diffusion in the *trobar.* In fact, it was employed, for example, by Bernart de Ventadorn, in a poetic passage on Peleus's spear, which we will analyse in the next section, as well as by Arnaut Daniel in the famous sestina *Lo ferm voler qu'el cor m'intra* (see vv. 15–16: "que plus mi nafra ·l cor que *colp* de verja / qu'ar lo sieus sers lai ont ilh es non intra"),[40] where an echo of Raimbaut d'Aurenga can be found in the coexistence of the verb *nafrar* and the term *colp* – to mention only the fundamental occurrences of the term in twelfth-century Troubadour poetry.

Raimbaut d'Aurenga then reuses the verb *nafrar* in the text *En aital rimeta prima*, vv. 23–26 – again in co-occurrence, as in the previous attestation, with

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35 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Un vers farai de tal mena,* vv. 33–34, in Milone (1998, 103–107). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 84: "Then why do I exchange my tears for joy and [then] go about lost in my melancholy thought?").

36 On the fundamental role of the rhyme word *lonh* in Jaufre Rudel's poetry, see Roncaglia (1981, vol. 2, 16–17). The motif of the *amor de lonh* is present also in the Minnesänger literary production: see Kellner (2018, 189–202). On the imaginary pilgrimage of Jaufre Rudel, see Teuber (2013).

37 See Milone (1998, 29).

38 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *Aissi mou un sonet nou*, vv. 25–28, in Milone (2004, in particular 57–61). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 126: "Love, I burn as excellently as may be wished. Since you are at my side why do I strive? For with a blow [of Cupid's arrow] from afar I am wounded here").

39 See Milone (1998, 201).

40 Arnaut Daniel, *Lo ferm voler qu'el cor m'intra,* vv. 15–16, in Eusebi (1995, 154–162). ('because it hurts my heart more than a blow of a rod that now her servant does not enter where she is').

the verb *rimar* ('to burn'), which here, however, joins the other verb pertaining to the fire of love, *ardre* ('to be in flames'):

> E.l rosinhols s'estendilha
> Qe·m *nafra* d'amor tendilh,
>
> Si que.l cor m'*art*, mas no.m *rima*
> Ren de foras, mas dinz *rim.*[41]

Furthermore, this coexistence and lexical proximity between the wound and the amorous ardour – despite the fact that, as it has been demonstrated,[42] Bernart de Ventadorn is the Troubadour who employs the motif of the love's flame with greater intensity – seems to bring the passage quoted from Raimbaut d'Aurenga's *En aital rimeta prima* closer to Jaufre Rudel's *Quan lo rius de la fontana,* where, as we have already seen, just a few verses before the *vulnus amoris* there is one of the first courtly presences of the theme of the fire of love in Troubadour poetry.

In the *trobar* we therefore have a "founding" moment of the theme of love's wound, in Jaufre Rudel, in whose poems this motif is probably layered with references to the mystical wound and, more specifically, to the *compunctio amoris* – in particular as it was conceived by Gregory the Great. The memory of this fundamental moment, that of Jaufre Rudel, on both a lexical and a conceptual level seems to have exerted a strong influence on some passages in the lyric poetry of Raimbaut d'Aurenga.

In the next section, we will analyse the evolution and the transformations of the *vulnus amoris* theme in three lyrical traditions: Langue d'oc, Langue d'oïl and medieval Italian.

2.2 Lyrical Wounds of Love: The Gaze and the Kiss (Langue d'Oc, Langue d'Oïl, Medieval Italian Love Poetry)

Stings of love, blows of joy that hurt, gazes that pierce, kisses that wound: these and many other images characterize the refined imagery that the Troubadours build around the *vulnus amoris* theme. A motif of ancient origin, heavily used, for example, already by Ovid, that engenders metaphors and rich symbols – such as the different kinds of love's arrows – and inserts love's wound in the pow-

41 Raimbaut d'Aurenga, *En aital rimeta prima,* vv. 23–26, in Pattison (1952, 72–75). (English translation in Pattison 1952, 72: "and the nightingale arouses itself and wounds me with [newly] awakened love, So that my heart flames, but nothing external burns, rather do I burn within").
42 Picchio Simonelli (1982, in particular 217–218).

erful concept of the *militia amoris.*[43] The Troubadours and, more broadly, medieval Romance love poetry re-use this Ovidian heritage. It is not by chance that the twelfth century has been called *aetas ovidiana.*[44] However, the Troubadours reframe these metaphors and images in the new intellectual context of their time, where the emerging concept of the passion of love interacts with the theology of Christ's Passion. As we have highlighted in Chapter 1, the "necessity" to be wounded for the sake of love is in fact a key element of the medieval concept of passion, both sacred and profane. A quotation by Augustine will, in my view, perfectly illustrate the "necessity" of the wound of love-*Caritas* for the salvation of the soul:

> *Vulnus amoris salubre est.* Sponsa Christi cantat in Cantico canticorum: *Vulnerata caritate ego sum* (*Cant* 2, 5; 5, 8). *Vulnus hoc quando sanatur?* Quando *satiabitur in bonis desiderium nostrum* (2 *Tim* 4, 6). *Vulnus dicitur, quamdiu desideramus, et nondum tenemus.* Sic enim est amor, ut sic illic et dolor. Cum pervenerimus, cum tenuerimus, tunc transit dolor, non deficit amor.[45]

This necessary and healthy wound for the love of God finds its literary parallel in profane poetry and in particular in the oxymoron of Love's wound as a source of joy – as we have already seen in the previous section, in particular in the passages examined from Jaufre Rudel's corpus. The etymology of this figure of speech (from Greek *oxýmoros*, 'sharply foolish') refers to the field of foolishness. In medieval Romance poetry the oxymoron of *vulnus amoris* is characterized by the combination – in a short space of verses or in the same verse – of terms related to the semantic field of the wound and, simultaneously, to the fields of joy, pleasure and sweetness. This lyrical combination is the textual "symptom" of a special emotional condition – that of the "lovesick" – marked by confusion and the overturning of "common" values and feelings.[46] This paradoxical condition of "lovesickness" can lead to melancholy, but also to madness; this is a motif that we find in profane, but also in sacred writings. We can recall, for example, the concept of the "madness for Christ", present in ancient Italian religious literary production.[47] The origin of

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43 See Murgatroyd (1975). I reuse here some considerations already present in Gubbini (2023).
44 Traube (1911, vol. 2, 113); Hexter (1986, 2–3); Hexter (1999).
45 Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermones*, *Sermo* 298, 2, *PL* 38, 1365–1367. ('The wound of love is healthy. The bride of Christ sings in the Song of Songs: I am wounded by love. When will this wound be healed? When our desire rests in the good. It is likened to a sore, if the persistence of our desire has not yet gained possession. Because love has this peculiarity, that the pain subsists beside it. Once the destination is reached, when possession is fulfilled, then the pain disappears, and love remains unchanged').
46 On lovesickness see footnote 1, Chapter 1.
47 On this theme in an italian medieval context see Gagliardi (1998).

this concept is to be found in Saint Paul's *First Letter to the Corinthians* (1, 18), where Paul speaks about the "message of the cross", considered "foolishness" by those that are perishing, but the "power of God" for those that are being saved. Such paradoxical "foolishness" characterises the expressions linked to the oxymoron of *vulnus amoris* in Medieval Romance literature as well.

Moreover, this alternation and compresence of wound and sweetness is to be connected to the role played by pleasure and pain in the system of medieval emotions, as recently highlighted in several studies in the field.[48]

In this paragraph, I will concentrate on a few aspects of this spectrum. Starting from Troubadour poetry, I will go on to discuss some passages and images from the Trouvères, from the poetry of the "Scuola Siciliana", from Guido Cavalcanti and from Dante Alighieri. Within the rich imagery connected to the theme of *vulnus amoris* in lyric poetry, I will direct my attention in particular to the wound caused by the gaze and by the kiss of the beloved: the centrality of these two images within medieval Romance literatures, as already pointed out in Chapter 1, calls in fact for a special analysis.

The gaze of the beloved as the "agent" of the wound is a very ancient topos. The passage by Augustine quoted at the beginning of this section was commenting on a fundamental text of Western culture, the *Canticum canticorum*, which says:

> *vulnerasti cor meum* soror mea sponsa *vulnerasti cor meum in uno oculorum tuorum* et in uno crine colli tui.[49]

The *vulnus amoris* is here described as proceeding through the eye and a lock of the beloved. The Troubadours will employ this motif, highlighting in particular the *dulcedo* that comes from the woman's smiling eyes, as we can see in the following examples:

> c'aissi.m *pasmei*, qan vos vi *dels huoills rire*,
> d'una *doussor d'amor* qe.m venc *ferir al cor*,
> qe.m fetz si *tremblar* e *fremir*,
> c'a pauc denan no.n mori de desire.[50]

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48 See, for example, the following excellent works: Boquet/Nagy (2015); Casagrande/Vecchio (2015).

49 *Canticum canticorum*, 4:9, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/biblia-sacra-vulgata/lesen-im-bibeltext/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/22/40001/49999/ch/0b465685c59c647ed847e0236f9ca406/ [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

50 Gaucelm Faidit, *Mon cor e mi e mas bonas chanssos*, vv. 13–16, in Mouzat (1965, 161). ('That I fainted, when I saw you laughing with your eyes, because of a sweetness of love that came to wound me in my heart, and made me shiver and shudder so much that I was to the point of dying of desire').

ni siei *bel oill amoros plen de ris*
non aneron *tan dousamen ferir*
mon cor, qe.s ten a leis totz e s'autreia.[51]

In both passages it is the sweetness provoked by the "laughter of the eyes" that wounds the heart – a sweetness lexically evoked by the semantic field of *dulcedo: doussor d'amor*; *dousamen.*

But in the song by Gaucelm Faidit the presence of love's wound contains a specifically bodily element, strongly intertwined with the spiritual one, and resulting in a complex "psychosomatic" dimension, not by chance a key characteristic of the cultural renewal of the twelfth century: researchers have in fact spoken of a "renaissance de la passion psycosomatique au XII^{e} siècle dans le monde latin, bien avant le grand réveil aristotélicien", as has been pointed out in particular by Damien Boquet and Piroska Nagy.[52] In the passage quoted from Gaucelm Faidit's song the theme of the wound is in fact accompanied by terms that strongly refer to the semantic field of corporeality, like *pasmar* ('to faint'), or the verbs indicating the act of shivering, such as *tremblar* and *fremir* – in a lyric climax that seems to recall the medical symptomatology of the *aegritudo amoris.* Medieval treatises of lovesickness point out, in fact, that the amorous passion enters the body through the eyes. Once the malady of love has affected the body, it arouses an alteration of its vital heat, causing an alternation of over-heated and frozen parts – and engendering, therefore, the experience of shivering.

Pier della Vigna – one of the most important authors of the so-called "Scuola Siciliana", and also an unforgettable character present in the *Divine Comedy*, more precisely in *Canto XIII* of the *Inferno* – develops this motif in the song *Uno piasente isguardo.* The amorous wound is in fact caused by the beautiful gaze of the beloved, described as a piercing and sharp arrow,[53] which has perforated the heart and undermined the lyrical I:

Uno piasente isguardo
coralmente m'ha *feruto*,
und'eo d'amore sentomi infiammato;
ed è stato uno *dardo*

51 Daude de Pradas, *Tan sen al cor un amoros desir*, vv. 27–29, in Schutz (1933, 35). ('Neither until her amorous eyes full of laughter wounded so sweetly my heart, that it is totally with her, and to her is devoted').

52 Boquet/Nagy (2011, 17).

53 On the presence of the arrow in this poem see Stewart (2003, 70–71).

pungent'e sì forte acuto
che mi passao lo core e m'ha 'ntamato.[54]

It is the fault of the eyes of the lyrical persona, says the text, for wanting to look at her: the "clash" between the two gazes has engendered a disaster. The eyes of the lyrical I confronted the fatal eyes of the beloved (*"oc[c]hi suo' micidari"*), and these consequently conquered and killed him:

Li *oc[c]hi mei ci 'ncolparo,*
che volsero riguardare,
ond'io n'ho riceputo male a torto,
quand'elli s'avisaro
cogli oc[c]hi suo' micidari,
e quelli oc[c]hi m'hanno conquiso e morto.[55]

The poet reproaches his treacherous fate: he was on the brink of departure, but fate reassured him, and now he has a mortal wound in his heart. The lyrical I had not before looked at the lady's beautiful gaze; when he finally did so, he immediately fell in love:

Volsi partire allora,
e tu mi asicurasti,
unde al core ag[g]io una mortal *feruta.*
Non avea miso mente
a lo *viso* piacente, – e poi *guardai*
in quello punto, ed io m'inamorai.[56]

Of that *inamoranza* ('falling in love'), he feels so much pain that no medicine can heal him:

54 Pier della Vigna, *Uno piasente isguardo*, vv. 1–6, in Contini (1994, vol. 1, I, 123). ('A beautiful gaze has deeply wounded me, so that I am now enflamed by love; and it was a piercing and sharp arrow that has perforated the heart and undermined me').
55 Pier della Vigna, *Uno piasente isguardo*, vv. 10–15, ibid. ('It is the fault of my eyes that wanted to look, for that I have wrongly received damage when my eyes have confronted her fatal eyes, and these eyes have conquered and killed me').
56 Ibid. ('I wanted to go away at that point, you have reassured me, therefore I have a mortal wound in my heart. I had not yet looked at the beautiful gaze, and then I looked at that moment, and fell in love').

Di quella inamoranza
eo me ne sento tal doglia
che nulla medicina me non vale.[57]

We can see how in this song by Pier della Vigna the *vulnus amoris* theme is closely connected to or, rather, "flows into" the motif of the malady of love.

A special "subset" of the connection we are following between the gaze of the beloved and the lyric wound is the motif of the basilisk – a kind of serpent that, according to premodern traditions, shoots poison from its eyes. The characteristic of the deadly gaze of the basilisk was already present in the *Natural History* of Pliny:

Basilisci, quem etiam serpentes ipsae fugiunt, alias olfactu necantem, *qui hominem, vel si aspiciat tantum, dicitur interimere.*[58]

In Troubadour poetry, although the presence of the basilisk is attested in different texts, such a lexical connection between the theme of the wound and the poison of the animal is in particular noticeable in a late Troubadour, Rostanh Berenguier:

Tot en aisi con es del *balasicz*
C'ap son esgart nos plus que colps de(s) glay,
Don resouton man quil e man esglay,
Es drechamen *l'esgardar* sobretrixz
De leis qu'ieu am, car *dousamen m'esguara,*
El dous esgar mi fer em frainh al cor.[59]

We have here the recurrent semantic fields of the *dulcedo*, the gaze and the wound: in this last one, we can notice the presence of the expression *colps de glay* ('sword blow'), and of the rarer verb *franher* ('to break', 'to shatter'). This theme appears in medieval French and Italian poetry. An extremely interesting presence of the basilisk that shoots poison from its eyes is to be found in an anonymous medieval Italian text of the thirteenth century, called the *Mare amoroso.* It

57 Pier della Vigna, *Uno piasente isguardo,* vv. 28–30, ibid. ('Of that falling in love I feel so much pain that no medicine can heal me').

58 Plinius, *Naturalis historia*, 29, 66 in Jones (1963–1975, vol. 8, 225–227). ('The basilisk, which puts to flight even the very serpents, killing them sometimes by its smell, is said to be fatal to a man if it only looks at him').

59 Rostanh Berenguier, *Tot en aisi con es del balasicz*, vv. 1–6, in Meyer (1871, 90). ('Similar to the basilisk, that with its gaze harms more than a sword blow – from which result many disasters and troubles – is indeed the deceiving gaze of the woman that I love, that sweetly looks at me, and her sweet gaze wounds me and breaks my heart').

is a sort of rich "reservoir" – containing the most important literary images and encyclopaedic notions from Bestiaries and Lapidaries of its time:

> Ché li cavelli vostri son più biondi
> Che fila d'auro o che fior d'aulentino,
> E sono le funi che mi tegnono alacciato;
> *Igli occhi belli come di girfalco,*
> *Ma son(o) di bavalischio per sembianza,*
> *Che saetta il veleno collo sguardo;*
> *I cigli bruni e sottili avolti in forma d'arco*
> *Mi saettano al cor(e) d'una saetta;*
> *La bocca piccioletta e colorita,*
> *Vermiglia come rosa di giardino,*
> *Piagente ed amorosa per basciare:*
> *E be·llo saccio, ch'io l'agio provato*
> *Una fiata, vostra gran mercede.*
> *Ma quella mi fu (la) lancia di Pelus,*
> *Ch'avea tal vertù(de) nel suo ferire,*
> *Ch'al primo colpo dava pene e morte*
> *E[d] al secondo vita ed allegrezza:*
> *Così mi diè(de) quel bascio mal di morte,*
> *Ma sse n'avesse un altro ben guerira.*[60]

Here the verb *saettare* ('shoot with arrows') and the term *saetta* ('arrow'), both pertaining to the semantic field of the wound, refer to the eyes emanating poison of the woman-basilisk, and to her brown, arched eyebrows (*i cigli bruni e sottili avolti in forma d'arco*). The basilisk would of course be able to shoot poison even without a bow and arrow, but this is doubled by the image of the eyebrows as bows.

In the Middle Ages the faculty of the *imaginatio*[61] is conceived as a sort of "treasure or warehouse" of perceptions coming from the five senses, or as a "re-

60 *Mare Amoroso*, vv. 90–108, in Vuolo (1962, 276–277). ('Because your hair is more blonde than golden wires or yellow roses, and these are the ties that bind me; and the eyes, beautiful as the ones of the falcon, but in truth they are the eyes of a snake, that shoots poison; and the eyebrows – dark, thin, in the form of an arch – strike my heart like arrows; and the mouth, little and coloured, red as a garden rose, beautiful and lovely to be kissed. And I know it very well, as I have tried it once, by your mercy! But this kiss was for me like the lance of Peleus, that had such power in wounding: the first wound gave suffering and death, the second one life and joy. In a similar way, the first kiss gave to me a deadly malady – but if I could have another one, I will be healed for sure').

61 For the section that follows on the faculty of *imaginatio* see already Gubbini (2017a).

pository" of sensory forms.[62] It is believed that its physical location can be identified in the anterior ventricle of the brain. Imagination is therefore crucially linked to the five senses, since it presides over the transformation of sensory perceptions into intellectual knowledge. *Imaginatio* is also called *vis formalis*, for example in the treatise *De anima* by Avicenna, and has therefore the power to create "forms':[63] these forms are mental images, the so-called *phantasmata.*[64] In medieval literary production the *phantasmata* are at the centre of the love narrative: the mental image of the desired person "installs" itself in the imaginative space of the lover, activates an obsessive *cogitatio* and therefore the birth of love, up to its pathological form, the *aegritudo amoris.* Medieval lyrical discourse is strongly characterized by this "evanescent" dimension of the relationship with the object of desire, although depicted and coveted with sensory eyes – in a unitary conception of body and spirit.[65] This process was effectively summarized by Andrew the Chaplain in his *De amore*, above all in the famous quotation "Amor est passio quaedam innata procedens ex visione et immoderata cogitatione *formae* alterius sexus".[66] It is interesting that the term used in this passage to indicate the object of the *immoderata cogitatio* is the Latin word *forma*, that, together with the simple meaning "beauty", could also be interpreted as the specific "product" of the imagination – also called, as we have already seen, "vis *formalis*".

The effect of love's wound through the eyes is therefore the "penetration" of the image of the beloved and its firm "installation" in the mental space of the lover. The "love-imprint" – as it has been defined by the previous secondary literature[67] – is a useful concept in order to explain this dynamic between eyes, memory and the birth of love. In fact, the images perceived by the eyes impress themselves in the memory; the *immoderata cogitatio* on the beautiful image perceived and preserved in the mental space arouses the birth of love. Love's wound through the eyes is, therefore, closely connected in medieval poetry to the role played by the *imaginatio* – and to its fatal consequences for the enunciating subject of the lyrical discourse.

62 On the medieval imagination see Harvey (1975); Fattori/Bianchi (1988); Carruthers (2008); Karnes (2011).

63 See Harvey (1975, 44).

64 On the *phantasma* in medieval philosophy see Brenet (2006); in medieval Latin literature, see Oldoni (2008); in Troubadour poetry, see Pasero (2016).

65 See the recent collected volume, Gubbini (2020a).

66 See Ruffini (1980); Wack (1986).

67 See Singer (2011, in particular 23–53).

One of the consequences of this dynamic is the fact that the beloved's features are "engraved" in the heart. Love chisels and carves the beautiful features (*avinenz faissos*) of the loved one in a poem by Giraut de Borneil:

> Qe, cal qe part m'estei,
> Vas l'Amor non vanei,
> Qe·m soiorn'e·m trebailla,
> Si·m *desboiss'e m'entailla*
> D'un adreg cors gingnos
> *Sas avinenz faissos.*[68]

And in a passage of the troubadour Sordello da Goito the features of the beloved are "carved in the heart with sharp edges':

> Dompna, al prim lans
> q'ieu vi.l gen cors de vos,
> *vostras faissos*
> *m'entaillet per semblans*
> *al cor, trenchans,*
> *Amors*, per q'ie.m sui datz
> a so qe.us platz
> fins, ferms a totz mos ans.[69]

The motif changes slightly in the development of the love poetry that follows soon after: for example, in the texts of the "Scuola Siciliana", we find a *canzonetta* of Giacomo da Lentini (*Meravigliosamente*, vv. 4–9), where the beloved's features are not "carved", but "depicted" in the heart of the lover. The stark cruelty of "engraving" the image of the beloved into the heart that we found in the texts of Giraut de Borneil and Sordello da Goito is replaced in the *canzonetta* by a courtlier idea – the painted image.

If love's wound arises from the gaze of the beloved, in the "phenomenology" of the *vulnus amoris* the role played by the eyes of the lyrical I is also crucial: it is in fact through them that the desired image penetrates, reaches the heart and, then, causes the malady of love. We will see in the next section that this "interplay" between the two gazes – that of the beloved that wounds and that of the lyrical I that

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68 Giraut de Borneil, *Qui chantar sol*, vv. 75–80, in Sharman (1989, 233–240). ('For, wherever I am, I do not make missteps towards Love, which refreshes me and torments me, when it chisels and carves the beautiful features and graceful figure of a cheerful, clever person').

69 Sordello da Goito, *Tant m'abellis lo terminis novels*, vv. 71–78, in Boni (1954, 62). ('My lady, since the first moment I saw this gentle body of yours, Love carved, cutting, your features in my heart – so that I am devoted to what you please, pure and persistent for all my years').

is wounded – will be developed to its highest poetic degree by Petrarch in his *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta.*

But, with some variations in the motif and to a lesser degree, this was already an important motif even before Petrarch – as some passages from a song of the trouvère Thibaut de Champagne will show. Thibaut begins his song *Li douz pensers et li douz sovenir* on the themes of memory and amorous thoughts: the poet is distant from his beloved – this is in fact very probably a crusade song, as has been pointed out – but he accepts his suffering, because amorous pain "ennobles" him. He regrets, nevertheless, his timidity and lack of courage. The beauty of his beloved has caused in his heart such a sore that he cannot be helped by his eyes, and he is not able to look at her as he desires:

> Dame, se je vos osasse proier
> mout me seroit ce cuit bien avenu,
> mais il n'a pas en moi tant de vertu
> que, devant vos, vos os bien avisier;
> ice me font et m'ocit et m'esmaie:
> *vostre beauté fet a mon cuer tel plaie*
> *que de mes eulz seul ne me puis aidier*
> *dou resgarder, dont je ai desirrier.*[70]

In this passage, however, the eyes are not mentioned as the place and the medium through which the agent causing the *vulnus amoris* "enters" and reaches the heart, but we do find an insistence on the "weakness" of the eyes of the lyrical I as a consequence of the intensity of the heart's sore. As we will see in the next section, the weakness of the eyes of the lyrical I will be recalled over and over again by Petrarch.

In the Italian medieval tradition, a very famous sonnet by Guido Cavalcanti mentions, right in its incipit, the eyes of the lyrical I as the "medium"[71] through

70 Thibaut de Champagne, *Li douz pensers et li douz sovenir*, vv. 17–24, edited by L. Barbieri, 2014, quoted at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/modernlanguages/research/french/crusades/texts/of/rs1469/#page1 [last access: Jan. 4th, 2022] (see English translation ibid.: "Lady, if I had dared to beseech you I think I might have been most fortunate, but there is in me not sufficient courage that I dare to look at you directly. This reduces me to nothing, kills and terrorises me; your beauty inflicts such a wound in my heart that my eyes are not enough to assist me in looking at you as I desire"). On Thibaut de Champagne, see Barbieri (2015, vol. 18, 199–223).

71 In another text of Guido Cavalcanti, *Io non pensava che lo cor giammai*, in Rea/Inglese (2011, 76–84), the eyes of the lyrical I are the medium through which the beloved's splendour penetrates. To verbalise this image, the poet uses the verb *ferire* ('to wound'): "Per gli occhi fere la sua claritate" (v. 23). The same text, some verses later, mentions a piercing arrow (*una saetta aguta*, v. 38), that comes from the beloved's sweet smile (*dolce riso*, v. 37).

which the image of the beloved enters and reaches the heart. The gentle eyes of the beloved possess a loving power, that is, the faculty to engender love. This loving power starts from the gentle eyes of the beloved and hits the lyrical I as an arrow:

> Voi che *per li occhi mi passaste 'l core*
> e destaste la mente che dormia,
> guardate a l'angosciosa vita mia,
> che sospirando la distrugge Amore.
>
> E' vèn *tagliando* di sì gran valore,
> che' deboletti spiriti van via:
> riman figura sol en segnoria
> e voce alquanta, che parla dolore.
>
> Questa vertù d'amor che m'a disfatto
> *da' vostr'occhi gentil*' presta si mosse:
> *un dardo mi gittò dentro dal fianco.*
>
> Sì giunse ritto *'l colpo al primo tratto*,
> che l'anima tremando si riscosse
> *veggendo morto 'l cor nel lato manco.*[72]

The semantic field of the *vulnus amoris* is present through the verb *passare* ('pierce'), *tagliare* ('to cut'), and the terms *dardo* ('arrow') and *colpo* ('blow'). The arrow comes from the amorous virtue of the gentle eyes of the beloved, an arrow that hits the side of the lyrical I (vv. 9–11: "Questa vertù d'amor che m'a disfatto/*da' vostr'occhi gentil*' presta si mosse:/*un dardo mi gittò dentro dal fianco*"). This side, as specified later in the sonnet, is the left one (lato manco), the place of the heart – a heart that is killed (*veggendo morto 'l cor nel lato manco*) by the arrow. The "passive-active" dynamic between the eyes of the beloved – in Cavalcanti's sonnet defined as gentle (*vostr'occhi gentil*'), but nevertheless wounding like arrows – and the eyes of the lyrical I, already strong especially in the passage by Pier della Vigna analysed above, will be further developed in Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, as we will see in the next section.

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72 Guido Cavalcanti, *Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core*, in Rea/Inglese (2011, 97–99). (See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/Cavalcanti.php#anchor_Toc161394219 [last access: Aug. 20th, 2023]: "You who reach my heart through the eyes/And wake my mind's dormant light,/Take notice of the anguish of my life,/That Love himself destroys with sighs,/And lays about him now so bravely/That my weakened spirits start to flee./Only the head remains of the target/And a fractured voice to tell of grief./This power of Love that has undone me/Came to me swiftly from your eyes./He hurled the dart that caused me pain./So fierce the blow arrived, and instantly,/Fearful the spirit shrank back in surprise/Seeing the heart within its left side slain").

In Cavalcanti's sonnet, the heart, as already highlighted in Chapter 1 of the present book, is the designated place of the wound of love: in *Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core* we find also the expression *lato manco* ('left side') to indicate the left side of the body where the heart has its location.

The same expression (*lato manco*) that we have found in Guido Cavalcanti's sonnet is used by Dante Alighieri in his song *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro* – a text commonly included in the group of his poems called *petrose*[73] – in order to verbalise the theme of love's wound. This is one of the most intense texts written by Dante: it is in fact a song in which we find the "rappresentazione con ogni mezzo e in ogni punto del tormento della passione",[74] as the excellent comment of Domenico de Robertis has highlighted. I would like to stress that it is not by chance that in a text deeply imbued with the idea of passion the *vulnus amoris* theme is highly present. The dynamic of love's wound in the song *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro* is a double one: the lyrical I is acutely wounded, and, in order to take revenge on the beloved, he wishes that she becomes wounded by love as well. The text describes a woman who coats and protects herself in stone, and who therefore can never be hit by arrows:

> e veste sua persona d'un diaspro
> tal che per lui, o perch'ella s'arretra,
> non esce di faretra
> *saetta* che già mai la colga ignuda.[75]

On the other hand, her own blows, dealt to others, are mortal, no one can protect himself from them – and this is especially true of the lyrical I:

> Ella *ancide*, e non val ch'uom si chiuda
> né si dilunghi da' *colpi mortali*
> che, com'avesser ali,
> giungono altrui e *spezzan ciascun'arme*,
> sì ch'io non so da lei né posso atarme.
> *Non truovo schermo ch'ella non mi spezzi*
> *né luogo che dal suo viso m'asconda.*[76]

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73 See the beautiful introduction to this text of De Robertis (2005, 3–5).

74 De Robertis (2005, 5).

75 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro,* vv. 5–8, in in De Robertis (2005, 6–7). (See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DanteRime.php#anchor_Toc365804596 [last access: Jan. 4th, 2022]: "who clothes herself all in adamant/so that by it, or her retreat,/never an arrow leaves the bow/that shall find her undefended").

76 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro*, vv. 9–15, in De Robertis (2005, 7). (See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DanteRime.php#anchor_

The lexicon employed insists on the semantic field of war, and the lady is described as a cruel enemy. Although the motif of love's wound from the eyes of the beloved is not explicitly stated, the poet affirms that he does not find a place to hide from her *viso* – a term that in medieval Italian has a double meaning: 'face', but also 'sight'. Love has overthrown (*percosso in terra*, v. 35) the poetic I and threatens him with the sword (*spada*, v. 36) that has already killed Dido:

> E' m'ha *percosso in terra* e stammi sopra
> con quella *spada* ond'elli uccise Dido.[77]

The wound struck by Love is then clearly mentioned at vv. 48–49, where there is also present a detail that contains what seems to be a quotation from Cavalcanti's sonnet *Voi che per li occhi mi passaste 'l core* – the reference to the *lato manco* ('left side', v. 48), the location of the heart:[78]

> *Egli mi fere sotto il lato manco*
> sì forte che 'l dolor nel cuor rimbalza.[79]

The wounded lyrical I subsequently invokes a wound for the cruel beloved as well: a wound that could split her heart in two:

> Così vedess'io lui *fender per mezzo*
> *il cuore a la crudele che 'l mio squatra.*[80]

Toc365804595 [last access: Aug. 20th, 2023]: "she kills, there's no use in hiding,/or fleeing from the mortal blow,/that, as if its flight was winged,/finds all and shatters every armour;/leaving no defence for me to make./No shield I find she cannot pierce,/nor place to hide from her features").

77 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro*, vv. 35–36, in De Robertis (2005, 10). (See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DanteRime.php#anchor_Toc365804595 [last access: Aug. 20th, 2023]: "Love felled me, and stands over me/clasping the sword that killed Dido").

78 See in this sense the commentary by De Robertis (2005, 12). This excellent commentary at this point stresses that the expression *sotto il lato manco* has to be understood as 'nel profondo' ('deep inside') and not as an anatomical location. On this point, I disagree slightly: in fact, I think that precisely because of the anatomical location (the left side, that is to say where the heart has its seat) we can then add and stratify a second level of meaning, that is – and here I totally agree with De Robertis – 'nel profondo' ('deep inside').

79 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro*, vv. 48–49, in De Robertis (2005, 12). ('He wounds me so fiercely under my left side that the pain bounces in my heart').

80 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro*, vv. 53–54, in De Robertis (2005, 13). See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DanteRime.php#anchor_Toc365804595 [Aug. 20th, 2023]: "Oh if I might see him strike the heart/of that most cruel one who shatters mine!").

This invocation is then repeated with variation at the end of the song, where the poet asks the song itself to hit the beloved's heart with an arrow:

> e *dàlle per lo cor d'una saetta,*
> ché bello onor s'acquista in far vendetta.[81]

As has been skilfully pointed out, "Il fine della canzone è pratico: disegnare, raffigurare, di contro alla propria, la sconfitta (il cedimento) della donna: di cui la canzone stessa è l'esecutrice".[82] In order to achieve this goal, Dante employs the motif of love's wound in a double direction: he complains of his wound struck by Love, surrounding this theme with other images and metaphors pertaining to suffering, and asks therefore the song itself to wound the cruel beloved in the heart with an arrow. This canzone, strongly built on the image of the beloved as a cruel enemy and on the semantic field of war, presents at its end a constellation that could be synthetised like this: the beloved and Love in combat with the poet and his song.

We have so far followed the process of inflicting the wound of love starting from the eyes of the beloved and through the eyes of the lyrical I to the latter's heart. But in Troubadour poetry the motif of love's wound presents yet another key type: the *vulnus amoris* through the kiss. The progression built by the transition from the most "visual" element – the eyes – to the most "tactile" and bodily one – the mouth – allow us to understand the presence in Troubadour poetry of different "degrees" of intimacy between the lover and the beloved, fantasised and verbalised in the different texts and from different authors of this rich literary tradition – too often instead still regarded as "uniform". Before analysing the texts in Langue d'oc, I would like to recall the presence of a slightly different, but nevertheless intimately connected theme in medieval Latin love poetry – that is to say the "classical" topos of the kiss as a "remedy" to love's suffering, as we can read in a beautiful passage from the *Carmina Burana:*

> *amare*
> *crucior,*
> *morior*
> *vulnere, quo glorior.*
> eia, si me *sanare*

81 Dante Alighieri, *Così nel mio parlar vogli' esser aspro*, vv. 82–83, in De Robertis (2005, 17). (See English translation at https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DanteRime.php#anchor_Toc365804595 [last access: Aug. 20th, 2023]: "and strike her with an arrow to the heart:/for great honour is acquired by revenge").

82 This is a quotation from the commentary of De Robertis (2005, 17) to the song.

uno vellet *osculo*,
que cor *felici iaculo*
gaudet vulnerare![83]

Coming back to Langue d'oc lyric tradition, it is important to highlight that it is especially Bernart de Ventadorn – perhaps the most important author of the "classical" period of Troubadour poetry – who builds a rich imagery on the idea of love's wound through a kiss: after him, different Troubadours would follow his model.[84]

For example, in the text *Can par la flors josta.l vert folh*, we have the image of the mortal wound that reaches the heart through the mouth – thanks to a sweet kiss:

domna, per cui chan e demor,
per la bocha.m.feretz al cor
d'un doutz baizar de fin'amor coral,
que.m torn en joi e.m.get d'ira mortal![85]

The "paradoxical" nature of courtly love finds in the motif of the *vulnus amoris* through the kiss its perfect representation. This dimension is strongly represented by a further development of the *vulnus amoris* through a kiss: the metaphor of the "two kisses, the first wounds and the second heals". It is again Bernart de Ventadorn who in fact introduces such a metaphor in Troubadour poetry:

Anc sa bela *bocha* rizens
non cuidei, *baizan* me traïs,
car ab un *doutz baizar* m'*aucis*,
si ab autre no m'es guirens;
c'atretal m'es per semblansa
com de *Pelaüs la lansa*,
que del *seu colp* no podi' om *garir*,
si autra vetz no s'en fezes ferir.[86]

83 *Estas in exilium*, *Carmina Burana*, 69, in Hilka/Schumann/Bischoff (1930–1970). ('I suffer bitterly, I die for a wound in which I glory. Alas! if only she would heal me with a kiss, she who enjoys to wound my heart with a cheerful dart!').

84 See Gubbini (2009, 225–234).

85 Bernart de Ventadorn, *Can par la flors josta.l vert folh*, vv. 29–32, in Appel (1915, 232). ('Lady, for whom I sing and wait, through the mouth you have wounded me with a kiss of pure, sincere love, that makes me joyful and and casts me free from mortal pain!').

86 Bernart de Ventadorn, *Ab joi mou lo vers e.l comens*, vv. 41–48, in Appel (1915, 1–10). ("I never thought her beautiful, laughing mouth would betray me with a kiss, yet with a sweet kiss she slays me, unless she revives me with another. Her kiss, I think, is like the lance of Peleus, from whose

Here the reference to the lance of Peleus is derived from Ovid, *Remedium Amoris*; it represents the "Pelian spear which once inflicted a wound on its enemy, bore relief to the wound". [87] This image is however adapted for the first time to the image of the kiss that wounds and heals by Bernart de Ventadorn, and, after him, it will be reused in Langue d'oïl and medieval Italian poetry. One example from medieval Italy is the long and dense passage from the *Mare amoroso* we have already quoted and which, similarly to the quotation of Bernart de Ventadorn, contains an explicit reference to the lance of Peleus.

So far we have seen the central position that the metaphorical model of *vulnus amoris* has in medieval Romance lyric poetry. In particular, two special subsets of the motif of love's wound are crucial for poetic production: the first is the wound caused by the eyes of the beloved and through the eyes of the lyrical I; the second is the wound struck by the beloved's kiss. An important consideration must be added at the end of this section and before dealing with Petrarch, in order to understand the evolution of the theme in time and through different poetic traditions as well as the trend of Italian lyric poetry before Petrarch. Where the first variant, that is to say, the wound caused by the eyes of the beloved through the eyes of the lyrical I, will be used and developed over centuries and experience countless variations in the passage from Troubadours to Trouvères to ancient Italian poets, the latter – the wound made by the kiss of the beloved – will experience a progressive decrease in lyric production from the Troubadours to Petrarch. This development is to be connected to the gradual decline over the centuries of the physical dimension in the description of the beloved and of her interaction, so to speak, with the lyrical I. This trend, which is traced in several chapters of this book, is partially overturned by Petrarch – but not with regard to the metaphor of the wound through a kiss. Petrarch evokes, but at the same time problematizes the physical nature of passion against the religious idealizing of the poets of the Dolce Stil Novo, but it is precisely for this reason that there is little room for kissing in his poetry.

thrust a man could not be cured unless he were wounded by it once again", English translation quoted from Nichols/Galm/Giamatti (1962, 43).

87 Sayce (2008, 146).

2.3 The Birth of Passion: Petrarch, *Era 'l giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro*

The theme of the wound caused by the eyes of the beloved and mediated through the eyes of the poetic I receives novel, extensive attention in the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta.* I will analyse this motif in the beautiful sonnet of Petrarch *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro* (*RVF* 3) – a crucial text for the entire conception and structure of the *Canzoniere:*[88]

Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro
per la pietà del suo Factore i rai,
quando i' fui preso, et non me ne guardai,
ché i be' vostr'occhi, donna, mi legaro.

Tempo non mi parea da far riparo
contra' *colpi* d'Amor: però m'andai
secur, senza sospetto; onde i miei guai
nel commune dolor s'incominciaro.

Trovòmmi Amor del tutto disarmato,
et *aperta la via per li occhi al core,*
che di lagrime son fatti uscio et varco:

però, al mio parer, non li fu honore
ferir me de saetta in quello stato,
a voi armata non mostrar pur l'*arco.*[89]

In order to contextualise the presence of the *vulnus amoris* in this sonnet in the broader frame of the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, it is important to note that the theme of love's wound acquires a new life with Petrarch, as it becomes a key part of the structural, insolvable and modern contradiction of the author's "double self" – as he himself pointed out, reflecting on his own self in a letter (*Fa-*

88 See Friedrich (1964, 217–219).

89 Francesco Petrarca, *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro*, *RVF* 3 in Santagata (2004). ("It was on that day when the sun's ray / was darkened in pity for its Maker, / that I was captured, and did not defend myself, / because your lovely eyes had bound me, Lady. / It did not seem to me to be a time to guard myself / against Love's blows: so I went on / confident, unsuspecting; from that, my troubles / started, amongst the public sorrows. / Love discovered me all weaponless, / and opened the way to the heart through the eyes, / which are made the passageways and doors of tears: / so that it seems to me it does him little honor / to wound me with his arrow, in that state, / he is not showing his bow at all to you who are armed". English translation from the following website: https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/Petrarch.php#anchor_Toc13045772) [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

miliares, IV, 1).[90] Moreover, the "new" life of *vulnus amoris* in the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* is nourished with ancient blood, that of Christ's Passion: in fact, Good Friday, the day of Christ's Passion, is the day when Petrarch first sees Laura and when, therefore, the first arrow opens his wound of love. The *tenebrae* of compassion and mourning in the mysticism of Good Friday[91] connected to the *Passio Christi* make possible the *vulnus amoris* and, therefore, the birth of profane passion; they become the darkness of sin. The rays of the sun are darkened in pity of Christ, and the eyes of Laura – very often called "rai" ('rays') in the texts of the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, as the commentaries to this poem have highlighted – "capture" and "bind" the lyrical subject. This text presents in a wonderful, captivating way a supreme synthesis of Classical and Medieval, of profane and sacred images. The wound of love is here described as the result of a shot from a bow and arrow, that is to say with a representation of Love or *Amor* that has an Ovidian flair. However, this Classical image is here totally transformed – thanks to the Christian background with which the text is "imbued". The wound is made through the eyes of the lyrical I ("et *aperta la via per li occhi al core*"). This is a crucial element, as the eyes and, more broadly, the senses are, according to the Patristic tradition, the doors through which the vices enter, as the memorable and well-known passage of Saint Jerome declares:

> Per *quinque sensus* quasi per quasdam *fenestras*, *vitiorum ad animam introitus est.*[92]

The *corpus patiens* of the lyrical I endures the *vulnus* of the beautiful "arrow-eyes" of Laura:[93] Petrarch develops at its highest degree the double "passive-active" dynamic between the eyes of the beloved, and the eyes of the lyrical I. In such a "passive-active" dynamic of the eyes and of the gazes, the image of the passive, wounded eyes of the lover is, in itself, a perfect representation of Petrarch's poetry. In Petrarch, the topical image of the beautiful eyes of the woman as arrows finds in fact a specular counterpart in the wounded eyes of the poet, repeatedly repre-

90 For the considerations that follow see already Gubbini (2019a).

91 See Kablitz (2014).

92 Hieronymus, *Adversus Jovinianum*, II, 8, *PL*, 23, 310 – 311. ('Through five senses, as through a sort of windows, the vices find their entrance into the soul').

93 The image of the "arrow-eyes" of Laura has a wonderful pictorial representation in the incunabulum Queriniano G.V. 15, fol. 33v, for *RVF* 86 e 87, as we will see later in this book. On this incunabulum see Mehltretter (2009, in particular 53).

sented in the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* as a real *corpus patiens.*[94] The *corpus patiens* of the lyrical I and, most of all, his eyes – the fragile organ over and over again recalled in the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* – cannot fight and resist the *vulnus* and the assault of Laura's beautiful eyes.

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, the image of the eyes or the gazes of the woman as arrows (or as arrow slits and crenels) that cause the wound of the poet and engender the birth of passion was used earlier in Troubadour poetry. The "passive-active" dynamic between the eyes of the beloved, and the eyes of the lyrical I was already present, for example, in the texts analysed by Pier della Vigna and Guido Cavalcanti. But in Petrarch's sonnet *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro*, this metaphor and its dynamic acquire a solemnity, and a "cosmic" resonance and weight that were not present in the previous tradition. This is done precisely through the intimate connection that Petrarch establishes between his special and "private" circumstance and the religious and solemn event of the *Passio Christi.* What was in the previous lyrical tradition a personal mistake or oversight of the single man/lyrical I, is in the *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* connected to a higher issue: the weakness of human beings towards sin and therefore the necessity of the redemption through Christ's passion.

This turning point is achieved by Petrarch following the example of Dante Alighieri and, as has been beautifully highlighted, Dante's "revaluation of the role of the author (…) ascribed to divine election, to an exceptional vocation. It is this eccentric position of the "poetic I", claiming a privileged insight, that we will rediscover in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* from the very beginning".[95]

2.4 Conclusions

This *parcours* shows first of all the richness and productivity of the *vulnus amoris* theme for the medieval Romance love lyric, and its *longue durée* through the centuries. In the first section, I start my analysis from the poem of Raimbaut d'Aurenga *Un vers farai de tal mena*, which presents an attestation of the wound where the bodily element is very intense. The model for this corporeal presence of the *vulnus amoris* can be found in the corpus of Jaufre Rudel, who insists twice in his poems in particular on the *ponha d'amor* ('sting of love') and on the "pain that heals with joy stinging more than a thorn". I establish, in turn, the possible model of Jaufre

94 The concept of love in the *Canzoniere* is in fact "modeled, at least to a certain extent, after the theory of love developed within the medical discourse of that age, which became known under the name of hereos" (Küpper 2018b, 91–92).

95 Kablitz (2014, quotation at 116).

Rudel's *ponha d'amor* in the concept of *compunctio amoris* as it was developed in particular by Gregory the Great to indicate the action of God that stings us in order to wake up our attention, distracted as we are by earthly goods, to his love. Jaufre Rudel uses this image and turns it into profane love: the layering of the references to the mystical wound and of the bodily dimension of the *vulnus amoris* create a unique result – the sensorial yet abstract image of the beloved of the *amor de lonh.*

This fundamental moment of the poetic history of the *vulnus amoris*, that of Jaufre Rudel, will strongly influence some passages of the poetry of Raimbaut d'Aurenga, at both a lexical and a conceptual level.

The second section examines the evolution and the transformations of the love's wound complex in three lyrical traditions: Langue d'oc, Langue d'oïl and medieval Italian. Among the rich imagery connected to the *vulnus amoris* in lyric poetry, the analysis focuses in particular on the amorous wound caused by the gaze and by the kiss of the beloved. The transformations of these two subsets of love's wound are detailed in this section. In particular, it seems important to highlight that in the passage from the Troubadours to medieval Italian poetry, the subset of the *vulnus amoris* through the kiss of the beloved – a central motif for Troubadour lyric – is drastically reduced until it almost disappears.

On the other hand, the subset of the wound caused by the gaze of the beloved, already fundamental for the Troubadours and very important for the Trouvères, develops further, intensifying in particular the specular dimension of the gazes: that of the beloved, agent of the wound, and that of the lyrical I, who is wounded.

The "passive-active" dynamic between the eyes of the beloved and those of the lyrical I, already strong for example in the poets of the "Scuola Siciliana" – such as in Pier della Vigna – or in Guido Cavalcanti, will be developed to its maximum degree in Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, to which the last section of the chapter is dedicated. With Petrarch, the concept of love reverts to its sensual origins (albeit in a negative mode), but without losing the complexity conferred upon it by medieval Christian thought.

In particular, it is shown that the "passive-active" dynamic between the eyes of the beloved and those of the lyrical I is fundamental in the sonnet *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro* (*RVF* 3), where it is used to represent the first encounter with Laura and the birth of passion on the day of Christ's Passion: Good Friday. The religious implications of this constellation, however, are no longer developed in the sense of an unbroken analogy between sacred and profane love; instead, they underline the disruptions of the modern subject.

3 “Amours est plaie dedenz cors / e si ne piert nïent defors”: Marie de France, Blondel de Nesle and the Occitan Romance *Flamenca*

3.1 Marie de France

The *Lais* of Marie de France constitute a small, but dense corpus of narrative texts in verse, dealing with stories of Celtic origin and therefore characterised by the strong presence of an enchanted fairy dimension. Marie de France is one of the most important writers of the Middle Ages, and the first female author of medieval French literature.[1] Her identification is still uncertain despite the captivating hypotheses that have been made on this topic. Marie, in fact, has been identified by scholars with different historical figures: with Marie de Champagne, daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and the king of France, and then with the abbess of Shaftesbury;[2] with Marie de Meulan;[3] with Marie de Boulogne[4] and with the abbess of Barking, sister of Thomas Becket.[5] What seems certain today is that she lived in England and knew the Plantagenet court.[6] The dedication to a ‘noble king” (“nobles reis”) that Marie places in the Prologue of her *Lais* refers to Henry II. She was certainly linked to the Plantagenets.[7] The *Lais* are short, beautiful verse narratives, which stage a universe of love and adventure, where the miraculous – fairies and a timeless world of eternal youth and spells, all typical elements of the Celtic tradition – intertwine closely with reality.[8]

The theme of *vulnus amoris* in the *Lais* of Marie de France is intimately connected to the miraculous and the “merveilleux”, because love’s wound, as we will see, is one of the ways in which the fairy dimension appears in some of these texts.

1 On Marie de France in general, her works and her connections with the Plantagenet milieu see at least: Walter (2018a; 2018b); Koble/Séguy (2011).

2 See Walter (2018b, 1103).

3 Pontfarcy (1995).

4 Knapton (1978).

5 Rossi (2009).

6 A reading of the *Lais* that values the importance of the “effect of the language upon meeting” is to be found in Bloch (2003, 11).

7 See Walter (2018b, 1104).

8 On the *merveilleux*, fundamental for medieval French literature, see at least Gingras (2015); Dubost (2016).

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In the *Lais* of Marie de France, the theme has an important presence. In particular, in the *Lai* of *Guigemar*, to which I will come back in detail in the following section, and in the *Lai* of *Yonec*, which I will analyse in detail in another chapter of this book,[9] the theme assumes a structural role. In another *lai*, *Équitan*, the theme is nevertheless present and plays an important role in the narrative of the text, although it does not have the same “structural” function that it has in *Yonec* and, even more so, in *Guigemar*.

As we will need to analyse the *lai* of *Équitan* in some detail, it will be useful to summarise its plot here. A king named Équitan has a loyal seneschal, who is married to a wonderful woman: the king has never seen her, but has heard her praises. As the topos of love *per audita* predicts, Équitan falls in love without knowing her and goes to the land of his seneschal for this reason. The king, sick for love, manages to convince and win over the beautiful woman, and they become lovers. Thanks to discretion and subterfuges, the two protagonists are not unmasked until much later. The nobles at court begin to complain to the king and demand that he marry and generate an heir. The woman, hearing these rumours, is worried, and fears being abandoned by her lover who must marry another woman. Équitan, who is deeply in love with his lady, reassures her, saying that he will not marry anyone else, and that if her husband were to die, they would be able to marry. The two lovers then plan the death of the seneschal: the king will go hunting in the land of the seneschal and his wife. He will lodge in the seneschal’s castle where after hunting, he and the seneschal will rest, be cured of their wounds and, after three days, will have a bath in two different basins in the same room. The basin intended for the seneschal will have boiling water, so that the man will die immediately. The plan is ready, the basins as well, and before the bath, the seneschal leaves the castle for a short time. The two lovers begin to make love in the room in the bed of the seneschal, who then suddenly comes back to the castle and discovers them. The king feels ashamed, and in order to cover his genitals, goes into the boiling water by mistake and dies. The seneschal puts his wife into the boiling water as well, and she dies, too.

In the *lai* of *Équitan*, the passage on love’s wound appears near the beginning of the plot, at vv. 54–57:

> Amurs l’ad mis a sa maisnie.
> *Une seete ad vers li traite,*

9 In Chapter 5, to be precise.

Que mut grant plaie li ad faite.
El quor li ad lancie e mise.[10]

We have here the Ovidian topos of the arrow (*seete*) that *Amor* shoots to the heart of the "victim". The amorous strike in fact follows the apparition and the first encounter with the beloved, perfect in every aspect, as the texts declares:

Mut la trova curteise e sage,
Bele de cors e de visage,
De bel semblant e enveisie.[11]

This short description of the lady comes after a longer one, present some verses before, and depicted following the topos of the *descriptio puellae:*

La dame ert bele durement
E de mut bon affeitement.
Gent cors out e bele faiture;
En li former muat Nature;
Les oilz out veirs e bel le vis,
Bele buche, neis bien asis.
El rëaume ne out sa per.[12]

The motif of the *descriptio puellae* is openly "prescribed" by the medieval treatises of rhetoric, for example, by the *Ars versificatoria* of Matthew of Vendôme: "si agatur de amoris efficacia, quomodo scilicet Jupiter Parasis amore exarserit, praelibanda est puellae descriptio et assignanda puellaris pulchritudinis elegantia, ut, audito speculo pulchritudinis, verisimile sit et quasi conjecturale auditori Jovis medullas tot et tantis insudasse deliciis. Praecipua enim debuit esse affluentia pulchritudinis quae Jovem impulit ad vitium corruptionis".[13] The presence of the *de-*

10 Marie de France, *Équitan*, vv. 54–57, Walter (2018a, 50–65). ('Love put him under his thumb; he shot an arrow at him which made him a deep wound: it is the heart which, aimed, was hit').
11 Ibid., vv. 51–54. ('he finds her very courteous and sensible, beautiful in body and face with a pleasant and cheerful air').
12 Ibid., vv. 31–37. ('the lady was of great beauty and perfect distinction. Her elegant body had noble appearance and nature had brought variety to her creation: she had iridescent eyes and a beautiful face, a beautiful mouth, a well-formed nose. She had no equal in the kingdom').
13 I quote from Faral (1924, 118–119). (See English translation in Galyon 1980, 34: "if one writes about the power of love – how for example, Jupiter burned with love for Callisto – then the audience ought to be given a foretaste of such exquisite feminine beauty, so that having a picture of such beauty in their minds, they would find it reasonably believable that a heart as great as Jupit-

scriptio puellae seems therefore essential[14] in order to explain – and maybe justify? – the “deviation” of the hero of the story: we can better understand the protagonist falling in love and becoming a victim of folly for it, if we can visualise, so to speak, the cause of such an erotic inflammation (as the passage of Matthew of Vendôme specifies: “quomodo scilicet Jupiter Parasis amore *exarserit*”).

In fact, already at the beginning, the text is put under the sign of the excess, the lack of *mesure*, that is a characteristic of love – a characteristic that, if not managed with intelligence and the knowledge of the laws of love, puts life in danger, as vv. 17–20 clearly state:

> Cil metent lur vie en nuncure
> Que d’amur n’unt sen e *mesure.*
> Tels est la mesure d’amer
> Que nul n’i deit reisun garder.[15]

“Causa diligendi Deum, Deus est; modus, sine modo diligere”:[16] loving God requires as a measure to love him with no measure, declares Bernard of Clairvaux with his typical ardent speech. Such a characteristic of mystical love becomes a problem when “transferred” to profane love, and, therefore, the discussion on “measure vs. lack of measure” in love becomes a key problem in medieval Romance literatures. We can quote the case of troubadour poetry, where this topic was controversial in the same years in which Marie wrote her *Lais:* some Troubadours in fact were strongly in favour of *mezura*, where others, such as one of the greatest representatives of this lyrical tradition, Bernart de Ventadorn, strongly denied that the *fin’amors* can be characterised by such temperance[17]. In the following develop-

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er’s could be heated up over the charms of a mere mortal. For it ought to be made clear what a wealth of charms it was that drove Jupiter to so vile an act”).

14 I employ here some considerations already developed in Gubbini (2009, 265).

15 Marie de France, *Équitan*, vv. 17–20, Walter (2018a). (‘It is really wasting his own life to have neither intelligence nor measure in love like him. Because such is the measure of love that no one should keep reason’).

16 Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo*, I, 1, *PL* (‘the cause of loving God is God himself; the measure, is to love without measure’). This reference is quoted and analysed in relationship with this passage of Marie de France already by Burgess (1987, 35–49) and in the commentary of Koble/Séguy (2011b, 243).

17 As highlighted by Paterson (1999, quotation at 35): “*Mezura* is self-discipline, the ability to moderate one’s passions with rational control, to avoid extremes or anything that contravenes courtly behaviour. A key element of the troubadours’ courtly ethos as a whole, and very different from the Tristan myth with its notion of overwhelming fatality, it is nevertheless the subject of troubadour polemic, since some, such as Bernart de Ventadorn, claim that it is impossible to retain *mezura* in love”.

ment of Romance medieval poetry, it is possible to find a clear statement on the intimate connection between true love and lack of measure at the origins of Italian Medieval poetry in an excellent representative of the "Scuola Siciliana", Guido delle Colonne, who in his beautiful canzone *Amor, che lungiamente m'hai menato*, vv. 53–55, openly declares:

> Amor fa disvïare li più saggi:[18]
> *e chi più ama men' ha in sé misura*,
> più folle è quello che più s'innamora.[19]

In fact, in Marie de France's text *Équitan*, the declaration of the difficulty, for the one who is in love and does not know its "laws", to keep reason and measure is then repeated and coherently supported in the *lai* by other elements insisting on the "excess" of love and its consequences, such as the references to the vocabulary of malady, turmoil, anguish and thoughtfulness:

> *N'i ad mestier sens ne cointise.*
> Pur la dame l'ad si suspris,
> Tuz en est *murnes* et *pensis.*
> Or l'i estut del tut entendre,

18 This reference to "li più saggi" ('the wisest') is also a topos of medieval Romance literature. The already Virgilian "omnia vincit amor" finds its perfect embodiment in the theme of the "wise man" defeated by the strength of love: in this sense, highly representative is Henri de Valenciennes' *Lai d'Aristote*, where the wisest and most knowing man, Aristotle, is completely subjugated by the power of desire – and where, therefore, the lack of measure and self-restraint in true love even forms the *fil rouge* of the plot. Aristotle has scolded his pupil, Alexander the Great, for forgetting his obligations because of his love for the blond Phyllis. Alexander unwillingly obeys his master and for some time refrains from meeting his beloved, but after a while, he cannot resist, meets Phyllis and tells her the whole story. Phyllis decides to take revenge on Aristotle: lightly dressed and half naked, she begins to sing on the green meadow in front of the window of the room where the old, wise man was studying. She begins to sing courtly love songs, pretending not to know that Aristotle was looking at her. The old man burns with desire for the blond woman, and he asks her to satisfy him. She declares that before giving him what he craves, she asks for one thing: Phyllis wants Aristotle to be on all fours, and to wear on his back a saddle, and she wants to ride him. Aristotle, burning with desire, consents, and in this way, with the young woman riding on his back, he is seen by Alexander, who does not miss the occasion to highlight how the old master has condemned him for his passion for Phyllis, while now the same Aristotle is behaving like a beast because of his desire for the same beautiful woman. The *lai* ends with the warning that no one may blame others for being amorous, because Love has power and command over every one: "Qu'Amors a pooir et commanz / Par deseur toz et deseur toutes" (Henri de Valenciennes, *Aristote*, vv. 459–460, Ueltschi (2018, 686)).

19 Contini (1994, vol. 1, 1, 106). ('Love leads astray the wisest, and who loves more, has less measure, the more one falls in love, the more one becomes a fool').

Ne se purrat nïent defendre.
La nuit ne dort ne ne respose,
Mes si memes blasme e chose:
“Allas, fet il, queil destinee
M’amenat en ceste cuntree?
Pur ceste dame qu’ai veüe
M’est une anguisse al quor ferue
Que tut le cors me fet trembler.
Jeo quit que mei l’estuet amer”[20]

Li reis *veilla* tant que jur fu;
A grant peine ad atendu.
Il est levez, si vet chacier;
Mes tost se mist el repeirer
E dit che mut est *deshaitiez.*
El chambre vet, si s’est cuchiez.
Dolent en est li senescaus.
Il ne seit pas queils est li maus
De quei li reis sent les friçuns;
Sa femme en est dreit acheisuns.[21]

Pensiveness (v. 60: “murnes et pensis”), turmoil (v. 63: “La nuit ne dort ne ne response”), and anguish (v. 68: “anguisse”) cause a malady that is not only metaphorical, but that has bodily consequences: the anguish agitates the king’s entire body with shivers (*trembler*; *friçuns*), as the text repeats twice in the quoted verses (vv. 68–69: “M’est une anguisse al quor ferue, / Ki tut le cors me fet *trembler*”; vv. 108–109: “Il ne seit pas queils est li maus / De quei li reis sent les *friçuns*”).

Even the fictional excuse that the two lovers find in order to meet in secret is closely linked to the semantic field of malady. It is in fact important to highlight the presence in the text of the motif of blood-letting, or phlebotomy (*seigner*):

Lung tens durrat lur drüerie,
Que ne fu pas de gent oïe.
As termes de lur assembler,

20 Marie de France, *Équitan*, vv. 58–70, in Walter (2018a, 50–65). (‘Wisdom and experience are useless: because of the lady, love has captivated him so much that he becomes mournful and thoughtful. Now he must submit to it completely without being able to free himself. At night, he finds neither sleep nor rest but he only accuses himself: ‘Alas! What fate brought me to this country! The sight of this lady plunged my heart into an anguish which agitates all my body with shivers. I think I just have to love her’”).

21 Ibid., vv. 101–110. (‘The king stayed awake until dawn, which he painfully awaited. He got up and went hunting, but he soon took the way back, saying he was very tired. He goes to his room and goes to bed. The seneschal is very sad. He does not know what is this malady which causes the king to shiver; yet it is his wife who is at the origin of everything’).

Quant ensemble durent parler,
Li reis feseit dire a sa gent
Que seignez iert priveement.
Les us des chambres furent clos;
Ne troveissez humme si os
Si li rei pur lui n'enveaist,
Ja une feiz dedenz entrast.[22]

In the Middle Ages, phlebotomy was recommended to cure all sorts of excesses in the blood. We can recall that, for example, already in the *Problems* attributed to Aristotle (such as in the very famous pseudo-Aristotelian *Problem* XXX, 1),[23] the overabundance of pneuma in the blood was supposed to engender immoderate sexual desires and then melancholy.[24] In the practice of medieval medicine, phlebotomy was therefore practiced to purge the blood of its excesses. Why does this passage of *Équitan* insert this element of blood-letting into the plot? It is of course mainly used here as a narrative device, as an "excuse" for the two lovers to be alone in a room without being accused of adultery,[25] but might we also find a thematic connection between the excess of love that characterises the two lovers and the excesses in the blood cured by phlebotomy?[26]

Such an analysis of the topos of the *vulnus amoris* in the *Équitan* seems to highlight that, even if in this text the presence of the theme insists on the well-known Ovidian metaphor of love's arrow, and even if the theme does not play the structural and crucial role that it has, for example, in the *lai de Guigemar*, which we will examine in detail in the next section, the metaphor of love's wound nevertheless has a special function in this narrative: it represents the "triggering" of the plot, and it is thematically strongly connected to what will follow in the intrigue. From the Ovidian metaphor of love's arrow, which causes a large sore in the heart, mentioned at the beginning of the *lai* (vv. 55–57: "Une *seete* ad vers li traite, / Que mut grant *plaie* li ad faite. / *El quor li ad lancie e mise*"), to this passage

22 Ibid., vv. 185–194 ('Their affair lasted a long time without anyone hearing about it. When the time was set for their meeting, when they were having encounters, the king made his people say that he had to undergo a bloodletting in private. The doors of the rooms were then closed and you could not have found a man bold enough who could penetrate in one way or another, unless the king had summoned him').

23 In this regard see Klibanski/Panofsky/Saxl (1979, 15–41).

24 I have worked on this topic in the contribution Gubbini (2020b).

25 This is an element present also in the *Folie d'Oxford* – one of the two anonymous verse texts named *Folies Tristan*: see Gubbini 2021b.

26 In this sense, it seems interesting to highlight that in a relatively short narrative text as this one – in total, 314 verses – the element of the phlebotomy is present three times, always in relationship with the king.

on blood-letting, to the dramatic death of the two protagonists, it is in fact a never-ending succession of excesses and lack of measure that characterises their love – a tragic love because it will finally be the cause of their death:

> Par lur anels s’entresaisirent,
> Lur fiaunce s’entreplevirent.
> Bien les tiendrent, *mut s’entramerent;*
> *Puis en mururent e finerent.*[27]

3.1.1 The *lai de Guigemar*

As I have anticipated, in the text *Guigemar* the theme of the *vulnus amoris* has not only a crucial role, but a structural function in the narrative.[28] First of all, it could be useful to summarise the content of this text. The protagonist, whose name is Guigemar, is a young man not interested in love. One day, while hunting, he hits and wounds a white doe: a fairy creature. The same arrow that hits the prey bounces back on him, and he is, in turn, wounded. The white doe, before dying, pronounces a curse: Guigemar will never heal from his wound until he finds a woman that will suffer for him and love him, and for whom he will suffer, and whom he will love passionately.

By chance, while he is wandering, he finds a ship at the shore about to depart. He enters, finds a wonderful bed inside and falls asleep. The ship, a magic self-propelled vessel, arrives at the capital of an ancient realm. This realm is ruled by an old man, married to a wonderful and young woman. The old king, jealous of his beautiful wife, keeps her locked and guarded at all times, but the place the woman is kept prisoner is near the sea. As the self-propelled ship arrives, the woman suddenly awakens. Her maid enters the ship, finds Guigemar sleeping and tells her queen, thinking, however, the pale knight to be dead. The queen takes his pulse and understands that he is alive. He awakens and the queen offers to heal his wound. In the healing process, the queen and Guigemar fall in love with each other. They both suffer for this mutual passion, as they do not reveal it to each other immediately. After a night during which both of them, separately, fail to get to sleep for unrelieved passion, and after some more hesitations, they are finally able to join each other.

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27 Marie de France, *Équitan*, vv. 181–184 (Walter 2018a, 58). At the end of the *lai* the text insists again on the excess of love: see vv. 312–314.

28 In this paragraph, I repurpose some observations already anticipated in Gubbini (2015).

For a year and a half, they love each other passionately and happily. But one day the queen has a premonition: their relationship will be discovered. Therefore, they make the vow to be faithful to each other and, in order to "seal" this vow, the woman ties Guigemar's shirt with an elaborated knot and he attaches his belt to her waist: she is the only one who can untie the knot, and he is the only one who can open her belt. They are discovered; Guigemar has to return to his country and they separate. In his country, Guigemar cannot find peace, as he longs for the queen. She does the same in her reclusion in a tower, until one day the door of her prison happens to be open. The queen goes to the shore to kill herself, but she finds the same ship waiting in which Guigemar was once found, yet this time without him. The queen thinks he is dead, but she nevertheless goes aboard. The ship sails for Brittany, and once there, the queen arrives near a castle.

This castle is ruled by Meriaduc, who sees the ship and its fair passenger and falls in love with her. He tries to convince her to love him, but she declares that she will only ever love the one who will be able to open the belt she wears. Meriaduc, who knows Guigemar by name, tells the queen that a knight by the name of Guigemar similarly cannot love any other woman but the one who will be able to undo the knot of his shirt.

On hearing the name of her beloved, she faints. Meriaduc, while the queen sleeps, tries to open her belt, but he does not succeed. He organises a tournament to which he invites Guigemar in order to have him as an ally against his enemy, but also in order to verify if the strange situation of the queen and that of Guigemar are, as Meriaduc suspects, connected. The queen faints when she hears the name of Guigemar. He tries to speak with her, then asks her to try to undo the knot: she succeeds. Guigemar sees that she is wearing his belt and asks her to narrate the whole story. Having realised that she really is his beloved, Guigemar asks Meriaduc to be allowed to take the queen with him, promising at the same time that he himself will be Meriaduc's vassal and help him against his enemy. Meriaduc does not accept Guigemar's offer and denies him permission to take the queen. So Guigemar offers his services to the enemies of Meriaduc: together with them, he lays siege to Meriaduc's castle. After a long siege, they succeed in penetrating into the castle, they kill Meriaduc, and Guigemar can finally re-join his beloved.

As we can see from this detailed summary of the plot, the wound of love is the true origin from which the whole story springs: without the wound that Guigemar receives while he is hunting and injuring the white doe, he would probably have remained the youth uninterested in love that he was at the beginning. It is the wound that makes him sick and in need of being healed: from selfish to needy, Gui-

gemar experiences a transformation of the self.[29] As said, the selfish Guigemar fatally wounds the white doe while hunting; but the same arrow ricochets and severely injures his thigh. The white doe, before dying, begins to speak and puts the following curse on him:

> Oï, lase! jo sui ocise!
> E tu, vassal, ki m’as nafree,
> Tel seit la tue destinee:
> Jamais n’aies tu medecine!
> Ne par herbe ne par racine
> Ne par mire ne par pociun
> N’avras tu jamés garisun
> De la plaie ke as en la quisse,
> De si ke cele te guarisse
> Ki suffera pur tue amur
> Issi grant peine e tel dolur
> Ke unkes femme taunt ne suffri.
> E tu referas taunt pur li,
> Dunt tuit cil s’esmerveillerunt
> Ki aiment e amé avrunt
> U ki pois amerunt aprés.[30]

The wound inflicted on Guigemar is a real, physical one that turns into a metaphorical one because of the doe’s curse: his wound will be healed only by a woman that loves and suffers for him as no one has ever done before. The white doe, the fairy and other-worldly animal belonging to the Celtic tradition, is very probably a personification of the woman he will meet and love, as the commentaries on the text have highlighted.[31] Many elements in the plot in fact char-

29 See, in this direction, the beautiful introduction of Walter (2018a) to the *lai*, and in particular the following observations (2018a, 1112): “pour évoquer cette naissance à l’amour, Marie choisit le mode de l’image, plus suggestif et plus sensible que celui des idées. Une métaphore maîtresse porte le poème: celle de la blessure. L’inexplicable coup de foudre entre les fins amants se condense dans l’image d’une double plaie”.

30 Marie de France, *Guigemar*, vv. 106–121, in Walter (2018a, 10–12). (‘Alas! I am going to die and you, young man who hurt me, may that be your destiny: may you never find a cure! Neither herbs nor roots, neither doctor nor potion will be able to cure you of the wound which you have in the thigh before heals you someone that will suffer for the love of you of so great sorrows and such a pain that any woman never suffered a similar one. And you will suffer as much for it; it will arouse the wonder of all those who love, will have loved or will love in the future.’).

31 Walter (2018a, 1114–1115).

acterise Guigemar's beloved as closely related to the fairy dimension,[32] such as her idea to "seal" their mutual pact with the knot on the shirt and the belt, or the fact that when she is imprisoned in the tower, she complains of her destiny, suddenly finds the door open and then is able to escape.[33]

The text *Guigemar* is therefore entirely built on the metaphors of the *vulnus amoris* and of the *aegritudo amoris*,[34] a malady curable only through being loved, as the pounding repetition of the love's wound and of the "disease-healing" polarity signals.[35] Moreover, the curse pronounced by the white doe, with its references to all the obstacles that the two protagonists will have to overcome in order to finally re-join, insists on the inevitability of deep suffering in the amorous process. Even more, as the white doe affirms, such love must cause both of them more suffering than anyone has ever endured before.

The depth and the persistence of love's wound is therefore a structural element of the conception of love present in the text, as the following passage wonderfully expresses:

> Mes ki ne mustre s'enferté
> A peine en peot aver santé.
> *Amur est plaie dedenz cors,*
> *E si ne piert nïent defors.*
> *Ceo est un mal que lunges tient,*
> *Pur ceo que de Nature vient.*[36]

We could translate the key verses "Amur est plaie dedenz cors / E si ne piert nïent defors. / Ceo est un mal que lunges tient, / Pur ceo que de Nature vient" as follows: "Love is a lesion inside the heart that does not show itself outside. It is a malady that lasts for a long time, because it comes from Nature". If we compare these verses with the classical *topos* of the arrows of Love (*Amor*), as, for example, we have seen in the text of Marie de France, *Équitan*,[37] it is possible to understand that we are here dealing with a different, more intense use of the theme. This presence of

32 On the character of the fairy, see the essential book of Harf-Lancner (1984). See also Le Goff/Le Roy Ladurie (1971); Guerreau-Jalabert (1999); Mühlethaler (2011). For the affinity of the character of Guenevere to a fairy, see Frappier (1978, 186–187); Gubbini (2014a, in particular 485–486).

33 Walter (2018a, 1114–1115).

34 On love malady see footnote 1, Chapter 1.

35 An interpretation of the *lai* especially devoted to its symbolic nuances is that of Ribard (1995).

36 Marie de France, *Guigemar*, vv. 481–486, in Walter (2018a, 28–30). ('But if you don't show your pain, it is hard to be healed. Love is a lesion inside the heart that does not show itself outside. It is a malady that lasts for a long time, because it comes from Nature').

37 See the previous paragraph 3.1 Marie de France.

the motif of love’s wound is framed by a “gnomic” aura that intends to state the nature of love and of the pain inherent in it. It is also important to recall a structural element: in the manuscripts in which it has been handed down,[38] the text *Guigemar* is the first *lai* that opens the collection of the *lais* of Marie de France; it therefore sets the tone, so to speak, of the entire collection.

Moreover, this special definition of love as ‘a secret lesion that does not show itself outside’ seems to deal with crucial concepts of medieval theology, philosophy and, more broadly, culture. This internalisation of the wound corresponds to the “internalisation” of love that the Middle Ages have in fact inherited from religious discourse and from the Church Fathers.[39] Augustine, in particular, who analysed over and over the difficult turning-points from carnal desire to *Amor-Caritas,*[40] stages a description of love and desire as a wound in the heart, a bleeding and putrescent wound in a passage from the *Confessions:*

> Interea mea peccata multiplicabantur, et avulsa a latere meo tamquam inpedimento coniugii cum qua cubare solitus eram, *cor*, ubi adhaerebat, *concisum et vulneratum mihi erat et trahebat sanguinem.* (…) *Nec sanabatur vulnus illud meum, quod prioris praecisione factum erat, sed post fervorem doloremque acerrimum putrescebat et quasi frigidius, sed desperatius dolebat.*[41]

38 Cf. Walter (2018d, in particular see 1116): “*Guigemar* est connu par trois manuscrits: *Lɪ*, *P* et *P5*, ainsi que par la traduction norroise”.

39 We would also like to mention the interesting point of view of Avalle (1977), who saw this “internalisation” of the amorous experience more in harmony with the barbarians’ culture than with the classical one: “Per i poeti del Duecento, dunque, amore si riduce sostanzialmente ai suoi termini più elementari, che sono il soddisfacimento degli istinti sessuali e la risposta immediata ad un impulso puramente naturale, legato, via via, al senso della vista, alla bellezza del corpo e al piacere che ne deriva. In tutto questo non c’è nulla di originale nei confronti dell’insegnamento dei pagani. Il nuovo sta invece nei due termini estremi della ‘passio’ o ‘ambition’, da una parte, e della ‘cogitation’, dall’altra, che implicano un principio di *interiorizzazione dell’esperienza amorosa*, per altro più in accordo con la cultura ‘barbarica’ che non con quella romana, forse sulla falsariga della filosofia del desiderio predicata da non poche religioni orientali.” (Avalle 1977, 59; italics are mine).

40 See, for example, his sermon *Incipit de caritate et de solo amando Deo*, entirely built on the contrast between *cupiditas* and *Caritas* (Augustinus Hipponensis, *Sermones*, 284, sermo 350 A, CLCLT). I have already evoked this sermon in relationship to the discussion on lust present in *Inferno V* of Dante Alighieri’s *Divine Comedy:* cf. Gubbini (2011).

41 Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, VI, XV, in Mohrmann/Vitali (2000, 284–285). (‘And meanwhile my sins were multiplying: torn from my side, as an obstacle to marriage, the woman who had been my life partner, my heart that was very close to her, was torn as if by a wound and gave blood. (…) But the wound inflicted by the previous tear did not heal, on the contrary, after burning and acute pain it gelled; then the pain became almost darker but more desperate.’).

The presence of the image of love as a lesion inside the heart that does not show itself outside could be read, in the text *Guigemar* of Marie de France, an extremely cultured poetess, as already highlighted in the relevant secondary literature,[42] as a sort of "revitalisation" or "transplant" of the Augustinian theme into a courtly and profane context. But, as we will see in the next two paragraphs, the image as present in Marie de France has been evoked in other courtly texts: in one case with a precise textual quotation, in another case with the use of a very similar metaphor and with a similar turn of phrase.

3.2 Blondel de Nesle

The first text that I will analyse in relation with the passage mentioned from the *lai* of *Guigemar* of Marie de France is a song in ancient French, *Cuer desirrous apaie.*[43] This song is of doubtful attribution in the manuscript tradition:[44] the manuscripts MTa, and table M' agree on attributing the song to Blondel de Nesle; as opposed to this, only ms. C attributes the text to Guiot de Dijon. In mss. MTa, and the M' table, as has been highlighted, *Cuer desirrous apaie* is accompanied by another song, *Bien doit chanter cui fine amours adrece*, attributed to Blondel de Nesle "da tutti i codici non anonimi che la riportano: oltre MTa, KNPX e C".[45] In fact, already in the edition of Blondel de Nesle some years ago, *Cuer desirrous apaie* was included in the "chansons authentiques", because "L'accord de MT et de a, qui appartiennent à deux groupes distincts, l'emporte sur le témoignage isolé de C, ms. notoriement peu fiable de surcroît".[46]

The question of the attribution in the manuscripts having been settled, it is now time to analyse the literary characteristics of the text. The song *Cuer desirrous apaie* is entirely built on the theme of love's wound, and on the sub-theme of the "wound through the kiss"- a motif, this last one, represented in Langue d'oc by some wonderful examples in the poetry of the troubadour Bernart de Ventadorn.[47] Vv. 9–16 of this text read:

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42 Marie quotes openly, for example, Priscian in the *Prologue* to her *lais* at vv. 9–16. On the Prologue of Marie de France see Spitzer (1943); Méla (2005).

43 In this paragraph, I repurpose the observations already anticipated in Gubbini (2015).

44 The analysis of the manuscript tradition of this song has been analytically addressed by the following book, on which we will rely: Lannutti (1999). For the list of the manuscripts and their identification, see Spanke (1955).

45 Lannutti (1999, XXV).

46 Lepage (1994, 40).

47 See in the present book chapter 2.

Premiers basiers *est plaie*
d’Amours dedenz cors,
mout m’angoisse et esmaie
se n’i pert dehors.
He las! Pour quoi m’en sui vantez?
Jai ne m’en puet venir *santez*
se ce dont sui *navrez*
ma bouche ne rassaie![48]

In this passage of the song, *plaie*, and the verb *navrer*, are used to verbalise the wound; *santez* belongs instead to the antithetical, but strictly connected to the wound, pole of healing. The variant chosen in the edition of Lannutti, “Premiers”, in the verse “Premiers basiers est plaie” seems to be a very good choice: in fact, it brings to the text greater coherence and depth of meaning if compared to the other variant, “Privez”, transmitted by the manuscripts MTZ and privileged by Lepage in the edition of Blondel’s songs. In fact, the “kiss-wound” of which the trouvère is complaining is indeed ‘the first’ he receives (“Premiers”), and risks, as the author tells us, remaining the only one. The whole song focuses on the request to be able to recover what has been experienced only once. Moreover, at vv. 41–48 in the last stanza, we read:

Se de faus cuer proiaisse,
donc je ne la pri,
espoir je recovraisse.
Maiz n’est mie einsi!
Ne ja Diex ne me doint voloir
de li deçoivre sanz doloir!
Ce me tient en espoir,
qu’Amours *blece et respasse.*[49]

Here, in the final verse, together with the verb of the wound *blecer* we have the verb *respasser* which, used absolutely, means, according to the Tobler-Lommatzsch, “genesen, gesunden”.[50] We see how the text is again insisting on the polarity of “wound–healing”. As has been highlighted with analytical observations at

48 *Cuer desirrous apaie*, vv. 9–16, in Lannutti (1999, 195). (‘The first kiss is a love sore inside the heart – it anguishes and troubles me much that it does not show itself outside. Alas! Why did I boast about it? I can not heal, if what has wounded me does not slake my mouth’).
49 *Cuers desirrous apaie*, vv. 41–48, in Lannutti (1999, 197). (‘If I prayed her falsely – which I don’t do – I could perhaps recover hope. But it is not like this! May God never give me the desire to disappoint her without suffering! This keeps my hope alive, that love wounds and heals.’).
50 See TL (1925–2018), s.v. *respasser.*

the lexical level, among the ancient French corpus of the Trouvères, the themes of the disease and the wound of love constitute a characteristic element in particular of the corpus of Blondel de Nesle,[51] one of the most famous and appreciated Trouvères and whose poems had a remarkable circulation in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts.[52]

But for the context of the present chapter, it is important to stress that the verses of the song in question, "Premiers basiers *est plaie/d'Amours dedenz cors*, (...) / *se n'i pert dehors*", constitute an explicit textual quotation of the verses from Marie de France's *lai de Guigemar:* "*Amur est plaie dedenz cors* / E *si ne piert nïent defors*". One reason to explain the presence of such an explicit quotation is probably that the *lai* of *Guigemar,* as we have already pointed out, is intimately nourished by the images and the semantic field of love's wound and malady, and so is the song *Cuer desirrous apaie.* But there may be another, historical reason. As I said at the beginning of this section, the song *Cuer desirrous apaie* containing this quotation of Marie de France is in fact of doubtful attribution in the manuscripts. As pointed out, one of the two authors proposed by the manuscripts for the paternity of the text is Blondel de Nesle. The *Lais* of Marie de France, whose *Prologue*, as we have already recalled, was dedicated to Henry II, were certainly very successful. However, a textual knowledge so precise as to be able to make an exact quotation seems to us more coherent in an author like Blondel, who has been situated by the secondary literature in the generation of poets active between 1175 and 1180,[53] than in an author like Guiot de Dijon, to be placed instead probably within the first third of the thirteenth century.[54] This chronological remark acquires further depth if, following Lepage, the commentator of the corpus of Blondel de Nesle, it is possible to think of an identification of the poet Blondel with the historical personality of Jehan I de Nesle, who fought in the Holy Land together with Richard Lionheart, son of Henry II Plantagenet and leader of the crusaders from August 1191. The historical and cultural proximity of Jehan I de Nesle and Richard Lionheart of the Plantagenet family could therefore have engendered so precise a textual echoing.

We see how, through the analysis of the *vulnus amoris* theme, it is possible to discover new connections between texts apparently distant from each other. The centrality of the motif of love's wound in medieval Romance literatures in several cases may lead an author not only to reuse the metaphor, but also the words and the expressions previously employed to verbalise the theme.

51 Zaganelli (1982, 164).

52 Cf. Karp (1980, 804–805); cf. also Lepage (1994, 17).

53 Lepage (1994, 10).

54 Cf. Hasenohr/Zink (1964), s.v. *Guiot de Dijon.*

3.3 *Flamenca*

The last text I would like to evoke in this chapter is the Occitan romance *Flamenca.* A masterpiece of the narrative production in Langue d’oc,[55] this anonymous text of the thirteenth century has come down to us in its entirety in a single manuscript, Carcassonne, Bibliothèque municipale, 35, missing, however, the beginning and the end and incomplete in other parts.[56] This romance in verses stages the story of the beautiful Flamenca,[57] whose flaming beauty is described in the text through the use of the semantic field of brightness (*soleils*, *resplandor*, *fresca*, *viva colors*, *enlumena*):

> Mais anc no.i ac domna neisuna
> Non volgues Flamenca semblar,
> Qu’aissi con es *soleils* ses par
> Per beutat e per *resplandor*,
> Tals es Flamenca antre lur,
> Quar tant es *fresca* sa colors,
> Siei esgartz douz e plen d’amors,
> Siei dig plazent e saboros
> Que la bellazers e.l plus pros
> E que plus sol esser jugosa
> Estet quais muda et antosa.
> (…)
> L’autrui beutat tein es effaza
> Li *viva colors* de sa fassa
> C’ades *enlumena* e creis.[58]

55 Limentani (1977, 157).

56 For the details on the manuscript and its gaps, see the examination of Zufferey (2014, 94–99). On the possible attribution of the text to Daude de Pradas, see Chambon (2015; 2018).

57 On the meaning of the name of the feminine protagonist of the romance, Flamenca, see the considerations of Valérie Fasseur in Zufferey/Fasseur (2014, quotation at 11): “il peut aussi bien signifier la ‘Flamboyante’, en référence à l’éclat extraordinaire du visage et de la chevelure de la jeune femme, que la ‘Flamande’, ce qui serait déterminant pour saisir dans quel espace géographique se situe la narration”.

58 *Flamenca*, vv. 536–546 and vv. 551–553, Zufferey/Fasseur (2014, 160–162). (‘But above all there was not a lady who would not have wanted to resemble Flamenca; for, as the sun has no equal in beauty and brightness, Flamenca shone among them. Her complexion was so fresh, her eyes so sweet and so full of love, her words were so pleasant and so tasty, that the most beautiful woman and the best endowed with qualities, that which ordinarily was the most playful, remained silent and ashamed. (…) the lively complexion of her face, the brightness of which, at every instant, gained in intensity, eclipsed the beauty of others and extinguished it.’).

Flamenca is married to the old Lord Archimbaut of Bourbon, who, soon after their marriage, becomes extraordinarily jealous of his young and beautiful wife: he begins to neglect his own physical appearance and to lose every modicum of courtesy. For the same reason of Archimbaut's pathological jealousy, Flamenca is cloistered in a tower. A young knight, Guillem of Nevers, hears rumours about her story and falls in love before having seen her, following the literary motif of love *per audita.* Guillem reaches Bourbon, where he finally sees Flamenca in church: she is, however, very closely guarded. The young knight finds a clever way to speak with her: he will dress as a clerk and slip to Flamenca a word every week under the cover of the psalter, when, during the service, the book is given to be kissed. Through this trick, Guillem is therefore able to declare his love to Flamenca, who agrees to respond to him and loves him in return. Thanks to a covertly dug tunnel, the young knight manages also to create a passage between his own room and the baths where Flamenca, simulating illness, has been allowed by Archimbaut to go. Flamenca and Guillem therefore begin their adulterous relationship. After some time, Flamenca manages to heal the morbid jealousy of her husband, thanks to a kind of fidelity oath she pronounces: Archimbaut therefore recovers his courtly attributes and begins again to hold tournaments in his land. Flamenca asks Guillem to return to his own lands and to visit her again for the next tournament. On this occasion, Flamenca and Guillem meet anew, and become lovers again. On the first day of the tournament, Guillem wins the prize together with Flamenca's sleeve: he covers the internal part of his shield with this precious piece of fabric. With the end of the text missing in the manuscript, the narration of the story is suddenly interrupted on the second day of the tournament.

In the plot of the story, the idea of slipping a word every week to Flamenca during the service under the cover of the psalter in order to declare his love, comes to Guillem through a *visio amoris:*[59] a dream in which he speaks to the beloved, and explains to her his sorrows. When he awakens, a sentiment of frustration takes possession of him. Looking at the colour of his face, looking at his expression, the text declares, no one could doubt that Guillem is sick with a specific malady:

> E qui vis adonc sa color,
> Ben semblet que fos d'aimador,
> Car palles fon e.ls oils ac blaus

59 On the topos of the *visio amoris* in Langue d'oc and Langue d'oïl literatures see my recent contribution Gubbini (2019) which also provides further bibliographical references.

De tot entorn, e.l polses caus
Un pauc, tan fo esmaigrïatz.[60]

This malady is the merciless *aegritudo amoris*, a sickness from which it is not possible to recover as from other maladies, which are organic and follow nature’s principles. The malady of love does not give pause to the sick, and in one night can cause more damage than others do in several days: love is a malady that attacks the heart and holds the soul prisoner without any rest:

E ges non es d’amors *nafratz*
Qui.s meravilla don s’ave,
Qu’om del *mal d’amor* non reve
Tant tost con hom fai d’autre *mal*
Que sec alcun point *natural.*
Quar *mals d’amors* es tan esquius
Que pieitz ne fai us rescalius
En un jorn o en una nug
Que autre mals en .xviii.
E dirai vos rason per que:
Amors es *mals* ques al *cor* te
E ten l’*arma presa e clausa*
Que hom non pot aver *nulla pausa.*[61]

It is a malady against which nature has no power: nature in fact feels that she cannot help the soul assaulted by this malady. The remedy cannot, therefore, proceed from nature: it cannot come from herbs, or resin:

E la *natura*, qu’es maïstra
Del cor<s> e son obs li ministra,
Es al *guerir* fort entendiva,
Mas per amor si ten caitiva,
Car nuil conseil donar no.i sap;
Per so met cel *cor* a mescap
E dis a l’arma: “Plus sabes,

60 *Flamenca*, vv. 2991–2995, Zufferey/Fasseur (2014, 314). (‘And who would have seen his complexion then would have understood that it was that of a lover, because he was pale, had dark circles around his eyes, his temples a bit hollow, he had lost so much weight’).
61 *Flamenca*, vv. 2996–3008, ibid. (‘Surely he has never been hurt by love, the one who is astonished at his condition, because one does not recover from the malady of love as quickly as from another illness, of organic type. The malady of love, in fact, is so biting that a bout of his fever of one day or one night is worse than what other maladies cause in eighteen. I will tell you why: love is a malady that attacks the heart, and holds the soul caught and prisoner, without any truce or rest.’)

Domna, ques eu, e si.us voles,
Al vostre mal queres mecina,
Mais non ges erba ni resina
Ni nulla re en qu'ieu obs aia,
Car no.s coven a vostra *plaia*".[62]

Love is a "sore of the spirit", a lesion, a wound that those who are injured enjoy, and from which they do not want to be healed; therefore, nature does not intervene with such a malady:

Amors es plaia d'esperit,
En que.s deleiton li *ferit*
Tan que de *garir* non an *cura*,
Per que no.s n'entramet Natura.[63]

This malady presents external symptoms, described in the text with richness of detail. The proximity of the spirit to the heart is such, that if the spirit suffers, the heart does the same:

E qui d'Amor es ben *feritz*
Mout deu esser escoloritz,
Maigres e teinz e flacs e vans,
Et en als sia fort ben sans,
Que tant es l'esperitz vesis
Del cor que, si nul mal suffris,
Nom pot esser que non s'en senta,
Et el cors los mals li presenta,
Quar si.l cors pena no.n traisses,
Amors non for a mals mais bes;
Mas quar lo *cor* n'a greu trebail,
L'apell'om mal e ges non fail,
Car ben es mals durs e cozens
E no.i ten pro nuls honemens.[64]

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62 *Flamenca*, vv. 3015–3026, Zufferey/Fasseur (2014, 316). ('Nature, which controls the body and regulates its needs, is very concerned with healing it. But she feels helpless in the face of love because she cannot give advice. This is why she leaves her heart in embarrassment and says to the soul: 'You are more knowledgeable than I, madam, and if you want, you must find a remedy for your ailment. But it is certainly not plant, or resin, or anything that falls under my jurisdiction, because it does not apply to your injury").

63 *Flamenca*, vv. 3027–3030, ibid. ('Love is a sore of the spirit, in which the wounded delight, so that they are not cured by being healed. This is why Nature does not intervene.').

64 *Flamenca*, vv. 3031–3044, ibid. ('The one who is seriously injured by Love must have lost his colors appreciably, be thin, have a sick, weak and exhausted complexion, while on the other

If we read some of the quotations attentively, we will notice the strong affinity of the passages of *Flamenca* mentioned with the *lai* of *Guigemar.* Especially striking is the proximity of vv. 3023–3026 of *Flamenca*, “*Al vostre mal queres mecina, /Mais non ges erba ni resina* / Ni nulla re en qu’ieu obs aia, / Car no.s coven a vostra *plaia*”, with vv. 109–113 of *Guigemar*, “Jamais n’aies tu *medecine!* / *Ne par herbe ne par racine* / Ne par mire ne par pociun / N’avras tu jamés garisun / *De la plaie* ke as en la quisse” and vv. 3027–3030 of *Flamenca, “Amors es plaia d’esperit*, / En que.s deleiton li ferit / Tan que de garir non an cura, / *Per que no.s n’entramet Natura”*, with verses 483–486 of *Guigemar*, “*Amur est plaie dedenz cors / E si ne piert nïent defors.* / Ceo est un mal que lunges tient, */ Pur ceo que de Nature vient*”.

Although it has already been shown by secondary literature that this romance from the thirteenth century is filled with literary quotations, and although many of the sources have been identified in detail,[65] the “echoing” of the passage of Marie de France’s *Guigemar* in *Flamenca* has not yet been analysed and valued as it deserves, if my assessment is correct. For example, in his fundamental work on the romance *Flamenca*, Alberto Limentani brings the quoted passage of *Flamenca* especially closer to the *Éneas* and, in particular, to some verses present in the description of the phenomenology of Love included in a conversation between Lavine, the future wife of the protagonist, and her mother, and to the *Cligès* of Chrétien de Troyes (esp. vv. 644–648).[66] Then, Limentani briefly quotes the passage from *Guigemar* as being related to the one from *Flamenca*, but “dismisses”, so to speak, its importance, simply declaring: “non è escluso che altri materiali discesi dal modello dell’*Énéas* confluiscano qui, vicini ormai a uno stadio di detrito memorizzato, confuso e rifuso (cfr. per esempio il *Guigemar* di Maria di Francia, versi 483–86 (…))”.[67] In fact, we do not think that, in the passage quoted from *Flamenca*, the echoing of the *Guigemar* is to be seen “to a stage of stored debris, confused and recast”. As I have said, this quotation is to be seen as an element of a bigger puzzle: the conscious procedure of the author of *Flamenca* to confront himself with previous literary tradition, and, as has been highlighted, not only with the Occitan lyric

hand, he is very full of health. The spirit, in fact, is so close to the heart that, if the latter suffers from the slightest evil, it is impossible that it does not feel the same and makes it visible in the body. Indeed, if the body did not show the suffering, Love would not be a malady, but a good. But, because the heart experiences, because of Love, great torment, it is called malady, and one is in no way mistaken. Because it is indeed a painful and bitter malady, against which no ointment is effective’).

65 Cf. especially Limentani (1977, 155–303) and Zufferey/Fasseur (2014, 33–70). See also Limacher-Riebold (1997).

66 Limentani (1977, 204–205).

67 Limentani (1977, 206).

poetry of the Troubadours, but also with the narrative production in Langue d'oïl.[68]

In the case of the passage quoted above, such a procedure touches, in particular, on crucial motifs of medieval literature and engages in a confrontation on a fundamental conceptual "knot': the themes of *aegritudo amoris* and of love's wound and their relationship with the idea of *Natura.*

In fact, in the passage of *Flamenca* we do not find a simple quotation, but, I would say, a quotation that partially seems *per opposita.* Both texts agree that the *aegritudo amoris* is a malady that lasts long. Yet whereas the passage in *Guigemar* affirms that this sickness lasts long because it comes from Nature ("Ceo est un mal ki lunges tient, / Pur ceo que de Nature vient"), the text in *Flamenca* says that Nature does not intervene ("Per que no.s n'entramet Natura"), because the ills, unlike in other cases, do not heal, and also because "love is a sore of the spirit" ("Amors es plaia d'esperit") and not a simple malady of the body. Why this change of perspective in *Flamenca* compared to *Guigemar?* Are we dealing with a change of perspective in the crucial concept of *natura* from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries?[69]

It is not easy to find an answer to these questions. However, one element of this passage of *Flamenca* deserves, in my opinion, to be analysed further: the presence of the term *esperit* in the beautiful v. 3027 "Amors es plaia d'esperit". What is the meaning of *esperit* in this verse? Should we translate it as 'mind' or 'soul' and distinguish it clearly from the body, or could we instead keep the complex and stratified term 'spirit'? I would prefer the latter possibility. In fact, in the entangled question of the possible distinction and/or overlap between the terms 'spirit', 'soul' and 'mind', the word 'spirit', closer to the Latin term *spiritus*, presents a more "layered" nature: it allows, for example, for the inclusion of all the references to the different spirits of pneumatological doctrine.[70]

And, in particular in this passage of *Flamenca*, a reference to the spirits of the pneumatological doctrine does not seem to be excluded. The connection between the spirit and heart, on which the text insists, seems far from being a simple poetic metaphor. In the Middle Ages, the special relationship between the life of the body and the activity of the mind has its roots in the conception of 'spirit', where phys-

68 Cf. Lejeune (1979a, 395–400).

69 On the concept of nature and the Troubadours, cf. Topsfield (1974); Topsfield (1975); Roncaglia (1985); Gubbini (2005a, especially 300–301). On the concept of nature in the Italian medieval literature, cf. Kablitz (2018). On the concept of Nature in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era, see the publications and the research of the DFG-Forschergruppe Natur – LMU München: https://www.for1986.uni-muenchen.de/index.html [last access: Jan. 4th, 2022].

70 In this direction, see Gubbini (2020c, especially 1).

ical and mind-related processes are combined. In this context, the pneumatological doctrine, of Greek and Latin origin, has a special importance; it combines philosophical, religious and medical ideas on ‘spirits’ and ‘breath’, connecting as it does spiritual, intellectual and physical functions. In this view, the bodily and intellectual life of a human being is assumed to be governed by ‘spirits’ playing different roles: they control bodily life and the flow of blood; they underpin the body’s mobility and sensorial perceptions; but they also govern the imagination, memory and rational activities of the human mind.[71] More precisely, medieval pneumatology speculated about the presence of three (or sometimes two) spirits: the natural spirit, the vital spirit and the animal spirit, which are physical located respectively in the liver, heart and brain.[72] Therefore, the European history of ‘spirit’, a concept later destined to assume a highly spiritual meaning only, begins in fact with a strong bodily dimension.[73] According to medieval medical treatises, love’s malady can lead to death: as the heart is the site of the vital spirit that keeps a person alive, if it is put in danger, the entire existence of the human being is menaced. And how could the heart be put in danger? Through the *immoderata cogitatio* on the beloved that prevents the lovesick from normal breathing: in this situation, the heart has to produce sighs in order to compensate for the missed breaths, and, in doing so, the production of vital spirit may be interrupted and the person may die, as the secondary literature on the theme has highlighted.[74] Our passage from the romance *Flamenca*, after depicting with richness of detail the exterior appearance of the lovesick (vv. 3031–3033: “E qui d’Amor es ben feritz / Mout deu esser escoloritz, / Maigres e teinz e flacs e vans”), declares that if the heart is suffering, the spirit, being so close to the heart, inevitably begins to suffer and then “makes visible” this suffering in the body (vv. 3035–3038: “Que tant es l’esperitz vesis / Del cor que, si nul mal suffris, / Nom pot esser que non s’en senta, / Et el cors los mals li presenta”). Therefore, it is important to understand this spirit in a “layered” way. This *esperitz* has a complex nature: it refers to the spirit as to the internal, spiritual dimension, but at the same time it also retains a “trace” of the pneumatological doctrine and of the *spiritus vitalis* that has its physical location in the heart.

71 On the pneumatological doctrine, see Verbeke (1945); Bertola (1951; 1958); Harvey (1975); Bono (1984, vol. 40); Fattori/Bianchi (1984); Jacquart (1986, vol. 144; 2003, vol. 11); Burnett (1994); Di Pasquale Barbanti (1998); Caiazzo (2006, vol. 2).

72 See Jacquart (2003, vol. 11).

73 On this theme I have published different contributions within the framework of my project *Pneuma: Breaths, Sights and Spirits in Medieval Romance Literature*, financed by the Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung: Gubbini (2014, vol. 68; 2014/2015, vol. 65/66; 2015; 2016; 2017a; 2017c).

74 See Ciavolella (1976, 80).

All these considerations seem to highlight the "psychosomatic" nature of love-sickness in the passage of *Flamenca:* the text appears to suggest that it is precisely this special interaction between body and spirit that engenders the malady of love and that keeps it alive; therefore, it is not the fault of nature. As we have anticipated, in this passage of the Occitan romance *Flamenca*, we are probably dealing with a change of perspective in the crucial concept of nature. As we can see, all these hypotheses and such reconstructions allow us to "detect" the learned layers laying behind the poetic metaphor, thus disclosing a better understanding of this beautiful and enigmatic passage.

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter begins with a presentation of Marie de France and a brief analysis of the motif of the love's wound in the *lai* of *Équitan.* This examination shows that, although the theme does not possess the structural role that it has in the *lai* of *Guigemar* examined immediately thereafter in the chapter, the metaphor of love's wound in the narrative of *Équitan* has nevertheless the function of "triggering" the plot, resulting in a tragic love that, through a succession of excesses and lack of measure, ends with the lovers' death.

Then, the chapter concentrates on the presence of the motif of the love's wound especially in three texts: the *lai* of *Guigemar* of Marie de France, a poem ascribable to the trouvère Blondel de Nesle and the Occitan verse romance *Flamenca.*

In the *lai* of *Guigemar* the wound of love is the real origin from which the whole story springs: in fact, it is the wound that Guigemar receives while he is hunting that makes him sick and in need of being healed and therefore provokes in him a transformation of the self, from selfish to needy.

In the *lai* of *Guigemar* the *vulnus amoris* theme is a structural element of the text. This is also confirmed by a crucial passage present in the *lai*, vv. 481–486, where love is defined as a "lesion inside the heart that does not show itself outside. It is a malady that lasts for a long time, because it comes from Nature".

The echoing of this passage then forms the *fil rouge* of the rest of the chapter.

We find an explicit quotation of the mentioned verses from *Guigemar* in an ancient French song of doubtful attribution in the manuscript tradition. Some manuscripts, which belong to two distinct groups, agree on attributing the song to Blondel de Nesle; another single manuscript, notoriously unreliable, instead attributes it to Guiot de Dijon. This element, together with the content of the song, entirely built on the motif of love's wound, suggest an attribution to Blondel de Nesle in whose poetic production the *vulnus amoris* theme is a recurrent one.

Moreover, the explicit quotation of the passage from *Guigemar* seems more coherent in an author like Blondel de Nesle who, according to the commentator of the corpus of Blondel de Nesle, can be identified with the historical personality of Jehan I de Nesle, who fought in the Holy Land together with Richard Lionheart, son of Henry II Plantagenet and leader of the crusaders from August 1191. In fact, the *Prologue* of the *Lais* of Marie de France was dedicated to Henry II. The historical and cultural proximity of Jehan I de Nesle and Richard Lionheart of the Plantagenet family could therefore have engendered the precise textual quotation.

The third text analysed in detail in the chapter is the Occitan romance *Flamenca*, an anonymous text of the thirteenth century. Before the beginning of the romance between the protagonist Flamenca and the knight Guillem of Nevers, there is an analysis of the topos of the *aegritudo amoris.* In this context, we find an echoing of the passage of the *lai* of *Guigemar* we have followed so far. But where the original text of *Guigemar* declared that love is a “lesion inside the heart that does not show itself outside. It is a malady that lasts for a long time, because it comes from Nature”, in the echoing present in *Flamenca* we have a change of perspective: here, love is said to be a “sore of the spirit”, a wound that those who are injured enjoy, and from which they do not want to be healed and that, therefore, Nature does not intervene with such a malady. Both texts, *Guigemar* and *Flamenca*, agree that the malady of love lasts long: but whereas the passage in *Guigemar* affirms that this sickness lasts long because it comes from Nature, the text in *Flamenca* says that Nature does not intervene: love is a sore of the spirit, and not a simple malady of the body. We are probably dealing with a change of perspective in the crucial concept of *Natura* from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries.

Through the analysis of the *vulnus amoris* theme conducted in this chapter, we have discovered new connections between texts apparently distant from each other. In fact, thanks to the centrality of the motif of love’s wound in medieval Romance literatures, we can encounter some cases in which an author does not only reuse the motif, but also the words and the expressions previously employed to verbalise the theme.

In (re)discovering ancient connections among texts “through the lens” of the motif of love’s wound, it is also possible to highlight major literary polemics and cultural turning points developed in the re-using of passages from one text to another and place these changes and confrontations in the context of their time.

4 *Passio Christi*. Love's Wound in Medieval Religious Literature

4.1 Staging Christ's Passion

This section takes a closer look at the role of the *vulnus amoris* present in texts that stage the spiritual event *par excellence* of Western culture: the Passion of Christ. In a deeply religious society such as the medieval one, a key role is played by the suffering body of Christ and the martyrs, those who become "fools for the love of Christ". The Fathers of the Church often underlined the necessity of the passion and the good for humanity that derives from it. As we will see in greater detail in Chapter 5, Tertullian wrote about Christ's *voluptas patientiae* and, as we have already seen in Chapter 2, Augustine insisted on the "necessity" of the wound of love-*Caritas* for the salvation of the soul. Furthermore, Erich Auerbach, as recalled and commented on in Chapter 1, placed the *Passio Christi* – where suffering approaches ecstasy – at the centre of the semantic evolution of the term *passio*, which thereby acquired a double meaning, ambiguous and polarised. If the concept of passion becomes crucial for the development of profane literature, this happens through the influence of a motif that is religious in its origin and then becomes secularised. It is therefore of fundamental importance for the investigation at the centre of this book to extend the analysis of the *vulnus amoris* complex to contemporary religious writing. We will see that in some cases the literary influence takes a double direction: from the sacred to the profane, and vice versa. This is true especially for Iacopone da Todi whose production of *laude* we will examine in the next paragraph – naturally with respect to the presence of the theme of love's wound.

The texts that stage Christ's Passion are characterised by an important "choral nature", first because they were publicly represented, and second because different characters speak and interact in these texts: Christ, the Virgin Mary, John, Pontius Pilate etc. This multitude of actors is often mirrored in the artistic representations of Christ's Passion by the presence of a crowd around the cross; we can consider as an example the fifteenth-century fresco of the Salimbeni brothers reproduced below.

My analysis of the texts that deal with Christ's Passion will focus primarily on Christ's physical wounds on the cross.[1] I will also analyse – especially in the next

1 On the scars, the blood and the corporeal completeness of the risen Christ see the contribution by Roling (2020).

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Figure 3: Lorenzo and Iacopo Salimbeni, *The Crucifixion* – Fresco (1416), Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista, Urbino, Italy (© Mattis, Opera propria, CC BY-SA 3.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32517353. The CC license terms for re-use of this publication do not apply to this image).

section, in the parts devoted to Iacopone – the metaphorical wounds of the characters present in these texts, a metaphor used to express their spiritual and emotional pain or mystical involvement.

The representation of Christ's Passion is at the core of the tradition of the Passion Plays, which was widespread all over Europe and lasted for centuries, slowly evolving from Latin to different European vernacular languages.[2] This process was particularly important in Medieval France and in Germany, where it produced long narrative texts dealing with Christ's Passion;[3] in Italy it developed into the tradition of the *Laude*, which will be at the centre of the next section. I will focus in this section on two examples from Medieval France: the *Passion des Jongleurs* and the *Passion catalane-occitane.*

2 For the importance of the *Passio Christi* and the *altercationes* between soul and body from medieval literature to the early modern age, see Küpper (2018a, in particular 305–312).

3 See Suitner (2010, 153–173, in particular 165).

The *Passion des Jongleurs* – an anonymous text of the end of the twelfth, or the beginning of the thirteenth century – is considered one of the principal sources of the first French dramatic passions – such as the *Passion d'Autun*, or the *Passion du Palatinus.*[4] It presents a linear and simple narrative of Christ's Passion, as has been highlighted.[5] The passage representing the flagellation is filled with cruel details on the wounding and insulting of Christ:

La glorieuse char Jhesu
Debatoient par grant vertu;
Moult le feroient asprement.
"Je cuit", font il, "qu'il ne s'en sent,
Que il ne nous crie merci,
Ne il ne gete bret ne cri".
Quant sa char li ont tant batue,
Une porpre li ont vestue;
En sa destre li font tenir
Un vert reinsel pour escharnir.
Une coronne li ont fette,
Ne fu d'or ne d'argent pourtraite;
Plus iert aspre que nule here
(On ne mist pas .iii. anz a fere),
D'aspres espines fu tornee,
Espressement iert broçonnee
De roissiaus poignanz et menu;
Pour mal fere sont tuit agu.
El chief li mistrent sanz relés,
Par deseure mistrent un es.
D'un martel deseure feroient;
En son beau vis li embatoient.
Des plaies li font .ii. et vint.
Li sans qui par chascune vint
Aval s'en court parmi la face.
(...)
Enmi le vis li escopoient,
Et de leur paumes le feroient.
Moult a regardeüre fiere;
"Garde", font il, "qu'il ne te fiere".
Parmi le vis le referoient
De leur verges que il tenoit.

4 See Lalou (1983).

5 See again Suitner (2010, 164–167), where this passage is accurately commented.

Entr'eus estoit comme uns aigneaus,
De trestouz estoit li plus beaus.[6]

The contrast between the glorious flesh of Christ (v. 1348: *La glorieuse char Jhesu)*, his beauty, repeatedly underlined in the passage (v. 1369: *son beau vis;* v. 1391: *De trestouz estoit li plus beaus*), and the savagery of his enemies against him – a cruelty well represented by the element of the crown of thorns, accurately described as intertwined with harsh thorns, and branches of prickly and thin roses in order to hurt him (vv. 1362–1365: "D'aspres espines fu tornee,/Espressement iert broçonnee/De roissiaus poignanz et menu; /Pour mal fere sont tuit agu") – were purposely recalled in the *Passiones* in order to awake pity and compassion for Christ in the audience. The climax of the passage is to be found in the image of the beautiful face of Christ disfigured by twenty-two wounds from which blood flows down (vv. 1369–1372: "En son beau vis li embatoient./Des plaies li font .ii. et vint./Li sans qui par chascune vint/Aval s'en court parmi la face"). It is also important to recall that these texts were often staged in the presence of wooden statues representing, for example, the Crucifixion or the Deposition, or in churches and religious places with frescoes in the background, always related to Christ's Passion[7] – such as the Salimbeni brothers' fresco in Urbino with the Crucifixion reproduced above.

The second text to be analysed in this section is the *Passion catalane-occitane*, anonymous and handed down to us by a manuscript of the middle of the four-

6 Perry (1981, vv. 1348–1372, vv. 1384–1391, 147–148). ('They beat the glorious flesh of Jesus with great force; they hurt him very bitterly. 'I believe', they say, 'that he does not feel anything, since he does not ask us for grace, and he does not throw a cry or a lament.' After beating him so much, they dressed him in purple: in the right hand they made him hold a green reed, to mock him. They made him a crown, but it was neither gold nor silver; it was more pungent than any other torment (it didn't take them three years to do it). It was intertwined with harsh thorns, where branches of prickly and thin roses were purposely inserted; they are all sharp to hurt. They put it on his head without delay, they put a sign on it. They hit him with a hammer, beat him in his handsome face. Twenty-two wounds they caused him. The blood of each of them runs down through his face. (…) They spat in his face, and hit him with their slaps. He had a very proud look; 'Careful' they say, 'that they don't hurt you.' In his face they wounded him again with the sticks they had. Among them he was like a lamb, of all he was the most beautiful').

7 See Suitner (2010, 156–157). On the role of the wooden statues in dramatic functions, see Bacci (1995, vol. 1). For an example from a Catalan *milieu* (twelfth century), see "The Descent of the Cross from Erill la Vall", preserved in the *Museu Episcopal de Vic:* https://www.museuartmedieval.cat/en/colleccions/romanesque/the-descent-from-the-cross-from-erill-la-vall-mev-4229 [last access: Aug. 24th, 2023].

teenth century.[8] This text is generally characterised by a sober style – as has been pointed out[9] – but it includes strong passages where a central role is played by the metaphor of the wound of love sustained by Christ. A key section of the text is where Longinus pierces the chest of Christ on the cross with his spear, provoking the physical bleeding of Christ's wound; its redeeming role is announced, as Christ's wound gives back to Longinus (in his own words) sight, hope and faith:

> *Longis pren la lansa de sa ma e los Juzeus meton la al costat de Jhesu al dret he Longis enpey la lansa e la sanc devalec per la lansa e Longis toquec ne sos ulhs e tant tost el vic e dit enaysi a Jhesu.*
>
> Bels senher Dieus, hieu te ador,
> Que es del mon ver salvador.
> Senher, en tu ay mon sper,
> Que m'as rendut lo mieu vezer.
> Tu as suffreyta pazio
> Per la nostra redempcio.[10]

The blood of Christ runs all down the lance, and simple contact with this blood allows Longinus to recover his sight. With this recovery, Longinus also gains faith: here, sight or vision has a double meaning: physical sight, but also the vision of the *oculi cordis* – to employ a Paulinian and Augustinian metaphor, which is crucial for the Middle Ages.[11]

We will see in Chapter 5 how the bleeding lance of medieval French Grail literature will be identified with Longinus's spear, and how, in the same textual tradition, contact with the blood flowing from this spear possesses healing powers.

At the end of this section, I would like to highlight the strong role played by the bodily dimension in medieval religious texts dealing with Christ's Passion and, following from this, with the *vulnus amoris* metaphor. The body of Christ is staged obsessively: highly spiritual texts, intended to stimulate repentance and to save the soul, are replete with bodily images and metaphors. Beautiful and wounded,

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8 Macdonald (1999, 13).

9 Macdonald (1999, 14–15).

10 Macdonald (1999, 184–185). ('Longinus takes the lance in his hands, the Jews put it on the right side of Christ and Longinus has pushed it and the blood has run all down the lance; Longinus has put the blood on his eyes and has immediately recovered the faculty of vision and he says to Christ: 'Beautiful Lord, God, I adore you, you are the real Saviour of the world. Lord, I have placed my hope in you because you have given me back the faculty of vision. You have suffered the Passion for our redemption").

11 On this theme, see Schleusener-Eichholz (1985, vol. 2, 1019–1040); Squillacioti (1999, 365); Gubbini (2009, 80).

Christ's body was in fact the symbol of outrage and scandal *par excellence* for the mentality of the Middle Ages: the Incarnation of God in the humble, perishable prison of the human body.

4.2 Saint Francis, the Stigmata and the *Laude* in Medieval Italy

In *Canto XI* of the *Paradiso*, Dante presents the historical figure of Saint Francis and his life: the story, in the narrative of the *canto*, is recalled by another fundamental personality of Western culture, Thomas Aquinas. In the story of Saint Francis's life, there is a moment of particular importance for the theme at the centre of this book – the manifestation of the stigmata on his body,[12] that Dante defines as follows:

> nel crudo sasso in tra Tevero e Arno
> da Cristo prese l'ultimo sigillo,
> che le sue membra due anni portarno.[13]

As has been pointed out, the stigmata are signs on a body that refer to another body, that of Christ, without being readable or interpretable signs in an hermeneutic sense.[14] They are, however, readable in a causal sense, as symptoms, traces or "seals". In fact, the stigmata are here defined *l'ultimo sigillo* ('the last seal') that Saint Francis receives from Christ: this expression, as has been highlighted,[15] is a quotation from Bonaventure, *Legenda maior* XIII 9: "sigillum Christi". The "impression" of the stigmata – that is to say "le piaghe da lui [Christ] sofferte sulla croce, alle mani, ai piedi e al costato. Sono queste le cinque piaghe prodotte dai chiodi e dalla Lancia"[16] – on Saint Francis's body is testified by his very first followers, the first Franciscan text speaking of the stigmata being the *Epistola* of Brother Elias, who, at the time of Francis's death, was the vicar of the order.

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12 On the stigmata of Saint Francis in the context of the analysis of the theme of the wound, see the contribution of Kellner (2023).

13 Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, Canto XI, vv. 106–108, in Inglese (2019).
(English translation quoted from https://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Italian/DantPar8to14.php#anchor_Toc64099873 [last access: Aug. 24th, 2023]: "then, on the harsh rock, between the Tiber and the Arno, he received the final wounds, from Christ, that his limbs showed for two years").

14 See Teuber (2004). For an analysis of the mystical implications and the gender aspect of stigmata as a form of *imitatio Christi* by a male body, see Teuber (2003, 492).

15 See Inglese (2019, 160, footnote to the vv. 106–108).

16 I quote from Chiavacci Leonardi (1994, 322, footnote to the v. 107).

The following passage from Elias's *Epistola* openly declares the identification between the five sores of Francis and Christ's wounds:

> Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum et miraculi novitatem. A saeculo non est auditum tale signum, praeterquam in Filio Dei, qui est Christus Dominus. Non diu ante mortem frater et pater noster apparuit crucifixus quinque plagas, quae vero sunt stigmata Christi, portans in corpore suo.[17]

The exaltation of the experience of the stigmata as the crucial moment in Francis's life and its interpretation as the "proof", so to speak, that he was an *alter Christus*, is even stronger in the *Legenda maior* written by Bonaventure and approved by the General Chapter of the Order in Pisa in 1263.[18] In fact, as we can read in the following passage from the *Legenda maior*, Bonaventure clearly insists on Francis's *imitatio Christi:*

> Intellexit vir Deo plenus, quod sicut Christum fuerat imitatus in actibus vitae, sic conformis ei esse debet in afflictionibus et doloribus passionis, antequam ex hoc mundo transiret.[19]

The image and the interpretation of Saint Francis present in Bonaventure's *Legenda maior* is the version that would mostly "shape" the saint's subsequent perception as an *alter Christus.*[20] It has been highlighted that precisely thanks to the influence of the Christocentric mystique of the mendicant orders, both the artistic and the literary production of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries experience increased "realism", in particular in the representation of Christ's Passion, with a special attention to bodily suffering.[21]

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17 Brother Elias, *Epistola*, in *Analecta Franciscana* X, Ex Typ. Collegii s. Bonaventurae, Ad Claras Aquas prope Florentiam 1926–41, 526. Passage quoted and commented in Frugoni (2010, 52–53 and 198). ('And now I announce to you a great joy, an extraordinary miracle. Never has such a portent been heard in the world except in the Son of God, who is Christ the Lord. Some time before his death, our brother and father appeared crucified, bearing imprinted on his body the five wounds, which are truly the stigmata of Christ').

18 See in this regard the important book of Frugoni (2010, in particular 24–26).

19 Bonaventure, *Legenda maior*, chapter 13, paragraph 2, in *Analecta Franciscana* X, 616. Passage quoted and commented in Frugoni (2010, 175 and 199). ('Then he understood, that man filled with God, that just as he had imitated Christ in his choices and in the conduct of life, in the same way, before leaving this world, he had to conform to him in the sufferings and pains of the Passion').

20 A question that should be raised, but cannot be dealt with in this context, concerns the historical dynamics and the variants of the legend of St. Francis. It would be interesting to see whether its evolution follows or precedes the historical changes found in other discourses, not least in profane amorous literature.

21 I follow here the considerations present in Suitner (2010, 156).

Medieval Italy developed a sacred lyrical genre, the *lauda* – an evolution from the *ballata* – that, especially in its dramatic version (*lauda drammatica*), describes the Passion of Christ. This literary production was mostly anonymous, originating from religious confraternities. Within this tradition, however, a well-known author stands out for the intensity of his texts and for the relevance of his historical role in early Franciscanism:[22] Iacopone da Todi. The theme of the wound appears very frequently in Iacopone's *laude.*[23]

A perfect example[24] is to be found in the dramatic *lauda Donna de Paradiso* – the evocation of Mary's sorrows *par excellence* within Medieval Italian literature, in which Christ's Passion is described with a rich vocabulary of suffering. This includes the verb *flagellare* ('to whip'):

> "Accurre, donna e vide
> che la gente l'allide;
> credo che lo s'occide,
> tanto l'ò *flagellato.*"[25]

Also, the verb *fendere* ('to split'), the term *bollon* ('nail'), and the verb *clavellare* ('to cleave, to nail') enrich the vocabulary of cruelty depicting the physical suffering of Christ, the cleaving of his hands and feet to the cross:

> "Donna, la man li è presa,
> ennella croc'è stesa;
> con un *bollon* l'ò *fesa*,
> tanto lo 'n cci ò ficcato."[26]

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22 For the historical figure of Iacopone da Todi and his role in the Franciscanian order see at least Suitner (1999; 2001); Menestò (2001; 2007); Brufani (2001).

23 I reuse here some considerations already anticipated in Gubbini (2019a, in particular 109–110).

24 Erich Auerbach (1946, 164–165) has masterfully seen in this *lauda* of Iacopone da Todi the "vollkommene Einbettung des erhabenen und heiligen Vorgangs in die zugleich zeitgenössisch-italienische und jederzeitliche Wirklichkeit".

25 Iacopone da Todi, *Donna de Paradiso,* vv. 4–7, in Leonardi (2010, 149–150). ('Hurry, lady, and see that they are beating him; I think they are killing him, so much they have whipped him'). See already Matthew 27.26: "tunc dimisit illis Barabban Iesum autem flagellatum tradidit eis ut crucifigeretur" https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/biblia-sacra-vulgata/lesen-im-bibeltext/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/50/270001/279999/ch/a731509cc01d37f735c14a7964f4692b/ [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023], and John 19.1: "tunc ergo adprehendit Pilatus Iesum et flagellavit" https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/biblia-sacra-vulgata/lesen-im-bibeltext/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/53/190001/199999/ch/5074685dce79862f6542ab24a400ff8e/ [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

26 Iacopone da Todi, *Donna de Paradiso*, vv. 64–67, Leonardi (2010, vv. 64–67, 149–150). ('Lady, they have taken his hand and pressed it against the cross, with a nail they have split it').

"Donna, li pè se prènno
e *clavellanse* al lenno."[27]

This cruelty is particularly fierce, as it is directed against the son of God and his wonderful, holy body; in the same text, the Virgin Mary calls him, in a very beautiful sequence of verses, "fair and rosy-cheeked son, son without peer" and "fair and blonde son, son with a joyful face":

"Figlio bianco e vermiglio,
figlio senza simiglio,
figlio, e a ccui m'apiglio?
Figlio, pur m'ài lassato!
Figlio bianco e biondo,
figlio volto iocondo,
figlio, perché t'à el mondo,
figlio, cusì sprezzato?"[28]

However, in the *laude* of Iacopone the theme of the wound is also declined in a more abstract and metaphorical sense. Spiritual and emotional pain is expressed with the help of metaphors such as the wound. For example, in the same text, *Donna de Paradiso*, Mary's sorrow at the death of Christ is described with the expression: "Ora sento 'l coltello / che fo profitizzato" (vv. 130–131: "Now I feel the knife that was predicted"):[29] the metaphorical wound is represented with the term *coltello* ('knife'). This metaphor, as the secondary literature has pointed out, is frequent in the texts of Iacopone,[30] and is a quotation with readjustment from the Gospel of Luke, 2.35: "Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius" ("and a sword will pierce through your own soul also").

The theme of the wound is often used by Iacopone to express mystical involvement and deep emotion, a feeling both physical and spiritual. In his texts the very special relationship between body and spirit is striking; this is typical of "mystical love" – where the unification with Christ seems to involve not only the spirit, but also the body. In the lauda *O dolce amore*, the mystical wound of love reaches the

27 Iacopone da Todi, *Donna de Paradiso*, vv. 72–73, in Leonardi (2010, 149–150). ('Lady, they have taken his feet and nail them to the cross').

28 Iacopone da Todi, *Donna de Paradiso,* vv. 116–123, in Leonardi (2010, 149–150). ('Fair and rosy-cheeked son, son without peer, son, who I can lean on now? Son, now you have left me! Fair and blonde son, son with a joyful face, son, why has the world so despised you?').

29 Iacopone da Todi, *Donna de Paradiso*, vv. 130–131, Leonardi (2010, vv. 130–131 and 149–150). ('Now I feel the knife that was predicted').

30 See Bettarini (1969, 247–248).

heart, the "chair spirituelle",[31] which in the Middle Ages – as we have already seen in Chapter 1 – was conceived as the "receptacle" of *passiones* and *affectiones*. This image of Love's wound reaching the heart is clearly expressed by the term *accorato* ('pierced to the heart'):

> O alma, si' ardita
> d'aver sua *ferita*
> ch'io mora *accorato* d'amore![32]

The mystical version of Love's wound is joyful and enthusiastic – it is a *passio* that leads to a proper "passion", as Auerbach has demonstrated, and as we have recalled several times in this book. In this way Love's wound becomes an oxymoron, a source of pain and, at the same time, a source of joy – as already highlighted in Chapter 2. Its rhetorical use is evident for example in another *lauda* by Iacopone, *O Amor, devino amore:*

> O *ferita ioiosa,*
> *ferita delettosa,*
> *ferita gaudïosa,*
> chi de te è *vulnerato!*[33]

In particular, expressions such as "ferita gaudïosa, / chi de te è vulnerato" are closely linked to profane medieval love poetry, as an older example from the *Carmina Burana* (that we have already quoted in Chapter 2) clearly shows, confirming once more that Iacopone's *laud*e, as has been highlighted, are filled with references and quotations from profane love poetry.[34] In a broader sense, these phenomena exemplify the fertile exchange between sacred and profane literature that we are investigating in this book through the productive "lens" of the *vulnus amoris* metaphor:

> amare
> crucior,
> morior

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31 The expression is taken from the article of Guerreau-Jalabert (2003, 368).

32 Iacopone da Todi, *O dolce amore*, vv. 64–66, in Leonardi (1988) ('Oh soul, be intrepid, take his wound so that I can die pierced to the heart!').

33 Iacopone da Todi, *O Amor, devino amore, / Amor, che non èi amato,* vv. 11–14, in Leonardi (2010, 79–80). ('Oh happy wound, oh delightful wound, oh wound full of pleasure for the one who is wounded!').

34 On the presence of references to profane love poetry in Iacopone's *laude* see at least Perugi (2001); Menichetti (2007) – which can also be used for further bibliographical references.

vulnere, quo glorior.
eia, si me sanare
uno vellet *osculo*,
que cor felici iaculo
gaudet vulnerare![35]

Excursus: The Virgin Mary and the Dynamics of Joy and Sorrow

The dynamics of joy and sorrow we have highlighted in profane courtly love find a parallel in the religious production dealing with the Virgin Mary. The twofold tradition of her Seven Joys and her Seven Sorrows is a perfect example of this theme, but the latter were commemorated by an official feast only in the early modern age, whereas the former are documented earlier in literary form. In this respect, we can quote the text of Gui Foucois/Pope Clement IV, *Los VII gauz da nostra dona*, from the thirteenth century. However, even before the establishment of this tradition, the twofold idea of the Virgin Mother, happy to have given birth to a child (and especially a child whom she knows is Christ), and of the sorrowful Virgin, who saw her son suffer and die, was an important element of medieval religious production, especially in the *laude* tradition. The two poles of this complex could be described as hovering around the semantic fields of 'life'/'procreation' and 'suffering'/'death' – that is to say, around a syndrome which presents (at a certain level of abstraction, of course) elements in common with the image of profane love in the texts of the courtly tradition.

In this context, I would like to recall in particular an example from the so-called *Laudario Urbinate*, a manuscript presenting a collection of *laude* studied by Rosanna Bettarini.[36] In her work, she shows the excellence of the manuscript from a textual point of view, and then, building on this result, Bettarini analyses the manuscript's reliability also regarding the possible attribution to Iacopone of the texts transmitted by it. The stylistic survey and detailed analysis carried out lead to two results: the first is the re-attribution to Iacopone of fourteen additional texts, and the second result is the identification, for the other laude transmitted by the manuscript, of a "Scuola Urbinate" – a terminology that Bettarini borrows from the vocabulary used in the history of art.

The text I will analyse in particular is a *planctus*, devoted to the passion and the death of Christ: in this *planctus*, the narration begins in a special moment of

35 *Estas in exilium*, *Carmina burana*, 69, in Hilka/Schumann/Bischoff (1930–1970). ('I suffer bitterly, I die for a wound in which I glory. Alas! if only she would heal me with a kiss, she who enjoys to wound my heart with a cheerful dart!').

36 Bettarini (1969). See also Gubbini (2007).

the story, that is to say when the Virgin searches for her son, who seems to have disappeared (in fact, the *Passio* has already begun). In response to the women who ask her about the reason for her anguish, and in order to explain to them the excellence of her son, the Virgin describes in detail his supernatural beauty:

> Li so capilli fôro
> como lo bactut'oro;
> la fronte latïosa
> candida plu ke cosa;
> e le soi belle cilla
> detracte a·mmeravilla;
> e·ll'ocli tanto belli
> no li veio a kivelli;
> e lo naso tillato
> bellissimo ordenato.
> Bocca vermilla, e·ddenti
> plu·cke perne lucenti;
> e lo mento e la gula
> como argento de cola;
> e braça, spalle et anche,
> sì belle non vidi anke;
> mano lung[h]e e·ssutili,
> gamme e·ppedi gentili.
> La carne parea a·mmeve
> una massa de neve;
> e·ssovr'onne belleça
> era l'avenanteça.[37]

The detailed description of the beauties of Christ is intended both to highlight his outstanding nature and to bring out the contrast between the grace of his body and the slaughter and the scandal of martyrdom to which that body was subjected – a martyrdom clearly described by the women some verses after the description quoted. This same dynamic of the painful confrontation between before and after, between a happy original condition and a current unhappy situation, char-

37 Iacopone da Todi (attributed), *Sorella, tu ke plangni*, vv. 64–84, in Bettarini (1969, 497). ('His hair was like wrought gold; his forehead spacious and whiter than anything else; and his beautiful eyelashes wonderfully drawn; and the eyes so beautiful that I have never seen the like on anyone else; and his thin nose, beautifully arranged. Red mouth, and teeth glossier than pearls; and the chin and the neck like freshly cast silver; and arms, shoulders and hips so beautiful that I have never seen the same; hands long and thin, and gentle legs and feet. His flesh seemed to me like a mass of snow; and greater than all his beauty was his grace.')

acterizes some other lines, in which the Virgin narrates some passages of the story, full of regret for the past:

> "Sorelle, dunqua è·mmorto
> lo mio fillo e·cconforto,
> la vita e la sperança
> e la mia delectança,
> Cristo lucedo e·cclaro!
> Or m'è tornato amaro
> lo delecto e lo bene,
> e·dd'angustie e·dde pene
> lo mio core è·rrepleto;
> e ià non sirà leto,
> k'agio perduto tucto,
> lo gaio e lo desducto,
> unde stava scecura,
> sença nulla paiura."[38]

The Virgin strongly underlines the contrast between past and present: joy and goodness have turned into bitterness; her heart is full of anguish and pain, as her source of happiness is lost. The dynamic of joy and sorrow is in fact similar to the one we have encountered in profane courtly texts, but with an important difference: this *planctus* ends on a note of hope – the women in fact exhort the Virgin not to despair, given the fact that the Scriptures announce that Christ will rise again and, thanks to his Passion, he will cleanse humanity from original sin.

Therefore, where the earthly form of passion found in profane texts seems to possess a dynamic without any real evolution, in which the continuous alternation of joy and pain is without hope of resolution, the *Passio Christi,* instead, leads through pain to future joy, thanks to the hope of salvation and redemption contained in the Scriptures.

38 Iacopone da Todi (attributed), *Sorella, tu ke plangni*, vv. 173–186, in Bettarini (1969, 499–500). ('Sisters, thus has died my son, my comfort, life and hope and my joy, Christ, shining and clear! Now joy and goodness have turned into bitterness, and my heart is full of anguish and pain and will never be happy again, since I have lost everything, happiness and joy, for which I was safe without any fear.')

Excursus: The Pelican as *Figura Christi* in the Bestiaries

Figure 4: Original source: British Library, Harley 3244, fol. 54v. Illumination showing a Pelican that feeds his little ones with his own blood
See the following website of the British Library: https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminated manuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=28187

This illumination is taken from the Ms. Harley 3244 of the British Library, fol. 54v. This manuscript is described by the detailed notice of the British Library website as a "theological miscellany", written in Latin; its origin is England, and the date, again according to the BL website, is "1236 to c. 1250".[39] The manuscript also contains a Latin Bestiary (ff. 36 – 71v), and the illumination reproduced here refers to the Pelican, shown as feeding its little ones with its own blood.

The figure of the Pelican is of course present also in the vernacular Bestiaries, which, even though there are many differences among them, all depend on the Greek *Physiologus*, which circulated in many different Latin translations.[40] The first vernacular adaptation in a Romance language is the Anglo-Norman *Bestiaire* of Philippe de Thaün of the first half of the twelfth century.[41] In the section in

39 The notice is at the following website: https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8798&CollID=8&NStart=3244 [last access: Jan. 4th, 2022].
40 See, in this regard, Morini (1996, p. VII, and p. XII–XVI)
41 Morini (1996, XVI).

which this text deals with the Pelican, there is a passage which explains the connection of the bird with Christ:

e de tel nature est:
quant vent a ses oisels
e il sunt granz e bels
e ele le volt joïr,
de ses eles cuverir,
li oiselet sunt fer,
prenent le a becher,
volent le devurer
E ses dous oilz crever.
L[i p]ere est curucié
quant el se sent plaié.
Dunt le bech' e prent
sis ocit a turrement,
e puis les lesse atant,
morz les lesse gisant.
Puis repaire al terz jur,
mort les trove a dolur;
dunc en fait dol si fort
quant ses oisels vait mort,
de sun bec fert sun cors
que li sancs en ist fors.
Li sancs vait degutant
sur ses oisels caant;
li sancs ad tel baillie
par lui venent en vie.
E iceo demustrum
par ceo que sis peignum.
Hic pellicanus et pulli eius pinguntur. Et pellicanus Cristum significat et pulli eius gentes designant.
Cist oisels signefie
le fiz Sainte Marie,
e nus si oisel sumes
en faiture de humes,
si sumes relevé,
de mort resuscité
par le sanc precïus
que Deus laissat pur nus,
cume li oisel funt
ki par treis jurs mort sunt.[42]

42 Philippe de Thaün, *Bestiaire*, vv. 2340–2376, in Morini (1996, 234–236). ('And this is his nature: when he approaches his little ones when they are already big and beautiful, to cajole them, cover them with his wings, these little ones are cruel, start to prick him with their beaks to the point of

The Pelican wounds itself in order to save its offspring: in the same way Christ has been crucified to save mankind. In both cases, the blood has the power to save and to return someone to life. In the context of the present investigation, it is important to highlight that this representation of the self-inflicted wound of the Pelican-Christ strongly emphasises the dimension of the *sacrifice* for Love connected to the wound. We will see in Chapter 5 that this dimension of the sacrifice within the *vulnus amoris* metaphor will become of fundamental importance for the world of profane romance as well.

4.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have especially investigated texts that stage the Passion of Christ, or that refer explicitly to it.

The first section has examined in particular two Passions, the *Passion des Jongleurs* and the *Passion catalane-occitane.* In the first text we find a strong contrast between the glorious flesh of Christ, celebrated in its beauty, and the cruelty of the wounding suffered by the Saviour. In the second one, the motif of the wound is expressed through the story of Longinus striking Christ with the lance: the *vulnus* is here explicitly connected to healing, as the blood flowing from the spear heals the blind Longinus, who suddenly recover his sight – and, with it, gains faith. This is an element that will also characterise the bleeding lance of the Grail tradition, as we will see in the next chapter.

In the second section, I concentrate my analysis on the *laude* production of medieval Italy. The Christocentric mystique of the mendicant orders and Saint Francis's experience of the stigmata – especially thanks to the narrative of this event originating as early as with the first followers of Francis, but most of all in Bonaventure – have a major influence on the artistic and literary production of thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, where increased realism and a more de-

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wanting to devour him and wanting to put out his two eyes. Feeling hurt, the father gets angry, and then he grabs them, pokes them with his beak and kicks them horribly, then he abandons them and leaves them dead, lying on the ground. Then, on the third day, he returns, and is sorry to find them dead; then he is so sad to see his little ones dead that with his beak he hits his own body so that the blood comes out. The blood falls in drops on his youngs: this blood has such a force that it is thanks to it that they come back to life. And this we show with what we draw here. Here the pelican and his little ones are painted. And the pelican means Christ and his little ones represent men. This bird signifies the son of the holy Mary: it is we who are her little ones but in human form, and we are upright, that is to say risen from death thanks to the precious blood that God has shed for us, like the are those little birds that stay dead for three days').

tailed depiction of the suffering of the Passion spread. In particular, in one crucial author within the religious production of medieval Italy, Iacopone da Todi, we find an insistence on the *vulnus amoris* metaphor – especially in the depiction of the suffering of Christ's passion, but not only. In fact, Iacopone employs the motif of love's wound in a more abstract and metaphorical sense as well, in order to verbalise spiritual and emotional pain, or to express the mystical involvement and the emotional feeling connected with it. In this sense, the use of the metaphor in Iacopone's corpus of texts can be compared to its use present in profane lyric poetry, a repertoire that Iacopone consciously quotes, as has been highlighted. There follows a first excursus, devoted to the Virgin Mary and the dynamics of Joy and Sorrow. The paragraph emphasises how the twofold idea of the Virgin Mother, happy to have given birth to Christ, and of the sorrowful Virgin, who saw her son suffer and die, is a key element of medieval religious production, and how this fluctuation presents elements in common with the dynamics of joy and pain highlighted in the texts of the courtly tradition devoted to profane love. However, the excursus stresses also a major difference between the two dynamics: where the alternation of joy and pain of profane passion is without hope of resolution, the *Passio Christi,* instead, leads through pain to future joy, thanks to the hope of salvation and redemption contained in the Scriptures. In the excursus these elements are discussed in particular through the analysis of a *planctus* transmitted by the *Laudario Urbinate.*

It ends the chapter another excursus, dedicated to the image of the Pelican-Christ in the bestiaries, and in particular in that by Philippe de Thaün. The passage analysed insists on the dimension of the sacrifice that characterises both the self-inflicted wound of the Pelican and Christ's Passion – a dimension that will be also crucial for the transformation of the *vulnus amoris* metaphor in the world of profane romance, as we will see in the next chapter.

5 The Wound of Passion, the Bleeding Lance and the Grail Tradition

5.1 The Wound of Passion: Tristan and Lancelot (with Some Considerations on Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec*)

In the world of medieval French *lais* and romances, in verse and in prose, the semantics of *vulnus amoris* plays a fundamental role: in particular, the male protagonist is, very often, wounded and bleeding in the literal sense. More precisely, just as this hero tries to reach his beloved, he suffers a wound, or an old one reopens.

In this section, I will analyse the motif of love's wound in three texts: the *Lai de Yonec* of Marie de France, the *Tristan et Yseut* of Béroul and the *Lancelot ou Le chevalier de la Charrette* of Chrétien de Troyes. These three texts have an element in common, which seems of the greatest interest for the present investigation on love's wound: the male characters, after having been wounded, stain the bedsheets of the woman they love with blood. We will see how this motif has, however, different cultural backgrounds and narrative implications in the three masterpieces analysed.

The first text at the centre of this section is Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec.* A short summary of the plot will be suitable in order to contextualise the love's wound theme. A young and beautiful woman is married to a rich, old and jealous man – this is the topos of the *mal mariée*, widespread not only in the *lais* and in the romances, but also in medieval romance poetry. He has imprisoned his wife in a tower, and his old sister watches her day and night. The sad young woman complains of her fate: she desires a lover in order to know the joy of love which she has read about in stories. Suddenly a goshawk comes flying to her window. The bird transforms itself into a beautiful knight, Muldumarec, who asks for her love. She agrees, provided that he can prove to her that is a good Christian. The knight, who temporarily takes the form of the lady in order to deceive the castle chaplain, receives the Eucharist – thus proving that he is not a creature linked to the devil. They begin their relationship and fall deeply in love. The woman is so joyful that she cannot hide her happiness. For this reason, the two lovers' secret is discovered by the old sister of the lady's husband. The husband then, in order to kill the lover, has iron spikes placed in his wife's window. The bird-lover is pierced by the spikes, enters the bedroom and leave stains of blood on the bedsheets of his beloved. Muldumarec, feeling that he is going to die, announces to his beloved that she is carrying a son, Yonec, by him. Muldumarec then disappears. The desperate beautiful woman looks for him and follows the tracks of blood left

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by him on his way home. She reaches a wonderful city and a palace, probably (as suggested by some textual details) situated in the Celtic "other world". Finally, she finds her lover lying on his deathbed: he tells her to return home and gives her a magic ring, which will make her husband forget all that happened. Muldumarec gives her his sword as well, to hand it on to their son Yonec when he comes of age. The lady then returns to her country and gives birth. Some years later, when Yonec has reached the age to be armed knight, he is invited by a local lord to visit an abbey together with his mother and her old husband. There they find a richly ornamented tomb. They are told that this is the grave of a knight who died for the love of a lady, after having been caught in a trap. The mother then reveals to her son that these words refer to his late father. She hands him the sword she had received from Muldumarec and dies at her lover's grave. Yonec understands and immediately cuts off his stepfather's head, thus accomplishing the revenge prophesied by Muldumarec. At the end of the *lai*, the beautiful woman is buried in her lover's grave, and Yonec becomes the lord of his (real) father's country.

The narrative segment that we will analyse more closely is the one in which the bird-lover is pierced to death by the spikes placed on the window of his lover's bedroom.

The text describes the preparation of the trap by the husband as follows:

> Des *engins* faire fu hastifs
> A ocire le chevalier.
> *Broches de fer* fist forgier
> E *acerer* le chief devant:
> Suz ciel n'ad *rasur* plus trenchant.
> Quant il les ot apparailliez
> E de tutes parz *enfurchiez*
> Sur la fenestre les ad mises,
> Bien serreies e bien asises,
> Par unt le chevaler passot,
> Quant a la dame repeirot.[1]

The lexicon used – *engins* ('traps'), *broche de fer* ('iron pin'), *acerer* ('to sharpen'), *rasur* ('blade'), *enfurchiez* ('made sharp like a pitchfork') – refers to the world of the hunting: the husband hunts the bird-lover.

1 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 284–294, in Walter (2018a, 168). ('He hurried to set a trap to kill the knight. He forged great iron pins, sharp at their ends: there is no sharper blade on earth. When he had prepared them and furnished them with barbed points on all sides, he placed them on the window, tight and well planted, where the knight passed when he returned to see the lady').

This is a folkloristic motif, as has been highlighted,[2] which shows the ancient Celtic material reused by Marie de France in *Yonec*.[3] It is in fact a motif registered in the *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* of Stith Thompson, under the title "Wounding by trapping with sharp knives [glass]".[4]

The wounded Muldumarec then enters the window, and stains the bedclothes with his blood:

> En la fenestre vient volant,
> Mes les *broches* furent devant;
> L'une le *fiert* par mi le cors,
> *Li sanc vermeil en eissi fors.*
> Quant il se sot de mort *nafré*,
> *Desferré* tut enz est entré.
> Devant la dame al lit descent,
> *Que tut li drap furent sanglent.*
> Elle veit le *sanc* e la *plaie*,
> Mut anguissusement s'esmaie.[5]

The wounded Muldumarec prophesies to the beautiful woman that she is pregnant by him: the child to be born will be called Yonec and will avenge them both, killing their enemy. But the sore is bleeding heavily, and he has to go. She follows him, retracing the blood tracks left by her lover on the way:

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2 See Avalle (1990, 170 and 276). For the considerations that follow I rely on the excellent work of Avalle.

3 Clearly, these folkloristic elements are a far cry from the theories of medieval medicine and natural philosophy at the center of the *vulnus amoris* complex. But it is important to note that theory and folkloristic imagery can meet up and coexist in poetry more than in any other field. Even in a discourse universe like the medieval one, where analogies bring together many highly heterogeneous elements, literature can establish the best balance between what can be demonstrated scientifically and what can only be imagined (or even enacted ritually). We have seen that the wound of love is a key element within the poetics of knowledge concerning love, and that it links some very different discourse systems within a specifically literary rather that scientific field: fiction and poetry can reconcile what can be demonstrated scientifically and what can only be imagined. On truth and fiction in Arthurian literature in the twelfth century see Burrichter (1996).

4 Thompson (1955–1958). In the medieval textual production on Tristan, this folkloric motif is also present in the *Tristan* of Eilhart of Oberg: see always Avalle (2010, 277).

5 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 309–318, in Walter (2018a, 168). ('He comes flying in the window but the rods stand in front of him. One pierces the middle of his body and ruddy blood spurts. When he knew he was mortally wounded, he freed himself from the iron and then entered. He sat down in front of the lady on the bed so that the sheets were all bloodied. She sees the blood and the sore; she is moved painfully').

A la trace del sanc s'est mise,
Que del chevaler decurot
Sur le chemin u ele alot.[6]

En cele hoge ot une entree,
De cel sanc fu tute arusee.[7]

Del sanc trova l'erbe muilliee,
Dunc s'est ele mut esmaiee.
La *trace* en siut par mi le pré.[8]

La dame est en la vile entree
Tuz jurs aprés le sanc novel
Par mi le burc desk'al chastel.[9]

Al paleis vient al paviment,
Del sanc le treve tut sanglent.[10]

The bird-lover, like a hunted and wounded animal, leaves tracks of blood, which allow the beautiful woman to follow him. It is therefore important to highlight that the "hunting" dimension, already remarked in the trap placed by the woman's husband, seems to characterise the entire episode of the wounding and death of Muldumarec.

It is precisely this "hunting" dimension that seems to be in the background – however, with different implications – of another episode of "blood on the bedclothes" to be found in Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut.* In this text, just as Tristan is trying to reach his beloved Yseut in her bed, an old wound reopens:

Sa *plaie* escrive, forment *saine;*
Le sanc qui'en ist les dras ensaigne.
La *plaie saigne*, ne la *sent*,
Qar trop a son delit *entent.*[11]

6 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 342–344, in Walter (2018a, 170). ('She tracked the blood the knight was losing on the path she was taking').

7 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 347–348, ibid. ('In this mound, there was an entrance, it was all stained with the same blood').

8 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 357–359, ibid. ('She found the grass all wet with blood and this greatly moved her. She followed the trail of blood on the meadow').

9 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 372–374, in Walter (2018a, 172) ('The lady entered the city, she still followed the blood whose fresh traces led her from the village to the castle').

10 Marie de France, *Yonec*, vv. 377–378, ibid. ('She arrived in the palace, in a paved room, which she saw full of blood').

11 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 731–734, in Poirion (1995a, 22). ('But his wound that reopened bleeds profusely. The blood that flows from it leaves its mark on the sheets. The wound bleeds, and he does not even realise it, as he is all too intent upon his delight.'). In this chapter, for the texts of Béroul and of Thomas, I have consulted the French translation included always in Marchello-Nizia/Boyer/Bu-

The narrative context of this passage is as follows: Tristan's enemy, the dwarf Frocin, attempts to catch Tristan in flagrant adultery.[12] In order to "capture" Tristan's footprints in the act of reaching Yseut's bed, the dwarf scatters flour in front of Tristan's bed. But the latter observes Frocin's preparations without being seen. To avoid leaving traces on the flour, Tristan jumps from his bed to Yseut's. When he does so, however, an old wound of his reopens and bleeds profusely. Thus, Tristan bloodies the sheets without even realising it: he is too busy enjoying carnal pleasure with Yseut.

One detail seems particularly important: some verses before the quoted passage, the text clarifies the origin and the nature of this wound:

> Le jor devant, Tristan, el bois,
> En la janbe *nafrez* estoit
> D'un grant sengler, mot se doloit.
> La *plaie* mot avoit *saignié.*
> Deslïez ert, par son pechié.[13]

The fact that Tristan received the wound that reopens from a boar while he was hunting again connects the hero's wound to the semantics of hunting. But, if we compare this episode to the death of Muldumarec in Marie de France's *lai de Yonec*, we can observe a slightly different dynamic. Where in the *lai* of Marie de France Muldumarec was simply hunted like a wild beast by the husband, here in the text of Béroul there is a "hunting-hunted" dimension: Tristan is hunting in the forest, but at the same time he is "hunted" by the wild boar.[14]

We clearly see how in this passage there is no trace of the mystical dimension of the wound: it is in fact a purely physical wound, just as the pleasure that completely absorbs the attention of the male character is strongly physical.

This observation seems to be in apparent contradiction with the religious background of the *vulnus amoris* that we outlined in the first chapter of this book. But what this book precisely intends to analyse are the transformations of this metaphor of love's wound in different texts and in different centuries, and the "back and forth" movements of this theme between the sacred and the profane. Moreover, the passage from Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut* on the wound analysed

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schinger/Crépin/Demaules/Pérennec/Poirion/Risset/Short/Spiewok/Voisine-Jechova (1995) – all remaining errors are entirely my own.

12 I reuse here some considerations from my recent article (Gubbini 2019a).

13 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 716–720, in Poirion (1995a, 22). ('The day before, Tristan, hunting in the forest, had been injured in the leg by a large boar, and he was in great pain. The wound had bled profusely. The bandage had come undone, to his misfortune').

14 For the connection between the motif of the wound and beastliness, see Huchet (1990, 26–52).

here must be contextualised within the internal dynamics of this text: a text of Celtic origin, which, in Béroul's version, still retains many aspects of its "archaic" dimension; a text that some critics have defined to be without morality and whose conception of love remains "barbaric" – as appropriately highlighted by the secondary literature on the subject.[15]

In this passage from Béroul's text, the theme of the wound plays a fundamental role on the level of diegesis; the connection with the dimension of love and desire is also ensured by the immediate narrative context, which links the protagonist's wound and bleeding to carnal pleasure. However, as already stated, the *vulnus* here is an old hunting wound that accidentally reopens while the protagonist is reaching the bed of his beloved. It is not in fact a wound that Tristan receives out of love for Isolde. Therefore – this is a very important element – the dimension of sacrifice does not seem to be present here. Finally, as already mentioned, this presence of the wound in Béroul does not seem to have any mystical or religious dimension.

On a theoretical level, such an outright denial of the presence of a religious layer of meaning might surprise readers acquainted with the medieval reading technique of religious allegoresis. Are not all forms of literature, from antiquity to the high Middle Ages, from love poetry to epics and romance, susceptible, in the hands of a medieval reader, to allegorical readings that transform them into intimations of Christian truths, however indirect? Here, I should like to distinguish between historically possible *uses* of literature for other purposes (such as religious meditation) and *literary readings* that are sensitive to the economies of meaning inherent in a given text. If any text whatsoever *can be* read in a religious perspective, this tells us nothing about the relevance of a possible religious dimension within the fabrics of the text itself, or else there would be no difference between a medieval text with a strong Christian dimension and a dominantly secular text. Strictly speaking, it would even have been *impossibl*e for a medieval writer to write either a religious or a non-religious text, as there would have been no choice. On the other hand, this does by no means imply that the two spheres, secular and sacred, were wholly distinct in the Middle Ages (see below).

A literary reading sensitive to the question of the presence of Christian elements will in any case have to discuss the plausibility of each religious interpreta-

15 See in this respect the considerations of Daniel Poirion on the difference between Béroul and Thomas: "Mais Thomas ajoute une intention morale que n'avait sans doute pas notre auteur [scilicet: Béroul], qui pose plus naïvement, plus brutalement le problème de la contradiction entre le désir et l'ordre" (Poirion 1995b, 1131). For the "barbaric" conception of love in Béroul, see Varvaro (1963, 63).

tion within the whole framework of a given text, and in the cases discussed above the evidence seems to go against a Christian reading of the hero's wounds.

On the other hand, in the romance in verses by Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette,*[16] the metaphor of the *vulnus amoris* presents, as we will see, a strongly "mystical" character – which will be seen to be at once physical and spiritual – a trait absent in Béroul.

In the economy of Chrétien's text, the passage we will read is a crucial turning point in the diegesis: the long-awaited night of love between Lancelot and Guenevere.

Lancelot, in order to reach the queen, who is locked up in her room, must force the bars of the window. In doing so, he severely injures his fingers down to the nerves – but he feels no pain, as his attention is turned elsewhere:

> As fers se prant, et sache, et tire,
> Si que trestoz ploier les fet
> Et que fors de lor leus les tret.
> Mes si estoit *tranchanz li fers*
> Que del *doi mame jusqu'as ners*
> *La premiere once s'an creva,*
> *Et de l'autre doi se trancha*
> *La premerainne jointe tote;*
> *Et del sanc qui jus an degote,*
> *Ni des plaies, nule ne sant*
> *Cil qui a autre chose antant.*[17]

As we can clearly see, there is a remarkable difference between the *fers* ('iron bars') that wound Lancelot and the *broches de fer* ('iron spits') which pierced Muldumarec to death in Marie de France's *lai de Yonec:* in fact, where in the case of the bird-lover the spits were a trap prepared by the husband and unbeknownst to the lovers, in the passage of Lancelot it is a voluntary choice of the valiant knight to force the iron bars in order to enter the queen's bedroom. Moreover, in *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*, as opposed to both the examples analysed above – the

16 See the masterful analysis of the romance of Frappier (1968, 122–144). See also the important book of Topsfield (1981).

17 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette,* vv. 4644–4654, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 621). ('He seizes the bars, shakes them, pulls them so well that he bends them and tears them from their sealing. But the iron was so sharp that he nicked the first knuckle of the little finger down to the nerves, and completely severed the first knuckle of the neighbouring finger. But he is not aware of any drops of blood falling from it, nor of any injury, for he has a completely different preoccupation').

lai de Yonec and the *Tristan et Yseut* of Béroul – the hunting dimension is totally absent from the episode.

On the other hand, it is important to highlight, as stressed by previous secondary literature, that there are many points shared between the two episodes of the wound narrated respectively in Béroul and in Chrétien de Troyes, but with a major difference, which we will now analyse in detail.

As witnessed by the rich bibliography on the subject, there are in fact many points of contact between the two passages of Béroul and Chrétien: the theme of the wound, the close connection with physical pleasure and, very important, the total absorption of the hero in amorous pleasure, so much so as not to notice the wound and not to feel the pain – all verbalised through the presence, in both passages, of the two rhyme words *sant – antant.*[18] Thus far, there seems to be no significant change in Chrétien compared to Béroul. But let us read further.

Bleeding, Lancelot enters the queen's room, and kneels in front of her bed, because, as Chrétien says, he does not venerate any holy body as he does the queen's:

> Et puis vint *au lit la reïne,*
> Si l'*aore* et se li *ancline,*
> Car *an nul cors saint ne croit tant.*[19]

Bleeding, Lancelot has a night of love with Guenièvre, and, without perceiving it, he stains the white bedclothes with his red blood. The morning after, Lancelot kneels again in front of her bed as in front of an altar, as the text points out:

> Au departir a soploié
> A la chanbre et fet tot autel
> *Con s'il fust devant un autel.*[20]

Given these telling details and their precise configuration, the mystical nuance of the passage seems undeniable. We cannot, therefore, agree with those who mini-

18 Poirion (1994a, 1242); Gingras (1999; 2003); Perugi (2007); Paradisi/Fuksas (2016).

19 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette,* vv. 4659 – 4661, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 621 – 622). ('and then he arrives at the queen's bed. He remains in adoration by bowing before her, because it is the holy body in which he believes the most'). In this chapter, for the texts of Chrétien de Troyes, I have consulted the French translation included ibid. – all remaining errors are entirely my own.

20 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 4724 – 4726, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 623). ('As he walked away, he knelt down toward the bedroom, as one might do before an altar').

mise this aspect in the name of a merely worldly and almost blasphemous reading of the passage.[21]

Of course, the text and the passage in question are undoubtedly dedicated to the description of a profane and not a divine love – and it is in no way our intention, as we have already made clear in previous publications, to suggest that medieval courtly romances are to be read as profane in the letter and sacred in allegorical reading.[22] But our conception and our current clear separation – post-Tridentine, I would say – between what is worldly and what is sacred, between what is still "orthodox" and what is blasphemous, in my opinion does not work for the Middle Ages. This overlapping, this seductive, inevitable yet dangerous confusion between *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas* was in fact, we could say, the central node of all Romance literature preceding Dante and, more broadly, of the whole of medieval culture. It is a confusion primarily in terms of terminology and, following from this, ideology – as shown in a famous passage by William of Saint-Thierry, from the *Expositio in Cantica canticorum*, masterfully examined by Aurelio Roncaglia: "O Amor a quo omnis amor cognominatur, etiam carnalis ac degener!"[23] A confusion, then, between *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas* with which one could surely "play" on a literary plan in the Middle Ages – or, on the other hand, refuse to play.

As pointed out above, the fact that these spheres overlap does not imply that a dominantly secular discourse is impossible. The distinction between *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas* is not inexistent, yet at the same time it is blurred, and this means it is possible to play on their intersection, confusion or even continuity, as perhaps Chrétien does, whose irony the authors of secondary literature have repeatedly tried to underline, and as Guido Guinizzelli would do in the song *Al cor gentil.* Yet it seems to me that the great medieval *auctores* of courtly literature could never totally escape from the power and problematic nature of this distinction. This is a confusion that Dante would try to resolve in *Inferno V* and in his ascensional path of the *Commedia*[24] but which would reappear, irremediably unresolved, in Petrarch (as we have already seen in Chapter 2 of the present book).

21 Thus declares on page 90 the contribution – as a whole, albeit acceptable – of Paradisi/Fuksas (2016): "Reference to the 'cors saint" (v. 4671) and the comparison between Guenièvre's 'chambre' and an 'autel' (vv. 4735–4736) in the *Chevalier de la Charrette* must be intended in this very mundane and somewhat blasphemous sense".

22 See Gubbini (2009, 206, footnote 215; 2012a, 25).

23 See Roncaglia (1969).

24 See Gubbini (2017b).

Only upon returning to his room, Lancelot realises that his fingers are badly injured. But he does not regret any wound: he would prefer to be without arms to giving up entering the queen's room:

> Et lors a primes se mervoille
> De ses doiz qu'il trueve *plaiez*;
> Mes de rien n'an s'es esmaiez
> Por ce qu'il set tot de seür
> Que au traire les fers del mur
> De la fenestre se *bleça*;
> Por ce pas ne s'an correça,
> *Car il se volsist mialz del cors*
> *Andeus les braz avoir traiz fors*
> *Que il ne fust oltre passez.*[25]

At the beginning Lancelot causes injuries to himself in an attempt to uproot the iron bars from the window and thus to reach Guenevere and live a night of love with her: it would therefore seem, at a first glance, to be a mere contingent situation of the diegesis that "forces" him, so to speak, to face wounds and pain. However, Lancelot's solicitude, firm will, resistance and endurance towards wounds (and the pain that follows) in order to reach the queen bring this passage closer to the attitude of the martyrs, their good disposition and their infinite "patience". Furthermore, as mentioned above, the religious nuance of the passage taken from Chrétien's *Lancelot* is corroborated by the references to the *cors saint* (v. 4661, 'holy body') and by the act of kneeling in front of Guenevere's bed "as if in front of an altar" (v. 4726: "Con s'il fust devant un autel"). As we have already mentioned in Chapter 1 of this book, in Patristic literature the martyr for Christ glorifies himself through the wounds he received for the love of the Lord. The glory and exaltation of the martyr through his wounds and the insistence in the passage of Chrétien de Troyes on Lancelot's patience and endurance to wounds are the effect – and the symptom – of a similar emotional condition: *passio* as 'passion'. The relationship between love and wound is both accidental and causal; the hero's deep passion has the effect of suppressing the perception of physical, real pain. The "need" to be wounded for love – as an index of the

25 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette,* vv. 4732–4741, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 623–624). ('And it was then that for the first time he discovered with astonishment that his fingers were injured. But he was not alarmed, knowing full well that it was while removing the bars of the window from the wall that he had hurt himself. So he had no regrets about it, because he would have preferred having both his arms torn off to not having made it through the window').

"true passion" – and the patience towards wounds that we saw in Lancelot's episode was in fact strongly present (naturally, if seen from a completely religious perspective) in the writings of the Church Fathers. An important aspect of the reflection developed by Patristic literature on this matter is the sacrifice of Christ for the sake of the humankind and his immense patience. Tertullian, for example, highlights the *voluptas patientiae* of Christ in his *De patientia:*

> Numquid tamen subeundae morti etiam contumeliis opus fuerat? *Sed saginari voluptate patientiae* discessurus volebat. Despuitur, verberatur, deridetur, foedis vestitur, foedioribus coronatur. Mira aequanimitatis fides. Qui in hominis figura proposuerat latere, nihil de impatientia hominis imitatus est. Hinc vel maxime, Pharisaei, Dominum agnoscere debuistis: *patientiam huiusmodi nemo hominum perpetraret.*[26]

Lancelot patiently endures his wounds to save Guenevere, similarly to what Christ did for the love and salvation of mankind in His passion.[27] Lancelot also experiences the *voluptas patientiae:* he is almost an *alter Christus.*[28] This is an aspect of this character that is corroborated by the episode of his liberation of the prisoners in the realm of Gorre; however, before quoting and commenting the passage, it will be useful to contextualise the episode in the plot of Chrétien's *Lancelot.*

As is well known, from the beginning of the romance, Lancelot searches for Guenevere, who has been kidnapped by the evil Méléagant. The latter is taking the queen to his realm, Gorre, the country from which no one returns, and where he has long been holding prisoners from Arthur's realm, Logres. Lancelot, while he looks for Guenevere in order to rescue her, encounters many adventures.

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26 Tertullianus, *De patientia*, III, *PL*, 001, 1254 ('But was it perhaps necessary that he also received the insults, at the moment of dying? But he wanted, on leaving, to be satisfied with the pleasure of patience: he receives spit, beatings, insults; they put on him infamous robes, and an even more infamous crown. faith worthy of admiration for his ability to endure: he who was manifested in the form of a man imitated nothing of human impatience. From this before all else, Pharisees, you should have recognised the Lord: no man has ever shown such great patience!'). This passage by Tertullian is commented by Didi-Huberman (2007), in connection with an interesting analysis on the wound and incarnation in the visual arts.

27 In this case, it would be hard indeed to distinguish clearly between a case of intentional ambiguity and an effect of interference between courtly and religious imagery on the side of the readers.

28 Jacques Ribard has interpreted the entire romance *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette* of Chrétien de Troyes as a religious allegory in his book (1972, in particular, for the parallel between Lancelot's wounds and Christ's ones, see 136). As we will see, this section agrees on many of the specific considerations made by Ribard, but it structurally distances itself from the quoted book for the function that, in my opinion, such parallels with the mystical and religious production have in Chrétien's *Lancelot.*

In one of them, he escorts a damsel through the forest; she is the same damsel who is with him when they find at a crossroads the comb of Guenevere, full of her golden hair.[29] While in the forest, they encounter a knight who is in love with the damsel, but whom she does not love in return. The knight wants to take the damsel with him, but Lancelot declares that, as it is not the lady's will to follow the knight, the latter would have to fight Lancelot before being allowed to take her. They find a clearing in which they can fight, but in this meadow, there is also the father of the knight, who forbids his son to fight against Lancelot. However, in exchange the father promises to his son that they will follow Lancelot and the damsel for the next two days. Lancelot and the damsel then resume their journey, and arrive at a beautiful place, where there is a church with a cemetery. Lancelot asks the monk if he can visit the cemetery, and once there, he sees the most beautiful graves. On every grave, there is written the name of the person who will rest there in the future. Lancelot reads all the names – they are the names of the best knights of the world, the knights of the Round Table. One grave is more splendid than the others: the monk explains to Lancelot that it is not possible to see the inner side of the grave, as it is covered by a very heavy flagstone. On the grave, there is the following inscription:

> Et letres escrites i a
> Qui dïent: "Cil qui levera
> Cele lanme seus par son cors
> Gitera ces et celes fors
> Qui sont an la terre an prison,
> Don n'ist ne clers ne gentix hon
> Des l'ore qu'il est antrez;
> N'ancors n'en est nus retornez:
> Les estranges prisons retienent;
> Et cil del pais vont et vienent
> Et anz et fors a lor pleisir."[30]

Lancelot easily lifts the flagstone. The monk is shocked by the prodigy, and further explains to him that the tomb will welcome the one who raises the slab, therefore, implicitly in the text, Lancelot himself. After many adventures, there is a fight be-

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29 See the analysis of this passage in Chapter 6 of the present book.

30 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 1905–1915, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 553–554). ('There is an inscription which says: He who will lift this slab on his own will free those who are held captive in this land from which no one can leave, even a clerk or a gentleman, once he has entered it. No one has come back yet. Foreigners are held there prisoners while the inhabitants of the country come and go, enter and leave at their leisure').

tween Méléagant and Lancelot. The latter is winning against the queen's evil kidnapper, but Méléagant's father, Baudemagu, interrupts the fight to save his son. A peace agreement is reached: Méléagant will set the queen free, on the condition that Lancelot, after a year, will return to fight him again. Therefore, according to the tradition of the kingdom of Gorre, if one prisoner is allowed to leave, the others may also be freed. The prisoners then bless Lancelot, who has freed them:

> Tel costume el païs avoit,
> Que, puis que li uns s'an issoit,
> Que tuit li autre s'an issoient.
> Lancelot tuit beneïssoient:
> Et ce poez vos bien savoir
> Que lors i dut grant joie avoir,
> Et si ot il sanz nule dote.[31]

In this case Lancelot has accomplished a venture on the edge of the supernatural, an element reinforced by the prophecy contained in the inscription on the tomb. Lancelot is therefore predestined for this venture.

Lancelot's liberation of prisoners from the kingdom of Gorre seems to find its sacred parallel in Christ's harrowing of Hell and the liberation of the righteous from the beginning of time – a theme which Dante, for example, will address in *Canto IV* of the *Inferno.*[32]

Lancelot therefore presents different characteristics that connect him to the model of Christ: but all these religious elements are used, in the construction of Lancelot's character in Chrétien de Troyes' romance, not to build the perfect image of the "religious knight", but to highlight the strength of his love for the queen.[33] A very dangerous mixture, this love of Lancelot's for Guenevere: he has put the queen on the altar in God's place. And this is in fact the reason that prevents Lancelot, the bravest knight, from conquering the Grail, as the romance *Queste del Saint Graal* – part of the larger prose cycle called *Lancelot-Graal* – will explicitly state later.[34] On a theoretical level, this goes to show that, for the con-

31 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette,* vv. 3907–3913 in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 603). ('The custom established in the country was that, if one left, all the others would have the freedom to leave. So everyone blessed Lancelot, and you can well imagine the joy that was to reign then, and that indeed reigned').

32 See Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, *Canto IV,* vv. 52–63, in Inglese (2007). On the theme of Christ's liberation of the "ancient Justs" see Turner (1966); Gounelle (2000); Franceschini (2016, 39).

33 See the considerations, already in this direction, of Poirion (1994a, 1248).

34 *Queste del Saint Graal*, §85, Gros (2009, 895–896). On *the Lancelot-Graal* cycle see at least the considerations on the entire cycle present in Frappier (1961); Walter (2001, IX–LV).

fusion and amalgamation of sacred and profane love to be productive of relevant interpretations, a basic distinction between the two spheres must be presupposed.

As we have seen in this section, the trajectory of love's wound starts out from an archaic pattern – and a Celtic one – present in Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec* and in Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut*, and then becomes "Christianised" with Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette* – even if still in a context of profane love.

The next section will show a further evolution, in an even more religious and mystical sense, of the wound of love in the world of romance.

5.2 The Wound, the Bleeding Lance and the Grail Tradition

In the romance of Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* – a text, as is well known, incomplete and "bipartite" – some parts of the romance are dedicated to the new character, Perceval, and others are consecrated to Gauvain.[35] It has been highlighted, for example by Philippe Walter, that "Comme l'indique son nom (qui n'a aucune consonance celtique), Perceval aurait dû "percer" le secret du val où se trouvait la maison du Roi Pêcheur, possesseur du Graal".[36] The reference is to the key scene of the romance, the scene in which Perceval, after having met the Fisher King on the river, is having dinner with him at his castle. A strange cortege manifests itself – with young people bringing different objects: one a spear, others candlesticks, another the Grail, and a last one a silver board. The spear is described as follows:

> Que qu'il parloient d'un et d'el,
> Uns vaslez d'une chanbre vint,
> Qui une blanche lance tint
> Anpoigniee par le mileu,
> Si passa par entre le feu
> Et ces qui el lit se seoient,
> Et tuit cil de leanz veoient
> *La lance blanche et le fer blanc;*
> *S'issoit une gote de sanc*
> *Del fer de la lance an somet*
> *Et jusqu'a la main au vaslet*
> *Coloit cele gote vermoille.*[37]

35 See Poirion (1994b, 1299–1318).

36 See Walter (2014, 316).

37 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, vv. 3190–3201, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 764).

This is the first marvellous object that Perceval sees in the cortege, but, as the text says, he restrains himself from asking for explanations about this marvel, and then also about the Grail: in fact, Perceval does not ask because he remembers the counsel imparted to him by the man who knighted him: that is, to refrain from speaking too much. As we will see later, this excess of discretion will cause him trouble, and will have severe consequences for the Fisher King and for his realm.

The Grail, in this first appearance in medieval French literature, is represented without blood: as has been said: "À la suite de Robert de Boron, les auteurs postérieurs à Chrétien de Troyes identifient le Graal à la fois avec le plat de la Cène et le récipient dans lequel Joseph d'Arimathie a recueilli le sang du Christ".[38] But if in the scene from Chrétien's *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* there is no blood in the Grail, instead we find, as we have seen, the blood dripping from the lance. The identification of this spear with Longinus's weapon – the lance with which the Roman legionary struck Christ's side – is made only later, by the *Continuations* of Chrétien's romance.[39] However, as already noticed,[40] the healing function of the bleeding lance – the most interesting element, in our view, for the present book, that insists on the dynamic of wound and healing investigated in Chapter 6 – is developed later, in the prose cycle of the *Vulgate*,[41] and in particular in the *Estoire del Saint Graal* and in the *Queste del Saint Graal.* In particular, in the following passage from the *Queste*, Galaad is asked to grease the wound of the Fisher King – who in this passage is qualified, with an adjective already present in Chrétien's *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, as *"Roi Mehaignié"* ('the Maimed King')[42] – with the blood of the bleeding lance in order to heal him:

> Et pour ce que je ne voel pas que tu t'en ailles sans la *garison* au *Roi Mehaignié*, voel je que tu prenges *del sanc de ceste lance et l'en oing les gambes:* car c'est la chose par coi il sera *garis.*[43]

38 Bokozy (2020, quotation at 209–210). See also the considerations on the close relationship between Christ's redeeming death and the Grail as bearer of a host, the body of Christ, of Zambon (2019, 17).

39 See Bokozy (2020, 215).

40 See Bokozy (2020, 217).

41 On this literary tradition, see the beautiful book of Trachsler (1996, in particular the 3rd chapter).

42 See the footnote 4 of the §364 in Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1638).

43 *Queste del Saint Graal*, §363, in Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1166–1167). ('And as I do not want your departure to prevent the Maimed King from being cured, I would like you to take blood from this spear to rub his legs with it: it is the treatment that will make him heal'). In this paragraph, for the texts of the "Lancelot-Graal" cycle, I have consulted the French translation included ibid. – all remaining errors are entirely my own.

> Et Galaad vint a la lance qui ert couchie sor la Table *et toucha au sanc*, puis vint au *Roi Mehaingnié, se li en oinst les gambes ou il avoit esté ferus.* Et il se leva maintenant sains et haitiés del lit: si en rent grasses a Nostre Signour qu'il est si tost *garis.*[44]

But what kind of wound afflicts the Fisher King? The explanation is present already in *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* by Chrétien, and the narrative context of the passage is the following: after dinner at the Fisher King's castle, during which Perceval has seen the mysterious cortege with the bleeding lance, the candlesticks, the Grail, and the silver board, he goes to sleep without having been able to pose a single question. The morning after, he finds the castle empty. He then meets a young lady – who, he discovers, is his cousin – who explains to him the origin of the wound of the Fisher King:

> Rois est il, bien le vos os dire,
> Mes il fu an une bataille
> *Navrez et mahaigniez* sanz faille
> Si que il aidier ne se pot.
> *Il fu feruz d'un javelot*
> *Parmi les hanches amedos*,
> S'an est aüz si angoissos
> Qu'il ne puet a cheval monter.[45]

As has been highlighted by Daniel Poirion, this wound "a un caractère sexuel que l'euphémisme et la metonymie déguisent à peine. (…) Il y a là comme la marque d'un malheur, qui est peut-être le châtiment d'une faute".[46]

This sexual origin of the wound is then made explicit in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*,[47] where the Fisher King is called Amfortas – a name probably derived from the Latin term *infirmitas*.[48] As has been pointed out,[49] Amfortas's

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44 *Queste del Saint Graal*, §364 in Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1167). ('Galaad approached the spear which was lying on the Table and took blood, then, coming to King Méhaingnié, he rubbed his legs with it where the king had been struck. Immediately the king rose from the bed at his best. He gives thanks to Our Lord for such a rapid healing'). Passage already quoted in Bokozy (2020, 218–219).

45 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, vv. 3508–3515, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 772). ('He is indeed a king, I can tell you, but he was wounded in a fight and he remained crippled to the point of not being able to move without help. It is because he was hit by a javelin between the two hips and he was left with such pain that he can no longer ride a horse').

46 See Footnote 2 in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 1352).

47 On Amfortas' wound see the contribution of Kellner (2023).

48 See Walter (2014, 33).

49 Mathey-Maille (2015, in particular 7).

wound is clearly connected in Wolfram's text to an excess of love – and, as a punishment, he has been struck in his private parts by a poisonous lance. The reason for this punishment was that Amfortas, a Lord of the Grail, did not respect the Grail's law that imposes on all the Lords of the Grail which wife they have to choose. Amfortas has in fact chosen the woman he loved and not the one he was meant to wed, and was therefore punished.

So, the Fisher King being one of the Grail's lords and guardians, his punishment seems to constitute a sort of curse on the Grail's lineage. Moreover, as has been highlighted,[50] in the romance of Chrétien, there is a striking similarity between the wound of the Fisher King and the one that Perceval's father has received:

> Vostre peres, si nel savez,
> *Fu par mi les janbes navrez*
> Si que il *mahaigna* del cors.[51]

Therefore, like the Fisher King, Perceval's father, too, seems to share the same sexual punishment – and it is not by chance that in Chrétien's romance it is precisely through Perceval that the Fisher King could have been healed. In fact, the day after the cortege, when Perceval meets the young lady who is also his cousin, she explains that if he had asked the all-important question during the mysterious cortege at the castle, Perceval would have made the healing of the Fisher King's wound possible:

> Ha! Percevax maleüreus,
> Com fus or mesaventureus,
> Qant tu tot ce n'as demandé,
> *Que tant eüsses amandé*
> *le boen roi qui est maheigniez*
> *Que toz eüst regaaigniez*
> *Ses manbres et terre tenist.*[52]

50 See the considerations of Daniel Poirion in footnote 2 in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 1352). See also Mathey-Maille (2015, 6).

51 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal,* vv. 435–437, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 696). ('Your father, you do not know it yet, had been injured between the legs, which made him completely crippled').

52 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, vv. 3583–3589, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 774). ('Ah! unhappy Perceval, what bad luck for you that you did not ask all these questions, because otherwise you would have healed the good crippled king, and he would have recovered the use of all his limbs and the power over these lands').

If we compare the trajectory of the wound present in the Grail tradition – and especially in the pioneer text in this regard, Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* – to the one we have traced in the previous section, we will see that we are dealing with a turning point. In fact, the hero – in this case Perceval – is not wounded for love anymore, as was the case (though with major differences) for Muldumarec in Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec*, for Tristan in Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut*, and for Lancelot in Chrétien's *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette.* Also, the "red and white" pattern of colours we had seen in the motif of the blood on the white sheets in the three texts just mentioned, is transformed in Chrétien's *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal:* the pattern "red and white" repeats itself in an amorous context, but it is no longer the blood of the hero on the beloved's white bedclothes. In this new transformation of the pattern, the narrative context is as follows: the countryside is covered in snow, and Perceval, very early in the morning, sees some wild geese fleeing a falcon which is attacking them. One of them, caught, wounded, and then left by the falcon, has lost three drops of blood, which had spread over the snow. And Perceval, seeing this image, is totally absorbed and lost in his reverie – this evocative mixture of colours in fact recalls to him the face of his beautiful *amie.* The passage that follows is a typically Chrétien masterpiece of *variatio* on a fundamental element of the *descriptio puellae* – the beloved's complexion:

Si s'apoia desor sa lance
Por esgarder cele sanblance,
Que li sans et la nois ansamble
La fresche color li resanble
Qui est en la face s'amie,
Et panse tant que il s'oblie.
Que ausi aloit an son vis
Li vermauz sor le blanc asis
Come les gotes de sanc furent
Qui desor le blanc aparurent.
An l'esgarder que il feisoit
Li ert avis, tant li pleisoit,
Qu'il veïst la color novele
De la face s'amie bele.
Percevax sor le gotes muse
Tote la matinee et use
Tant que hors de tantes issirent
Escuier qui muser le virent
Et cuiderent qu'il somellast.[53]

53 Chrétien de Troyes, *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal,* vv. 4197–4215, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembow-

The final element I would like to stress as regards Perceval in relation to the literary texts analysed in the previous section is something we have already mentioned: the fact that the hero is not wounded for love. In *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal* in fact, as we have seen in this section, the character who is wounded is not Perceval, but the Fisher King. In the case of the Fisher King, we are very probably dealing with a wound that has its origin in love and in an excess of lust. It is, instead, the hero Perceval who had the possibility (and the moral duty) to heal the Fisher King's wound.

Excursus: King Arthur as Melancholy "Christ in Distress" in London, BL Additional 10294, fol. 94r

Figure 5: Original source: British Library, Additional 10294, fol. 94r, detail.
See the following website of the British Library: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_10294_f002r

ski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 789). ('He leaned on his spear to contemplate this image, for the blood and snow formed a composition which resembled to him the fresh colours of his friend's face; and he became absorbed in that thought. He compared the vermeil on the white background of her face with the drops of blood that appear on the snow. All in this contemplation he imagined, in his delight, seeing the fresh colours of the face of his beautiful friend. Perceval spent the whole morning dreaming about the drops of blood, until the squires came out of the tents. Seeing him plunged into this reverie, they thought he was asleep').

The complex and stratified dynamic of "back and forth" between profane and religious contexts and implications of the wound in Arthurian romances analysed in this chapter finds a striking synthesis in an illumination contained in the ms. London, BL Additional 10294, fol. 94r.[54] In the description of the illumination provided by the website of the British Library, section "Digitised Manuscripts", we read: "Girflet watches the hand emerge from the lake to catch King Arthur's sword as the king dies from his wounds."[55] A closer look at a detail of the image of the King, however, holds a small surprise. King Arthur in fact is not only dying of his wounds, but he is doing so with a special, iconographically relevant attitude: that of a melancholic "Christ in distress" (or "Pensive Christ").[56] This type of image crosses the element of the hand that supports the head – the typical attitude of the melanchonic, as the fundamental book of Klibanski, Panofsky and Saxl has highlighted –[57] with the Crown of Thorns and the presence of the wounds – two features existing also in the similar iconographical subject of the "Man of Sorrows", but with a difference: where in fact the wounds exhibited in the latter are mainly those of the Crucifixion, the wounds of the "Christ in distress" are usually those of the Flagellation.

The artistic subject of the "Christ in distress" developed, as can be gleaned from the secondary literature, from the type of "Job in distress"[58] – a *figura Christi*, according to the typology of Christian theology. The subject was very present during the Renaissance – as Albrecht Dürer's painting *Christus als Schmerzensmann*, preserved today at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe, beautifully attests (see below).

The pensive component of the topic – the head supported by the hand – which the illumination shares, among others, with the type of "Christ in distress" finds its explication in the very text that corresponds to the illumination in the manuscript.[59] *La mort le Roi Artu* in facts says that Arthur:

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54 Fundamental for the study of the relationship between text and image in the manuscripts of the Lancelot-Graal cycle is the *Lancelot-Graal Project:* https://www.lancelot-project.pitt.edu/lancelot-project.html [last access: July 7th, 2022]. See on specific cases and in general: Stones (2003); Kennedy (2004). For the iconography present in the manuscripts of the Lancelot-Graal cycle Stones (2018), and, more recently, Fabry-Tehranchi/Nicolas (2021).

55 https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_10294 [last access: July 5th, 2022]. For an analysis of the illuminations that represent Arthur's death in the Lancelot Graal cycle, see Stones (1988) – to be consulted also for other bibliographical references on the theme.

56 See Marrow (1979); Puglisi-Barcham (2013).

57 Klibanski/Panofsky/Saxl (1979).

58 Schiller (1966).

59 I will quote in the next lines the edition of Poirion/Walter (2009), based on the ms. Bonn, Universitätsbibliothek, S 526. I have, however, also examined the text handed down from the ms. Lon-

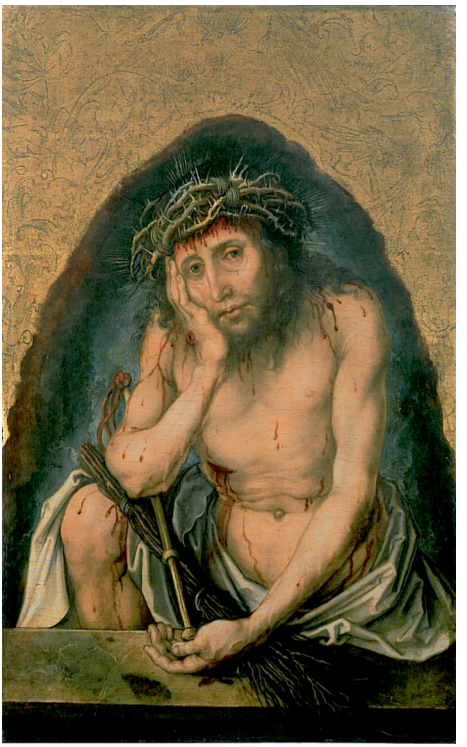

Figure 6: Albrecht Dürer, *Christus als Schmerzensmann*, Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe (photograph Immanuel Giel, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christus_als_Schmerzensmann_(Duerer).jpg, public domain, {{PD-US-expired}}. The CC license terms for re-use do not apply to this image).

> "Par foi, fait li rois, ce pensoie je bien, car ma fins aproce durement". Lors commencha a penser, et en cel penser li chaïrent les larmes as ex.[60]

But along with the melancholic component, we have the elements, first, of the two crowns – in the case of Christ, a crown of thorns – and, second, of the wounds, which place the illumination close to the artistic type of "Christ in distress". Why, then, this analogy between Christ and Arthur in this illumination? In trying to answer this question, we should first of all consider the illumination in the con-

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don, Additional 10294, where the illumination here discussed is preserved – and there are not, in this passage, any variations that alter the "substance" of the text related by the two manuscripts. See already Sommer (1909–1916, VI, 380).

60 *La mort le roi Artu* §334, in Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1469). ("Well," said the King, "that is what I thought, my end is very near". He entered into a meditation that brought tears to his eyes.)

text of the manuscript. The manuscript BL Additional 10294 was, together with the mss. Additional 10292, Additional 10293, Additional 10294/1, "formerly part of the same volume".[61] The illumination at the centre of our analysis is placed at fol. 94r – that is to say in the final section of the manuscript, which hands down the masterpiece *La mort le Roi Artu.* This text narrates the end of King Arthur and the Round Table, presenting itself, as Jean Frappier has suggested, as the "epilogue" of the seemingly endless Arthurian tradition.[62] As the last of the three final parts of the vast cycle known as *Lancelot-Graal* (*Lancelot propre*, *Queste del Saint Graal* and *La Mort le Roi Artu*) and nowadays recognized as the result of a coherent process of creation – especially thanks to the "thèse de l'architecte" developed by Jean Frappier[63] –, *La mort le Roi Artu* stages the end of the Arthurian world. It does so, as we shall see, in a "tragic" perspective (in the sense this term takes on in writings of the period), as it focusses on the perception of the changes caused by time and fortune and by the destructive power of the adulterous passion between Lancelot and Guenevere. At a certain point, the two lovers are discovered and leave Arthur's court together. A cruel war ensues, which sees Arthur and his nephew Gauvain fight against Lancelot. The latter, although victorious, generously returns the queen to the king. Arthur and Gauvain are still not satisfied and decide to continue the war. Lancelot has left the country and Arthur follows him, entrusting his kingdom and his wife Guenevere to Mordret, the incestuous son Arthur had with his half-sister Morgan le Fay. Mordret wants the kingdom and desires Guenevere; he organises a coup, spreading the word that Arthur has died. To escape Mordret, Guenevere hides in the Tower of London. Arthur fights both Lancelot and the Romans; he learns of Mordret's betrayal and dreams of the Wheel of Fortune predicting his fall. He does not change his course, however, nor does he ask for Lancelot's help. When he faces Mordret in the final battle, this results in the death of both and in the end of the Round Table. Before dying, Arthur orders Girflet to throw the sword Excalibur into the lake – thus marking the end of the Arthurian world. Girflet, albeit reluctant at first, will eventually follow Arthur's order and tell him what he has seen: after throwing the sword into the lake, as soon as the sword approaches the water, he sees an arm coming out of the lake up to the elbow, grabbing the sword, wielding it in the air three or four times, then disappearing, with

61 I quote from the description of the ms. London, BL Additional 10292: https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_10292 [last access: July 5th, 2022].

62 I come back here to some considerations already developed in Gubbini (2018a).

63 Frappier supposes that different authors contributed to the *Lancelot-Graal* cycle, but identifies, in analogy to what happened in the construction of the cathedrals during the Middle Ages, the presence of a "plan d'ensemble dans son unité", conceived by "celui qui mérite d'être appelé le premier maître de l'œuvre ou, d'un seul mot, l'Architecte". I quote from Frappier (1961, 144).

the sword, into the lake. From Girflet's narration of the event, Arthur understands that his end is near and starts to weep. This is precisely the scene that the illumination at the center of this excursus deals with. From these few elements of the action we can see how the dominant note of *La mort le Roi Artu* is a sense of the tragic, and this precisely in the sense in which William of Conches' twelfth-century commentary on Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* uses the term. Here, the close relationship between tragedy, the theme of Fortune and the fall of "kings and highly placed men" is clearly stressed: "*Quid tragediarum*, etc. [...] In hoc carmine potuisti perpendere reges et provectos deprimi per Fortunam indiscrete percucientem, id est improvise, quia nescitur dies vel hora miseriarum".[64] In another passage of the same Commentary on Boethius, William of Conches gives us a more synthetic definition of tragedy: "Tragedia est scriptum de magnis iniquitatibus a prosperitate incipiens, in aduersitate desinens. Et est contraria comediae quae ab aliqua aduersitate incipiens in prosperitate finitur".[65] In *La mort le roi Artu* we have a great character – King Arthur –, we have Arthur's dream of the wheel of Fortune, as well as the fall and the end of Camelot and of the Arthurian world: these are all elements that correspond to the medieval concept of tragedy we have highlighted, and that have, therefore, legitimately led scholars – starting with Jean Frappier – to underline the tragic dimension of *La mort le Roi Artu.*[66]

Even though this tragic dimension "haunts" the entire text, with hostile fates in this world in store for almost all the characters, there is no doubt that the one that stands out – for the adversities he has to bear and the fatal decisions he makes despite the predictions – is King Arthur. In the abundance of sorrows which come upon him, he is a sort of equivalent of Job. The fact that Job, in turn, can be considered a figure of Christ explains the analogy of the representation of Arthur in the illumination with the artistic model "Christ in distress". One might ask, of course, how a "tragically" failing character like Arthur can be compared to Christ – even if only at the level of an iconographic representation of an illumination? A possible answer can be found in the special concept of salvation present in *La mort le Roi Artu.* In the very final section of this masterpiece,

64 William of Conches, *Glose super Librum Boecii de Consolacione*, II.2, British Library MS Royal 15 B 3, fol. 39v, quoted in Kelly (1993, 2005, 71). (For the English translation, see ibid., 70–71: "In this sort of poem [that is, tragedy], you could have taken to heart examples of kings and highly placed men brought down by Fortune's striking without discernment – that is without expectation, because one knows neither the day nor the hour of one's miseries.").

65 See Nauta (1999, 105). (For the English translation, see Kelly 1993, 69: "Tragedy is a writing dealing with great iniquities, which begins in prosperity and ends in adversity. And it is contrary to comedy, which begins with some adversity and finishes in prosperity").

66 See Frappier (1961); Pratt (1991); Gubbini (2018a).

after the death of Arthur, the text gives us some hints regarding the otherwordly destiny of some of the characters, among whom the King himself. As a hermit explains to Girflet, Arthur in fact lies in a tomb in the consecrated *Noire Chapele.*[67] In *La mort le Roi Artu* therefore we do not have the disquieting doubt whether Arthur is really dead or not and whether he will come back in the future, which can be found in previous texts dealing with Arthur's death, such as Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britannniae* and Wace's *Roman de Brut:* in fact, as has been pointed out, "[t]heir narratives preclude the question of salvation for Arthur by suggesting that, despite his mortal wound, he may return to rule Britain once more."[68]

This is not the case of *La mort le Roi Artu*, where we are certain that the King is dead and lies in a sanctified chapel – we could even hope that Arthur will find salvation in the other world, as indeed seems to be the case with Lancelot and Guenevere, again according to the very last part of *La mort le Roi Artu.*[69]

In spite of their moral mistakes and bad choices [70] – which tragically bring about the end of the Arthurian world – the otherwordly destiny of some of the principal characters of *La mort le Roi Artu* seems to be one of salvation. And, especially in the case of Arthur, the path to his probable salvation is paved with enormous suffering, tears, losses and tragic deaths – a sort of equivalent of the fate of Job: hence, probably, the representation in our illumination of Arthur as "Christ in distress".

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67 See *La mort le Roi Artu*, § 338; Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1471–1472).

68 I quote from King (2014, 116).

69 Lancelot becomes a hermit and on his death the archbishop exclaims that he dreamed of angels carrying the knight's soul to heaven. Regarding the death of Guenevere, who has become a nun, *La mort le Roi Artu* states: "onques si haute dame plus bele fin ne fist, ne qui ot plus bele repentance, ne qui plus doucement criast merci a Nostre Signour qu'ele fist", quote from Poirion/Walter (2009, vol. 3, 1475). ('Never did a lady of such high rank know a more beautiful end or more sincere repentance, asking Our Lord for forgiveness with more humility than she had done.').

70 Even though a specific concept of *hamartia* is usually absent in medieval definitions of tragedy – at least before the translation of William of Moerbeke of Aristotle's *Poetics* (1278), or Herman Alemannus' translation (1256) of the commentary of Averroes on the *Poetics:* see Kelly (1993, 2005, 117–118) – we can consider Arthur's incestuous love for his half sister a moral error, which leads to disaster, but does not preclude Arthur from being an illustrious character. The decisive argument in favour of such a reading is found in the way in which this character is presented not only in *La mort le Roi Artu*, but in the entire Arthurian tradition: though morally flawed and, in some texts, even presented as weak and passive (see Friede 2018), he is not depicted as a villain.

Excursus: The Healing Power of Christ's Blood

Intimately linked to the love wounds of the *Passio*, the motif of the blood of Christ is of great importance to medieval literature – especially (as we have seen in this Chapter 5) to French Grail literature, which highlights how contact with the blood flowing from the bleeding lance possesses healing powers; the bleeding lance can in its turn be identified with Longinus's spear, a theme which we will evoke again at the end of this excursus.

The purifying virtue of the blood of the Lamb is already underlined in the Apocalypse: "Et dixi illi: Domine mi, tu scis. Et dixit mihi: Hi sunt, qui venerunt de tribulatione magna, et laverunt stolas suas, et dealbaverunt eas in sanguine Agni". [71] The motif of the beatific and healing virtue of Christ's blood is then abundantly used in mystical writings – from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age. An important portion of this mystical production, in which the blood of Christ plays a fundamental role, is by female authors such as Catherine of Siena and Julian of Norwich. As has been underscored by researchers, blood is the central symbol of Catherine's mysticism, interpreted as the principle of life and a sign of the Incarnation's salvific power.[72] Catherine constructs a rich "bloody" imagery, in which the blood washes, heals and nourishes. In accordance with John 6:54, Christ is said to have healed us, giving us "la carne in cibo e 'l sangue in beveragio". [73] This salvific and vital dimension of the blood of Christ is a motif that is forcefully present also in Julian of Norwich. The English mystic underlines the abundance[74] and preciousness of this blood which proceed precisely from the intensity and power of Christ's love for humankind:

> For it is most plentuous, as it is most precious, and that by the vertu of the blessed godhead. And it is our owne kinde, and all blissefully overfloweth us by the vertu of his precious love.[75]

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71 *Apc* 7, 14 (italics mine). (See English translation on the following webpage: http://www.sacredbible.org/studybible/NT-27_Revelation.htm [last access: December 9th, 2022]: "And I said to him, 'My lord, you know'. And he said to me: 'These are the ones who have come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and have made them white by the blood of the Lamb'".) I take up here some considerations already made in Gubbini (2022).

72 See Bartolomei Romagnoli (2006, 222): "Principio di vita e segno della potenza salvifica dell'Incarnazione, è il simbolo centrale, la cifra stessa della mistica cateriniana, come esperienza di dolore e di amore".

73 Catherine of Siena, *Lettera 260*, in Volpato (2002, 508). ('his meat as food and his blood as drink'). The passage is already commented in Bartolomei Romagnoli (2006, 225, footnote 112).

74 On the abundance of Christ's blood in Julian of Norwich see the recent Star (2020).

75 I quote the passage from Watson/Jenkins (2006, 167). (See modern English translation in Windeatt 2015, 57: "for it is most abundant as it is most precious, and that is so by virtue of his blessed

Among the various wounds of Christ, it is in particular the one on the side that arouses a rather strong image – that of being able to live inside it and find shelter. Thus, for example, in the *Dialogo della Divina Provvidenza* by Catherine of Siena:

> El vostro luogo, dove voi stiate, sia Cristo crocifixo unigenito mio Figliuolo, abitando e nascondendovi nella caverna del costato suo, dove voi gustarete, per affecto d'amore, in quella natura umana la natura mia divina. In quello cuore aperto trovarete la caritá mia e del proximo vostro, però che per onore di me, Padre etterno, e per compire l'obbedienzia ch'Io posi a lui per la salute vostra, corse a l'obbrobriosa morte della sanctissima croce.[76]

In fact, as the *Dialogo* explains, through the "open side" one can penetrate the secret of Christ's heart:

> Io volsi che gli fussero conficti e' piei, facendoti scala del Corpo suo; e il costato aperto, acciò che tu vedessi el secreto del cuore.[77]

Therefore, among the different wounds of the *Passio Christi* it seems that especially the one on the side has influenced and energised the imagery of mystical literature. Yet this element is present also in courtly texts, confirming once more the interesting dynamic of fruitful exchange between sacred and profane production. A beautiful example can be found in a text of Arnaut Daniel, *Doutz braitz e critz:*

> Dieus lo cauzitz,
> per cui furon assoutas
> las fallidas que fe *Longis lo cecx*,
> voilla q'ensems eu e midons jagam
> en la cambra on amdui nos mandem
> uns ries covens don tan gran joi atendi
> que.l sieu bel cors baisan, rizen descobra
> e que.l remir contra.l lum de la lampa.[78]

Godhead. And it shares our nature and washes most blissfully over us by virtue of his precious love").

76 Catherine of Siena, *Libro della divina dottrina: Dialogo della divina provvidenza*, in Fiorilli (1912, 584). ('In the place where you are, there may be Christ crucified, my only-begotten Son, dwelling and hiding yourself in the cave of his side, where you will taste my divine nature in that human nature, through the affection of love. In that open heart you will find my charity and that of your neighbour, since for the honour of me, the Eternal Father, and to fulfil the obedience that I imposed on him for your salvation, he ran to the shameful death of the most holy cross').

77 Ibid., 600 (italics mine). ('I wanted his feet to be nailed, making you a stairway for his Body; and the side opened, so that you could see the secret of the heart').

78 Arnaut Daniel, *Doutz braitz e critz*, vv. 33–40, Eusebi (1995, 112–113). ('May the merciful God, who absolved the sins committed by Longinus the blind, grant that Madonna and I lie together in the room where we both exchanged certain beautiful promises from which I await the great

Here the wish of Arnaut is very "worldly", so to speak: being able to lie together with his beloved and to kiss and admire her body in the light of the lamp. In this profane "prayer" to God, [79] Arnaut evokes Longinus, who was known in the Middle Ages as the blind centurion who pierces Christ's side with his spear, and then recovers his sight, thanks to the mixture of blood and water which spills from the wound and wets his hands, which Longinus brings to his eyes – thus making miraculous contact with Christ's blood. This myth was probably the result of a mistake in the translation or the interpretation of the oldest texts which speak about him. [80] The myth interpreted the blindness of Longinus in a literal sense, whereas in the original sources it was very probably intended not as a physical, but as a moral blindness, a metaphor for the darkness of sin. But the important element for the present analysis is the use that literature makes of this misunderstanding and, more broadly, of this theme: it is, in fact, again the healing power of Christ's blood which is crucial for the myth of Longinus, enabling the centurion to become a sort of "paradigm" of a miraculously-healed person in the Middle Ages – a paradigm, then, likewise valid for much "earthlier" requests of miracles, such as the one present in the beautiful poem of Arnaut Daniel.

5.3 Conclusions

This chapter has traced a trajectory of the metaphor of love's wound in the world of the *lais*, and of the romances. I have concentrated my analysis predominantly on the verse romances, adding, however, some considerations about the prose romances. In the first section of this chapter, I highlighted that the path of the *vulnus amoris* in medieval French narrative production starts from an archaic pattern – and a Celtic one – present, for example, in Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec* and in Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut.*

The "turning point" of this trajectory is to be found, in our view, in Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette:* in this text, even if still in the context of a profane love, the metaphor of love's wound in the narrative production becomes "Christianised". Lancelot, depicted by Chrétien as almost an *alter Christus*, suffers with patience his wounds for the love of Guenevere: Chrétien de Troyes here stages in his Lancelot the most important question and *querelle* at the centre

joy of discovering, kissing and laughing, her beautiful body and to contemplate it against the light of the lamp').

79 On this topic see Beggiato (1999), and Di Girolamo (2005).

80 Ibid., 404.

of the culture of his time – the complex relationship and the seductive confusion between *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas.*

In the second section of this chapter, I analyse a further evolution of the *vulnus amoris* metaphor in medieval French textual narrative production dedicated to the Grail legend. In Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, which presents the Grail for the first time in romance texts, the metaphor of the wound is developed in an even more religious and mystical direction. The protagonist of the first part of the romance, Perceval – differently from Muldumarec in Marie de France's *Lai de Yonec*, from Tristan in Béroul's *Tristan et Yseut*, and from Lancelot in Chrétien's *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette* – is not anymore wounded for love. The character in the plot who becomes marked by the wound is the Fisher King. Furthermore, in the case of the latter, this wound is a *vulnus amoris*, one which has its origins in (excessive) love on the part of the wounded. Perceval is, instead, the possible "healer': that is to say, the person who could heal the wound of the Fisher King.

The trajectory traced in this chapter shows an increasing "Christianisation" of the metaphor of love's wound in the passage from the *lais*, to the romances, first in verses and then in prose.

There follows a brief excursus, dedicated to the analysis of an illumination contained in the ms. London, BL Additional 10294, fol. 94r. This illumination is included in the section of the manuscript that hands down the masterpiece *La mort le Roi Artu*, and shows King Arthur full of wounds, pensive and melancholic. The representation of the attitude of King Arthur in this illumination seems close to the artistic type of "Christ in distress". The reason for this affinity may be found in the way the character of Arthur is represented in *La mort le Roi Artu:* he is in fact bearing all sorts of adversities, and facing, until the end, the fatal decisions he has to take in spite of negative predictions. King Arthur is therefore in *La mort le Roi Artu* an equivalent of Job, who is in turn a figure of Christ – and therefore represented, in the illumination of the ms. London, BL Additional 10294, fol. 94r, with a strong similarity to the artistic type of "Christ in distress" – even though this does not imply that Arthur himself is a figure of Christ; he rather resembles a "tragic" version of Job. This example shows in a striking way the dynamics of "back and forth" between profane and religious contexts and implications of the wound at the centre of this book.

The chapter ends with another excursus, devoted to the theme of the healing power of Christ's blood. As seen in this same chapter, the motif of the blood of Christ is of great importance in French Grail literature, which highlights how contact with the blood flowing from the bleeding lance possesses healing powers. The motif of the beatific and healing virtue of Christ's blood is then abundantly used in

mystical writings: the excursus analyses some passages of two female authors, Catherine of Siena and Julian of Norwich.

As the bleeding lance quoted above can be identified with Longinus's spear, the excursus evokes then the myth of Longinus – and, in particular, his presence in a poem of Arnaut Daniel. Also in the case of Longinus, it is, in fact, again the healing power of Christ's blood which is crucial, enabling the centurion to become a sort of "paradigm" of a miraculously-healed person in the Middle Ages.

6 She Wounds, She Heals: Healing the Wound

6.1 Ambivalences and Ambiguities: The Wound, its Healing Therapy and the Image of the "Supernatural" Woman in the Middle Ages

Up to this point, we have investigated the concept of love's wound itself, but what is its relation to the antithetical yet complementary concept of healing? And what is the role played by the image of the woman in this intricate knot?

In the Middle Ages this intimate connection finds its natural frame in the crucial couple of pain and pleasure, the "bedrock", so to speak, of all medieval discourse on emotions. As some important studies have shown, pain and pleasure constitute a privileged point of view for the analysis of the *passiones* in the Middle Ages, both for their centrality in medieval thought on the emotions and for their mutual interdependence.[1]

In this chapter, I will therefore concentrate my attention to the polarity "wound–healing", but before I can do so, a methodological clarification seems appropriate. I will of course analyse in this chapter the theme of healing as present in medieval texts as a "therapy" for a physical or metaphorical wound: a wound that, therefore, is verbalised in the texts by the semantic field of the *vulnus amoris.*[2] But, differently from the past chapters, I will not confine my attention to instances of healing that refer directly to a *vulnus amoris* in the strict sense. Instead, I will extend this chapter's analyses to cases of healing or solace provided by female characters in medieval Romance texts as a therapy for emotional "pain" in a more general sense, including the solace that the beloved can provide to a lover who is shattered and destroyed by amorous passion as such. Thus, in this chapter I intend "wound" as a concept in a somewhat broader sense, which differs slightly from that adopted in the previous chapters.[3]

The interdependence and the mutual compresence of pain and pleasure finds a parallel in the medieval imagination about woman, especially from the twelfth century onward. In fact, a double point of view, an ambivalent view of woman es-

1 See Bec (1968, 545–571); Casagrande/Vecchio (2009).

2 The woman who wounds, but at the same time has the potential to heal by physical love, is an important motif in German *Minnesang*, especially Heinrich von Morungen. I should like to thank Beate Kellner for her comments on this aspect.

3 For a theoretical discussion on the concept of "vulnerability", see Chapter 1.

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tablishes itself in this crucial period of European culture, the "renaissance of the twelfth century" to quote the title of the famous book by Charles Haskins.[4] To recall an example, Marbode of Rennes introduced two chapters on this subject in his *Liber decem capitulorum*, one entitled *De muliere mala*, the other *De muliere bona.*[5] In the former, Marbode highlights the deceptive power of female beauty where sordid secrets are hidden behind a bright face: "It facie renitens secretaque sordida celans".[6] In the same period, Walter Map,[7] a writer at the court of King Henry II of England, tells of several disquieting feminine figures in his work *De Nugis Curialium:* they are mostly phantasmatic apparitions, disguised evil spirits, as he says in the very famous passage "A *fantasia*, quod est aparicio transiens, dicitur *fantasma*".[8] In fact, it is possible to define the image of the woman in the Middle Ages as both "phantasmatic" and "fantastic".[9] These two adjectives pertain to the same lexical field and return, via modern and medieval French and via medieval and classical Latin, to the Greek *phantasia.*[10] *Phantasia* is an extremely dense term, but, to simplify, we can say that it corresponds to the faculty of imagination.[11] In ancient Greek, *phantasia*, together with the Greek verb *phantázo* 'to show oneself, to appear', and the key term *phántasma* 'appearance, vision, dream'[12] constitute a group of terms essential to the history of ideas. *Phantasia* was related etymologically, by Aristotle, to the term for 'light': "As sight is the most highly developed sense, the name *Phantasia* (imagination) has been formed from *Phaos* (light) because it is not possible to see without light".[13]

4 Haskins (1927).

5 Leotta (1998).

6 *Liber decem capitulorum*, III, De muliere mala.

7 See Bate (1972, 860 – 875); Latella (1984 – 1987, 45 – 59).

8 James/Brooke/Mynors (1983, 160). See, on these themes, Gubbini (2019b).

9 I recall here some considerations I have already anticipated in Gubbini (2021a).

10 In particular, the term *phantasma* has acquired the significance of a mental image in the field of Aristotelian philosophy (and here of course I simplify): an image that is created on the basis of sensorial impressions and is subsequently "stored" in the mental space known as "imagination". However, as far as the developments of the term and of its semantic field in medieval romance languages are concerned, the meaning consists largely in "apparition", and, in particular, an apparition emerging from the supernatural or enchanted spheres. We can recall for example, the rare Old French verb *enfantosmer*, specifically meaning 'to enchant', used in narrative contexts dealing with fairies.

11 See references on this theme in Chapter 2 of this book.

12 See for example Bailly (1935): *s.v. phantázo:* 'se montrer, apparaître', and *s.v. phántasma:* 'apparition, vision, songe'.

13 Aristotle, *On the soul*, Book III, Ch. 3 (English translation from the website: https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/aristotle_anima_final.pdf [last access: December 4th, 2022]. The connection between the two terms is found, then, in the Stoics: see Lefebvre (1997).

We will see in this chapter that this remote etymological connection between the activity of imagination and the quality of brightness appears to have left some traces at a metaphorical and, more broadly, an epistemological level, and, precisely, in the imagery of the beloved who heals present in medieval Romance literature. In fact, two major leitmotifs emerge among the different themes and metaphors connected to this image: the supernatural brightness and the powers of the beloved-healer, a phantasmatic and fantastic figure, a complex and seductive image, caught between the human and the supernatural world, between reality and the realm of imagination.

6.2 The "Supernatural" Woman in Lyric Poetry – from William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, to Petrarch

William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, is the first troubadour whose poems have been handed down to us. Part of possibly the most powerful family in medieval France, he was, as all the Dukes of Aquitaine, honorary abbot of Saint Martial de Limoges, but was, at the same time, twice excommunicated. Indeed, William experienced several difficulties with the Church as a result of his stormy and unruly love life. As a poet, he is chiefly well known as the author of irreverent texts dedicated to his friends, the *companhos*, which include outrageous sex stories. In addition, he also wrote courtly texts, all of them, however, characterised by a strong physical dimension. One cannot fail to notice that in nearly all the texts of the corpus attributed to William IX the erotic theme is dominant: in particular, among the ten poems certainly known to be by him, only one, whose incipit is *Pos de chantar m'es pres talenz*, has no reference to the sphere of love.

But what image of women is conveyed in his poems? We shall see that this varies according to the different poetic "genres" present in William's corpus. In the texts dedicated to his friends, the *companhos*, women are mere objects of erotic satisfaction: for example, they are metaphorically compared to two mares in *Companho farai un vers [qu'er] covinen*, and represented by the metonymy of the female sex in *Compaigno, tant ai agutz d'avols conres.* William's "materialistic"[14] approach to love finds its climax in the text *Farai un vers pos mi sonelh*, which has been defined a *fabliau ante litteram.*[15] In fact, this text, a true anticler-

14 The attitude of William towards love has been defined as an 'aristocratic materialism': see, in this direction, Pasero (1973, 219); Milone (1979); Mancini (1984, 31); Gubbini (2009).

15 See Dronke (1973, 287–288).

ical poem by explicit statement by the author himself,[16] recounts William's erotic hyperboles with the wives of two of his vassals (and therefore in opposition to the courteous virtue of *celar*, 'to hide') – almost to claim, against any possible opponent, his domination over all the "things" his fiefs contain.

But for a long time now it has been noticed that the production of William includes some more courtly texts as well:[17] that is, texts in which the woman is presented in a more flattering way than in the production dedicated to the *companhos*, and where are already present some elements that will later constitute the "core" of courtly poetry.

One key element is the desire and longing for the beloved; this theme in William's "courtly" production is closely connected to the idea that the presence of the woman and a reciprocity of feeling are essential to the well-being of the man, as in some verses of the poem *Ab la dolchor del temps novel:*

De lai don plus m'es bon e bel
non vei mesager ni sagel,
per que mos cors non dorm ni ri
ni no m'aus traire adenan,
tro qu'eu sacha ben de la fi,
s'el'es aissi com eu deman.[18]

16 See in particular the following verses of the text: "Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh,/e·m vauc e m'estauc al solelh;/donnas i a de mal conselh,/et sai dir cals:/cellas c'amor de chevaler/tornon a mals./Donna non fai pechat mortau/que ama chevaler leau;/*mas s'ama monge o clergau/non a raizo:/per dreg la deuria hom cremar/ab un tezo*" (William IX, *Farai un vers, pos mi sonelh*, vv. 1–12, in Pasero (1973, 125) ('I will compose a *vers*, since I am sleepy, and I walk and rest in the sun: there are ladies with evil intentions, and I can say which ones: those who despise the love of a knight. A lady who loves a loyal knight does not commit a mortal sin: but she is wrong, if she loves a monk or a cleric. Rightfully she should be burned on a stake'). The controversy against women who deny their love to knights, but still grant it to clerics appears here for the first time in the *trobar* – at least among the corpus that has arrived to us. But the debate opposing the love of the cleric to that of the knight is well attested in the field of medieval Latin: from the first half of the twelfth century, the *Altercatio Phillidis et* Florae is probably one of the first Latin medieval texts in which the question arose. Just after the *Altercatio* there is the *Concilium Romaricimontis*, another medieval Latin text that deals with the theme, located in the Convent of Remiremont. Even in the *Concilium* the cleric defeats the knight, as one can imagine in texts written by clerics. It is therefore clear that the subject was perceived, at the time of Guillaume, as urgent, and Guillaume himself seems to perceive the danger. Guillaume, who had deep political and biographical disagreements with the Church, therefore opposes to the ambiguity of the *amor clericalis*, a "materialist" theory of love (for this theme, see Gubbini (2009, 65–67; 2012b, 18–20).

17 In fact, for this reason, William has been defined "trovatore bifronte" ('two-faced troubadour'): see Rajna (1928).

18 William IX, *Ab la dolchor del temps novel*, vv. 25–26, in Pasero (1973, 250).

This motif of the essential (psychophysical) presence of the beloved for the (psychophysical) well-being of the lover is even more present in William's poem *Molt jauzens mi prenc en amar*. This poem has in its centre a charming *domina*, described as a joy that brightens more than any other, a dark day that turns to light:[19]

mas si anc negus jois poc florir,
aquest deu sobre totz granar
e part los autres esmerar,
si cum sol brus jorns esclarzir.

Anc mais no poc hom faissonar
cors, en voler ni en dezir
ni en pensar ni en consir;
aitals jois non pot par trobar,
e qui be.l volria lauzar
d'un an no.i poir' avenir.

Totz jois li deu humeliar
e tot'autr'amors obezir,
midons, per son bel acuillir
e per son bel douset esgar:
e deu hom mai cent tans durar
qui.l joi de s'amor pot sazir.

Per son joi pot malaus sanar,
e per sa ira sas morir,
e savis hom enfolezir,
e belhs hom sa beutat mudar,
e.l plus cortes vilaneiar,
e.l totz vilas encortezir.

Pus hom gensor no.n pot trobar
ni huelhs vezer, ni boca dir,
a mos obs la vueill retenir,
per lo cor dedins refrescar
e per la carn renovelar,
que no puesca envellezir.[20]

19 I include here some considerations I have already anticipated in Gubbini (2021a).

20 William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, *Molt jauzens mi prenc en amar*, vv. 9–36, in Pasero (1973). (English translation: "but if ever could one joy blossom, this one should above all bear fruit and shine above all others, just as a sombre day turns brighter. And never could anyone portray such a body, for in want nor wish nor in though nor in imagination; such a joy can't find an equivalent; and if one wanted to praise it properly, he couldn't do it in a year. Every joy must lower itself and all other love object obey my lady, because of her pleasantness and of her sweet beautiful look; and he will live a hundred times longer who can partake the joy given by her love. Because of

We see how in this passage the "list", so to speak, of the beloved's excellent virtues and of the supernatural effects caused by her is introduced precisely by the quality of brightness: "mas si anc negus jois poc florir, / aquest deu sobre totz granar / e part los autres esmerar, / si cum sol brus jorns esclarzir" ("but if ever could one joy blossom, this one should above all bear fruit and shine above all others, just as a sombre day turns brighter"). *Esmerar* in fact means 'to shine',[21] and a further contribution to this semantic field is to be found in the comparison with the sombre day that turns brighter, the verb *esclarzir* meaning 'to illuminate'.[22]

Closely related to the same *milieu* and the same geographical area of this poem of William IX, there is a text called *Boeci*, a hagiographic poem probably composed in the third quarter of the eleventh century in the famous abbey of Saint-Martial de Limoges.[23] The text is a reworked version of Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae*, and adapts the original in various passages. It will be of use to compare two extracts. The first passage, taken from Boethius's *Consolatio*, introduces the moment in which the allegory of Philosophy appears to the protagonist. In the second passage, taken from the vernacular text *Boeci*, the woman who suddenly shows up becomes an allegory of Biblical Wisdom:

> Haec dum mecum tacitus ipse reputarem quenmoniamque lacrimabilem stili officio signarem, adstitisse mihi supra uerticem uisa est mulier reuerendi admodum uultus, oculis ardentibus et ultra communem hominum ualentiam perspicacibus colore uiuido atque inexhausti uigoris, quamuis ita aeui plena foret ut nullo modo nostrae crederetur aetatis.[24]

> ella's tan bella, reluz ént lo palaz;
> lo mas o íntra, inz es granz claritaz,
> ia no es óbs fox i ssia alumnaz;
> ueder ent pót l'om per quaranta ciptáz.[25]

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the joy (given by her love) can the sick turn healthy and because of the lack of her love can a healthy man die and a wise man turn mad and a handsome man lose his beauty and the most courteous turn into a lout and the most churlish turn into a courtier. Since nobody can find a worthier woman nor eyes see one, nor mouth describe one, I want to keep her all for me, to bring freshness to my heart and to renew my flesh, so that it cannot grow old". The translation, with some changes, is quoted from the website: http://www.trobar.org/troubadours/coms_de_peiteu/guilhen_de_peiteu_09.php [last access: July 14th, 2022]).

21 See Levy (1973, 168).

22 See Levy (1973, 161).

23 See Schwarze (1963).

24 Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, I, 1, in Stewart (1953, 130–131).

25 *Der altprovenzalische «Boeci»*, in Schwarze (1963, 111).

As we can see, the insistence on the lexical field of brightness appears more in the female description contained in the Occitan passage than in the Latin one. The Occitan text in fact immediately links the beauty of the woman to her luminosity, which is stressed through the use of the verbs *relucer* ('to shine') and *alumnar* ('to shine') and of the term *claritaz* ('clarity'). Such insistence can probably be related to the special role played here by the *Domina splendens.*[26] She seems to embody the figure of Biblical Wisdom whose luminosity is described in Scripture as follows: "est enim haec speciosior sole et super omnem stellarum dispositionem luci conparata invenitur prior".[27]

The female figure of the text *Boeci* also appears to be an *imago Christi*, since she possesses the supernatural power to send evil souls to Hell and welcome the good ones to Heaven, as the *Boeci* explains later in the poem.[28]

Brightness and supernatural powers: we see how these two special elements we have encountered in the *Boeci* characterise the image of the beloved of William IX as well. And we will see later in this chapter that these two characteristics will mark the description of the idealised woman also in other key texts of medieval Romance literatures.

Coming back to William IX: the extraordinary effects that the fantastic woman of William's text has on human beings mirror the supernatural powers we have noted in the *domina* of the *Boeci* as well. But there are also some differences. Hidden behind William's text, we may find parallel and latent Biblical sources, some-

26 The passage of the *Boeci*, the role of *Sapientia* in the formation of the concept of *Midons* in the poetry of the Troubadours and the correspondences present in the text of William IX have already been pointed out in the excellent works of Lucia Lazzerini, notably in Lazzerini (2013, 150–164). Our perspective on the role of this image of *Sapientia* in the evolution of the lady of the Troubadours is, however, significantly different (as we have already pointed out in Gubbini 2009, 206, in a passage which we will resume here), especially as regards the interpretation of this unmistakable community of images and language between the sacred domain and the profane one. In fact, where Lucia Lazzerini (as in other previous works: see in particular the important contribution Lazzerini (1993), vol. 18/2, 153–205; vol. 18/3, 313–369), from these images and metaphors, "tends" towards a mystical interpretation of the poetry of the Troubadours, we believe that such a community of images is rooted, so to speak, in the ambiguity peculiar to the concept of love in the Middle Ages, which is duplicated and "stratified" into *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas* – as admirably expressed by William of Saint-Thierry, in his *Expositio in Cantica canticorum:* "O Amor a quo omnis amor cognominatur, etiam carnalis ac degener!" Mystical images, true spiritual nourishment of the culture of the medieval man, thus constitute almost organically the metaphorical and rhetorical "background" of the lyrical poetry of the Troubadours.

27 *Sap*. 7, 29, https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/online-bibeln/biblia-sacra-vulgata/lesen-im-bibeltext/bibel/text/lesen/stelle/41/70001/79999/ch/81ac516b03cd5597bf86c040994cd4f9/ [last access: Mar. 28th, 2023].

28 Lazzerini (2013, 158).

thing that is taken for granted in a culture like the medieval one, sustained as it was by religious tradition. However, it seems to me that the feminine image described in William's poem *Molt jauzens mi prenc en amar* is too deeply linked to a bodily dimension to be interpreted merely as an allegory, as it is in the *Boeci.*

The thaumaturgical effects produced by the "supernatural" woman of William's text are actually closely connected to her possession – physical possession, I should say, looking in particular at verses 33–36: "a mos obs la vueill retenir, / per lo cor dedins refrescar / e per la carn renovelar, / que no puesca envellezir" ("I want to keep her all for me, to bring freshness to my heart and to renew my flesh, so that it cannot grow old").

In particular, this last element of the possession of the beloved that renews the flesh and keeps away ageing, can be connected to medieval medical discussions on the usefulness of sexual intercourse for the human body. In this regard, we can quote for example the treatise *De Coitu* of Constantine the African. In the section of this treatise dedicated to the theme *De utilitate coitu*, Constantine discusses previous theories on coitus, also quoting classical physicians, as in the following passage:

> Diximus enim quod coitus prodest hominibus duobus modis. Rufus vero ait quia coitus solvit malum habitum corporis et furorem mitigat, prodest melancolicis et amentes revocat ad noticiam et solvit amorem concupisciencie.[29]

In this passage sexual intercourse "eliminates the negativities of the organism, mitigates rage, benefits melancholics, restores reason to the demented and frees from sexual arousal", and in *Molt jauzens mi prenc en amar*, William says about the beloved, that "because of the joy (given by her love) the sick can turn healthy and because of the lack of her love can a healthy man die and a wise man turn mad and a handsome man lose his beauty and the most courteous turn into a lout and the most churlish turn into a courtier". I am not suggesting that the treatise of Constantine the African is a direct source used by William IX, but I am suggesting that the effects on the psychophysical level engendered by the beloved in William's poem are similar to those that the medical treatises attribute to sexual intercourse. Therefore, for all these reasons, the female figure of *Molt jauzens mi prenc en amar* seems to me highly ambivalent: she possesses divine powers over human beings, which, however, originate from her corporeal dimension.

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29 Constantine the African, *De coitu*, in Lauriello (2020, 65). ('In fact, we have said that coitus benefits two types of subjects. Rufus argues that coitus eliminates the negativities of the organism, mitigates the rage, benefits the melancholics, restores reason to the demented and frees from sexual arousal').

Moreover, William's text introduces another sub-theme related to the imagined woman and her supernatural powers, which we will encounter later in this chapter: a very special relationship with time, age and youthfulness.

We have, so far in this chapter, analysed some examples of supernatural women who possess the faculty to ruin or save the lover, to let him become sick and foolish, or to heal him. I would now like to examine some textual examples where the "she wounds, she heals" pattern is expressed in a more focused way: that is to say, where the semantic field of the wound and of healing are explicitly present on the textual level.

We will also move for a while from Occitan to Langue d'oïl lyric poetry, in order to analyse a poem by Blondel de Nesle. Blondel is, together with other famous poets, such as Gace Brulé, Conon de Béthune and the Chastelain de Couci, part of a group of Trouvères that has been defined the "école provençalisante"[30] of Oitanic lyrical production. As we have already seen in the present book, Blondel de Nesle is one of the most famous and appreciated Trouvères, and his poems had a remarkable circulation in thirteenth and fourteenth centuries manuscripts;[31] moreover, the motifs of the disease and the wound of love constitute a characteristic element of his corpus.[32]

I will concentrate my analysis on some passages quoted from a well-known poem by Blondel, the incipit of which is *Bien doit chanter qui fine amours adrece.* The fortune of this song is a proof of Blondel's "European" fame: in fact, this poem, "déjà imitée deux fois en français, a aussi inspiré le minnesänger Ulrich von Gutenberg pour la composition de son lied *Ich hôrte wol ein merlîkin singen*".[33]

In the second stanza of Blondel's text we read:

Ne m'a rescous faintise ne perece,
Que ma dame ne m'ait navré parfont
D'un douz reguart, dont la plaie me blece,
Qu'ele me fist des biaux iex de son front.
N'en puis guerir, se mire ne m'i sunt
A l'aïde de son cuer, qui confont
Moi et le mien, dont plus l'aim en cest mont

30 Zumthor (1954, footnote 412).

31 See Karp (1980, 804–805); see also Lepage (1994, 17).

32 Zaganelli (1982, 164).

33 Lepage (1994, 17). On the "Minnesang als Kunst der Wiederholung und Variation", see Kellner (2018, 58–67).

> Qu'a estre rois de la greigneur hautece,
> Se diex *joie* ne *guerredon* m'en doint.[34]

The wound the poet has received is from the eyes of the beloved, and, as we have seen in Chapter 2 of this book, this is a typical component of the *vulnus amoris* theme in lyric poetry. As the first step in the topos of the *quinque lineae amoris*[35] is *visio* ('vision'), the eyes are of course the first element that provokes love's wound. The passage of Blondel's song insists on the *vulnus amoris* semantic field thanks to the simultaneous presence of the verbs *navrer* and *blecer* (both 'to wound'), and of the term *plaie* ('sore'). Then, the poet explains that he can be healed only by the same eyes that have caused him this sore, and in this sense Blondel is using again, with variation, the theme of Pelias' spear, which we have already seen in Chapter 2. The semantic field of healing is constituted by the verb *guerir* ('to heal') and the term *mire* ('doctor'). At last, Blondel ends the stanza with an image that will carry us through the following texts we will analyse: the *guerredon*, that is the "reward". In fact, he says: "may God give me joy and reward". *Guerredon*[36] is the feudal term *par excellence* and it belongs to the "feudal metaphor" that has been acknowledged as being fundamental for medieval courtly lyric poetry.[37] Together with other terms, all of them originating from the feudal lexicon and then semantically stratified, such as *merce*, *bon* and *don*, *guerredon* alludes to a reward or a remedy for pain, which, in many texts, acquires a sensual nuance.[38]

The sensual reward, either allusively expressed under the "feudal metaphor", or requested *apertis verbis*, is a recurrent component of the "she wounds, she heals" theme. This is the case, for example, in a poem by Arnaut Daniel, *Ab gai so cuindet e leri*, which stages a perfect beloved – *la gensor… del mon* ('the gentlest in the world') – that causes in the poet so deep a love that it keeps him warm even during the winter:

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34 Blondel de Nesle, *Bien doit chanter qui fine amours adrece*, vv. 10–18, in Lepage (1994, 95). ('Cowardice and laziness could not prevent me from being deeply wounded by my lady with a gentle look whose sore bruises me and which she gave me with the beautiful eyes of her forehead. It is impossible for me to be healed, unless her eyes serve me as a physician, with the help of her heart, which kills me and my heart, with which I love her more than anything in the world, to the point that I would even sacrifice to her the highest royal dignity: may God give me joy and reward').
35 On the *topos* of the *quinquae lineae amoris* see Gubbini (2009, 41–56).
36 For the etymology and the meaning of the Occitan equivalent term *guizardo*, see Cropp (1975, 174–177; 355).
37 On this theme in the Troubadours' poetry, see at least Lejeune (1979b, 103–120); Pellegrini (1944–1945); Mancini (1993).
38 For the dynamics of these terms in Troubadours' poetry, see Gubbini (2009, 315).

Tot jorn melhur e esmeri
quar *la gensor am e coli*
del mon, so.us dic en apert:
sieu so del pe tro qu'al cima,
e si tot venta.ill freg'aura,
l'amor qu'ins el cor mi plueu
mi ten caut on plus iverna.[39]

This image used by Arnaut, most probably influenced by a similar one already employed in the very famous song of Bernart de Ventadorn *Tant ai mo cor ple de joya*,[40] already introduces into the poem the dimension of the poet's body. Then, in the stanza that follows, we have a short *descriptio puellae* that introduces, instead, the body of the beloved:

Mill messas n'aug e.n proferi
e.n art lum de cer'e d'oli
que Dieu m'en don bon acert
de lieis on no.m val escrima;
e quan remir sa crin saura
e.l cors qu'a graile e nueu
mais l'am que qui.m des Luzerna.[41]

After presenting the beauty of the beloved's body – and therefore, after "preparing" the reader for an emotional reaction to this perfection – Arnaut stages his psychosomatic suffering in the fifth stanza of the poem. Here the amorous pain is expressed with the image of love's flame that burns and sets the heart on fire; then follows the lover's request for reparation and healing of the suffering, the only possible medicine being a kiss:

No vuelh de Roma l'emperi
ni qu'om me fassa postoli

39 Arnaut Daniel, *Ab gai so cuindet e leri*, vv. 8–14, in Eusebi (1995, 94–95). ('Every day I improve and enhance myself because I serve and venerate the most beautiful in the world, I tell you openly. I'm hers from head to toe, and even if the cold wind blows, the love that rains inside my heart keeps me warm the colder it gets.').

40 Bernart de Ventadorn, *Tant ai mo cor ple de joya*, vv. 13–16, in Appel (1915): "Anar posc ses vestidura, / nutz en ma chamiza, / car fin'amors m'asegura / de la freja biza" ('I can walk around without clothes, my naked body under my shirt, for perfect love protects me from the cold wind.').

41 Arnaut Daniel, *Ab gai so cuindet e leri*, vv. 15–21, in Eusebi (1995, 95). ('I hear and offer a thousand masses, and I burn a flame of wax and oil so that God may give me success with whom it is not worth fencing for me; and when I contemplate her blond hair and her body that she has agile and fresh, I love her more than those who would give me Lucerne.').

qu'en lieis non aia revert
per cui m'art lo cors e.m rima;
e si.l maltrait no.m restaura
ab un baizar anz d'annueu,
mi auci e si enferna.[42]

The fact that healing can come (only) from interaction or the proximity of the lover to the body of the beloved is a key theme in courtly lyric poetry – and an element that contributes to reminding us that medieval poetry, far from being the "monolith" that has been depicted by centuries of general and cursory readings, possesses its own bodily dimension strictly connected and intertwined with the spiritual one. A perfect example of this "body and spirit" connection and of the centrality of the bodily dimension of the beloved's proximity for the process of healing – and even for the survival – of the lover is to be found in Bernart de Ventadorn's poem *Can lo boschatges es floritz.*[43]

This is a wonderful text haunted by the theme of the *aegritudo amoris*, and full of metaphors and images that involve references to Patristic, philosophical and medical knowledge. In order to analyse this song, I will quote it here in its entirety:[44]

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42 Arnaut Daniel, *Ab gai so cuindet e leri*, vv. 29–35, in Eusebi (1995, 97). ('I do not want the empire of Rome, nor that I be made pope, if I do not have to find asylum in the one for which my heart burns and is on fire; and if she doesn't repair the damage with a kiss within the year, she kills me and damns herself.').

43 I reuse here some considerations already anticipated in Gubbini (2014c).

44 I quote in this footnote first the German translation of Appel (1915), then the English translation of Kay (2022).

"I. Wann der Hain erblüht ist und ich sehe, wie die Zeit sich wieder verjüngt und ein jeder Vogel seine Gefährtin sucht und die Nachtigall singt und ruft, dann erwächst mir aus einer großen Freude solch Vergessen, daß ich mich zu nichts anderem wenden kann. Tag und Nacht läßt sie mich seufzen, so bindet sie mir die Wurzel des Herzens.

II. Um meiner Herrin willen bin ich ohne Freude froh, weshalb es mir schwer ist meine Pein zu tragen, denn um sie zu gewinnen werde ich mich verlieren, und das wird für sie eine gar ungehörige Missetat sein. Ach, was soll ich tun? Wie bin ich verraten, wenn sie mir ihre Liebe nicht gewähren will! Denn ohne zu lieben kann ich nicht, leben, denn von der Liebe bin ich erzeugt (?).

III. Jetzt bin ich gar zu klug in dem, was sie betrifft! Zunge, wie kannst Du so viel reden? Denn schon für weniger pflegt sie mich so zu beschuldigen, daß ich mich auf den Mund geschlagen habe. Was ist mir denn so arg, wenn ich vernichtet bin? Ihr gegenüber bin ich ohne Schutz; aber mit dem süßen Fühlen eines Kusses würde ich alsbald von diesem Leid wieder belebt sein.

IV. In großer Qual (Beunruhigung) werde ich kraftlos um ihretwillen, welche die Schönheit selbst bilden wollte, denn ihr Körper ist, wie Natur es erlesen konnte, aus dem Besten hergestellt: die Hüfte schlank und geschmeidig, ihr Antlitz erscheint frisch wie die Rose; weshalb sie mich, wenn ich tot bin, leicht wieder beleben kann. Soll ich sagen wie? so verwegen bin ich nicht.

V. Von solcher Süße bin ich erfüllt, wann ich sie aus der Nähe schauen kann, daß ich mich für alle Tage in Überfluß sehe, so bereichert bin ich von ihrer Liebe. Und wann ich sie sich von mir entfernen sehe, ist die Kälte derart, daß ich darüber in Schrecken bin, da das Feuer, welches mich von ihr zu wärmen pflegt, flieht; und ich bleibe farblos zurück.

VI. Das Gute und das Übel sei ihr gedankt, weil sie von mir auch nur das Bitten entgegennimmt. – Nun bin ich töricht im Prahlen, und es ist recht, wenn ich Lügen gestraft würde. Fraue, es sei Euch nicht leid, wenn die Zunge sagt was mein Herz nie denken konnte. Schweig, Mund! gar zu sehr kannst Du schwatzen, und großes Leid ist Dir daher bestimmt.

VII. Hoch ist der Lohn, der gewährt ist, da sie mich nur zu grüßen geneigt war. Vielen Dank! Gott schütze sie dafür! – Von dieser Lust her ist mir noch schwerer. Jedes andere Gut ist mir so erstarrt, daß mir nicht helfen würde, darob um Gnade zu rufen. Es ruft das Herz, weil es es nicht lassen kann, und hernach versagt mir das Wort.

VIII. Fraue, wenn ich von Euch in so köstlicher Weise gehört würde, wie ich es zeigen will (...), würden wir im Anbeginn unserer Liebe unsere Seelen anstauschen! Dann wäre mir gar guter Sinn zu teil geworden, denn dann würde ich wissen wie es mit Euch, und Ihr wie es mit mir steht, gleich zu gleich, und wir wären so beschaffen, daß wir zwei geeinte Herzen hätten!

IX. Ach, wie im Unheil bin ich, in übler Weise verspottet (wie übel beschieden?), denn ich kann die Qual nicht ertragen, solchem Schmerze läßt sie mich erliegen, da sie mir in diesem Grade ihre Liebe versagt. Mit schönem Schein bin ich betrogen. Was hilft’s mir? Nichts kann mich belehren. Der Tod möge dem ankommen, der es mir tadeln will, daß ich noch tot und begraben sie liebe.

X. Da ich gezwungen und in Trübsal von ihr scheide, tötet sie mich mit Leichtigkeit, denn mit Mühe ward ich genährt, solch Kummer fühle ich mir im Herzen schneiden. Ich sterbe und meine zu vergehen, da ich ohne sie nicht genesen kann.”

English translation by Kay (2022), available also on the following website: site: https://cornellpress.manifoldapp.org/projects/medieval-song/resource/4-2-2-text-and-translation-of-bernart-de-ventadorn-can-lo-boscatges

[last access: Oct. 14th, 2023].

“When the woodland is in flower and I see
the season is new again and every bird seeks its mate
and the nightingale sings and calls, I am so
overwhelmed and lost to the world through joy that
I can turn my mind to nothing else. It makes me
sigh night and day, so tightly does it bind the root of
my heart.
I rejoice in my lady without any enjoyment of her—
this wretched state is hard to bear for I will lose
myself to win her and the blame [on her] will be
shabby indeed. Alas! What shall I do? How I am
betrayed, if she declines to grant me her love! For I
cannot live without loving, since I was begotten by
Love.
How mocked and derided I am by her! Tongue,
why do you run on so? – For she is capable of
accusing me of less than this, and so I strike my

own mouth. Yet why is it so cruel that I am destroyed? She will never find that I protect myself in any way. But the sweet feeling of a kiss would quickly revive me from this suffering.
I have grown weak from my painful uncertainty about her, who Beauty decided to shape, for her body is made of the best things Nature could select: with delicate, slender hips, her complexion appears as fresh as a rose – with this, she could easily bring me back from dead to life. Shall I say how? I wouldn't dare!
I am filled with such warm feelings when I can gaze at her from close by, that all the time I see my well-being surpass everyone else's, so much does my love for her fill me with good things. And the chill, when I see her go away from me, makes me so miserable, because the fire that used to warm me has fled and I am left pale and colorless.
May she be thanked for both the good and the bad, since she condescends to let me woo her. Now I am going crazy with my empty claims and it is right that I should be contradicted! Lady, don't be upset if my tongue says things that my heart/body has never been able to think. Be silent, mouth! You wag your tongue too much and much ill will come of it.
What a great prize is given me when she deigns to greet me. All my thanks! God protect her! I am afflicted with pleasure; all the other good [she might do me] has grown so cold for me that there would be no point in asking her to bestow it. My heart/body clamors, for it cannot cease; and then, words fail me.
Lady, if I had been heard by you with as much fondness as I show to you, the first time we began to love each other we would have exchanged our life forces. I would have gained perfect impressions [of you], for then I would have known how things were with you, and you with me, as one equal with another, and with our two hearts/bodies we would be as one.
Oh, how despondent I am! How unfortunate! I cannot endure the melancholy, and so much pain makes me faint, when she so adamantly refuses me her friendship. I am betrayed by her fair

I
Can lo boschatges es floritz
e vei lo tems renovelar
e chascus auzels quer sa par
e·l rossinhols fai chans e critz,
d’un gran joi me creis tals oblitz
que ves re mais no·m posc virar.
noih e jorn me fai sospirar,
si·m lassa del cor la razitz.

II
Per midons m’esjau no-jauzitz,
don m’es l’afans greus a portar,
qu’e·m perdrai per leis gazanhar,
et er li crims mout deschauzitz.
las! que farai? com sui träitz,
si s’amor no·m vol autreyar!
qu’eu no posc viure ses amar,
que d’amor sui engenöitz.

III
Ar sui de leis trop eissernitz!
lenga, per que potz tan parlar?
que de menhs me sol acuzar
si que·m sui per las dens feritz.
que·m n’es si fer s’eu sui delitz?
ja no trobara, li m’ampar;
mas ab doutz sentir d’un baizar
for’eu tost d’est mal resperitz!

IV
En greu pantais sui feblezitz
per leis cui Beutatz volc formar,
que, com Natura poc triar,
del melhs es sos cors establitz:
los flancs grailes et escafitz,
sa fatz frescha com roza par,

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appearance. What can help me? Nothing can put me right! Come, death, to anyone who wants to reproach me for not loving her, [for I would do so] even if I were dead and buried!
I leave her sadly and against my will. She can easily kill me but I was barely nurtured [by her]. I feel such distress slice through my heart that I die and want only to depart this world. But only through her can I be healed.”

don me pot leu mort revivar.
dirai com? no sui tan arditz.

V
De tal dousor sui replenitz,
can de prop la posc remirar,
c'a totz jorns vei lo meu sobrar,
ta fort sui de s'amor techitz;
e·l freis es tals, qu'e·n sui marritz,
can la vei de me deslonhar,
que·l focs que m'en sol eschaufar,
fug, e remanh escoloritz.

VI
Lo bes e·l mals sia·lh grazitz,
pos de me denha sol preyar. –
ara folei de trop gabar
et es dreihs qu'en fos desmentitz!
domna, no·us pes si·lh lenga ditz
so c'anc mos cors no poc pessar,
tatz, bocha! nems potz lengueyar,
et es t'en grans mals aramitz.

VII
Autz es lo pretz qu'es cossentitz,
car sol me denhet saludar.
moutas merces! Deus la·n ampar! –
del plazer me sui engrevitz.
totz l'autre bes m'es si frezitz
que no·m valgra·n merce clamar.
clama·l cors que no pot cessar;
et apres m'es parlars falhitz.

VIII
Domna, s'eu fos de vos auzitz
si charamen com volh mostrar,
al prim de nostr' enamorar
feiram chambis dels esperitz
azautz sens m'i fora cobitz,
c'adonc saubr' eu lo vostr' afar
e vos lo meu, tot par a par,
e foram de dos cors unitz!

IX
Ai! can brus sui, mal escharnitz!
qu'eu no posc la pena durar,
de tal dolor me fai pasmar.
car tan s'amistat m'esconditz!
ab bel semblan sui en träitz.

que·m val? res no·m pot chastiar!
mortz venh' a sel qui·m vol blasmar
qu'eu no l'am mortz e sebelitz!

X
Car forsatz m'en part e marritz,
leu m'auci, mas greu fui noiritz,
tal ira·m sen al cor trenchar,
car me mor e volh trespassar,
mas ses leis no serai gueritz!

Already in the first stanza and then later in the text, Bernart uses two terms – the verb *sospirar* ('to sigh', v. 7) and the term (in plural) *esperitz* ('spirits', v. 60) – which share the same etymological root, i. e. the Latin verb *spiro.* At vv. 7–8 of the text *Can lo boschatges es floritz*, obsessive desire makes the poet sigh day and night, so much does it tie up the root of the heart ("noih e jorn me fai sospirar, / si.m lassa del cor la razitz").

The image of Bernart de Ventadorn, which is that of an obsessive desire constraining the lyrical I[45] to sigh, so much does it tie up the root of his heart, seems well "rooted" in the medical knowledge of the time. In fact, sighs and the need to breathe in air were linked to the pneumatic doctrine and, in particular, to the notion of the cardiac location of the vital spirit.[46]

For example, in the description of the vital spirit – already referred to as *spiritus spiritualis*, as in the *Pantegni* of Constantine the African[47] – William of Saint-Thierry, in the first part of his treatise *De natura corporis et animae*, establishes a close connection between the warmth of the heart, seat of the vital spirit, and the need to breathe in air to temper this heat: if there is no more air, the heart is, indeed, destined to die.[48]

45 On subjectivity in the lyric poetry of Troubadours and the connection between courtly literature and medieval philosophy, see Kay (1990; 2001).

46 On the *spiritus* see Chapter 3 of this book.

47 See, in this direction, Burnett (1994).

48 William of Saint-Thierry, *De natura corporis et animae*, in Lemoine (2012, 93–95): "Spiritus ergo spiritualis uel eius uirtus fundata in corde operatur dilatationem et constrictionem. Dilatatio est cum se cor dilatat et dilatantur arteriae ad aerem attrahendum modo conuenientem, modo superfluum, et sanguinem subtilissimum a uenis. Nisi enim cordis calor sic temperaretur, et sedem suam et omnia quae uicina sunt combureret. Vnde etiam dicitur requiescere cor in sinu pulmonis quasi in sinu nutricis, aerem sibi ad sui nutrimentum iugiter attrahentis. […] Qui si omnino deficit, cor moritur. […] Virtus ergo spiritualis est quae uiuificat omnia, et a qua uiuit quicquid uiuit in corpore. Et hic est spiritus spiritualis." (See French translation, Lemoine, 92–94: "L'esprit spirituel ou, si l'on veut, la vertu qui lui correspond, a pour fondement le cœur dont il opère la dilatation et la contraction. Il y a dilatation quand le cœur se dilate et que se dilatent les artères pour aspirer

Another element that is worth considering in the present analysis of the healing dimension of the beloved, is the verb *resperir*, present at v. 24 of *Can lo boschatges es floritz* and inserted into an image dedicated to the *osculum:*

> mas ab doutz sentir d'un baizar
> for'eu tost d'est mal resperitz!
> (vv. 23–24)

The verb *resperir* derives from the Latin *expergiscere*[49] and means 'réveiller' (*FEW*), 'ranimer' (*Lexique Roman*),[50] 'wieder herstellen' (*Supplement Wörterbuch*).[51] Bernart de Ventadorn's editor, Carl Appel, suggests translating this term as 'wieder beleben', that is to say 'revive',[52] a meaning which fits well in the context devoted to the *osculum*, and also within the semantic oscillation between the bodily and the incorporeal, as was already the case for the Latin term *spiritus.*

Any reflex of the lyrical I becomes psychosomatic when moving away from the beloved's body. In verses 37–40, we can observe the oscillations of the lover's body temperature, which changes from hot to cold as the body of the beloved recedes:

> e.l *freis* es tals, qu'e.n sui marritz,
> can la vei de me *deslonhar,*
> *que.l focs que m'en sol eschalfar,*
> *fug, e remanh escoloritz.*
> (vv. 37–40)

In the physiology of the human body, such an event is caused by the dissipation of natural heat (*calor naturalis*) from the heart, the seat of the vital spirit, a loss which causes the death of the heart, and, with it, of the whole man, as the *De natura corporis et animae* by William of Saint-Thierry explains:

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l'air en quantité tantôt convenable, tantôt excessive, et un sang très subtil provenant des veines. En effet, si la chaleur du cœur n'était ainsi tempérée, elle consumerait son siège ainsi que tout ce qui l'entoure. C'est pourquoi l'on dit que le cœur repose sur le sein du poumon comme sur le sein d'une nourrice, puisqu'il tire à lui sans arrêt l'air pour s'en nourrir. (...) Si l'air vient à manquer complètement, le cœur meurt. (...) Ainsi donc, la vertu spirituelle est ce qui donne vie à tout, et ce par quoi vit tout ce qui, dans un corps, est vivant. C'est l'esprit spirituel").

49 See *FEW* (1948–, vol. 3, 308): "Darüber, dass afr. Esperir zu EXPERGERE 'wecken', EXPERGISCI 'erwachen' (auch EXPERGESCERE) gehören, kann wohl kein Zweifel bestehen".

50 See *LR* (1836–1844, vol. 3, 176).

51 See *SW* (1973, vol. 7, 267).

52 See Appel (1915, 229): "*resperir* können wir mit 'wieder beleben' gut übersetzen. Hier, neben *d'est mal*, natürlich nicht im eigentlichsten Sinne (Zingarelli: *risuscitato*, s. v. 31), sondern in dem schwächeren, den das Wort bei uns auch hat".

> Sic etiam de corde. Cuius calor naturalis si extinguitur, continuo infrigidato corpore mors sequitur. Per quod euidenter apparet quendam uiuendi fontem et causam in corde etiam consistere, ex quo fistulares pori et arteriarum procedens multiplex diuersitas, aliis ab aliis nascentibus, uniuerso corpori igneum et uitalem spiritum administrant.[53]

Losing closeness to the body of the beloved is, for the lyrical I, as for the heart, equivalent to the loss of the vital spirit. By reading the entire song by Bernart de Ventadorn, we can see that the text *Can lo boschatges es floritz* is entirely nourished by images that refer to the passage from life to death:

> los flancs grailes et escafitz,
> sa fatz frescha com roza par,
> *don me pot leu mort revivar.*
> *dirai com? no sui tan arditz.*
> (vv. 29–32)
> tal ira.m sen al cor trenchar,
> *car me mor e volh trespassar,*
> *mas ses lei no serai gueritz!*
> (vv. 75–77)

Bernart de Ventadorn insists on the healing brought by the beloved, and by her body: the description of her slender hips ("los flancs grailes et escafitz") and of her face, fresh as a rose, seem to indicate that it is mainly thanks to this eminently physical dimension, desired, fantasised, that the body of the lyrical I – which, in fact, risks weakening and even vanishing at all times, as we can see from the verbs *feblezir* ('to weaken')[54] and *pasmar* ('to faint')[55] – can escape death or even be brought back to life with a kiss.

But the kiss also plays a crucial role in mystical writing. The "mystical kiss" is probably at first a spiritual transposition of an erotic practice. However, as we can see in the passage of Bernart de Ventadorn, it then migrates again from the religious sphere to the secular one, bringing to the profane texts some elements con-

53 William of Saint-Thierry, *De natura corporis et animae*, in Lemoine (2012, 134). (See French translation, Lemoine 2012, 134–136: «Il en est ainsi de même pour le cœur: si sa chaleur naturelle s'éteint, la mort suit sans délai le refroidissement du corps. Ainsi il apparaît à l'évidence que la vie a sa source et sa cause établies aussi dans le cœur. Les conduits qui en sortent, la complexité des diverses artères qui en procèdent en naissant les unes des autres assurent au corps tout entier l'animation de l'esprit igné qui donne la vie»). Passage commented by Gröne (2008, vol. 31, 124).
54 *Can lo boschatges es floritz*, vv. 25–26: "En greu pantais sui feblezitz / per leis cui Beutatz volc formar".
55 *Can lo boschatges es floritz*, vv. 66–68': "qu'eu no posc la pena durar, / de tal dolor me fai pasmar, / car tan s'amistat m'esconditz". For the terms *feblezir* and *pasmar* see *FEW* (1984, vol. 3, 618, and vol. 12, 138); *LR* (1836–1844, vol. 3, 296, and vol. 4, 446).

ferred on it by mystical writing, and illustrating therefore the bi-directionality of these processes of migration.

In the mystical texts the phenomenon of the kiss comes into view on various occasions, as the moment par excellence for the exchange of souls between lovers: a passage from Saint Ambrose, for example, explicitly focuses on this point. Ambrose, according to article on *Osculum* in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* "inaugure la tradition" of the mystical kiss among the Latins, with such a strong emphasis on this theme that, later, in the twelfth century, William of Saint-Thierry brought together in an anthology on the *osculum*[56] several passages from Ambrose including this one:

> Osculum est enim quo invicem amantes sibi adhaerent, et velut gratiae interioris suavitate potiuntur. Per hoc osculum adhaeret anima Deo Verbo, per quod sibi transfunditur spiritus osculantis: sicut etiam ii qui se osculantur, non sunt labiorum praelibatione contenti, sed spiritum suum sibi invicem videntur infundere.[57]

The kiss can therefore, not least in *Can lo boschatges es floritz*, be interpreted in a "stratified" way: as an exchange of spirits between lovers through breath, and as a source of spiritual knowledge, but also as a source of healing for the lover. More generally, this poem of Bernart de Ventadorn stages the healing power of the body of the beloved perfectly and, on the other hand, the weakening and the deep psychosomatic suffering that the separation from her engenders.

Petrarch presents this theme repeatedly in his *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, and, more than any other Italian poet before him, he seems to share the image of the beloved as "bringer of life" with the Troubadour tradition.[58] As we have already seen in Chapter 2, Laura "wounds" the poet on the first occasion they see each other, causing the "birth of passion" – and then again and again. But she is also the one who "keeps alive" the spirits of the poet, as he explicitly says in sonnet *RVF* 47, vv. 1–2: "Io sentia dentr'al cor già venir meno / *gli spirti che da voi ricevon*

56 See Solignac (1995, 1015, 1020). See also Perella (1969, 44).

57 Ambrose, *De Isaac et anima*, 3, 8, *PL*, 14, 531–532 ('The kiss is in fact how lovers get attached to each other, and as inner grace they have access to the sweetness. The soul attaches itself to the word of God through this kiss, through which it transfers to itself the spirit of the one who kisses: just as those who kiss are not content only with tasting their lips, but seem to reciprocally exchange their spirit). In this passage Ambrose plays, as the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* says, "sur les sens différents du mot *spiritus* (souffle, esprit, voire Esprit saint)": Solignac (1995, 1015).

58 I reuse here some considerations already anticipated in Gubbini (2017c).

vita"[59] (we will come back to this theme later). Similarly to what we have read in Bernart de Ventadorn's poem *Can lo boschatges es floritz*, the departure of Laura's body provokes the freezing of the spirits (vv. 9–11: "ma gli spiriti miei s'aghiaccian poi / ch'i' veggio, al departir, gli atti soavi / torcer da me le mie fatali stelle"), as the sonnet *Piovonmi amare lagrime dal viso* (*RVF* 17) explains:

> Piovonmi amare lagrime dal viso
> con un vento angoscioso di sospiri,
> quando in voi adiven che gli occhi giri
> per cui sola dal mondo i' son diviso.
>
> Vero è che 'l dolce mansueto riso
> pur acqueta gli ardenti miei desiri,
> et mi sottragge al foco de' martiri,
> mentr'io son a mirarvi intento e fiso;
>
> ma gli spiriti miei s'aghiaccian poi
> ch'i' veggio, al departir, gli atti soavi
> torcer da me le mie fatali stelle.
>
> Largata alfin co l'amorose chiavi
> l'anima esce del cor per seguir voi;
> et con molto pensiero indi si svelle.[60]

The sonnet is entirely filled with references to pneumatic doctrine, as I have shown elsewhere:[61] traces of it are to be found in the simultaneous presence in the text of *sospiri* and *spiriti* – both having their etymological root in the Latin verb *spiro*, as we have already seen in the poem of Bernart de Ventadorn – and in the separation of the soul from the body of the poet, when the soul leaves him in order to follow Laura. The theme of the soul detaching itself from the body refers in fact to the doctrine of the *spiritus phantasticus* which, as a concept originating from a Stoic and Neoplatonic matrix, finds a synthesis in the treatise *De insomniis* by Synesius of Cyrene that well illustrates the complex of issues that will characterise the medieval tradition. In *De insomniis*, the *spiritus phantasticus* is mostly linked to the dimension of dreams; in Petrarch's sonnet it is not a real dream, but a *rêverie.* In a process that is typical of the *Canzoniere* and, more generally, of medieval lyrical discourse, the lover, whose torments are soothed only by the – mostly phantasmatic – presence of the object of love, in case of distance or

59 Francesco Petrarca, *Io sentia dentr'al cor già venir meno* (*RVF* 47), vv. 1–2, in Santagata (2004, 435). An analysis of this sonnet, examined together with *RVF* 48 and 49, attentive to the medical references can be found in Tonelli (2015, 153).

60 Francesco Petrarca, *Piovonmi amare lagrime dal viso* (*RVF* 17), in Santagata (2004, 72).

61 I use here some considerations I have already anticipated in Gubbini (2014b).

separation operates a "dissociation" between his real condition and the activity of the imagination. Thanks to the power of the latter, it is in fact possible to overcome the boundaries of bodily materiality and reach the object of love "in spirit".

Petrarch is strongly linked to this troubadour tradition, taking up key themes which, however, after the stilnovistic experience and profoundly nuanced by religious guilt and by Petrarch's particular propensity to the Augustinian idea of *fluctuatio*,[62] seem to acquire a new, distinctly modern flair.

An example can be found in the motif of Laura as "bearer of life". If in this theme, as it has been pointed out, Petrarch innovates with respect to his Italian predecessors, who instead insisted on the "disturbing" function performed by the beloved on the lyrical I.[63] We will add that this innovation is made by the author precisely through a "revivification", so to speak, of key themes of troubadour poetry. What therefore appears as a clear innovation of Petrarch compared to the Italian poets preceding him often instead has ancient roots. Petrarch develops this theme beautifully in the sonnet *Da' più belli occhi, et dal più chiaro viso* (*RVF* 348):

> Da' più belli occhi, et dal più chiaro viso
> che mai splendesse, et da' più bei capelli,
> che faceano l'oro e 'l sol parer men belli,
> dal più dolce parlare et dolce riso,
>
> da le man', da le braccia che conquiso
> senza moversi avrian quai più rebelli
> fur d'Amor mai, da' più bei piedi snelli,
> da la persona fatta in paradiso,
>
> prendean vita i miei spirti: or n'à diletto
> il Re celeste, i Suoi alati corrieri;
> et io son qui rimasto ignudo et cieco.
>
> Sol un conforto a le mie pene aspetto:
> ch'ella, che vede tutti i miei penseri,
> m'impetre gratia, ch'i' possa esser seco.[64]

The first element that captures the attention in the description of Laura is the insistence on her brightness: 'the brightest face that has ever shined' (vv. 1–2: "(…) dal più chiaro viso / che mai splendesse (…)"), and 'the most beautiful hair that made gold and the sun look less beautiful' (vv. 2–3: "(…) et da' più bei capelli, /

62 On the *fluctuatio* see Bettarini (2002); Gubbini, (2011, 478); Alfano (2016, vol. 1–2); Rigo (2018).
63 See Chiamenti (1988, 77): "Petrarch instead innovates on his theme because the presence of Laura herself gives life, and not death, to his *substantiae*".
64 Francesco Petrarca, *Da' più belli occhi, et dal più chiaro viso* (*RVF* 348), in Santagata (2004, 1341).

che faceano l'oro e 'l sol parer men belli"): as we have seen, and as we will see in all the texts examined in this chapter, this is a recurrent feature of the beloved. Laura's body, dissected in *post-mortem* memory in an analytic *descriptio puellae*, is the bearer of life, on the corporeal and on the spiritual level: it is a body that seems to recover, after its "negation" and its silence in the production of the *Dolce Stil Novo*, that dimension of "spiritualised corporeality"[65] invented by the Troubadour lyric. A sublime synthesis that here seems to fleetingly "condense" the tensions that run through the entire poetry of Petrarch and, more broadly, medieval literature: and open up, in this sublimated tension, to modernity.[66]

6.3 Yseut la Blonde and Guenevere

We continue our investigation on the theme "she wounds, she heals" through the analysis of the character of Yseut in the medieval textual production on the story of the famous couple.

As is well known, the two medieval French texts in verses on Tristan et Yseut written by Thomas d'Angleterre and by Béroul survive incomplete in the manuscript tradition. The text of Thomas d'Angleterre survived in different manuscripts – all of them are fragments, some of them longer, others shorter.[67] The text of Béroul, on the other hand, is extant in one single manuscript, which is missing the beginning and the end.[68] At the beginning of the last century, it was hypothesised that a "common version" had existed,[69] well before the first French romances in verses of Thomas and Béroul and the Middle High German text of Eilhart von Oberg.[70] After these first texts, adaptations of the story in many different medieval European languages proliferated – from Middle High German, to Middle English,

65 The quotation is from Gubbini (2009, 322).

66 On the modernity of Petrarch see Küpper (2011, where further bibliographical references on the theme can also be found).

67 See Short (1995).

68 See Poirion (1995b).

69 See in particular the works of Bédier (1902 and 1905); Golther (1907); Schoepperle (1913). On the reconstruction of the Tristanian archetype, see Varvaro (1967).

70 On the "common version" and the "courtly" one, see Frappier (1963, 255–280 and 441–454). On an update on the history of Tristan and Yseut in Medieval European literatures see Marchello-Nizia (1995a). On Thomas d'Angleterre see at least Roncaglia (1971); Hunt (1981); Marchello-Nizia (1995c); Vatteroni (2006); Gambino (2015). In particular on the fragment of Carlisle, see Short (1995, 1208–1211). On Béroul see Varvaro (1963); Bertolucci Pizzorusso (1989); Paradisi (1989); Poirion (1995b); Brusegan (2001); Maddox (2001); Croizy-Naquet/Paupert (2012); Cigni (2016).

to Old Norwegian etc.[71] As has been said, "malgré des divergences de détail, ces romans possèdent en commun une structure et des éléments narratifs et symboliques assez caracterisés pour que, dès le XIX[e] siècle, on ait pu formuler l'hypothèse d'un récit archétypal perdu, nommé *Ur-Tristan* par W. Golther, *estoire* par G. Schoepperle, qui reprenait le terme employé par Béroul, ou encore 'archétype', et dont la composition se serait située, quoi qu'il en soit, vers le milieu du XII[e] siècle".[72] This would mean that we can reasonably "integrate" into the present analysis some of the episodes missing in the texts of Thomas and Béroul with the corresponding versions in other medieval European languages. Even if this approach is slightly speculative, I will use this method in order to analyse the character of Yseut – and in particular her "healing" power – in the Tristan tradition as a whole.[73]

For this purpose, I will examine in detail some episodes missing in the incomplete and fragmentary ancient French texts, but which are present in the other European versions. In particular, I will quote from two Middle High German texts: the *Tristrant* of Eilhart of Oberg and the *Tristan und Isolde* of Gottfried von Strassburg. The first one is "la seule version complète que nous possédons pour le XII[e] siècle".[74] The second one, written in the first third of the thirteenth century, is "le plus important roman allemand en vers ayant trait à la matière de Tristan, écrit par un homme que des auteurs ultérieurs (...) ont nommé *meister* ("maître") Gottfried".[75] For all the reasons mentioned, in addition to the verse romances of Thomas and Béroul, these two texts of Eilhart of Oberg and of Gottfried von Strassburg stand out in importance among the various older European versions of the story of Tristan and Yseut.[76]

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71 See the synthesis on the theme offered by Marchello-Nizia (1995a).

72 I quote from Marchello-Nizia (1995a, XXX).

73 Yseut is, of course, a very different character in each version of the story, and sometimes even in the various manuscript versions of an individual textual tradition. We will, however, consider the various versions of this character synoptically here – not because they are taken to constitute a unified or ideal character, but, rather, because of our focus on the discourse of love's wound rather than on the character of Yseut. We will keep our interest on singular texts and singular instances of the motif of wounding and healing, guided by the character of Yseut, but we will not give a detailed history of her different textual incarnations.

74 Baumgartner (1987, 28). On Eilhart of Oberg, see at least Brandstetter (1989); Müller (1990).

75 Buschinger/Spiewok (1995, 1400). On Gottfried von Strassburg, see at least Wetzel (1992); Wolf (1973).

76 In the next pages of this section, in order to proceed with my analysis and follow the development of the theme at hand, I will "jump" from the text of Eilhart of Oberg to that of Gottfried von Strassburg, of course always specifying which one I am dealing with in the footnotes.

First of all, we have to notice that the healing power of Yseut la Blonde is "anticipated" and shared, so to speak, by her mother, the queen of Ireland, who, not by coincidence, has the same name as her daughter, Yseut. The queen mother is in fact at the origin of the whole plot: she is the one that has imbued the sword of her brother (and oncle of Yseut la Blonde), Morholt, of a lethal poison. Morholt is a giant who terrorises Cornwall with his brutal strength: Mark, Tristan's uncle and king of Cornwall, has therefore been forced to accept to pay to the giant an abominable yearly tribute of young and beautiful boys and girls. Tristan is the only person at the court of King Mark who has the courage to defy the giant and finally succeeds in defeating him. But at the same time Tristan receives from Morholt a (potentially) mortal wound: before dying, the giant reveals to Tristan that his sword has been impregnated with a lethal poison the antidote for which only his sister, Yseut the queen of Ireland, possesses. Tristan therefore (says the expiring giant) will die of this wound. In fact, Tristan, having defeated and killed Morholt, finds that the wound inflicted by the poisoned sword of the giant does not heal. On the contrary, it deteriorates and begins to putrefy, as, for example, the text of Eilhart of Oberg explicitly says:

> Trÿstrand der gu^{o}t
> waß in gro^{v}ssem unmu^{o}t.
> er mocht weder essen noch trincken.
> zu^{o} letst begund im stincken
> daß glúpp uß dú wund,
> daß im niemen kund
> wol zu^{o} im nauhen.[77]

The physicians try to heal him, but no medicine has any effect on the poisoned wound. After this, the two texts we have offer two different version of the story: in Eilhart of Oberg, Tristan asks King Mark to have the servants put his sick body on a small ship, with nothing but his harp.[78] He goes alone, abandoning him-

77 I quote the text from Buschinger (2004, vv. 1104–1110, 35). ('The noble Tristant was in great torment. He could no longer eat or drink. And, finally, his poison-infected wound began to stench so much that no one could truly get close to him'). My English translation is based on the French translation present in Pérennec (1995, 277–278: "Le noble Tristant était dans un grand tourment. Il ne pouvait plus manger ni boire. Et, pour finir, il se mit a sortir de sa plaie infectée par le poison une telle puanteur que personne ne pouvait plus vraiment s'approcher de lui").

78 In the text of Eilhart von Oberg it is in fact specified that the hero, weakened by the poisoned wound, can do anything but observe the direction taken by the ship carried by the wind: see Pérennec (1995, 279: "Tristrant soffrit beaucoup de caprices du vent, qui le poussait dans un sens, puis dans l'autre, si bien que, dans son état d'affaiblissement, il ne pouvait que constater la direction que prenait la barque").

self to the fortuitous flowing of the ship, and he arrives, by chance, on the coast of the kingdom of Ireland, precisely where Queen Yseut and her daughter Yseut the Blonde have their abode. The ship, which magically transports its passenger of its own accord and without guidance or crew and brings him to the place where he or she is destined or has to go, is a leitmotif of Breton literature[79] – we find it for example in the *Lais* of Marie de France.[80] As opposed to this, in the text by Gottfried von Strassburg, this "magic" element seems to have disappeared and to have been replaced by a more realistic form of travel: Tristan is not alone, as together with him there are Curvenal and a crew of eight men.[81] In Gottfried's version, Tristan then "stages" as a kind of second-degree fiction what in the text of Eilhart was "real" within the fictional world of the tale: Gottfried writes that, after arriving with Curvenal and the crew in Dublin, Tristan calls for the poorest dresses to wear and asks to be deposed alone in a small boat in the sea, not far from the city. He takes with him only his harp and food for three or four days. Then Tristan asks Curwenal and the crew to go back to Cornwall.[82] The Dubliners find the small boat:[83] at the beginning, they do not see anyone, but they hear the sweet sound of a harp and the beautiful voice of a man. They approach the boat, and see a sick and weak man. They ask him how he has made his way to Dublin, and Tristan invents a story in order to hide his true identity. He narrates that in the past he was a jester, and how he then decided to become a merchant. While he was travelling at sea, pirates attacked his ship and massacred all the travellers and crew but for him. As the only survivor he has now arrived near Dublin.

At the beginning, the disguised Tristan is treated by a physician provided by the Dubliners, but this man cannot heal him. Then, thanks to the spreading fame of the unknown stranger as a virtuoso harp player and singer, a priest of the entourage of the queen of Ireland goes to visit him. The priest, who has for a long time been the tutor of the queen of Ireland and of her daughter Yseut the Blonde, asks the queen to take care of the stranger and to try to heal him. And so it is done. The queen of Ireland recognises immediately the poison that has intoxicated him from the colour of the wound, but thanks to her medical ability and to the fact that she knew of the poison beforehand, in twenty days she

79 For this topos, see Harf-Lancner (1984).

80 In this regard, see the Chapter 3 of the present book.

81 See Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, in Buschinger/Spiewok (1995, 484).

82 Ibid., 485.

83 In the version of Eilhart the episode is different: it is in fact the father of Yseut that finds him – see Pérennec (1995, 279).

comes to his aid so well that his wound no longer makes anyone who wishes to stay with him flee due to its stench.[84]

We can see here that the healing dimension is connected to the mother of Yseut la Blonde – but the mother is intimately connected to her daughter, not only by tight family bonds, but by the fact that they have the same name, Yseut. One might speculate if this constellation follows an underlying archaic religious structure of trinitarian Goddesses: for example, the hypothesis has been put forward that the name they have in common could be connected to the Celtic mythological tradition, where supernatural feminine characters are often represented as triple goddesses such as the Mother-Goddess.[85] (It is important to remember that, in the plot of the story, we encounter three persons with this name: the mother, queen of Ireland; her daughter, Yseut la Blonde; and then the wife of Tristan, Yseut of the White Hands). One of the principal characteristics of such a goddess is precisely the power of healing.[86] In fact, the queen mother, with the help of her daughter Yseut, heals Tristan a second time and save his life yet again. This happens after the valiant and winning fight of Tristan against the dragon which terrorises Ireland. The king of Ireland has promised the hand of his daughter Yseut to the man who kills the beast. Tristan is the only knight who succeeds; he cuts the tongue of the dragon off as a proof of his victory and keeps it close to his breast under his armour. However, the vapours of the dragon's tongue weaken Tristan, and he is close to death. The three women – the queen of Ireland, her daughter Yseut the Blonde and Brangain – find him and take the knight to the castle. The mother and the daughter heal Tristan, as a passage from the version given by Gottfried von Strassburg declares:

> trîaken nam diu wîse dô,
> diu listege künigîn
> und vlôzte im der alsô vil în,
> biz daz er switzen began.
> "er wil genesen" sprach sî "der man,
> der tampf gerûmet schiere hie,

84 Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, in Buschinger/Spiewok (1995, 491–492: "en vingt jour elle lui vint si bien en aide que sa blessure ne faisait plus fuir par sa puanteur quiconque désirait rester auprès de lui").

85 Hincapié (2013).

86 Green (1995, 116): "The context of some cult-objects shows the Mothers to have been involved in healing".

der von der zungen an in gie,
sô mag er sprechen unde ûf sehen." [87]

Together with the strong role of healer attributed to the queen mother, the daughter, too, is said to have actively contributed to the healing of Tristan.[88] In a surviving passage of the *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas d'Angleterre, Yseut the Blonde is said to have been the one who healed the hero's sore ("Quant ele jadis guarri ma plai") – and the sore at the centre of the passage is probably that which Tristan had received from Morholt's sword:

Demustrez li ben ma *dolur*
E le mal dunt ai la langur,
E qu'ele *conforter* moi venge.
Dites li qu'ore li suvenge
Des emveisures, des deduiz
Que humes ja diz jors e nuiz,
De granz peines e dé triturs,
E dé joies e dé dusurs
De nostre amur fine et verai,
Quant ele jadis guarri ma plai;
Del beivre qu'ensemble beuimes
En la mer, quant suppris en fumes.
El beivre fud la nostre *mort*,
Nus n'en avrum ja mais *confort*.[89]

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87 I quote from Ranke/Krohn (1981, I, vv. 9436–9443, 564). ('The queen, who was wise and experienced, took the theriac and gave him enough of it to make him start to sweat. Then she said, 'This man will be healed. As soon as his body has eliminated all the vapours from the tongue, he will recover his senses"). My English translation is based on the French translation present in Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, in Buschinger/Spiewok (1995, 510: "La reine, qui était sage et experimentée, prit de la thériaque et lui en administra une dose suffisante pour qu'il se mette à transpirer. Elle dit alors: 'Cet homme guérira. Dès que son corps aura éliminé toutes les vapeurs de la langue, il reviendra à lui'").

88 In this direction, see already Doggett (2009), in particular the chapter *A healer in love.*

89 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2637–2650, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 194) ('Describe to her well my suffering and the evil which strikes me thus with languor, and insist that she come to relieve me. Tell her that she remembers the pleasures and the joys that we once knew day and night, the deep sorrows and the moments of sadness, and also the joys and sweetnesses of our perfect and sincere love, when she once healed my injury; of the beverage that we drank together, on the sea, by mistake. This potion contained our death, we will never have a cure'). In this passage of the text, it has been noted by the secondary literature that Thomas may be hesitating about the role of the philtre: were Tristan and Yseut already in love when he, disguised as Tantris, was healed by the queen mother and Yseut from Morholt's wound – that is to say *before* the philtre? This could be the interpretation to be given to vv. 2645–2646: "De nostre amur fine et verai /Quant ele jadis guarri

This passage is part of the message that Tristan asks Kaerdin to pass down to Yseut the Blonde: the message in fact contains a sort of "summary" of the story of the two lovers, and its function is to convince Yseut to come to visit and heal Tristan, who is sick to death.

It should be remembered, in this context of death and healing, that the rhyme words *mort: confort*, as has been noticed by earlier scholars, are "scattered" about the text by Thomas, especially towards the end of the story.[90]

In fact, Yseut the Blonde is the only person who can heal and save Tristan from death, as the text clearly states some verses before the passage quoted above:

> Dites li *saluz* de ma part,
> Que nule en moi senz li n'a part.
> De cuer tanz *saluz* li emvei
> Que nule ne remaint od moi.
> Mis cuers de *salu* la *salue*,
> Senz li ne m'ert *santé* rendu;
> Emvei li tute ma *salu.*
> *Cumfort* ne m'ert ja mais rendu,
> *Salu de vie* ne *santé*,
> Se par li ne sunt aporté.
> S'ele ma *salu* ne m'aporte
> *E par buche ne me conforte*,
> Ma *santé* od li dunc remaine,
> E jo murrai od ma grant peine.
> En fin dites que jo sui *morz*
> Se jo par li ne ai les *conforz.*[91]

As we can read, there is a strong insistence on the closely interconnected semantic fields of *saluz* (greeting), *salut* (salvation) and *santé* (health). Such interconnections

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ma plai". However, in other passages of his text, Thomas speaks of the role of the philtre in the birth of love between Tristan and Yseut. For the possible hesitation of Thomas, see Marchello-Nizia (1995c, 1226): "Faut-il voir là une trace des hésitations de Thomas dans son effort pour gommer une partie des éléments purement folkloriques et merveilleux du récit?".

90 See Ronchi (1991). See also Punzi (2005, 175–176).

91 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2621–2636, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 194). ('Bring her my greeting, for without her there is no salvation for me. From the bottom of my heart I send her so many greetings that none of my own remains. My heart salutes her as salvation, for without her I shall not recover my health; I therefore send her all my regards. I will find neither the comfort, nor the salvation of my life, nor health, if they are not brought to me by her. If she does not bring me salvation and comfort me with her own mouth, may she keep my chances of recovery with her; I will die with my immense pain. Finally, tell her that I'm dead if she doesn't offer me her comfort').

among semantic fields and the forms of word play rising from them are made possible by the underlying Latin roots *salus* and *salutare*. The Latin verb *salutare* (greeting someone) implies the Latin term *salus* (health and salvation), as it means 'greeting someone wishing him/her good health'. This evocative lexical and conceptual interplay will be developed to the highest literary and conceptual degree by Dante Alighieri in the *Vita Nova*, as we will see in the following section of the present chapter. But there is a compelling difference between the role of salvation played by Yseut and that of Beatrice: where the latter will act mostly on a spiritual level, the healing role of Yseut has on the contrary a very strong bodily dimension – she in fact "heals" Tristan's anguish thanks to the proximity of her body.

As we have seen in the passage quoted above, Tristan says that the comfort and the salvation he hopes for from Yseut comes from her mouth: if Yseut does not come and kiss him, he will die:

> S'ele ma *salu* ne m'aporte
> *E par buche ne me conforte*,
> Ma *santé* od li dunc remaine,
> E jo murrai od ma grant peine.[92]

We have seen in the first section of this chapter, how this image of the "kiss that brings back to life" present in the texts of Bernart de Ventadorn is not only a poetic metaphor but hides a probable reference to the theory of the spirits – a crucial one indeed for the medical and philosophical knowledge of the time.

The clear physical dimension of the healing power of Yseut the Blonde appears even more strongly in some other passages scattered over a variety of texts dedicated to this beautiful story.

It is in fact repeated in various texts that making love with Yseut is the only solace for Tristan, who, thanks to this experience, forgets his physical pain and anguish, as we can read for example in Béroul, vv. 731–735, where Tristan forgets the pain of a wound thanks to the pleasure he feels in making love with Yseut:

> Sa plaie escrive, forment saine;
> Le sanc qui'en ist les dras ensaigne.
> *La plaie saigne, ne la sent,*
> *Qar trop a son delit entent.*[93]

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92 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2631–2634, Marchello-Nizia (1995b) ('If she does not bring me salvation and comfort me with her own mouth, may she keep my chances of recovery with her; I will die with my immense pain').

93 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 731–734, in Poirion (1995a, 22).

The "anaesthetic" and healing feature of the "good love" between Tristan and Yseut is a crucial element of the conception of love in the text of Béroul, as vv. 1364–1366 openly declare:

> Aspre vie meinent et dure;
> *Tant s'entraiment de bone amor*
> *L'un por l'autre ne sent dolor.*[94]

In this sense, it is important to stress that this passage insists on the reciprocity of the "good love" between the two lovers – a love that is good also because it allows them to forget anguish and pain.

Tristan is nearly always depicted in these texts as either wounded[95] or sick. It should be pointed out that the diseases of the hero are often simulated ones, like leprosy and madness:[96] Tristan in fact disguises himself as a leper or as a fool in order to reach Yseut without being recognised. However, as has been shown, these "masks" are not mere disguises, but reflect special sides of Tristan's temperament.[97] In particular, Tristan presents clear features of a very specific malady: the *aegritudo amoris* and its closely connected humoral imbalance, melancholy.

In Thomas's text, for example, we can read this beautiful passage where Tristan reflects on his own misery. It presents a sick Tristan whom trials, fasts and vigils have greatly weakened:[98]

> Plaint sa mesaise et sa grant peine,
> E sa vie que tant le meine.
> Mult es *febles* de travailer,
> De tant *juner* et de *veiller*,
> De *grant travail* e des *haans*.
> Sur lé degrez *languist* Tristans,
> *La mort desire et het sa vie,*
> *Ja ne leverad mais senz aïe.*[99]

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94 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 1364–1366, Poirion (1995a, 39). ('The life they lead is rough and hard, but the good love they have for each other makes them insensitive to pain').

95 This is a crucial characteristic of the male protagonist in the Medieval French literary tradition, as we have seen in Chapter 5 of this book.

96 On these themes see Rémy (1946); Adams (1981); Dufournet (1982); Walter (1985; 2005); Curtis (1986); Pichon (1984); Fritz (1992); Heijkant (1996); Touati (1998); Pozza (2008); Levron (2009); Giacomazzi (2014).

97 In this regard, see especially Blakeslee (1989), and Walter (1985).

98 I return here to some considerations already developed in Gubbini (2020b, 99–100).

99 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2025–2032, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 178) ('Tristan laments his misfortune, and his life which imposes so much pain on him. Trials, fasts, vigils have greatly weakened him, great torments and sufferings have exhausted him. Tristan languishes under the stairs,

He is in the palace of his uncle, King Mark, and anxiously waits to meet, even for a moment, his beloved, Yseut la Blonde. Brangien, follower and confidant of Yseut, finds him sick and weak, pale and thin, with the complexion of a melancholic:

> Trove le *malade* e mult *feble*,
> *Pale de vis, de cors endeble,*
> *Megre de char, de colur teint.*[100]

The only remedy for this pain is the lovers' brief reunion, during which, as the text clearly tells us, Tristan takes pleasure in Yseut – *deduit* being a key term in Old French to indicate the pleasure of love:

> Acordent sei par grant amur,
> E puis *confortent lur dolur.*
> *Tristan a Ysolt se deduit.*[101]

A real "sujet agité",[102] Tristan is led and misled by his emotions, which have effects on his choices, his disguises, his simulations and, finally, his body.[103] Yseut the Blonde constitutes for him his erotic obsession, his love, his healing solace.

But what about Yseut the Blonde herself? Differently from the *Midons* sung in the lyric genre, in romance, the female characters speak, have desires, emotions and a story. It is therefore interesting to analyse the features, and in particular the body language and the emotional behaviour of this charming, healing woman. In some episodes of the story, especially in the text of Béroul, Yseut the Blonde seems to "control" her emotions more effectively than Tristan, and to be able to manage complex situations. One perfect example is to be found in the scene of the "rendez-vous épié", where, during a secret encounter with Tristan, she suddenly sees in the fountain the reflected image of her husband Mark, who is in fact spying on them from a tree. She promptly reacts, pretending with remarkable rhetorical skill that this encounter was meant to discuss with Tristan why she, as the king's wife and following some scandalous rumours, has been be-

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he desires death: he has had enough of his life. Without help, he no longer feels the strength to get up').

100 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2129–2131, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 181) ('She finds him in bad shape and very weakened, pale, without strength and emaciated, and his complexion is livid').

101 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 2147–2149, ibid. (they reconciled with deep emotion, and console themselves of their grief; and Tristan takes his pleasure with Yseut).

102 The expression is taken from the essay of Boureau (2009).

103 Here I insert some considerations I have already anticipated in my contribution Gubbini (2021b).

having in a distant and cold manner towards him.[104] But, as has been masterfully highlighted by Jean Frappier, in other passages we see other sides of Yseut's temperament. In fact, soon after overcoming some extremely stressful episodes during which she has been fearing for her life and that of her lover, Yseut the Blonde reacts with an emotional break-down: "Son émotion, trop longtemps contenue, déborde. […] Ses pleurs expriment son émotion trop longtemps réprimée et coulent presque malgré elle. Ils sont de même nature que son rire qui éclate au moment où Marc envoie Brengain chercher Tristan et qui résonne un peu trop fort, comme un rire nerveux, mal contrôlé […]. C'est […] un rire de détente, d'angoisse surmontée, de vitalité retrouvée."[105]

Her temperament is therefore extremely changeable: she passes very easily from laughter to tears. The contradictory nature of the character of Yseut the Blonde has led the great scholar Jean Frappier to formulate a hypothesis of the greatest interest for our analysis: the character of the queen could be identified as a woman with fragile nerves, perhaps suffering from cyclothymia.[106]

If we focus our attention on the body language of Yseut the Blonde, we will discover that, together with tears and nervous laughter, another somatic element characterises her as a *fil rouge:* she perspires – as indicated by the reiterated presence of the ancient French verb *tressuer.* In Béroul, as already underlined by Frappier,[107] just before the end of the text, Yseut sweats because of her anger towards one of the traitors she has perceived spying on her and Tristan.[108] But also, I would add, Yseut the Blonde perspires when she is eroded by doubts, when she does not recognise Tristan disguised as a fool and therefore hesitates, embarrassed and full of anguish, as two passages from the *Folie d'Oxford* clearly tell us:

> Quant il vint enz e vit Ysolt,
> Il vait vers lu, baiser la volt,
> Mais ele se traite lores arere;
> *Huntuse fu de grant manere,*

104 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, 3–9, in Poirion (1995a).

105 Frappier (1972–1973, 219).

106 Frappier (1972–1973, 225): "On le voit: tantôt prudente et tantôt follement téméraire, tantôt confiante et tantôt désespérée, elle passe régulièrement, dirait-on, du sang froid à la passivité et aux larmes, d'une phase de dépression à une phase d'excitation, d'extraordinaire énergie. On serait parfois tenté d'employer à son propos un terme médical comme celui de cyclothymie".

107 Frappier (1972–1973, 225).

108 Béroul, *Tristan et Yseut*, v. 4431 in Poirion (1995a, 120).

Kar ele ne saveit quai fere dut,
E *tressüat* u ele estut.[109]

Isolt l'entent e culur mue,
D'anguisse fremist e tressue.[110]

The physiology of anguish we have highlighted in the character of Yseut seems to be the perfect *pendant* to the psychosomatic nature of Tristan's suffering.
Again in the *Folie d'Oxford*, once Tristan's disguise is unveiled and Yseut recognises him, her anguish is dispelled, and she can finally abandon herself to the joy of love – Yseut is so happy holding her friend in her arms that she loses all composure:

Ysolt entre ses bras le tint.
Tele joi en ad de sun ami
Ke ele ad e tent dejuste li
Ke ele ne set cument cuntenir.[111]

The medieval French verse texts featuring the story of Tristan and Yseut show, then, that Yseut the Blonde has a strong healing talent – also thanks to her beauty and her charming power over Tristan – which connects her to the supernatural world. Yet she is also presented as a fragile, emotional and passionate human being.

In contrast to Yseut the Blonde, who, beyond the healing power of her body, shares with her mother a medical knowledge that approximates her with the medieval figure of the *domina herbarum*, Guenevere – wife of King Arthur and lover of Lancelot – does not seem to be endowed with such expertise. This queen is a very complex character, whose contours are constantly blurring in the different texts that stage her. As previous studies have shown, from her literary debut in the *Historia Regum Britanniae* by Geoffroy of Monmouth and in its vernacular rewriting *Roman de Brut* by Wace, up to the late medieval texts presenting Guenevere, "il n'existe aucun personnage féminin qui soit plus hétérogène, polymorphe et protéiforme que l'épouse d'Arthur".[112] She is at the same time the perfect queen,

109 *La Folie de Tristan, version d'Oxford*, vv. 679 – 684, in Demaules (1995, 235) ('When he came inside and saw Yseut, he came closer and wanted to kiss her, but she recoiled. She felt a great embarrassment because she did not know what to do. She felt sweaty').
110 *La Folie de Tristan, version d'Oxford*, vv. 939 – 940, in Demaules (1995, 241). ('Yseut listens to him, and pales; she shudders with anguish and becomes sweaty').
111 *La Folie de Tristan, version d'Oxford*, vv. 988 – 998, in Demaules (1995, 242 – 243). ('Yseut embraces him. She is so happy to hold her friend in her arms that she loses all composure').
112 See Rieger (2012, quotation at 260). The same author has dedicated a book to this character: Rieger (2009) (in the book there is also a rich bibliography on Guenevere's character).

symbol of beauty and courtliness, and the passionate adulterer – the reason for which the knights of the Round Table make their exploits, and, at the same time, at the origin of the destruction of the Arthurian world.[113] This ambivalence of Guenevere is well represented by the clothes she wears when she welcomes Lancelot in her room before their first night of love:

> Tant que la reine est venue
> En un molt *blanche chemise*;
> N'ot sus bliaut ne cote mise
> Mes *un cort mantel* ot desus,
> *D'escarlate* et de cisemus.[114]

The colours of Guenevere's clothes in this scene are white and red: as has been stressed, the white of chastity and the red of passion.[115] Later on, this same combination of colours will characterise Dante's Beatrice in the masterpiece *Vita Nova.* When Dante meets Beatrice in the street and she greets him, her clothes are very white:

> Poi che fuoro passati tanti dì che appunto eran compiuti li nove anni appresso l'apparimento soprascritto di questa gentilissima, ne l'ultimo di questi dì avenne che questa mirabile donna apparve a me *vestita di colore bianchissimo.*[116]

And later, when Dante dreams of Beatrice held asleep in the arms of Love, she is naked but for a light blood-coloured cloth:

> Nelle sue braccia mi parea vedere vedere una persona dormire nuda, salvo che 'nvolta mi parea in uno *drappo sanguigno* leggeramente.[117]

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113 See Frappier (1961). See also Gubbini (2018a).

114 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 4586–4590, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 620). ('Finally, the queen arrived in a very white shirt; she had not put on a blouse or a tunic, but had thrown over a short scarlet and marmot cape).

115 See Rieger (2012, 269).

116 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 45). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: "After so many days had passed that it was exactly nine years since the above-named apparition of this most gracious of women, on the last of these days that marvelous lady appeared to me dressed in pure white".

117 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 46). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: "In his arms I thought I saw a sleeping person, naked but for a crimson silken cloth that seemed to be draped about her".

This pattern of colours – white and red – is intimately connected to the birth of love and to the concept of "*passio*-passion", as we have already seen in the context of various wounds of Tristan and Lancelot and the closely linked theme of the "white bedclothes stained by blood" we find in the narratives.[118]

But whereas this dimension, connected as it is to the "*passio*-passion", is (as we will see in the next section) sublimated to a more spiritual dimension in the dream described by Dante, in the passage we have read from Chrétien de Troyes, this pattern of colours in the queen's clothes is a "prelude" to the night of love-passion that Guenevere and Lancelot will experience together.[119]

If, as we have seen in Chapter 5, the pleasure of sexual intercourse has an unquestionable "anaesthetic" power for the wounded Lancelot, before and after the night of love (as we have seen in the same chapter), the body of Guenevere has a double and intertwined function: a sensual and a spiritual one. The very strong power that love has over Lancelot is the central leitmotiv and the premise to every episode, be it ever so apparently paradoxical, of the romance. In particular, a special part of Guenevere's body, her hair – very important for the Middle Ages and for the topos of the *descriptio puellae* – has an incredible power over Lancelot. A perfect example can be found in the scene of the ivory comb of Chrétien's romance *Lancelot ou le Chevalier de la Charrette.* Lancelot must escort a damsel into the forest; arrived at a crossroads they find, abandoned, a beautiful ivory comb, full of blonde hair. Lancelot asks the damsel if she knows who this comb belongs to; she replies that it belongs to the queen, as does the hair on it, which is more blond than gold. Lancelot almost faints:

> Quant cil l'ot, n'a tant de vertu
> Que tot nel coveigne ploier:
> Par force l'estut apoier
> Devant a l'arçon de la sele.
> Et quant ce vit la dameisele,
> Si s'an mervoille et esbaïst,
> Qu'ele cuida qu'il en cheïst;
> S'ele ot peor, ne l'en blasmez,
> Q'ele cuida qu'il fust pasmez.
> Si ert il, autant se valoit,
> Molt po de chose s'an failloit,
> Qu'il avoit au cuer tel dolor

118 See Chapter 5 of this book.

119 For an interpretation of the episode of the night of love between Lancelot and Guenevere as an "holy adultery" that could have been connected with the crusading mentality present in Marie de Champagne's court, see Walters (2012).

Que la parole et la color
Ot une grant piece perdue.[120]

Lancelot's apparent overreaction actually corresponds to the symptoms of lovesickness – fainting, pain in the heart, pallor – and the knight's adoration of Guenevere's hair is near to fetishism, as we can read in the following passage:

Et cil, qui vialt que le peigne ait,
Li done, et les chevox an trait,
Si soëf que nul n'an deront.
Ja mes oel d'ome ne verront
Nule chose tant enorer,
Qu'il les comence a aorer,
Et bien cent mile foiz les toche
Et a ses ialz, et a sa boche,
Et a son front, et a sa face;
N'est joie nule qu'il n'an face:
Molt s'an fet liez, molt s'an fet riche;
An son saing, pres del cuer, les fiche
Entre sa chemise et sa char.[121]

The fact is that Lancelot adores Guenevere's hair as a "charm': he has more faith in her hair than in any other medication or even in prayers to the saints, as the text explicitly declares:

N'en preïst pas chargié un char
D'esmeraudes ne d'escharboncles;
Ne cuidoit mie que reoncles
Ne autres max ja més le praigne;
Dïamargareton desdaigne

120 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 1430 – 1443, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 542). ('Listening to this revelation, the rider fainted and had to lean in front of him, on the saddle arch. Seeing all this, the damsel was amazed and bewildered: she was afraid of seeing him fall. Do not blame her if she was afraid, she believed that he was passed out. In fact, Lancelot was almost unconscious, or was shortly missing: he had such pain in his heart that he lost the use of words and the colours of his face for a long time').

121 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 1463 – 1475, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 543). ('And he, who wants the damsel to have the comb, gives it to her, but removes the hair so delicately that he doesn't break any. Never will a man's gaze see someone honouring an object as much as he does when he begins to adore the hair: he caresses them more than a hundred thousand times, with his eyes, his mouth, his forehead, his face. He celebrates them in every way: they are his happiness, his wealth. He hides them on his chest, near his heart, between his flesh and his shirt').

Et pleüriche et tirïasque,
Neïs saint Martin et saint Jasque;
Car an ces chevox tant se fie
Qu'il n'a mestier de lor aïe.[122]

So, if Guenevere does not possess medical and magical skills like Yseut the Blonde, we could also say that she does not even need them. Her body naturally possesses medical and magical virtues that have the strongest effects on her lover, Lancelot. This holds true not just for the moments of physical intimacy, but even for situations when only a small part of her body (such as her hair) is near him.

In fact, the beauty that characterises the queen includes elements which pertain to her exceptional nature. In particular, the following passage on her hair insists on an aspect we have already detected as a recurrent and a key one: the quality of brightness, here repeatedly evoked thanks to the hair of Guenevere, brighter than gold a hundred thousand times purified, a hundred thousand times melted:

Mes quel estoient li chevol?
Et por mançongier et por fol
M'an tanra l'en, se voir an di:
Quant la foire iert plainne au Lendi
Et il i avra plus avoir,
Nel volsist mie tot avoir
Li chevaliers, c'est voirs provez,
S'il n'eüst ces chevox trovez.
Et, se le voir m'an requerez,
Ors cent mille foiz esmerez
Et puis autantes foiz recuiz
Fust plus oscurs que n'est la nuiz
Contre le plus bel jor d'esté
Qui ait an tot cest an esté,
Qui l'or et les chevols veïst,
Si que l'un lez l'autre meïst.[123]

122 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 1476–1484, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 543). ('He wouldn't have given them in for a wagon full of emeralds or carbuncles. He was no longer afraid of getting ulcers or other illnesses. End with the diamargariton, the pleuriche and the theriac, and even with prayers to Saint Martin and Saint James! Now he had so much faith in that hair that he didn't need any more help').

123 Chrétien de Troyes, *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette*, vv. 1485–1500, in Poirion/Berthelot/Dembowski/Lefèvre/Uitti/Walter (1994, 543). ('But what was this hair like? They will take me for a liar and for a fool if I tell the truth. Whatever can accumulate in the great days of the Lendit fair, the knight would not want to have it in place of that hair he found. And if you insist on knowing the whole truth, gold a hundred thousand times purified, a hundred thousand times melted, would

This exceptional nature of the beauty of Guenevere seems very close to the supernatural: as we have already seen in the Chapter 3, the topos of the fairy, strongly present in the *Lais* of Marie de France and the anonymous ones that follow her model, flourishes in the twelfth century. Therefore, in order to better understand the character of Guenevere, and her supernatural dimension, it is important to dedicate a short excursus to the figure of the fairy in the Middle Ages and, in particular, in Anglo-Norman literary production.

The fairy is the synthesis of all perfections: full of brightness and beauty, forever young, she usually appears to a hero in the middle of a forest and, unexpectedly, lavishes him with love, power and richness. According to different narrative turning points or specific reasons (betrayals or indiscretions of the hero, for example), the same fairy disappears all of a sudden, leaving him in a state of physical and psychological prostration.[124]

This is more or less the plot underlying a scene we will analyse now, taken from *Désiré*, one of the anonymous *lais* just mentioned:

> Du duel qu'il a s'apesanti,
> En poi de tens amaladi.
> Sa grant joie met en tristor
> Et son chant est torné en plor.
> Un an entier et plus langui,
> Trestuit le tienent a peri.
> Tuz diseient qu'il se moreit,
> E il meïmes le diseit.
> Al chef de l'an qu'il out jeü,
> Oiez cum il est avenu:
> Un jor le leisserent dormant
> Si esquier et si sergant.[125]
>
> Quant il aveit assez dormi,
> esveilla sei e esperi.
> D'une chose se porpensa:
> Que seus estoit. Molt li pesa.

seem darker than night compared to the most beautiful summer day of this year if, after bringing them together, we compared it to that hair').

124 For analytic bibliographical references on the theme of the fairy and the *merveilleux*, see Chapter 3.

125 *Désiré*, vv. 387–398, in Koble/Séguy (2011b, 666–668). ('His grief affected his whole being, and he swiftly fell ill. His intense joy turns into sadness, his song has turned to tears. For over a year he remained prostrate; all thought he was lost. It was said that he was in agony, as he himself confirmed. At the end of a year of prostration, listen to what happened. One day his squires and his servants left him to his sleep').

Si comme il ert en tel anui,
S'amie vint parler a lui.[126]

Tu te feïs de moi confés,
Si ne recovreras jamés.
Estoies tu de moi chargiez?
Ce ne fu pas si grant pechiez!
Je ne fui onques espousee,
Ne fiancee, ne juree,
Ne fame espousee nen as;
Je croi tu t'en repentiras!
Qant tu confessïon querroies,
Bien sai que de moi partiroies.
Que li pechiez vaut au gehir,
Qui ne se puet mie partir?
Soventes foiz as tu douté
Que je t'eüsse *enfantosmé.*
N'aies tu ja de ce regart,
Ne sui mie de male part.[127]

The protagonist, as a result of his disquiet for the real nature of the too extraordinary beloved – fairy, demon, witch? – has unwisely revealed his secret relationship to the confessor, breaking in this way the pact agreed with the fairy. She punishes him by disappearing without a trace; he falls to the ground, prostrate, his body is weak, his emotions depressed. He falls asleep and suddenly witnesses the apparition in this state of psycho-physical exhaustion. According to medieval texts on dreams (such as in the *Liber de spiritu et anima*, former attributed to Augustine, but in fact probably written by the twelfth-century Cistercian monk Alcher of Clairvaux),[128] specific physical conditions, such as drunkenness and indigestion, or even the devil's intervention, may affect our dream activity and result in a *visio falsa* of the *phantasia:* false images, illusions.[129] It is not clear whether the same idea underlies this passage of the *Lai de Désiré:* the apparition is a fairy

126 *Désiré*, vv. 401–406, in Koble/Séguy (2011b, 668). ('When he had slept enough, he awoke and regained consciousness. He realised that he was alone; he was overwhelmed. In that moment that he was so sad, his beloved came to speak to him').
127 *Désiré*, vv. 417–432, in Koble/Séguy (2011b, 668–670). ('You've confessed about me, an irremediable mistake. Did my love weigh upon you so hard? The sin was not so serious! I have never been married, betrothed, or promised, and you have no wife. You will repent, I believe! Since you were trying to confess, I knew you would leave me. What is the good of confessing a sin if one cannot escape from it? Many times you were afraid that I had bewitched you. Have no fear, I am not evil').
128 See Regan (1948). See also Tarlazzi (2009).
129 See Schmitt (1988, 187).

who nevertheless repudiates the suspicions of her beloved as to the possible evil nature of her spells, which she expresses with the rare but important Old French verb *enfantosmer*.

The ambivalent character of the fairy – good and extraordinary in terms of her virtues and powers, but simultaneously disquieting on the grounds of her equivocal nature, caught between two worlds, the human and the supernatural – will leave a slight "trace" precisely in Guenevere,[130] first of all for the exceptional and supernatural dimension of her beauty and the "healing" power of her body – but also for another reason.

The Celtic root of the name Guenevere is *Gwenhwyfar*, composed of the elements *gwen-*, which is indicative of radiance, brightness and whiteness, and *-far*, which means fairy: so Guenevere conceals within her name an ancient magic nature: she is the "radiant fairy" *par excellence.* And, besides her brightness, she also possesses supernatural powers: Guenevere, similar to what we have seen in the *domina* of William of Aquitaine or in the fairies of the Anglo-Norman *lais*, enjoys a very special relationship with time, age and youthfulness. As the sombre, haunted text *La mort le roi Artu* tells us, she does not grow old:

> Et la reïne estoit si bele que touz li monz s'en merveilloit, car a celui tens meïsmes qu'ele iert bien en l'aage de cinquante anz estoit ele si bele dame que en toute le monde ne trouvast l'en mie sa pareille, dont aucun chevalier distrent, por ce que sa biauté ne li failloit nule foiz, que ele estoit fonteinne de toutes biautez.[131]

This characteristic of immutability, of transcending time, is what distinguishes magical creatures from human beings, and is, additionally, indicative of a divine nature, if it is true that, as in Augustine's reflections on time, the time of God is eternal and stable and God is immutable and always identical unto himself: "qui est id idipsum et id idipsum", in a passage by Augustine masterfully analysed by Étienne Gilson.[132] And this is precisely a characteristic of the queen Guenevere, who, as Jean Frappier has highlighted, was "la femme la plus belle de toute la Grande-Bretagne" according to Geoffroy of Monmouth – the queen Guenevere whose "ascendance poétique appartient à la féerie".[133]

130 On this theme see Frappier (1978a, 186–187); Gubbini (2014a).

131 Frappier (1954, 3–4) ('And the queen was so beautiful that everyone was astonished: although she was fifty, she was such a beautiful woman that you could not find anywhere a comparable one. As her beauty never betrayed her, some knights said that she was fountain of all beauty').

132 See Gilson (1947, 123–124).

133 See Frappier (1978, quotations at 186–187).

Excursus: The Virgin Mary as a "Healer"

The double and ambivalent function of the beloved in courtly romance literature at the centre of this chapter – that is, simultaneously and / or in a progressive sequence, both the first cause of love's wound and its healing – has some points of contact, but also fundamental differences, with the religious repertoire. The vocabulary used in the profane and sacred spheres shows strong analogies, which testify to the mutual and interconnected influence between courteous and religious poetry.

A case in point is a poem by Lanfranco Cigala – a Genoese troubadour of the first half of the thirteenth century, who, in addition to profane texts, also includes in his poetic production religious songs dedicated to the Virgin. In one of these religious songs Lanfranco Cigala "summarises", so to speak, the lexicon of the profane *vulnus amoris.* Where worldly love wounds (*nafrar*) with a *mortal plaia* ('deadly sore') and the *espina del mon* ('wordly thorn') stings, salvation and peace can instead be found in the *fin'amansa* for a more reliable *Midons* – the Virgin Mary, who gives healing (*guirensa*) and cures (*sanes*) with her compassion (*pidansa*):[134]

> Qui de l'amor del mont follia
> Es *nafratz* d'una *mortal plaia*,
> Per qu'es fols cel que.s n'atalenta;
> Mas cel que vostr'amors chastia,
> No.ill faillira que ioi non aia,
> E non er mals que de mal senta.
> E car eu sui *poingz* de *l'espina*
> *Del mon*, veing a vos per *guirensa*,
> Que.m *sanes* per vostra *pidansa*
> E que.m fassas, dousa reina,
> Mon cor e tota m'entendensa
> *Pausar en vostra fin'amansa.*[135]

134 I come back here to some considerations already developed in Gubbini (2012a).

135 Lanfranco Cigala, *Gloriosa sainta Maria*, Branciforti (1954, 145), vv. 13–24. ('He who acts like a fool in worldly love is wounded by a mortal wound, so that he who takes delight in it is mad, but he who is perfected in your love cannot fail to have joy and there will be no evil so strong that he can suffer badly. And since I am stung by the thorn of the world, I come to you for salvation so that you heal me out of your pity and make me put my heart and all my aspirations in courtly love towards you').

The Franciscanian poet Iacopone da Todi[136] then goes a step further: in one *lauda*, *O Regina cortese, eo so' a vvui venuto*, the Virgin Mary is a "physician", who heals the "sore of the sin" – a wound in the heart so severe that it begins to rot – with spiritual medicines:

> "O Regina cortese, eo so' a vvui venuto,
> ch'al meo core *feruto* deiate *medecare!*
> Eo so' a vvui venuto com' omo desperato;
> perduto onn'altro adiuto, lo vostro m'è lassato;
> s'e' nne fusse privato, farìme consumare.
> Lo meo cor è *feruto*, Madonna, no 'l so dire;
> et a tal è venuto che comenza *putire*;
> non deiate suffrire de volerm'adiutare.
> Donna, la sufferenza sì mm'è pericolosa,
> lo mal pres'à potenza, la natura è dogliosa;
> siatene cordogliosa de volerme sanare!"
> (...)
> "Figlio, poi ch'è' venuto, multo sì mm'è 'n placere;
> addemannime adiuto, dòllote volunteri;
> sì t'opport'è a suffrire con' per arte vòi fare.
> Medecarò per arte; emprima fa' la dieta;
> guard'a sensi de parte, ché nno dian plù firita,
> la natura perita che sse pòzz'agravare."[137]

The double and ambivalent function of the beloved of profane literature is therefore resolved in religious production in a one-dimensional sense: the Virgin Mary does not wound, instead she heals, cures, soothes.

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136 We have already analysed the production of this author in the context of the religious version of love's wound in Chapter 4 of the present book.

137 Iacopone da Todi, *O Regina cortese, eo so' a vvui venuto*, vv. 1–11; vv. 18–23, Leonardi (2010, 30–31). (I quote here the translation – not very literal but beautiful – included in Underhill (1919, 251–253): "O Queen of all courtesy,/To thee I come and I kneel,/My wounded heart to heal,/To thee for succour I pray –//To Thee I come and I kneel,/For lo! I am in despair;/None other help can heal,? Thou only wilt hear my prayer:/And if I should lose Thy care,/My spirit must waste away.//My heart is wounded more,/Madonna, than tongue can tell;/Pierced to the very core;/Rottenness there doth well!/How canst Thou say me nay?//Madonna, so fierce the strain/Of this my perilous hour,/Nature is turned to pain,/So strong is evil's power;/Be gracious, O Ivory Tower!/My anguish touch and allay" (...) "Come to Me, son most dear,/Thy coming is all my pleasure;/Ask my help without fear,/Gladly I give in due measure;/Yet, for my skill and treasure,/In suffering must thou pay.//If that thou wouldst be well,/Spare thy diet must be;/Conquer thy senses and quell,/Teach them from peril to flee;/Till they be chastened and free,/Lest nature ruin and slay").

Excursus: The Phantasmatic Image that Wounds and Heals

On fol. 33v of the incunabulum G.V.15, preserved at the Biblioteca Queriniana of Brescia, there is a wonderful illustration showing a fire arrow departing from Laura's eyes and hitting the lyrical I (see figure below). The book, fashioned on the basis of the *editio princeps* of Petrarch's *Canzoniere* towards the end of the fifteenth century, was probably prepared by the poet Antonio Grifo as regards both the illustrations and the marginalia. As has been demonstrated by Florian Mehltretter, Grifo's attitude of literal treatment of the poetic allegories in the illustrations influences the perception not just of the single poems, but of the shape of the entire cycle.[138] In the case of this figure, which refers to *RVF* 87, the illustration "materialises" with a fire arrow coming from the eyes of Laura the expression contained in v. 5 of the sonnet, "il colpo de' vostr'occhi".[139]

Figure 7: Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, Inc. G.V.15, image 34 of 160, fol. 33v.
Source of the image: https://brixiana.medialibrary.it/media/ricercadl.aspx?keywords=canzoniere

138 See Mehltretter (2009, 49 and 53).
139 Santagata (2004, 435).

The image of the eyes of the beloved shooting forth arrows[140] is connected to the topos of the wound of love inflicted by or through the eyes, a topos highly present – as we have seen in the second chapter of this book – already in the poetry of the Troubadours and of Guido Cavalcanti. As I have recalled earlier, this lyric theme has a parallel in the optic theories circulating during the Middle Ages.[141] Among the various theories of vision, we can, for example, recall the atomistic one, which supposed that atoms departed from the object of vision and then entered the foramen of the pupil, or the Platonic version, according to which it was from the eye of the observer that rays spread out into space and, once they encountered an obstacle that reflected or refracted them, returned back. Both these theories, however, as remarked by Natascia Tonelli, implied a sort of contact between the object of vision and the eye.[142] A contact that in the lyrical metaphor acquires bloody connotations – those of a love wound.

Moreover, as already seen in this chapter, there seems to be a connection between the phantasmatic image[143] of the woman and light: the word *phántasma* is strictly connected to *phantasia*, which, as we have seen, was related etymologically, by Aristotle, to the greek term for 'light' (*phaos*).[144] With its incredible luminosity – a fundamental leitmotif of the description of the beloved in medieval literature – the phantasmatic image enters through the eyes of the lyrical subject, reaches his heart and "invades" it, so to speak. Guido delle Colonne elaborates on this theme in his very beautiful canzone *Ancor che l'aigua per lo foco lassi* – a text venerated by Dante, who quotes it twice in his *De vulgari eloquentia*, first as representative example of the "siciliano illustre" (I, xii, 2), the second time (II, vi, 6), in the words of Gianfranco Contini, as "unica fra le italiane pre-stilnovistiche, come scritta nella suprema *constructio* sintattico-stilistica, nel grado *et sapidus et venustus etiam et excelsus.*"[145] I will quote some passages from the poem which are particularly interesting for the investigation at hand:

140 On the relationship between optic theories and the eyes as arrow(s) of love, see the book of Stewart (2003).

141 See Gubbini (2021a, 33).

142 See Tonelli (2015, 33 – 44).

143 On the phantasmatic image in medieval literature, see at least Agamben (1977), Oldoni (2008), Mikhaïlova-Makarius (2016), Pasero (2016), Gubbini (2021a).

144 Aristotle, *On the soul*, Book III, Ch. 3, (In English translation at the website: https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/aristotle_anima_final.pdf [last access: December 4th, 2022].

145 See Contini (2007, 254); moreover, see Marti (1970 and 1971). I elaborate here some ideas from my contribution Gubbini (2014b).

Eo v'amo tanto che mille fiate
in un'or si m'arranca
lo spirito che manca,
pensando, donna, le vostre beltate;
[. . .]
Eo non credo sia [già] quel[lo]ch'avia,
lo spirito che porto,
ched eo fora già morto,
tant'ho passato male tuttavia:
lo spirito ch'i' aggio, und'eo mi sporto,
credo lo vostro sia,
che nel meo petto stia
e abiti con meco in gran diporto.

Or mi son bene accorto,
quando da voi mi venni,
che quando mente tenni
vostro amoroso viso netto e chiaro,
li vostri occhi piagenti
allora m'addobraro,
che mi tennero menti
e diedermi nascoso
uno spirto amoroso,
ch'assai mi fa più amare
che no amò null'altro, ciò mi pare.[146]

The poet clearly affirms that, because of his great love, his own spirit fails him in thinking about the beauty of the beloved – therefore, he does not think that the spirit animating him could be his own: rather, it is probably the spirit of the beloved which makes him move, and which resides with him in his chest. But how has the beloved's spirit entered his body and soul? The beautiful lines provide

146 Guido delle Colonne, *Ancor che l'aigua per lo foco lassi*, vv. 39–42 and vv. 58–76, in Contini (1995, 107–110). See also Calenda (2008, 97–108). English translation in Mallette (2005, 183–184): "Love is an ardent spirit/that cannot be seen;/only because of the sighs/does it make itself known in one who loves./So, honorable lady,/my great sighs/can make you certain/of the amorous flame that engulfs me" (vv. 24–31); "I love you so, one thousand times/in an hour my spirit/wearies and wavers,/contemplating, lady, your beauty" (vv. 39–42); "I do not believe it to be the same that I had,/the spirit that I now hold;/for I should already be dead,/I have suffered so much and for so long./The spirit I have, which animates me,/I believe to be yours;/it resides in my chest/and abides with me in joy and pleasure./Now, I have indeed noticed/when I come to you/that, when I hold your loving face/in my thoughts, clear and bright,/your pleasing eyes/overwhelm me at that moment;/for they remain fixed in my mind/and they hide within me a spirit of love,/that makes me love much more,/it seems to me, than any other loved before".

a clear answer – the lyrical I has in fact understood how it has happened: when he gazed at the beautiful look of his beloved, her eyes secretly passed to him an amorous spirit (*spirto amoroso*), "doubling" his own spirit, so to speak, by adding a further spirit. The psycho-physical invasion of the woman's spirit in the lyrical I has therefore been made possible thanks to the *spirto amoroso* radiated by her eyes – the consequence of this "inhabiting" is the "loss" of autonomy of the lover.[147]

This idea is intimately connected to the operation of the faculty of imagination as it was conceived in the Middle Ages (and as we have already recalled in this volume)[148]: the *imaginatio* in fact transforms the sensory perceptions into mental images – the *phantasmata.* For some medieval authors the storage of these images takes place in the brain, for others in the heart. As Mary Carruthers has highlighted,[149] this latter hypothesis involves the term for 'heart', *cor*, at the origin of the Latin verb *recordari*, etymologically, 'bring back to the heart', and consequently 'recall'. Therefore, according to this hypothesis, the *phantasmata* are stored in the heart and occupy it. This theory of the faculty of imagination finds its perfect correspondence in the poetic texts we have quoted, where the phantasmatic image of the beloved has invaded the lyrical I and occupies his heart. But how it is possible for the lyrical I to find relief from this invasion and to counter the consequent loss of self? Some literary texts try to give an answer to this question: the possible consolation can come from the contemplation of this internal image,[150] similarly to the contemplation of sacred images[151] – no matter whether such an internal image is only abstractly conceived or "plastically" recreated.

For the first of these two options, we can quote some important examples: all of them – one by Giraut de Borneil, another by Sordello da Goito, and the third by Giacomo da Lentini – have already been mentioned and partly analysed in this book.[152] For the purposes of this excursus, it is important to recall that the first two text extracts mentioned (that by Giraut de Borneil, and that by Sordello da Goito), present a common element: the beloved's features are carved and engraved in the lyrical I. In the text of Sordello, the exact "place" of the carving is also speci-

147 This is a theme present also in the sonnet of Giacomo da Lentini, *Molti amadori la lor malatia*, significantly in a text devoted to the description of the "symptoms" of the *aegritudo amoris* – as the incipit of the sonnet already states.

148 See Chapter 2 of this volume for a more detailed analysis and for bibliographical references on this theme.

149 Carruthers (2008, 59–60).

150 Fundamental on this topic for the Sicilian School is the contribution of Allegretto (1980).

151 On the connection between courtly literature and mystical one for the "figure in the heart", see Mancini (1988). Additionally, see Meneghetti (2005).

152 See Chapter 2 of this book.

fied: the heart. This is a component, which connects the second with the third example, that is to say, the *canzonetta* of Giacomo da Lentini *Meravigliosamente.* In this last text in fact, as already in that of Sordello, the heart is the location occupied by the image of the beloved – this time not carved, but depicted.

For the second category of texts – those which present a "plastic" recreation of the image of the beloved – a very well-known example is to be found in the episode of the "salle aux images"[153] in the *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas d'Angleterre. We can briefly recall the plot of the story: Tristan is married to another Yseut, Yseut of the White Hands, whom he has chosen, the text tells us, for her name and for her beauty.[154] Tristan has decided to marry her to forget Yseut the Blonde, but it is impossible for him: Tristan in fact does not even manage to consummate his marriage. Ever more melancholic, he decides to build a life-sized statue of Yseut the Blonde and keep it in the "salle aux images". He locks himself in with the statue, talks to her, blames her for her faults, reminds her of their love:

> E les deliz des granz amors,
> E lor travaus et lor dolurs,
> E lor paignes, et lor ahans,
> Recorde a l'himage Tristrans.
> Molt la baisse quand est haitez,
> Corrusce soi quant est irez,
> Que par penser, que par songes,
> Que par craire en son cuer mençoinges
> Que ele mette lui en obli
> Ou que ele ait acun autre ami
> Que ele ne se pusse consurrer
> Que li n'estoce autre amer,
> Que mieuz a sa volunté l'ait.
> Hiceste penser errer le fait,
> Errance son corage debote.[155]

The *immoderata cogitatio* typical of the lover – following the definition of Andrew the Chaplain – is pushed to the extreme in the episode of the "salle aux images':

153 On this episode, see the masterful contribution of Roncaglia (1971).

154 I elaborate here on some considerations already present in Gubbini (2021b).

155 Thomas d'Angleterre, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 1095–1109, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 153–155). ('The delights of passionate love, the sufferings and pains, the sorrows and torments they bring are what Tristan evokes to the statue of Yseut. He covers it with kisses when he is joyful, but he becomes furious when he feels pain, when he imagines that perhaps, in her thoughts or her dreams, or because she would trust lies about him, Yseut could forget him or have another friend; or that she cannot help but come to love another man, more available to her desires. These thoughts mislead him, and this turmoil upsets his heart').

Tristan in fact "materialises", so to speak, his phantasmatic image of Yseut the Blond in a plastic incarnation – a statue.[156] Tristan, longing for Yseut, looks for consolation in his interaction with the statue – and this episode therefore represents a sort of *exemplum* of the illusion, the self-deception and, ultimately, the delusion that characterise the lovesick. An echo of this episode can be found in the canzone of Giacomo da Lentini, *Madonna mia, a voi mando:*

> In gran dilettanz'era,
> madonna, in quello giorno
> quando ti formai in cera
> le bellezze d'intorno:
> più bella mi parete
> ca Isolda la bronda,
> amorosa gioconda
> che sovr'ogn'altra sete.[157]

The commentary by Antonelli recognises that in this passage there is a reference to the episode of the "salle aux images" of Thomas;[158] however, it offers no clear explication of the vv. 43–44 "quando ti formai in cera/le bellezze d'intorno". The commentary explains the expression "formai in cera" as "ritrassi nel volto, nei sembianti", that is '(when I have) portrayed you in the face, in the semblances', affirming that the term "cera" here has to be interpreted as 'volto' (face) and not as 'wax', because it is "(fonematicamente incompatibile con *era*), dunque non proponibile *formare* e compl. di materia con *in*".[159]

A recent contribution has tried to explain the passage, attempting to fill in what was lacking in the commentary.[160] The two most relevant results of this article for our purposes are, first, the discussion of the hypothesis that, contrary to what the commentary had affirmed, the term "cera" can be interpreted here as 'wax', and second, connected to the first result, a reminder of the Aristotelian physiological concept of the 'impression' of sensorial perception in the heart and, con-

156 On this theme in art and literature, see the beautiful book of Camille (1989).

157 Giacomo da Lentini, *Madonna mia, a voi mando*, vv. 41–48, in Antonelli (2008, 287). (English translation in Lansing 2018, 75: "I felt such great delight,/My lady, on the day/When I portrayed your face/With all the beauty you possess:/You seem more beautiful/Than fair Isolde was,/My sweetheart full of joy,/For you best each and all"). We will see later how one of the interpretative proposals hypothesised in this paragraph could imply a different translation of the two vv. 43–44 "quando ti formai in cera/le bellezze d'intorno".

158 Ibid., 295–296.

159 Ibid., 296.

160 Pace (2020).

nected with it, of the image in the memory "like a seal in wax".[161] But the contribution also contains a very problematic affirmation. Speaking of the passage we have quoted from the canzone, it states: "Nor is the image, as argued by Aurelio Roncaglia, an allusion to the episode of *la salle aux images* portrayed by Thomas d'Angleterre at the end of the third quarter of the twelfth century in the Turin fragment of his *Tristan et Yseut*". This statement is clearly denied by the text of Giacomo itself, as we can see if we do not limit ourselves to interpreting vv. 43–44, "quando ti formai in cera/le bellezze d'intorno", but instead read further and include vv. 45–48: "più bella mi parete/ca Isolda la bronda,/amorosa gioconda/ che sovr'ogn'altra sete". It is precisely the proximity in the text between verses 43–44 referring to the image formed in wax and verses 45–48 which explicitly quote Yseut the Blonde (*Isolda la bronda*) that confirm the connection of the entire passage to the episode of the "salle aux images".

The same choice of concentrating only on vv. 43–44 of the canzone, "isolating" them, so to speak, from the rest of the text, is at the basis of the second problem of this recent contribution: it does not consider an important and reiterated element in the song of Giacomo, which can give us a lead to follow in order to achieve a more complex and coherent interpretation of the entire text. I am alluding to the obsessive presence of the sighs in the canzone of Giacomo *Madonna mia, a voi mando* – as we can read in the following passages:

> Madonna mia, a voi mando
> in gioi li mei *sospiri*
> (...)
> und'eo prego l'Amore,
> a cui prega ogni amanti,
> li mei *sospiri* e pianti
> vo pungano lo core.
>
> Ben vorria, s'eo potesse,
> quanti *sospiri* eo getto,
> ch'ogni *sospiro* avesse
> *spirito* e intelletto,
> ch'a voi, donna, d'amare
> dimandasser pietanza,
> da poi ch'e' per dottanza
> non vo posso parlare.[162]

161 Ibid., especially 233–234 and 240–244.

162 Giacomo da Lentini, *Madonna mia, a voi mando*, vv. 1–2, 13–24 in Antonelli (2008, 285–286). (English translation in Lansing 2018, 73: "My lady, I send you/My sighs abrim with joy"; "So I appeal to Love,/To whom all lovers plead,/To let my sighs and cries/Pierce deep into your heart/If I were able, I should like,/For all the sighs I heave,/That every sigh could be/Alive and have a voice,/To seek

As I have already highlighted,[163] the sigh is not only one of the most important physiological expressions of the *aegritudo amoris* – according to medieval medical treatises – but it is also intimately connected to pneumatological doctrine,[164] a connection often explicitly highlighted, on the textual level, by the joint presence of the elements of the sigh (*suspirium*, in Latin) and of the spirit (*spiritus*, in Latin), both of them sharing the same etymological root, the Latin verb *spiro* ('to blow', 'to breathe'). In fact, in this passage from the song of Giacomo, we find this connection again in vv. 17–20: "Ben vorria, s'eo potesse,/quanti *sospiri* eo getto,/ch'ogni *sospiro* avesse / *spirito* e intelletto". As Robert Klein and Giorgio Agamben have highlighted, this complex of themes can also be defined as a "pneumo-phantasmology':[165] a formulation particularly well-conceived, because it enables us to understand the medieval interrelation between spirits, sighs and the *phantasmata* of imagination and memory – an interrelation that we can appreciate only if we connect the functioning of the faculty of *imaginatio* to medieval medical and philosophical theories, and especially pneumatological doctrine. Therefore, in order to understand the song of Giacomo on its multiple levels, it is crucial to consider the whole text and the complex web of themes that it involves.

Another detail of the canzone of Giacomo *Madonna mia, a voi mando* could thus perhaps be better explained: the element of the "shaping in wax" of the beloved, present in vv. 43–44 might hide – together with the reference to the "pneumo-phantasmatic" image already discussed – another possible concrete allusion. I am thinking about the so-called technique of "lost wax casting" – a very ancient technique used to produce sculptures, which, as the name itself explains, involves the use of wax.[166] This is the technique with which two bronze rams of Hellenistic workmanship were made: in the thirteenth century, these same sculptures were then placed as an ornament at the gates of the castle of Maniace, re-erected at the behest of Frederick II and following the plans of the architect Riccardo da Lentini. Now, according to recent research, the intermediary of the acquaintance between Frederick II and Riccardo was precisely Giacomo da Lentini:[167] the *Notaro* must therefore have known the technique of the two sculptures, placed on display in one of the most important castles among the architectural works commissioned by Frederick.

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from you, my dear,/Compassion for my love of you,/Because the fear I have/Won't let me speak to you").

163 See Gubbini (2014b; 2015).

164 For a detailed summary of pneumatological doctrine in the present book, see Chapter 3.

165 See Klein (1970). The formulation "pneumo-fantasmologia" is in Agamben (1977, 105).

166 On this topic, see Hunt (1980).

167 See Pistilli (2014, 129).

In conclusion: Giacomo recreates the image of the beloved in his *imaginatio* and memory, but also – new Pygmalion[168] and new Tristan – he imagines "plastically" materialising this image in a statue, perhaps making an allusion to an ancient sculptural technique well-known in Frederick's circle: imagination and references to the culture of the time merge and stratify in Giacomo's beautiful song, which therefore requires a complex reading on multiple levels.

More broadly, the brief history of the phantasmatic image that we have followed in this *excursus* – starting from the illustration of the Queriniana, then going back chronologically to the 12th and 13th centuries – shows us once again how the process of wounding and healing, of pain and consolation constitutes a fundamental component of medieval literary production.

6.4 "Beata Beatrix"

In[169] the "booklet" (*libello*) of the *Vita Nova*, a true masterpiece that the author composed when he was still young,[170] Dante narrates his love for Beatrice through time: from their first encounter, when she was nine years old, to when she prematurely died at the age of twenty-four, to the period after her death. The text, as is well known, is a *prosimetrum*, alternating prose and verse, and following, in this sense, first of all the model of the *Consolatio Philosophiae* of Boethius.[171] But Dante

168 On this theme, see Agamben (1977) and Camille (1989, 316–337).

169 The title of this paragraph plays with the title of a masterful essay of Gianfranco Folena dedicated to Beatrice d'Este and also to the praise that the Troubadours have made of this historical figure; therefore, Folena's essay has nothing to do with Dante's Beatrice. However, the beautiful title and the quotation that follows both also suit Dante's Beatrice perfectly – and justify, therefore, in my view, the "re-use" of the title for the present section: "Nella storia dell'onomastica femminile il Duecento è il secolo di Beatrice, nome augurativo di tradizione storica imperiale, che, dapprima patrimonio dell'aristocrazia, diviene presto anche di dominio borghese. Basta dare un'occhiata alle genealogie degli Este e dei Savoia (...) per vedere moltiplicarsi le Beatrici. (...) La curva delle Beatrici discende alla fine del secolo, proprio nell'età della Beatrice privatamente, ma universalmente, beatificata sopra a tutte da un uomo solo, Dante, e non dalla chiesa, e che pure in poesia ha i connotati di una santa, prima con un crisma biografico e agiografico, poi anche come simbolo teologico ed ecclesiale: quella *gentilissima*, *nobilissima*, *mirabile*, *beata*, *gloriosa*, *benedetta* Beatrice, per ricordare gli aggettivi che le fanno aureola, in crescendo, nella *Vita nuova*, la 'gloriosa donna de la mia mente la quale fu da molti chiamata Beatrice li quali non sapeano che si chiamare', e la 'loda di Dio vera' della *Commedia:* l'unico caso in cui i due amori, umano e divino, siano nati e cresciuti insieme, in tutta la storia della poesia che va da Guglielmo IX al Petrarca" (Folena 1990a, quotation at 145–146).

170 For a fresh perspective on the *Vita Nova*, see the new book of Carrai (2020).

171 See Picone (2001).

had a profound knowledge of the tradition of the Troubadours as well, as the *De vulgari eloquentia* clearly testifies.[172] Particularly relevant for the *Vita Nova* are some additions we find in the late manuscript tradition of the Troubadours, where the poetic texts are accompanied by the *vidas* and *razos* probably introduced by Uc de Saint Circ.[173]

The *vidas* and *razos* were both in prose, and they were respectively dedicated to a short biography of the author (*vida*) and to the explanation of the content of a song (*razo*): the introduction of these commentaries in prose together with the poetic texts was of primary importance in order to better “explain” to the new public of northern Italy’s courts the literary and cultural world of the Troubadours.

With this literary background as a context, the *Vita Nova* narrates the story of a love,[174] a story that includes as a matter of course certain events and turning points in its plot. But, most of all, I would say, it is a story that narrates the transformation of an idea of love: from the concept of “love-passion”[175] to one of “love-beatitude”.[176] This is to me the real change, the real turning point that Dante carries out in the *Vita Nova* and that marks a fundamental transformation of the idea of love from to the previous literary tradition.

In order to highlight this transformation, I will analyse a key episode of the *Vita Nova*, the dream of the “cuore mangiato” (‘eaten heart’): I will link this episode to the previous literary tradition – in Langue d’oc and in Langue d’oïl[177] – and I will, moreover, connect this dream to pneumatological doctrine.

The dream of the eaten heart is located soon after the beginning of the book: it does not constitute a “frame” of the text as it was, for example, in the case of the

172 See Inglese (1998).

173 On Uc de Saint Circ see Zinelli (2004; 2006).

174 A beautiful lecture of the *Vita Nova* attentive to the presence of the image and to the faculty of imagination is to be found in Borsa (2018). On the meaning of the “nudità di Beatrice”, see the new, excellent book of Pirovano (2023).

175 And it is not by chance that Dante himself defines the *Vita Nova* as “fervida e passionata” (‘fervid and passionate’) in the *Convivio* (I, i, 16): see Inglese (2015, 44).

176 See, already in this direction, the fundamental essay of Singleton (1949, especially the III Chapter). See also Branca (1966, quotation at 129): “È un itinerario chiarissimo ed evidente, già del resto intravisto dal Parodi, già ragionato magistralmente da Bruno Nardi: dall’amore-passione all’amore-carità, dalla contemplazione sensibile alla visione ultrasensibile nel ‘libro della memoria’”. See also the following lines from the excellent article of Brugnolo (2018, quotation at 143): “un percorso intellettuale e poetico ancora ignoto e tutto da compiere ma inconsciamente auspicato: quello che, detto in estrema sintesi, porterà alla trasformazione dell’amore-passione, *cupiditas* o *amor hereos* (poiché questo, nell’impianto del sonetto, resta pur sempre l’ineludibile dato di partenza), in amore puro e disinteressato, amore-*caritas*”.

177 An interesting parallel can be found in the German *Herzmaere* by Konrad von Würzburg.

Roman de la Rose,[178] but it strongly affects the way in which we understand the entire sense of the *Vita Nova:* a text imbued with a strong prophetic dimension, a text that stages a narrative that is at the crossroads between sacred and profane dimensions.

Before beginning the analysis of this dream, I would like to point out that, in the context of the present investigation on the the *vulnus amoris* theme in medieval romance literatures, I consider the motif of the "eaten heart" as a special variation – of course with its own anthropological and cultural meaning and connections – of the topos of love's wound. The "cruelty" and the bloodiness of the image are much stronger than in a usual literary representation of love's wound, but both the motifs insist on the special connection between the wound (or the removal of the flesh), and the heart as the designate organ.[179] I would therefore say that the motif of the eaten heart can be described, in relation to the *vulnus amoris* theme, as its most intense variant.[180]

After the first greeting received from Beatrice, Dante goes to his room and begins thinking about her. Then he falls asleep and a fantastic vision appears:

> e, però che quella fu la prima volta che le sue parole si mossero per venire a' miei orecchi, presi tanta dolcezza che come inebriato mi partìo da le genti e ricorsi al solingo luogo d'una mia camera e puosimi a pensare di questa cortesissima; [14] e pensando di lei mi sopragiunse un soave sonno nel qual m'apparve una maravigliosa visione: che mi parea vedere ne la mia camera una nebula di colore di fuoco dentro a la quale i' discernea una figura d'un signore di pauroso aspetto a chi la guardasse, e pareami con tanta letizia, quanto a sé, che mirabil cosa era, e nelle sue parole dicea molte cose le qual i' non intendea se non poche, tra le quali intendea queste: "Ego dominus tuus". [15] Nelle sue braccia mi parea vedere una persona dormire nuda, salvo che 'nvolta mi parea in un drappo sanguigno leggeramente; la qual i' guardando molto intentivamente, conobbi ch'era la donna de la salute la quale m'avea lo giorno dinanzi degnato di salutare. [16] E nell'una delle mani mi parea che questi tenesse una cosa la quale ardesse tutta e pareami che mi dicesse queste parole: "Vide cor tuum". [17] E quando elli era stato alquanto, pareami che disvegliasse questa che dormia e tanto si sforzava

178 In the *Roman de la Rose* the dream is the real frame of the text, that, already at the beginning, introduces on the role of dreams a polemic against the previous literary tradition: the text in fact declares that not every dream is a lie, using the couple of rhyming words *songe*/*mensonge* that the previous literary tradition had already employed in order to stress the mendacity of dreams: see Gubbini (2019), where the previous bibliography on the theme can also be found. On the *Roman de la Rose* see in particular the excellent works of Stephen Nichols as, for example, Nichols (2007).
179 On the connection between the motif of love's wound and the heart, see the Chapter 1 in this book.
180 However, I would also like to point out that in medieval romance literatures, as will be briefly sketched later, the motif of the eaten heart has also been used in contexts that were not connected to love: a perfect example is the *planh* of Sordello da Goito *Planher vuelh en Blacatz en aquest leugier so.*

> per suo ingegno che le facea mangiare questa cosa che ’n mano l’ardea, la quale ella mangiava dubitosamente. [18] Appresso ciò poco dimorava che la sua letizia si convertia in amarissimo pianto e, così piangendo, si ricogliea questa donna nelle sue braccia e con essa mi parea che si ne gisse verso il cielo; ond’io sostenea sì grande angoscia che ’l mio deboletto sonno non poteo sostenere, anzi si ruppe e fui isvegliato.[181]

The long history of the motif of the eaten heart has already been traced in several publications,[182] and it will therefore not be the task of the present work to recall all the texts that have dealt with this topos before Dante.

In this context, I would like to comment only on some selected appearances of this motif before Dante, precisely in order to better understand the meaning of this theme in the *Vita Nova*.

In the *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas d’Angleterre, the theme of the eaten heart appears indirectly through a *lai* – a tale in verses accompanied by music – that Yseut the Blonde, longing for Tristan who is far from her, sings in her room (*en sa chambre*):

> En sa chambre se set un jor
> E fait un lai pitus d’amur,
> *Coment dan Guirun fu supris,*
> *Pur l’amur de la dame ocis*
> *Qu’il sur tute rien ama,*
> *E coment li cuns puis li dona*
> *Le cuer Guirun a sa moillier*

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181 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 45–47). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: “And since it was the first time her words had reached my ears, I felt such bliss that I withdrew from people as if I were drunk, away to the solitude of my room, and settled down to think about this most graceful of women. And thinking about her, a sweet sleep came over me, in which appeared a tremendous vision. I seemed to see a fiery cloud in my room, inside which I discerned a figure of a lordly man, frightening to behold. And it was marvelous how utterly full of joy he seemed. And among the words that he spoke, I understood only a few, including: ‘Ego dominus tuus’ In his arms I thought I saw a sleeping person, naked but for a crimson silken cloth that seemed to be draped about her, who, when I looked closely, I realized was the lady of the saving gesture, she who earlier that day had deigned to salute me. And in one of his hands it seemed that he held something consumed by flame, and I thought I heard him say these words: ‘Vide cor tuum.’ And when he had been there a while, it seemed that he awakened the sleeping lady, and he was doing all he could to get her to eat the thing burning in his hands, which she anxiously ate. Then his happiness turned into the bitterest tears, and as he cried he picked up this woman in his arms, and he seemed to go off toward the sky. At which point I felt more anguish than my light sleep could sustain, and I woke”.

182 See Rossi (1983; 2003); Cots (1991); di Maio (1996); de Riquer (1998); Picone (1996); Pinto (2008); Brugnolo (2018).

Par engin un jor a mangier,
E la dolur que la dame out,
Quant la mort de sun ami sout.
La reïne chante dulcement,
La voiz acorde a l'estrument.
Les mainz sunt bels, li lais buens,
Dulce la voiz, bas li tons.[183]

The *lai* to which the text of Thomas is referring has not been handed down to us.[184] The central element for the present analysis is that the *lai* of *Guirun* – a character of the Arthurian cycle – narrates that the protagonist is put to death for having loved a lady above all else, and that the husband of the beloved of Guiron then treacherously gives the heart of the protagonist to his wife to eat, causing her to despair. We see how the connection of the motif of the eaten heart with the conception of love-passion is already strongly present in this passage from the *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas. An element that will constitute the *fil rouge* of this connection is formed by the *intensity* – and maybe the excess?[185] – of this love-passion: vv. 989–991 state "Coment dan Guirun fu supris, / Pur l'amur de la dame ocis / *Qu'il sur tute rien ama*" ('how Lord Guirun was surprised and put to death for the love of his lady whom he loved *above all else*'). *Above all else* seems to me to be the key element of this fatal encounter between love-passion and the eaten heart.

Another text that stages the close connection between the eaten heart and love-passion is the *vida* of the troubadour Guilhem de Cabestany. As hinted above, the *vidas*, short biographies of the Troubadours, and the *razos*, short narrations on the facts and the circumstances that have generated the composition

183 Thomas, *Tristan et Yseut*, vv. 987–1000, in Marchello-Nizia (1995b, 150–151) ('One day, the queen was in her room composing a very moving *lai* on love: it recounted how Sir Guiron had been discovered and put to death for the love of his lady whom he loved above all else, and how the count had then treacherously given to eat the heart of Guiron to his wife, and her despair on learning of the death of the one she loved. The queen sang softly, tuning her voice to the instrument. Her hands were beautiful, and the *lai* well made, soft was her voice, and grave the tone of the accompaniment').

184 But, as a footnote to the edition of Thomas's *Tristan et Yseut* highlights, this lost *lai* of Guirun had probably already been evoked before in Thomas' masterpiece, in a fragment today lost as well: "Il s'agit du lai de Guirun, qui n'a pas été conservé, et qui était l'une des nombreuses versions médiévales du thème du 'cœur mangé'. Thomas semble avoir évoqué ce lai également dans ce qui a été perdu de son poème, puisque Gottfried de Strasbourg (…) et frère Robert dans la *Saga* (…) y font allusion" (quotation from Marchello-Nizia 1995c, 1259).

185 The problem "mezura vs. desmezura" ('measure vs. excess') is crucial for Troubadour poetry: see Wettstein (1974); see also Gubbini (2009, 237).

of a poem, were very probably functional in promoting a greater understanding of the troubadour universe in a Northern Italian courtly public, which was very different from the original audience. [186] In any case, the creation of *vidas* and *razos* and their introduction as “accompanying” texts in the manuscript tradition greatly changed the access to troubadour poetry by this new audience. A perfect example of the influence of these texts on the following literary tradition and on the image of the Troubadours conveyed is precisely the *vida* of the troubadour Guilhem de Cabestany, a text that later inspired the ninth *novella* of the Fourth *Giornata*, devoted to tragic loves, of Boccaccio’s *Decameron.* The *vida* says (I quote only the relevant passages for the present analysis):

> En Guillems de Cabestaing si amava la dompna per amor e chantava de lieis e.n fazia sas chanssos. E la dompna, qu’era joves e gaia e gentils e bella, *si.l volia ben mais que a re del mon.* (…) E qan venc un dia, Raimons de Castel Rossillon trobet passan Guillem de Cabestaing ses gran compaignia et aucis lo; e fetz li traire lo cor del cors e fetz li taillar la testa; e.l cor fetz portar a son alberc e la testa atressi; e fetz lo cor raustir e far a pebrada, e fetz lo dar a manjar a la moiller. E qan la dompna l’ac manjat, Raimons de Castel Rossillon li dis: “Sabetz vos so que vos avetz manjat?”. Et ella dis: “Non, si non que mout es estada bona vianda e saborida”. Et el li dis q’el era lo cors d’En Guillem de Cabestaing so que ella avia manjat; et, a so q’ella.l crezes mieils, si fetz aportar la testa lieis. E quan la dompna vic so et auzic, ella perdet lo vezer e l’auzir. E qand ella revenc, si dis: “Seigner, ben m’avetz dat si bon manjar que ja mais non manjarai d’autre”. E qan el auzic so, el cors ab s’espaza e volc li dar sus en la testa; et ella cors ad un balcon e laisset se cazer jos, et enaissi moric.[187]

We see how here the “excess” plays a special role first of all in the cruelty of the husband’s revenge, but the element of intensity is already present in the sentence that qualifies the nature of the love that Soremonda, the feminine character of the *vida*, proves toward Guilhem de Cabestany. The text says ‘she loved him more than

186 See Gubbini (2018b, 28–33).

187 Boutière/Schutz (1973, 531). (‘And Guillem de Cabestany loved deeply a lady and he sang about her and made his songs. And the lady, who was young, cheerful, gentle and beautiful, loved him more than anything in the world. (...) And one day Ramon de Castell Rosselló found himself walking with Guillem de Cabestany, who was going without great accompaniment, and killed him; he made her extract the heart from the body and cut off the head; and he brought the heart to his house, and also his head; and he had the heart roasted and seasoned with pepper, and he made it feed his wife. And when the lady had eaten it, Ramon de Castell Rosselló told her: ‘Do you know what it is that you have eaten?’ And she said: ‘No, it was a very good and tasty meal.’ And he told her that it was Guillem de Cabestany’s heart that she had eaten; and, to make him believe it better, he had her head brought before her. And when the lady saw and heard this, she lost her sight and hearing. And when she recovered her senses, she said: ‘Lord, you have given me such a good delicacy that I will never eat another.’ And when he heard it, he ran with her sword and wanted to hit her on the head; and she ran to a balcony and flopped down, and so she died’).

anything in the world' ("si.l volia ben mais que a re del mon"). In the version of the story present in the *Novella IX* of the *Fourth Giornata* of the *Decameron*, Boccaccio attributes this characteristic both to the male character Guiglielmo Guardastagno and to the female one:

> E come che ciascun dimorasse in un suo castello e fosse l'uno dall'altro lontano ben diece miglia, pure avvenne che, avendo messer Guiglielmo Rossiglione una bellissima e vaga donna per moglie, *messer Guiglielmo Guardastagno fuor di misura*, non obstante l'amistà e la compagnia che era tra loro, *s'innamorò di lei* e tanto or con un atto or con un altro fece, che la donna se n'accorse; e conoscendolo per valorosissimo cavaliere le piacque e cominciò a porre amore a lui, in tanto che *niuna cosa più che lui disiderava o amava, né altro attendeva che da lui esser richesta:* il che non guari stette che adivenne, e insieme furono una volta e altra *amandosi forte.*[188]

Fuor di misura seems therefore to be a recurrent element that prepares, so to speak, a tragic end. And, as we can see from the examples analysed, the eaten heart is a motif intimately linked to the concept of 'love-passion': its presence in the dream of the *Vita nova* seems therefore to evoke this literary context and atmosphere. Let us now see in detail the elements that go in this direction in Dante's juvenile masterpiece.

The personification of Love in this text speaks in Latin, not least because, as Domenico de Robertis has highlighted, "il latino (…) rappresenterà l'eterno linguaggio della passione".[189]

The other fundamental element that verbalises, so to speak, the love-passion, especially in the first part of the *Vita Nova*, is the pneumatological doctrine, which we have repeatedly encountered in this book. The spirits in fact are the "spies" of the emotional turmoil that catches Dante when he encounters Beatrice:

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188 Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, IV 9, in Quondam/Fiorilla/Alfano (2020, 779). The comment to the text on the passage at 779 says: "*fuor di misura:* 'oltre i limiti' (imposti dall'amicizia e dall'essere compagni d'arme)". Although the passage can be also interpreted in this way, I would like to highlight that, in the quoted sentence, *fuor di misura* seems to be better connected to *s'innamorò di lei* than to the subordinate clause *non obstante l'amistà e la compagnia che era tra loro.* ("And, albeit each dwelt in his own castle, and the castles were ten good miles apart, it nevertheless came to pass that, Sieur Guillaume de Roussillon having a most lovely lady, and amorous withal, to wife, Sieur Guillaume de Cabestaing, for all they were such friends and comrades, became inordinately enamoured of the lady, who, by this, that, and the other sign that he gave, discovered his passion, [007] and knowing him for a most complete knight, was flattered, and returned it, insomuch that she yearned and burned for him above all else in the world, and waited only till he should make his suit to her, as before long he did; and so they met from time to time, and great was their love") (English translation of Rigg (1903) on the website: https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/texts/DecShowText.php?myID=nov0409&lang=eng) [last access: July 14th, 2022].
189 See De Robertis/Contini (1995, quotation at 31).

> Aparve vestita di nobilissimo colore, umile ed onesto sanguigno, cinta e ornata a la guisa che a la sua giovanissima età si convenia. In quel punto dico veramente che lo *spirito de la vita, lo qual dimora nella sacretissima camera del mi' cuore, cominciò a tremar sì fortemente che apparia ne li menimi polsi orribilmente* e, tremando, disse queste parole: “Ecce deus fortior me qui veniens dominabitur michi”. In quel punto *lo spirito animale, lo qual dimora nell'alta camera ne la quale tutti li spiriti sensitivi portan le loro percezioni, si cominciò a maravigliare molto e, parlando spezialmente a li spiriti del viso, sì disse queste parole:* “Apparuit iam *beatitudo* vestra”. In quel punto *lo spirito naturale, lo qual dimora in quella parte ove si ministra 'l nudrimento nostro, cominciò a piangere* e piangendo disse queste parole: “Heu miser, quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps!”[190]

It is important to recall that the pneumatic doctrine involves amongst other things the activity of dreaming. Thus, Synesius of Cyrene, between the fourth and fifth centuries, affirms in his work *De insomniis* that the *phantastikòn pneuma* – the *spiritus phantasticus* – is a sort of subtle body which, among others things, forms dream images and *phantasmata*, can detach itself from the body and give rise to supernatural visions.[191] In light of this, it seems highly significant that the dream of the eaten heart in the *Vita Nova* is immediately preceded by the above-mentioned passage on the spirits.

Moreover, it is possible to develop the pneumatic dimension of the dream of the eaten heart further, if we accept a special interpretation of the function of the adjective *sanguigno* present in the dream, which has been suggested by Massimo Peri:[192] that is, to interpret *sanguigno* as ‘of the colour of blood’ rather than just ‘dark’. This reference to the blood colour of the light cloth that covers

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190 *Dante Alighieri, Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 42–43). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: “She appeared, dressed in a very stately color, a subdued and dignified crimson, girdled and adorned in a manner that was fitting for her young age. At that time, truly, I say, the vital spirit, which dwells in the innermost chamber of the heart, started to tremble so powerfully that its disturbance reached all the way to the slightest of my pulses. And trembling it spoke these words: ‘Ecce deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur michi.’ At that time the animal spirit, which dwells in the high chamber to which all the spirits of sensation carry their perceptions, began to marvel, and speaking especially to the spirits of vision it said: ‘Apparuit iam beatitudo vestra’. At that time the natural spirit, which dwells where our food is digested, started to cry, and crying it spoke these words: ‘Heu miser, quia frequenter impeditus ero deinceps!’”.

191 See Klein (1970); Agamben (1977). See also the discussion on the *spiritus phantasticus* in the first section of the present chapter.

192 The interpretation of the *sanguigno* I will discuss in the text has been suggested by Peri (1996, 78–82). Peri has suggested his interpretation of the *sanguigno* of the *Vita Nova*'s dream of the eaten heart in the context of his study of the new Greek poetry of the Renaissance: I think this suggestion is of great interest not only for Dante but, more broadly, for medieval studies.

the naked body of Beatrice, according to this interpretation,[193] has in turn to be connected to pneumatic doctrine: in fact, following this doctrine, pneuma derives from the blood and constitutes its most refined "product". Therefore, the image of the body of Beatrice impresses itself in the faculty of *imaginatio* thanks to (or through) the "pneumatic blood" that shapes it: the *drappo sanguigno.*[194]

The impressive presence of pneumatic doctrine in the *Vita nova* cannot be overestimated: Dante repeatedly refers to the spirits of the eyes, the spirit of life etc. in his masterpiece. It is important to recall a well-known but fundamental element for the present trajectory: the profound influence of Guido Cavalcanti precisely on the matter of the spirits. Cavalcanti's poetry is full of spirits. Examples can be found in texts such as *Pegli occhi fere uno spirito sottile* or *Veggio negli occhi della donna mia*, just to quote two of them. Guido Cavalcanti in his poetry intimately connects this presence of the spirits to a concept of love as pain, and to the theme of love malady. It seems clear, therefore, that Dante uses this pneumatologic imagery in the *Vita Nova* as a scientific-literary "reservoir" capable of verbalising the concept of painful love, of love-passion.

The turning point, the movement, the change from love-passion – that is, from a dead-end situation where the lyrical subject is impeded even in its vital faculties (as we have seen in the passage on the spirits quoted above) and even deprived of the vital centre itself, the heart (as we have seen in the dream of the eaten heart) – the change from this to a dimension of *beatitudo* is carried out in the *Vita Nova* through different phases of evolution in a progressive sequence.

The first of these is the convergence of Beatrice and the Virgin Mary, which repeatedly returns, not only in the *Vita Nova*, but also in the *Divine Comedy.* It will be important for the present investigation to analyse in detail some passages that suggest such a convergence. Beatrice gradually assumes, already in life, and even more after death, functions and attributes of and a connection to the Virgin Mary. This dimension is anticipated by the meeting between the two in the *Vita Nova*, when Dante sees Beatrice in church and, not surprisingly, it is specified that during the liturgy, words in praise (*laude*) of the Virgin were said:

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193 See Peri (1996, 80–81).

194 Perhaps here it is worth distinguishing a primary meaning in the context of the story and of the explanations on the surface of the text from the text's resonances and poetic suggestions. This distinction does not coincide with that between the literal sense and the allegorical sense, and this seems more on the line of denotation/connotation. The concept of *collatio occulta* developed by Geoffroi de Vinsauf may be useful here: "Quae fit in occulto, nullo venit indice signo; / non venit in vulto proprio, sed dissimulato", Geoffroi de Vinsauf, *Poetria nova*, vv. 247–248, in Gallo (1971). On the *collatio occulta* of Geoffroi de Vinsauf in Dante, see the classical work of Dronke (1986).

> Un giorno avenne che questa *gentilissima* sedea in parte *ove s’udiano parole de la Reina de la gloria* ed io era nel luogo nel quale vedea la mia *beatitudine.*[195]

This connection with Our Lady is strengthened and corroborated by the recurrence of the adjective in the form of the superlative *gentilissima* (‘the gentlest/extremely gentle’) – which we have read, for example, in the passage above, and which returns again and again in the *Vita Nova* –, but also by the presence of *cortesissima* (‘the most courteous/extremely courteous’):

> L’ora che ’l su’ dolcissimo salutare mi giunse era fermamente nona di quel giorno, e, però che quella fu la prima volta che le sue parole si mossero per venire a’ miei orecchi, presi tanta dolcezza che come inebriato mi partìo da le genti e ricorsi al solingo luogo d’una mia camera e puosimi a pensare di questa *cortesissima.*[196]

In fact, this insistence on the superlative form in the expressions that concern Beatrice are, at a lexical level, very close to those that describe the Virgin, for example, in the oldest Italian collection of medieval *laude*, the *Laudario di Cortona.* We can read this in a text entirely dedicated to the Virgin, *Ave, donna santissima* (I will quote only some verses of the long text):

> Ave, donna *santissima*,
> regina *potentissima.*
>
> La vertù celestiale
> colla grazia supernale
> en te, Virgo virginale
> discese *benignissima.*
>
> La nostra redenzione
> prese encarnazione

195 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 50). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: “It happened one day that this most gracious of women was sitting in a place where words about the Queen of Glory were being listened to, and I was positioned in such a way that I saw my beatitude”.

196 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 45–46). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: “It was exactly the ninth hour of that day when her intoxicatingly lovely greeting came to me. And since it was the first time her words had reached my ears, I felt such bliss that I withdrew from people as if I were drunk, away to the solitude of my room, and settled down to think about this most graceful of women”.

> e senza corruzione
> de te, donna *santissima.*[197]

This connection of Beatrice with the Virgin Mary becomes finally consecrated in the *Divine Comedy*, and in particular in *Inferno II*, where Beatrice is the messenger of Saint Lucy who is, in her turn, the messenger of the Virgin: the three women care about the spiritual salvation of Dante. To achieve this goal, Beatrice descends from her empyrean location to Limbo, in order to ask Vergil to convince Dante to undertake, under his guidance, the journey of the *Divine Comedy.*[198] In this same context of *Inf.* II, I would like to highlight that it is not by chance that, in the dialogue between Vergil and Beatrice, the Virgin defines Beatrice as *loda di Dio vera* ('real praise of God': *Inf.* II, v. 103). As we have seen, the theme of 'praise' (in Italian: *lode*) is a *fil rouge* that characterises Beatrice in the *Vita Nova* and, then, in the *Divine Comedy*, and that make the *gentilissima* resemble the Virgin Mary as depicted in the *laude.* Theologically speaking, as Mary is the model of human perfection, resembling her is a measure of the perfection attained by Beatrice.

Therefore, it is not by chance that the real key moment of the great innovation of Dante with respect to the previous literary tradition – i. e. – the passage from *passio* to *beatitudo* – is to be found in the "poesia della loda" ('poetry of the praise'), as he explains in the following passage of the *Vita nova:*

> "A che fine ami tu questa tua donna poi che tu non puoi sostenere la sua presenza? Dilloci. ché certo lo fine di cotale amore conviene che sia novissimo." (...) Allora dissi queste parole loro: "Madonne, lo fine del mio amore fue già lo saluto di questa donna, forse di cui voi intendete, ed in quello dimorava la beatitudine che era fine di tutti li miei desideri, ma, poi che le piacque di negarlo a me, lo mio segnore Amore, la sua mercede, à posta tutta la mia beatitudine in quello che non mi puote venire meno." (...) "Noi ti preghiamo che tu ci dichi ove sta questa tua beatitudine." Ed io, rispondendole, dissi cotanto: "In quelle parole che lodano la donna mia."[199]

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197 *Ave, donna santissima*, vv. 1–10, dal *Laudario di Cortona*, in Contini (1994, 15–19). ('Hail, most holy woman, very powerful queen. The heavenly virtue with supernal grace descended in you most benign, oh virginal Virgin. Our redemption took incarnation without corruption from you, most holy woman').

198 See *Inf.* II, vv. 94–114 (Inglese 2007, 57–58).

199 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 86–87). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: "'What is the point of your love for this lady, considering that you can't endure her presence? We're curious, since the goal of such a love must be unusual, to say the least.' (...) I said: 'Ladies, the point of my love at one time was the greeting of my lady – to whom, I take it, you are referring – since that greeting was home to the blessedness that all my desires were seeking. But because she chooses to deny it to me, my Lord

"Where do you find your *beatitudo?* In the words that praise my beloved': this is the key moment of the turning point from *passio* to *beatitudo.* Later on in the book, Beatrice's death is an extreme consequence, so to speak, of two fundamental elements of the *Vita Nova:* the slight presence of her body and the new "poesia della loda". Her death "radicalises" the progressive abstraction of Beatrice's bodily presence, but this bodily presence is very subdued throughout the text, as testified by Beatrice's almost total lack of physical attributes in the *Vita Nova.* The fact that the bodily presence of Beatrice in the *Vita Nova* is so rarefied and that then, in the passage dedicated to the "poesia della loda", the *beatitudo* of Dante lies in the "words that praise my beloved", "frees" the poetic issue from the tyranny of desire and the love malady.[200] In fact, as Dante himself says in the *Convivio*, "desiderio… essere non può con la beatitudine, acciò che la beatitudine sia perfetta cosa, e lo desiderio sia cosa defettiva".[201] The desire in this passage from the *Convivio* has to be understood in the sense of Saint Augustine, when he wrote: "Desiderium ergo quid est, nisi rerum absentium concupiscentia?"[202]

The second step of this evolution occurs in the passage from the *passio* to the *Passio*, that is, from the passion for Beatrice to the Passion of Beatrice through her death: Beatrice as Christ. This superposition of Beatrice to Christ is in fact anticipated by the dream of the eaten heart that contains the prophecy of her death, expressed through the image of the personification of Love who, happy at the beginning, later walks away crying, with Beatrice in his arms:[203]

> Appresso ciò poco dimorava che *la sua letizia si convertia in amarissimo pianto* e, così *piangendo, si ricogliea questa donna nelle sue braccia e con essa mi parea che si ne gisse verso il cielo*; ond'io sostenea sì grande angoscia che 'l mio deboletto sonno non poteo sostenere, anzi si ruppe e fui isvegliato.[204]

Love, in his mercy, has transferred my bliss to that which cannot fail me.' (…) 'We would all like to ask you where your bliss now resides.' I responded, 'In words that praise my lady'".

200 On the relationship between body, writing, book and death in the *Vita Nova* see Kuhn (2008).

201 *Convivio*, III, XV, 3, in Inglese (2015, 205) ("Desire … it cannot be with bliss, as that bliss is a perfect thing, and desire is a defective thing").

202 Augustine of Hippo, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 118, 8, 4.

203 We could mention, in this sense, the image of Mary with the dead Christ in her arms – the *Pietà.* This pictorial and sculptural topos has its origins in Germany in the fourteenth century, but in Italy (especially in north-central Italy: Emilia, Umbria, Marche and Tuscany) apparently it begins to spread only at the end of the century. See in this sense Camporeale (2001).

204 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 47). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: "Then his happiness turned into the bitterest tears, and as he cried he picked up this woman in his arms, and he seemed to go off toward the sky. At which point I felt more anguish than my light sleep could sustain, and I woke".

And then, this identification of "Beatrice as Christ" is veiled under the parallel between Giovanna (the beloved of Guido Cavalcanti), also named *Primavera* from *prima verrà* (will come first), and Beatrice, who is named *Amore:* Giovanna as Giovanni Battista (John the Baptist) comes before "Beatrice-Love':

> E, poco dopo queste parole che lo cuore mi disse con la lingua d'Amore, io vidi venire verso me una gentile donna, la quale era di famosa bieltade e fue già molto donna di questo primo mio amico, e lo nome di questa donna era Giovanna, salvo che per la sua bieltate, secondo che altri crede, imposto l'era nome Primavera, e così era chiamata; e appresso lei, guardando, vidi venire la mirabile Beatrice. Queste donne andaro presso di me così l'una appresso l'altra e parve che Amore mi parlasse nel cuore e dicesse: "Quella prima è nominata Primavera solo per questa venuta d'oggi, ché io mossi lo imponitore del nome a chiamarla così Primavera, cioè 'prima verrà' lo die che Beatrice si mosterrà dopo la imaginazione del suo fedele; e se anche vòli considerare lo primo nome suo, tanto è quanto dire "prima verrà", però che lo suo nome Giovanna è da quello Giovanni lo qual precedette la Verace Luce dicendo: "Ego vox clamantis in deserto: parate viam Domini". E anche mi parve che mi dicesse, dopo queste parole: "E chi volesse sottilmente considerare, quella Beatrice chiamerebbe Amore per molta simiglianza che ha meco."[205]

Love is speaking to Dante: explaining the identification between Giovanna and Giovanni/John the Baptist, Love says about the latter that he came before "the real light" (Christ). At first glance, it seems that a separation is introduced between Love and Christ, and that therefore in this passage, Beatrice is identified with Love and not with Christ. But it is important to recall that, as the *First Letter of John* says: "Qui non diligit, non novit Deum: *quoniam Deus charitas est*" (1 John 4:8). Love-*charitas* and God, therefore, according to Christian theology, are the same.[206]

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205 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 177–118). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: "And a little after these words, which my heart told me in Love's own language, I saw a gracious lady coming toward me, noted for her beauty, and she was already very much the lady-queen of my best friend. And this woman's name was Giovanna, except that she was given the name Primavera, or Spring – because of her beauty, as others believe – and was called accordingly. And coming along after her, as I watched, I saw the marvelous Beatrice. These women passed near me, one after the other, and it seemed that Love spoke to me in my heart, saying: 'That first woman is named Primavera only in honor of today's coming. I moved the one who gave her that name to call her Primavera, that is, prima verrà, she will come first the day that Beatrice appears, after the imaginings of her faithful one. And if you also consider her given name, you will see that it is practically the same as saying prima verra, since her name, Giovanna or Joanna, is derived from that John who preceded the true Light, saying, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord'. And it also seemed that he said: 'And whoever wants to give the matter subtle consideration would call Beatrice 'Love' because of the great resemblance she bears to me.'".

206 But within the Trinity, love (of the Father for the Son) is rather the Holy Spirit.

The death of Beatrice, already prophesied, as Christ’s death was, then takes place. And the passage which narrates the event contains the following detail:

> quando lo Signore de la giustizia chiamòe questa gentilissima a gloriare sotto la ’nsegna di quella reina benedetta virgo Maria, lo cui nome fue in grandissima reverenzia nelle parole di questa Beatrice beata.[207]

In the last passage, we see how the explication of the death of Beatrice connects the two evolutions we have mentioned: Beatrice, like Christ, endures a *Passio* with her death, and she will be glorified under the emblem of the Virgin Mary in the kingdom of heaven. This “overlapping” of Christ and the Virgin Mary in the characterisation of Beatrice needs not astonish us: it is a recurrent element in different medieval texts that Christ and his mother have similar characteristics.[208]

The change – a momentous one for European love poetry – from *passio* to *beatitudo* consists therefore of three phases: the beloved is in her excellence similar to the Virgin Mary, she is met in a mass celebrating Our Lady, and she is also compared to her in the lover’s praise. In this phase, however, the lover still suffers from all the “symptoms” of a *passio* and of the *aegritudo amoris.* Then, in the second phase, she endures, like Christ, a *Passio* and dies. When she dies, she is glorified under the emblem of the Virgin Mary: she becomes the *beata Beatrice*, the Beatrix that is beatified and that beatifies the lover, the eternal source of beatitude. This is the third and last phase.

The quality of brightness that characterises the beloved of the Troubadours, of the Trouvères and of Petrarch’s Laura in lyric poetry, Yseut the Blonde and Guenevere in the romances, is an attribute also of Beatrice,[209] but, I would say, especially of the Beatrice of the *Divine Comedy*, and in particular of the *Paradiso,* rather than the Beatrice of the *Vita Nova.*[210]

In the *Vita Nova*, as we have mentioned, the traces of Beatrice’s corporeality are very weak. But an element that goes in the direction of brightness is to be found in the description of her complexion, similar to the colour of pearls:

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207 Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 133). See English translation (Frisardi Translation) on the *Digital Dante* (Columbia University) webpage: https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/text/library/la-vita-nuova-frisardi/ [last access: July 15th, 2022]: “when the Lord of Justice called this most gracious of women to glory under the banner of that blessed queen the Virgin Mary, whose name was held in utmost reverence in the words of this beatified Beatrice”.

208 See the examples from the Anglo-Norman bestiaries quoted in Gubbini (2016).

209 See, for example, *Enciclopedia Dantesca s. v. luce* (Bosco, 1970 – 1975).

210 For the rich allegorical dimension of the last *canti* of the *Purgatorio*, see Mehltretter (2005).

Color di perle à quasi, in forma quale
convene a donna aver, non for misura.[211]

Furthermore, a certain corporeal dimension is to be found in the reappearance of Beatrice at the end of the *Purgatorio*, in the earthly Paradise, where finally some information is given on the beauty of her eyes, 'like emeralds', and of her mouth:

Disser: 'Fa che le viste non risparmi;
posto t'avem dinanzi ali smeraldi
onde Amor già ti trasse le sue armi'
(vv. 115–117)

'Per grazia, fa noi grazia che disvele
a lui la bocca tua, sì che discerna
la seconda bellezza che tu cele'
(vv. 136–138).[212]

It is important to highlight that it is not by chance that this bodily dimension of Beatrice, almost absent when she was alive, appears only when she is dead and when Dante encounters her in the earthly Paradise and in a context strongly marked by allegory: it fits perfectly the sublimation of the love discourse that Dante carries out as opposed to the previous lyrical tradition.

Then, in Paradise, the closer Beatrice approaches God, the more she grows in beauty and brightness. In *canto* XXI of the *Paradiso*, Beatrice's face is so bright that Dante cannot bear the sight of her:

Già eran li occhi miei rifissi al volto
della mia donna, e l'animo con essi,
e da ogn'altro intento s'era tolto.
Ed ella non ridea, ma "S'io ridessi –
mi cominciò – tu ti faresti quale
fu Semelè quando di cener fessi:
che la bellezza mia (che per le scale
del'etterno palazzo più s'accende,
com'hai veduto, quanto più si sale),
se non si temperasse, tanto splende

211 Dante Alighieri, *Donne ch'avete intelletto d'amore*, vv. 43–56, *Vita Nova*, in Carrai (2009, 91).
212 Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, Canto XXXI, vv. 115–117 and vv. 136–138, in Inglese (2011, 377–379) ("'See that thou dost not spare thine eyes,' they said;/'Before the emeralds have we stationed thee,/ Whence Love aforetime drew for thee his weapons.'") ("'In grace do us the grace that thou unveil/ Thy face to him, so that he may discern/The second beauty which thou dost conceal'") (English translation (Longfellow 1867) on the following website: http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu/reader?reader%5Bcantica%5D=2&reader%5Bcanto%5D=31) [last access: July 15th, 2022].

che 'l tuo mortal podere al suo fulgore
sarebbe fronda che trono scoscende".[213]

At the end of this trajectory, we can see how the element of brightness has taken us from the light of the supernatural woman to the light of the Grace of God: from *Midons* to Beatrice. On this path, it is possible to recognise a development of the female figure: the beloved becomes ever more spiritualised over the centuries, from a more bodily presence to a more "abstract" one. At the same time, the perspective on the beloved undergoes a process of rationalisation, or rather, it shifts from the Celtic supernatural to the Christian one: from the fairies to Beatrice. In the context of the present chapter on the theme "she wounds, she heals", we have seen how first in Dante's *Vita Nova*, and then in the *Divine Comedy*, we encounter an evolution of the act of healing. The bloody topos of the eaten heart – in our analysis examined as the "fiercest" variation on the *vulnus amoris* theme – and the strong presence of the pneumatological doctrine seem to place the beginning of the *Vita Nova* under the sign of *passio.* But in the development we have highlighted, already in the *Vita Nova* and then in the *Divine Comedy*, we experience a gradual healing from the *passio* toward the *beatitudo.*

6.5 Conclusions

In this chapter, we have followed a trajectory that has taken us from William IX of Aquitaine to Dante and Petrarch. In the context of the present book's analysis of the *vulnus amoris* theme, the purpose of this chapter was to investigate the polarity of healing in the "wound-healing" knot, and connect it to the image of the woman in medieval Romance literatures.

We have seen how in Troubadour poetry the healing of the beloved is enacted on a psychosomatic level: poets such as William IX or Bernart de Ventadorn solicit physical compensation in order to avoid emotional pain or psychological death. Troubadours and Trouvères often "veil" this request of reward under the "feudal

213 Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso, Canto XXI*, vv. 1–12, in Inglese (2019, 270). ("Already on my Lady's face mine eyes/Again were fastened, and with these my mind,/And from all other purpose was withdrawn;/And she smiled not; but 'If I were to smile,'/She unto me began, 'thou wouldst become'/ Like Semele, when she was turned to ashes./Because my beauty, that along the stairs/Of the eternal palace more enkindles,/As thou hast seen, the farther we ascend,/If it were tempered not, is so resplendent/That all thy mortal power in its effulgence/Would seem a leaflet that the thunder crushes.") (English translation by Longfellow 1867 on the following website: http://dantelab.dartmouth.edu/reader?reader%5Bcantica%5D=3&reader%5Bcanto%5D=21) [last access: July 15th, 2022].

metaphor", and especially under the concept and term of *guizardo* (Langue d'oc)/ *guerredon* (Langue d'oïl) – a trend that arrived in the Italian poetry of the Middle Ages as well, with the expectation of the *guiderdone* as a reward (as, for example, in the poetry of Giacomo da Lentini).

In the *Tristan et Yseut* of Thomas d'Angleterre, the emotional distress and the illness due to a real wound put Tristan at risk of a physical death: he needs and asks therefore Yseut the Blonde to come and heal him, physically. The passage analysed says: "S'ele ma *salu* ne m'aporte / *E par buche ne me conforte*" ('If she doesn't bring me salvation and comfort me with her very mouth').

In the passage from Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette* quoted above, Lancelot does not fear any physical malady thanks to his proximity to an element of the real body of Guenevere: her golden hair. Her hair is for him a better protection from illness than medicaments and saints.

In one of the two excursus included in the present chapter, we have then analysed how one of the two dimensions that characterise the beloved in courtly romance literature – the healing one – is strongly present also in religious poetic production. The Virgin Mary in fact is seen as a "healer" who can cure the wounds of worldly love – for example in a *canso* of the troubadour Lanfranco Cigala – or even as a "physician" who treats with spiritual medicines the "sore of the sin" – as in a *lauda* of the Franciscan Iacopone da Todi. The double and ambivalent function of the beloved of profane literature is therefore resolved in the religious repertoire in a one-dimensional sense.

The second *excursus* of this chapter is devoted to the phantasmatic image that wounds and heals. Proceeding backwards from an illustration contained in a fifteenth-century incunabulum to the poets of the Sicilian School, the *excursus* connects the intimately related themes of the eyes of the beloved that wound, and the contemplation of the image of the beloved in the heart by the lover. To understand the link between these different elements in the texts examined, it is necessary to consider the medieval interrelation between spirits, sighs and the *phantasmata* of imagination and memory – a sort of "pneumo-phantasmology", as it has been defined, which connects the functioning of the faculty of *imaginatio* to medieval medical and philosophical theories, and especially pneumatological doctrine.

The chapter continues with an analysis of the character of Beatrice. As for Dante and the *Vita Nova*, at the beginning of the juvenile masterpiece the lyrical I risks physical and psychological death precisely *because* of the presence of Beatrice. We are, in the first part of the *Vita Nova*, still dealing with the topos of the *aegritudo amoris*, with strong connections to Cavalcanti's poetry, as it is evident also from the strong presence of pneumatic doctrine. But then, at a certain moment of the *Vita Nova*, Dante marks a turning point in the establishment of the new "poesia della loda': his *beatitudo* lies in the words of praise for his beloved

and not in the proximity of her body. In fact, the turn from the body to the word that has taken place in Dante's *Vita Nova* "frees" the poetic product from the tyranny of desire and, consequently, allows for the passage from *passio* to *beatitudo.* And the act of healing, which in previous Romance literature presupposed a contact or physical proximity of the lyrical self with the beloved, takes place with Dante only thanks to the sublimation in poetic writing. In this journey from William IX to Dante, we see that the healing of the *passio* gradually loses its corporeality, until it fades into the supernatural light of the heavenly Beatrice.

With Petrarch we have in a certain way a "comeback" of the body of the beloved and of physical desire. The body of Laura in fact "sustains" the spirits of the poet, similarly, in this sense, to the situation in Bernart de Ventadorn analysed earlier in this chapter. Laura is extremely luminous and her bodily presence is very strong not only while she is alive, but also in the memory of the lyrical I when she is dead. At the same time, as we have seen in a previous chapter, Petrarch, as opposed to the Stilnovisti, refutes any compromise between sacred and profane love or between wounding and healing – stressing, instead, the sinful and pernicious nature of physical desire. With this unsolvable[214] *fluctuatio* of the Petrarchan lyrical I between body and spirit, desire and repentance, sacred and profane,[215] the incurable wound of *passio* is destined to reopen.

214 On the "dilemma dell'amore" of Petrarch (*De remediis utriusque fortune* 1.69), see Huss (2021).
215 See the permanence of profane elements even in the last text of the *RVF*, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, highlighted by Küpper (2007).

7 To Conclude

> La mielleuse figue octobrine/seule a la douceur de vos lèvres/qui ressemble à sa blessure/ lorsque trop mûr le noble fruit/que je voudrais tant cueillir/paraît sur le point de choir/ô figue ô figue désirée/bouche que je veux cueillir/blessure dont je veux mourir.[1]

Thus Guillaume Apollinaire, in expressing the passion of his lyric persona to his beloved, re-employed the metaphor of *vulnus amoris* many centuries after the authors we have discussed in this book, and rhymed his evocation of the wound with the desire for a kiss: "bouche que je veux cueillir/blessure dont je veux mourir".

The literary tradition of love's wound that is behind this image – and which has been traced back to its founding moment, the Middle Ages, in this book – is of an astonishing richness.

As we have seen, the *vulnus amoris* is present not only in lyric poetry in different languages, but also in verse and prose romances, and we have highlighted how this metaphor is of crucial importance in both religious and profane literary production.

The key term for understanding the centrality of this metaphor in its *longue durée* is "transformation" – or, rather, "transformations". As we have seen, this metaphor experiences different transformations in its "life" – on the diachronic level, but also on the synchronic level. The historical transformations can be traced in traditions and their dynamics of variation, imitation or emulation, in the processes of accretion, amalgamation or amplification which the semantic materials undergo in time. The systematic transformations, which can "happen" in (diachronic) time, but which can also be described as relations between elements of the literary and cultural "grammar" of any given moment, concern the deep structure of the material, its function as metaphoric model or diegetic element or both (as in allegory), its functions for modelling central concepts and concerns of medieval culture.

Its intimate connection with the concept of *passio* and its psychosomatic nature link this metaphor immediately to one of the most important tenets of Christian religion: the dogma of Incarnation. The theology of love that is at the basis of Christian religion has stimulated profane poetry to "take possession", so to speak, of the love's wound theme and to make of it one of its central metaphors. The Troubadours, reusing the Ovidian "tools" of arrows and bows, create, thanks to the Christian double interpretation of the image of being wounded as not only by love but also for the sake of love, a new and perplexing paradox. The *vulnus amo-*

1 Apollinaire (1955).

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ris metaphor of the Troubadours has a strongly bodily dimension in the double and mutually intertwined strands of pain and pleasure: the wound is painful, but it is nevertheless a desired pain. The oxymoron and the "paradoxe amoureux" thus becomes the very basis of courtly lyric poetry. But it is also connected to pleasure, not only because it is a "sweet pain", as many lyric passages declare, but also because the Troubadours connect the wound to the gratifying moment of the *osculum* as well – as Apollinaire, many centuries later, will do. In the later lyric transformations of the *vulnus amoris,* the notion that love's wound can be opened by the kiss will nearly vanish, and instead, the way to the heart through the eyes will gain more importance – in a double sense, the eyes of the beloved, whose rays pierce like arrows, and the eyes of the lyrical I as an opening into the passive body, with this imagery finding its climax in Petrarch's *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta.*

The fundamental concept of the sacrifice, which is intimately connected to the *Passio Christi,* transforms the complex of love's wound in the diachronic evolution of the world of *lais* and verse and prose romances: the hero is always wounded, but where at the beginning of this literary tradition this is mostly a "barbaric" and folkloric element, in the course of development of the romance, we witness an increasing "Christianisation" of the metaphor. The turning point is to be found, in our interpretation, in the figure of Lancelot in Chrétien de Troyes' *Lancelot ou Le Chevalier de la Charrette.* In fact, the great *champenois* writer alludes, in his Lancelot, to one of the most important questions or *querelles* of the Middle Ages: the seductive confusion of *amor carnalis* and *amor-Caritas.* The Grail repertoire, starting with Chrétien de Troyes' *Perceval ou Le Conte du Graal*, and continuing with the prose romances – and, among the texts composing the *Lancelot-Graal* cycle, especially in the *Queste del Saint Graal* – increases the process of "Christianisation" of the motif and develops it in an even more religious and mystical direction.

In the religious production that stages the spiritual event *par excellence* of Western culture, the *Passio Christi*, love's wound is of fundamental importance. After Saint Francis's experience of the stigmata – and especially after the reading of this miracle provided by the Franciscan order – the representation of Christ's wounds in art and in literature becomes ever more "realistic" and detailed. In the writing of the Franciscan poet Iacopone da Todi, we can notice a strong presence of the *vulnus amoris* – however, in his *laude*, we find not only references to Christ's wounds, but the *vulnus* is also employed in an abstract and metaphorical sense, in order to verbalise spiritual and emotional pain. In this sense, the use of the metaphor in Iacopone's *laude* can be compared to its use in profane lyric poetry – a repertoire that Iacopone consciously quotes. This element corroborates, among others, the complex "back-and-forth" dynamic between sacred and profane

dimensions and literary production that this book identifies as a key feature of the *vulnus amoris* metaphor.

Finally, as shown in the last chapter, it is important to stress that in these medieval texts the *vulnus amoris* metaphor already contains the bipolarity that surfaces in the poem by Apollinaire quoted above: the healing option is part and parcel of this idea of injury, as opposed to later conceptions of trauma, and it is sometimes even provided by the very agent that struck the wound, as in the kiss. Pleasure and pain in the medieval system of emotions are in fact polar and complementary at the same time, and thus involve body and spirit in a psychosomatic intersection: a complex relationship that medieval literature, with astonishing intuition, has wonderfully represented in the *vulnus amoris* metaphor.

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