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The Theme of Chivalry in *Ille et Galeron*

In spite of the interest shown over the years in the romances of Gautier d'Arras, who is often seen as a rival of Chrétien de Troyes, there has been no formal study of the role of chivalric activity in *Ille et Galeron*. In his book *Tradizione cortese e realismo in Gautier d'Arras* Lorenzo Renzi provides a useful stylistic comparison between the accounts of battles in *Ille* and *Cligés*, but he does not pursue the overall question of the role of chivalry in Gautier's poem¹. Both Gautier and Chrétien are among a large number of twelfth-century authors whose heroes are knights. Both authors have different views of the contribution which the themes of chivalry and masculine activity can make to the thematic structure of their texts. My aim here is to examine *Ille et Galeron* and to ask to what extent the three principal areas of chivalric activity, hunting, tournaments and war, are reflected within the text. What is Gautier's precise attitude towards chivalry as a social phenomenon and as a literary theme?

We can deal at once with the first of these activities. Gautier makes no mention of hunting in his text. His characters are never forced to live in a forest and to feed themselves as a result of their hunting skills. He does not allow a husband's hunting trip to provide an opportunity for a wife's adulterous behaviour. Gautier also devotes little space to tournaments. But he clearly regards them as important in the early stages of a knight's career. When Ille, along with fifteen other young men, is dubbed a knight by the King of France (vv. 166-70), he and his companions immediately begin to practise their jousting skills at the *quintaine*. Ille is so successful at this exercise that he runs out of lances with which to fight. He breaks a large number and

* Work on this article was facilitated by a grant from the British Academy.

¹ Lorenzo Renzi, *Tradizione cortese e realismo in Gautier d'Arras*, Università di Padova, Pubblicazioni della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, 42 (Florence: Olschki, 1964), pp. 79-96.

would have broken more, if he had been able to obtain replacements:

Ensanle vont a la quintaine;
Illes i brise se vintaine
De grosses lances bien ovrees,
Et plus, ses eüst recovrees.

(vv. 172-74)²

These few lines provide not only an illustration of Ille's precocious military ability, but they also attest to his attitude of mind. From the start of his military career he possesses a strong sense of purpose and great enthusiasm for what he is doing. Constantly on the move, he fights with great vigour: «Il point a mont, il point a val» (v. 175). Gautier goes on to tell us that when he is practising his jousting skills on horseback Ille looks a born warrior:

Et si avient si au cheval,
Ce sanble qu'il nasquist a tout.

(vv. 176-77)

Gautier is evidently keen to present his hero as a knight who makes an excellent start to his military career. Thus it will come as no surprise when he later experiences success on the battlefield. The point is in fact made that Ille, although still young, becomes an immediate threat to those who have exiled him (vv. 178-79). His activities as a beginner (he is likened to a «poulain velu», v. 181) confirm for Gautier the general truth that a youngster («vallet petit», v. 182) should not be scorned (vv. 180-82). This is one of many cases in which Gautier presents his protagonist's activities against a background of human experience as codified in proverbs³. We also note the presence at

² Edited by Yves Lefèvre, C.F.M.A., 109 (Paris: Champion, 1988). I have also used the edition by Eilert Löseth, *Bibliothèque Française du Moyen Age*, 7, vol. II (Paris: Emile Bouillon, 1890); Wendelin Foerster, *Romanische Bibliothek*, 7 (Halle: Niemeyer, 1891) and Frederick A.G. Cowper, S.A.T.F. (Paris: Picard, 1956). Lefèvre, Löseth and Foerster print MS P (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fr. 375), whereas Cowper prints MS W (Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire, now in the Library of the University of Nottingham). On the quintain, mentioned in this passage, see Juliet R. V. Barker, *The Tournament in England, 1110-1400* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1986). Barker describes the quintain as a hastilude which «served as a means of teaching tiros to joust» (p. 149). It consisted of «an object, usually a shield, fixed to the top of a pole at which the horseman aimed his lance» (p. 150). Practice at the quintain, states Barker, was «a vital part of a knight's education» (ibid.).

³ For a study of Gautier's use of proverbial expressions see Elisabeth Schulze-

this early stage of two other motifs which will be of importance to the text: that of appearance and reality and that of scorn.

In addition to stressing the importance of physical skills, Gautier indicates that his hero benefits at court from his contact with *voidie* ('acumen, discernment, cunning'). *Voidie* is presented as an element which is part and parcel of the society to which Ille belongs, one which can teach him many things he will find useful when confronting his enemies:

Mout par li vait voidie entor
 Por lui enseignier et estruire
 Comment il puist tous cex destruire
 Qui l'ont destruit et dekacié.

(vv. 188-91)⁴

Right from the start Ille demonstrates his all-round abilities and it takes him only three years to establish a wide-ranging reputation for excellence («Honor et pris et vasselage», v. 193). He does not need to be given advice on how to conduct himself or to be reminded of what is truly important in life. He realizes the importance of forging a link with other knights and he retains two knights. In their company he continues to seek out tournaments as a means whereby he can, as a «chevaliers noviaus» (v. 199) maintain and enhance his reputation. He knows he must travel far afield in search of tournaments and that he must create the right impression by taking rich lodgings:

Il n'ot parler de nul tornoi
 Que il n'i aille son pris querre;
 Et cerke pour ce mainte tere;
 Et tient li chevaliers noviaus
 Hostex mout rices et mout biax.

(vv. 196-200)⁵

Busacker, *Proverbes et expressions proverbiales dans la littérature narrative du moyen âge français: recueil et analyse*, Nouvelle Bibliothèque du Moyen Âge, 9 (Geneva - Paris: Editions Slatkine, 1985), pp. 64-75.

⁴ Godefroy gives for the term *voisdie* the meanings 'adresse, habileté, subtilité, ruse, astuce' (vol. VIII, pp. 287-88). See on this term and the adjectival forms *vesié* and *voiseus* G. Raynaud de Lage, «Sur quelques épithètes morales», in *Études de langue et de littérature du moyen âge offertes à Félix Lecoy* (Paris: Champion, 1973), 499-505, pp. 500-02 (reprinted in *Les Premiers Romans français et autres études littéraires et linguistiques*, Geneva, Droz, 1976, 225-30, pp. 226-27).

⁵ On the concept of the «chevaliers noviaus» (v. 199) see Marie-Luce Chénier, *Le Chevalier errant dans les romans arthuriens en vers des XII^e et XIII^e siècles*, Publications Romanes et Françaises, 172 (Geneva: Droz, 1986), pp. 103-06.

When he has the chance to perform on the tournament field, his approach is at once positive and dynamic. He enters into the thick of the fray:

Et qant se vait esbanoier
 La fors as cans por tornoier,
 En tot le plus espés s'eslesse,
 Ne mes chascuns le camp li lesse;
 N'est onques si espés li rens
 Qu'il n'aclarit en poi de tens.

(vv. 201-06)

These are important lines. Ille is presented as a man who, early in his life, becomes accustomed to success. He is a man who does everything right and who is the perfect hero in the making. For him fighting is a pleasure (v. 201) and no odds are too great (vv. 205-06). As a tourneyer he is brave, energetic, quick and effective. He quickly reaches the point in his life when he is feared by opponents («Mout criement durement son estre» v. 207).

Ille is now ripe for future success in more serious areas of endeavour than tournaments. After he has established his reputation, the tournament is replaced by more vital issues such as the possession of land, the defence of the community, justice, etc. During the course of the story Ille's adventures will take him from Brittany to France, back to Brittany, thence to Rome, back to Brittany again and then back to Rome where he eventually becomes emperor⁶. In each place there is a real need for his military skills and organisational ability. In each case there is land which needs recovering, injustice which needs attention. Ille's serious confrontations begin when the King of France recognises that during the formative years he has spent with him at court Ille has provided him with first-rate service (vv. 276-77). The king wishes to reward this service with a gift of land and he offers Ille territory which stretches for six leagues around his own domain (vv. 280 ff.). Ille acknowledges that the time has

The example in which Ille is said to become more and more *nouviaus* («Et tos jors plus et plus noviax», v. 258) is glossed by Tobler-Lommatzsch as 'überraschend' (vol. VI, col. 852), a meaning for which they offer no further occurrences. I prefer the translation 'skillful', the adjective chosen by Ashton L. Ray, in *A Translation and Criticism of Ille et Galeron by Gautier d'Arras* (Dissertation, University of South Carolina, 1973, p. 101).

⁶ On Ille's oscillation between Brittany and Rome see Jean Batany, «"Home and Rome", a Device in Epic and Romance: *Le Couronnement de Louis* and *Ille et Galeron*», *Yale French Studies*, 51 (1974), 42-60.

indeed arrived for him to become a landowner. But he is adamant that the land in question must be that which belonged to his father. The issue here is one of the central issues of the feudal world: who owns which piece of land. The point is made firmly by Gautier that land must be rightfully held: «N'ai song de tere», says Ille, «ou je n'ai droit» (v. 297). A father's land must pass to his son: «Raler m'en voel en ma tere» (v. 3176). To accept someone else's land is to *s'abeisser* (v. 287) and to embark upon an «estrangle plait» (v. 286). It would be dishonourable, says Ille, to live in a state of peace and tranquillity (*vivre a repos*), when one's rightful land has been usurped (vv. 288-90).

It has already been made clear that Ille has inherited his father's excellent characteristics:

Morut li pere Ille, Elidus,
Vassax et durement vaillans.

(vv. 148-49)

Por le pere, qui si fu preus
Le het Oiaus o ses neveux.

(vv. 151-52)

The king himself remarks that Ille's father was a worthy and courtly man who had been an excellent servant to him:

Mout par fu prex, dous et cortois
Tes pere en ceste mortel vie
E tu ne le fourlignes mie.

(vv. 272-74)

In fact Ille owes his present favourable position to his father, for the king had taken Ille into his court as a result of Eliduc's service:

Le pere ama, si li merist
Son grant travail et son service.

(vv. 164-65)

One of Ille's virtues, illustrated throughout the text, is the speed with which he acts when something needs doing. Even as a young boy, after his father's death, he made the immediate and sensible decision, when faced with the duke's inability to protect him, to make his way to the King of France (vv. 158-59). In MS P Ille is aged ten at the time of this father's death. In MS W he is five, an unrealistic age for such a decision. Another of Ille's virtues is his strong commitment to honourable behaviour. When he makes up his mind to recover his father's lands in Brit-

tany Gautier has him castigate both dishonourable conduct (*malvestié*, v. 294) and indolence (*perece*, v. 294). He refuses to delay his departure even for a couple of weeks (vv. 300-01). But he is not excessively precipitate or hot-headed and he asks for money and men (vv. 302-04). His lands are in the possession of Hoel of Brittany and he loses no time in organising an attack on this usurper (vv. 153-54, 178-79, 262-64). With the help of a thousand marks from the king and with ten valiant knights he sets off to Brittany to join forces with two «bons amis» (v. 336). Gautier is at pains to make Ille stress to the king that, whatever the outcome of his mission, his overall loyalty to him will not be affected (vv. 309-11).

It is at this point that we encounter one of the most significant features of *Ille et Galeron*, Gautier's evident enjoyment of battles and his ability to narrate them with verve and a good sense of structure. It is with some surprise that one notices the dismissive attitude of critics towards these battles. Fourrier says that they are no more than «épisodes de remplissage» which are designed as cheap local colour to pad out the text and thus help to make Marie's lay of *Eliduc* into a longer romance⁷. Lefèvre complains that the battles are «nombreuses et stéréotypées» and far removed from reality (p. 21). The friends who have been summoned to meet Ille at the stone bridge set out with a mere twenty men (vv. 337-39). Gautier creates excitement for the audience by having Ille's twenty companions betrayed («Uns pautioniers les a vendus», v. 349) and attacked, before Ille arrives to support them, by Hoel's one hundred men. A noticeable element in Gautier's accounts of fighting is his insistence on the precise numbers of combatants involved and on the disparity between those on Ille's side and those in opposition to him. This is one of several factors he uses to heighten the tension created by the story. In this first battle Ille's friends cannot be certain that he will actually arrive (v. 387) and uncertainty gives way to a complete loss of hope. They nevertheless refuse to act dishonourably by taking flight (vv. 382-92) and Ille of course arrives in the nick of time to save their lives. The battle scenes are skilfully orchestrated and dynamically narrated. The initial clash between Ille's companions and Hoel's men (vv. 394-437)

⁷ Anthime Fourrier, *Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au moyen-âge*, t. I, *Les débuts (XII^e siècle)* (Paris: Nizet, 1960), p. 285.

takes place without Ille and is largely unsuccessful. But the fight after Ille's arrival leads to the massacre of many of Hoel's men. The survivors flee (vv. 491-807). We can note that Ille's men arrive at the battle scene so well «rengié» (v. 477) that they appear more numerous than they are. Ille's military instinct is such that he never misses a trick.

The battle is narrated in such a way as to bring out Ille's star qualities and to highlight his capacity for transforming sorrow into joy. He is shown to have the ability to make an important contribution to the well-being of society. Hoel, in addition to disinheriting Ille, had destroyed lands belonging to Breton lords (vv. 860 ff.) and they too require his assistance to redress the wrong done to them. Ille attacks his enemies with a controlled frenzy born of true anger:

Illes les plaise, Illes les fiert,
 Illes les destruist et requiert,
 Illes lor perce lor escus,
 Illes les fait tous irascus,
 Illes lor fausse lor haubers,
 Illes les fait chocier envers.

(vv. 742-47)

The figure of anaphora is used here to express the speed and intensity with which Ille accomplishes the destruction of his adversaries. Gautier himself comments on his speed of action (vv. 748-51) and adds complimentary remarks concerning Ille's great worth (v. 755). In the form of another proverb he stresses the tremendous willingness with which he performs his deeds: «Car nus ne fait si volentiers | Com cil a cui il est mestiers» (vv. 752-53).

After the battle Ille's ability is fully recognised by his supporters:

Cascuns sa ventalle deslace:
 Icil le baise et cil l'embrace.
 Mervelles ont grant joie eüe
 Por sa proece c'ont veüe.
 Por sa proece et sa valeur
 Oublient tote la douleur.

(vv. 816-21)

Ille's potential has now been realized in a life and death struggle, with land as the prize. Thanks to his ability in battle justice has now been done and throughout the account of the

battle Gautier stresses that the conflict is one between right and wrong. The enemy is referred to as «li fel Hoials» (v. 348), «Hoials, i fel» (vv. 566, 837), «Hoel, le felon prouvé» (v. 876), «sire des felons» (vv. 992-94). He is supported by his «felon parent» (v. 852). So, in his first fight, Ille has won a victory over treachery and injustice.

This victory is not presented by the author in one simple stage. Gautier's technique is to break up the narration, thus giving the combatants and the reader/listener a breather. During the pause between the initial combat (itself divided into two stages) and the concluding fight with Hoel's men, we learn that Galeron, the sister of Duke Conain, is overjoyed at the news of Ille's success (vv. 869-73). On his arrival at Conain's court Ille and Galeron become acquainted amidst scenes of joy. Again we see Gautier's liking for foreshadowing events:

Et Galerons, la bele nee,
 A mout grant joie de celui.
 Puis tourna mout a grant anui
 A ambedos cele acointance.
 Lor grant bialté et lor vallance,
 Lor cortoisie et lor proece
 Les misent puis en tel destrece!

(vv. 895-901)

This passage suggests to the reader that a shift in the orientation of the text is imminent. Ille's military success has brought him to the point at which he is worthy of love. Moreover, his positive qualities (*grant bialté*, *vallance*, *cortoisie* and *proece*) are not only shared by a woman, they are shared by someone who is his social superior. Success on the battlefield is already looking likely to enhance his social status⁸.

Initially Ille's military success enables him to enter the court of Brittany where earlier he would have been killed (vv. 874-78). He becomes Conain's *hom liges* and receives his rightful land «si com ses pere l'ot eüe» (v. 969). But this improvement in his welfare merely heralds a greater struggle with Hoel. In this second battle three hundred of Ille's knights meet five hundred of Hoel's men and a new twist is given to events when we are told

⁸ For a study of social status in this and other courtly romances, see Gillian P. Gaughan, *Rank and Social Status in non-Arthurian Romance of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries*, unpublished Ph. D. dissertation (University of Liverpool, 1987).

that Hoel's nephew, Rogelion, has amorous design on Galeron (v. 952). By way of preparation for the battle and with the vision and sense of strategy which are his hallmarks, Ille organises his troops into three battalions of one hundred men. The battle, which is again recounted in lively fashion, is also divided into two main sections, the general and the particular. The battle opens with the efforts of the first battalion, led by Ille, to cope with the knights in Hoel's army. When the burden becomes too much for them to bear, in spite of Ille's contribution, the other two battalions launch a simultaneous attack, one from the right, the other from the left. Gautier's concern is clearly to continue to enhance Ille's reputation. As the battle develops he inserts eulogistic comments on Ille's performance. Ille is said to be «la flors des chevaliers» (v. 1049) and a «mout hardi vassal» (v. 1091). He inspires confidence in his companions (v. 1090) and leads by example. He wants to be in the front line of the attack and to be one of those who, by making immediate inroads into the enemy, are feared for ever more:

Car, qui fait bien premierement
Et estoutoie durement
Ses anemis al premier tor,
Plus en est cremus tot le jor.

(vv. 1051-54)

In his account of the second part of the battle Gautier tells of Ille's personal combats. The first is with Rogelion, a man who «mout est fel et deputaire» (v. 951). He strikes a powerful blow on Ille's shield, but the latter exacts immediate retribution and Rogelion is carried off the battlefield on a litter. This inspires further bitter fighting in which Ille is assailed from all sides (v. 1132). But the end to the struggle is upon us when Ille and Hoel come face to face (1137 ff.). Again Ille deals effectively with his opponent, shattering his hauberk, ripping open his entrails and sending him flying to the ground over the crupper of his horse. As a result Ille's adversaires take flight:

En fuies torment li plus haut:
Desconfit sont, autant se valt.

(vv. 1157-58)

Ille's military success now brings him political power. The vanquished barons surrender to him «mainte tour | Et maint

palés et maint donjon» (vv. 1174-75). He now has control over all his enemies («Tuit sont en sa subjection», v. 1176) and he becomes their lord («Si en prent Illes les homages», v. 1178; «Or est Illes sire clamés», v. 1183). But the point is clearly made that he maintains the fealty he owes to the Duke of Brittany («Sauve le feüté le duc», v. 1179). Hoel has paid the price for his felony (vv. 1180-82) and Ille's military skills and ability to organise his supporters have both earned him popularity («Or est il durement amés», v. 1184) and prepared him for high office. He acquires the important office of seneschal of Brittany:

Li dus Conains a lui mande:
Tote Bretagne li commande,
Qu'il en soit sire et senescaus.

(vv. 1191-93)

In the Wollaton Hall manuscript he becomes marshal and chamberlain as well:

Tolte Bretegne li comande
Qu'il en soit sire et marescals
Et canbrelens et senescals.

(vv. 766-68)

Gautier has now created a most satisfactory set of circumstances for all concerned (vv. 1195 ff.). Ille has gained power and restored justice to Breton society. His first chivalric endeavours have made him a socially useful knight. He has already acquired, at this early stage in his career, the cares of estate management and high office. He benefits from the accompanying wealth and can now be described as «de mout bel afaire» (v. 1202). His social status, in comparison with that of his father, has also been increased.

This is, of course, the moment for the romance writer to introduce a new development. At such a juncture one in fact expects some form of crisis. We have seen that Galeron's interest in Ille has been stimulated by his prowess and now her father gives her to Ille as his wife. Happily the interests of father, daughter and husband coincide. The only obstacle is the existence of other high-powered suitors, the Duke of Normandy and the counts of Anjou and Poitou. But this is not the crisis which one might anticipate. This problem of other important suitors does not occupy him long and he copes effortlessly

with the task of defeating them, helped by the large number of supporters he now enjoys. Again Ille shows his subtlety in battle (v. 1564) and he takes all three suitors prisoner. Victory over suitors of such high standing confirms his rise to prominence. He is now, in a form of expression which Gautier favours, «li preuz, li bien apris» (v. 1563), «le preu, le bel, le gent» (v. 1573)⁹.

All this, however, is too good to last and one still expects that there will be a *mais* which will herald a problem which is less easy to resolve. This *mais* arrives in v. 1657. In MS P Gautier tells us that Ille loses an eye during the course of a tournament at which he had been the victor over three hundred other knights. When the tournament is about to disband, Ille spots a stray knight and attempts to joust with him:

Mais icil qui vient devers destre
L'ataint tot droit en l'oel senestre.

(vv. 1657-58)¹⁰

In the Wollaton Hall manuscript the loss of Ille's eye occurs during a war, when he has captured a hostile lord outside the latter's castle and is then struck in the left eye by one of the knights defending the castle (vv. 981-88). As we expect of him, Ille makes an immediate decision about how he will deal with this sad occurrence. He decides to conceal the damage done to him from everyone but a friendly cleric and eventually he travels to Rome where Gautier has him masquerade as a poor man in order to build his career afresh. Gautier, like Chrétien in *Erec et Enide*, clearly wants his hero's career to be brutally interrupted and then refashioned. Ille interprets the loss of his eye as a devastating blow to his marriage. Just why this is so is not entirely clear. Gautier seems to present Ille's self image as being based on his looks. But we are also meant to understand that it is his social inferiority complex which makes him incapable of viewing the matter objectively¹¹. But the injury

⁹ See also v. 371 («Ille, le bon, le bel, le preu»), v. 834 («Illes li preus, li jens, li biax»), v. 1585 («Illes, li preus, li afaitiés»), v. 3065 («Illes, li preus, li biax, li gens») and v. 3163 («Ne fust li biax, li preus, li ber»).

¹⁰ The situation related here is analogous to that in Marie de France's *Chaitivel*, where the four suitors expose themselves to unnecessary danger and are hit by a lateral attack (vv. 117-126, ed. A. Ewert, Oxford: Blackwell, 1944).

¹¹ Ille fears that Galeron, sister of the Duke of Brittany, will despise him (vv. 1683-84) and want to leave him (v. 1690). See also vv. 1786-88, 1920-23, 3762-68. For further comments on the loss of Ille's eye see J. P. Collas, «The Romantic

which caused this change in Ille's life has to be such that he could soon continue to fight, as he would rebuild his life in much the same way as he fashioned it in the first instance. Now that he is separated from his wife and his homeland all he has left is his chivalric abilities.

We can observe that Gautier whisks his hero from the real world of Brittany to the real world of Rome. He does not send him off for his rehabilitation into a forest or bring him into contact with occupants of the Other World. He arrives in Rome in v. 2000. There he finds another weak ruler («foibles hom», v. 2007), an aged man whose power is being precariously maintained by his seneschal. Ille speaks to the emperor, saying what a generous and courtly act it would be if he were to retain his services («Uns preudom qui me retendroit | Feroit aumosne et courtoisie», vv. 2025-06). With his usual understanding of the needs of a situation Ille uses language as a weapon to get what he wants. Ille recognises the value of serving a lord such as the Emperor of Rome and he is prepared to work hard to achieve what he desires. He has to adopt a persona which will fool the emperor and his entourage into providing him with the opportunity he seeks. Gautier presumably wants him to be able to avoid questions about his past and to surprise the Romans by his chivalric skills, as he had surprised Hoel and Conain. He claims to have no food or clothing and to be of lowly status («Je ne sui pas de grant afaire», v. 2029, cf. v. 1202). His general attitude is subdued, humble, modest. But at the same time it is subtle and effective and the emperor is duly taken in. His reply indicates that he accepts appearance as reality:

Tu nen es mie mout parans.
Se tu estoies de haut fait,
Autrement t'iroit qu'il ne vait.

(vv. 2034-36)

The emperor cannot envisage that a nobleman could possibly look the way Ille does. Ironically the emperor goes on to express his need for a man who is «preuz de cors» (v. 2039). Both he and Ille have in reality found just what they are looking for.

When Ille fought his first battle in Brittany, he was reacting

to the fact that he had been disinherited and thrown out of his land. Now it will be his task to prevent this fate from befalling the emperor. In the Wollaton Hall manuscript he says to Ille:

Si me violt on desireter
Et de ma tiere fors jeter.

(vv. 1352-53)

So Gautier is presenting Ille as moving from a personal conflict to one in which he has no direct stake, except as a mercenary.

The whole of the conversation between Ille and the emperor represents a fascinating glimpse of the way in which medieval man viewed the world. People speak to each other in accordance with how much power they think they exert over them. There is, moreover, a deep-felt need to know the other man's precise status in life. The emperor asks Ille if he is a *serjanz* or a *chevaliers* (v. 2043). Ille's reply is that he has never been a knight («Onques chevaliers ne fui», v. 2045) and that he was doomed to suffer misfortune. In the Wollaton Hall manuscript (and these lines are incorporated by Lefèvre into his edition) Ille says that the emperor has seen sufficient in him to hold him *en despit*, whereas, if he had discovered any *proece* in him (vv. 2046a-2046d), he would have spoken to him differently. When the seneschal of Rome arrives, the emperor informs him, to provide him with a laugh at Ille's expense («Tout en gabant si qu'il en rit», v. 2052), that a *sauoier* has appeared who will bring peace to the land and put an end to the war. Ille requests armour and a squire from the seneschal (vv. 2078-79). As a mount he will use the *ronci* he has with him. He is given old, rusty armour and a squire (vv. 2084-87), but the poor armour is mocked by the «grant chevalier embarni» (v. 2093). In a materialistic world, in which possessions act as a sign of the inner man, no one can comprehend Ille's situation. Gautier specifically says that no one takes any notice of him, including the chamberlain and the marshal. But appearances are deceptive. This one-eyed man equipped with old, rusty armour will turn out to be the saviour of the city.

The battle begins in v. 2109 and immediately Gautier makes a comment which confirms the blindness of the Romans and his continued interest in the theme of appearance and reality. Ille seemed a *prodome* in his stirrups:

En ses estriers est aficiés;
Prodome sanle, ce saciés.

(vv. 2119-20)

Bearing is important and it is clearly something one cannot disguise. Gautier again stresses that the numerical odds are stacked against his hero. The Lord of Constantinople has seven times more knights («chevalier bel et jent», v. 2103) than the seneschal of Rome. But, as one would expect of him, Ille, wounded by the laughter and scorn of the Romans, is determined to succeed. He makes an effort to get in the first blow («Illes, ki veut le cop premier», v. 2129), by advancing in front of «cex qui le suelent gaber» (v. 2118). His success, in two domains, is immediate. He defeats his opponent and then gives away his horse to a poor knight:

Brandist le hanste de pumier
Et met devant soi son escu,
Ja en fera un irascu.
Le bai d'Espagne point et broce;
Ens el pendant, les une roce,
Encontre un Griu enmi sa voie:
Plaine se lance jus l'envoie.
Par les resnes prent le destrier
Et au plus povre chevalier
Qu'il coisist le guie et maine,
Et se li done a bone estraine.

(vv. 2130-40)

It is thus not only Ille's *proece* which is made visible in this first skirmish («Li senescaus vit sa proece», v. 2141), but also his *largesce* (v. 2142). The combination is an impressive one. It is also surprising. For a wealthy man to show such little regard for a horse he has conquered is commendable (Erec behaves similarly at the tournament near Tenebroc¹²). For a poor man riding a *ronci* to do so is incomprehensible. It elicits from the seneschal the fundamental question about his existence: «Qui estes vous?» (v. 2166). Ille's answer is couched in terms of his financial and social status: «Sire, je sui uns povres hom» (v. 2167). But it is not calculated to solve the mystery of this talented stranger

¹² In *Erec et Enide*, Erec's disregard for the acquisition of horses is commented on by Chrétien: «Erec ne voloit pas entendre | A cheval n'a chevalier prandre, | Mes a joster et a bien feire» (vv. 2159-61, ed. M. Roques, C.F.M.A., 80, Paris: Champion, 1952).

and it stimulates the further incredulous inquiry: why did you give away the «premerain gaing de l'ost» (v. 2180)? Ille's carefully staged actions have in one sense silenced his critics, who can no longer doubt his prowess, but in another way they have puzzled them. For them poor men are not first-rate fighters and poor men need horses.

This discussion about Ille's act of generosity serves the structural purpose of breaking up the battle. The hostilities begin again in v. 2188, when Ille spots a loose Greek and despatches him:

Vers le Grifon point a eslais;
 Et li Grijois, qui fiers estoit,
 Broce vers lui a grant exploit.
 Fier sont li vassal ambedui.
 Li Grijois faut, et cil fiert lui
 Por bien honir et por confondre:
 L'escu li perce et li esfondre
 Et l'auberc li ront et desmalle,
 Ne quic que jamais home assalle.
 Les arçons vuide de la sele.

(vv. 2194-2203)

This time Ille takes the horse and gives it to a «chevalier prison» (v. 2205). Then he repeats the performance in vv. 2212-24 and gives the resulting horse and its rider to the seneschal, who calls him a «frans chevaliers» and makes a formal request for his help in overthrowing the enemy. Thus, in a remarkably short space of time, Ille has proved his worth and enhanced his status in the eyes of his new companions. He is honoured by all the Roman barons (vv. 2329-30). But he continues the game he is playing with the Romans and announces that he has no experience and that his success was due to luck.

We have, however, seen that organisation is one of Ille's strong points and, after persuasion, he duly masterminds the enemy's defeat. His instructions to the seneschal are to get his men into a castle to the rear and to let the enemy besiege them there. As the castle is surrounded by waste land, after a week the enemy will lack food and become vulnerable. The seneschal calls Ille 'sage' and he is now provided with proper armour and knights of his own to serve him. When the Romans eventually emerge to attack the Greeks, the latter are unarmed and many are killed or captured. There is a fierce fight, in which Ille, whose

opponents have become gradually more sophisticated, takes on the «mestre senescal» of the Greeks:

Al mestre senescal s'eslaisse;
 A l'encontrer sa lance abaisse,
 Si l'a feru par defors
 Que il li a cousu au cors
 L'escu et l'auberc c'ot vestu,
 Ne li valurent un festu.
 Sa lance trait après a soi
 Et cil ciet mors ens el tornoi.

(vv. 2349-56)

After this Ille's performance becomes truly spectacular, as, striking right and left, he casts a hundred opponents from their saddles («Tex .c. i fait seles vuidier», v. 2361). Finally he does obtain a horse for himself, the finest he had ever seen (vv. 2398-400).

The Romans return to the castle and close the door against the Greeks. Ille is the object of honour and rejoicing. But the next day things begin badly, although in a way which can lead to a further new development in the story. The Romans lose their seneschal («tot li plus prodome . . . | Que on seüst en tout l'empire», vv. 2428-29). Ille, of course, kills the man responsible for his death and he makes the Romans retreat into the castle. Again the Romans ask for his help and implore him to take on the *senescauchiee* (v. 2447). Eventually, after a fitting display of humility, he agrees, subject to the ultimate confirmation of the Emperor of Rome. He leads his new-found troops «mout seneement» (v. 2496, Foerster and Löseth read *ser(r)eement*) and, asking for their trust, creates ten divisions from amongst them. Thinking that Ille is dead, the Greeks are inspired to further action and they cause «grant martire» amongst the Romans (v. 2568). But, newly organised («Li Romain vont serreement», v. 2571), the Romans in their turn create havoc amongst the Greeks with their sharp lances (vv. 2573-74). Ille himself arrives, killing and maiming a large number (v. 2589) before encountering a top-class opponent, Dinas, Duke of Carthage, a man in whom the Greeks have «grant fiance» (v. 2600) and who has three thousand men with him:

Ille laisse corre a celui:
 Mout li porte pesme novele,
 Que tout l'escu li esquartele
 Et l'auberc li ront et desmaille,
 Le cuer li perce et le coraille,

Et de tant lonc con lance estent
Le porte a terre entre sa gent.

(vv. 2612-18)

Ille is then attacked by four courageous men and even he needs the assistance of his companions. But between them the Romans kill a hundred men and the sight of his companions united in battle raises Ille to a peak of performance which even he had never reached:

Proece acuet outre pooir
Et vaut plus qu'il ne puet valoir,
Et devint outre pooir preus,
Com sel faisoit por ses neveux.

(vv. 2689-92)

The Romans succeed in killing a thousand Greeks, but just as the end of the battle seems to be approaching, Agar, a Greek whose brother Ille had killed, attacks Ille and wounds him (vv. 2732-38). The Romans take him away in an attempt to discover whether his wounds are fatal and the Greeks attack enthusiastically to make sure that Ille is dead. But seeing that the Romans are retreating, Ille forgets his pains and rallies them with a reminder of the fact that the «Grijois felon» have come to conquer their land «a tort» (vv. 2786-87). The reader is reminded here of the struggle between Hoel and Ille. In case this is not enough he returns to the fray demonstrating more strength than anyone since Arthur:

Illes vait ferir Gadifer
Si durement que deson fer
Li a son hauberc dessarti,
Le cuer del ventre en. ii. parti.
Sa lance estort et cil trebuce,
Et sa gens plore, crie et huice.

(vv. 2809-14)

Shortly afterwards Ille kills Agar (v. 2834). But before narrating the final victory of the Romans, Gautier observes that there are *puceles* watching Ille's performance from the windows (vv. 2843-44). Again a future development is being adumbrated. Eventually the Greeks are pushed back by the strength of the Romans and would have been completely «desconfis» (v. 2871), had it not been for Agenor, the Duke of Athens, and his son. They and

their men charge at the Romans and kill many of them. Then they head for Ille. Emenidus strikes him a blow «en travers» (v. 2892) and, although he is not seriously injured and the aggressor is duly despatched by another brave Roman, the Romans are anxious about the flow of blood. Ille's wound has been spotted by the maidens, who are distressed by it. But Ille is unconcerned and returns to the battle. Some of his adversaries are already fleeing the battlefield, but Ille insults them for their cowardice. When they turn to fight, Ille does not spare them or himself:

Au parvenir les lances baissent
Et vont ferir el grignor tas.
Illes ne s'i espargne pas:
Mout i emploie bien sa main.

(vv. 3020-23)

His final victory is over Emenidon:

Sel fiert li ber par tel vertu
Qu'il li esfondre son escu,
L'auberc li desront et desmalle,
Le cuer li perce et le coraille,
Sel fait trebuchier contreval
Par son la crupe du ceval.

(vv. 3027-32)

At this point the Greeks turn tail and are finally «desconfit» (v. 3036). The Greek emperor gets into his ship and his knights appeal for mercy. Ille has their money seized and the noblest men. He lets the others go and returns to the castle where he is greeted by a thousand females.

From this time onwards Ille's life is largely preoccupied with his two ladies, Galeron and Ganor. In fact only a small portion of the text will henceforth be taken up with his chivalric activity. After his departure for Rome, Brittany had fallen to traitors, but on his return with Galeron it requires little time and effort on his part to restore order and deal with those who had usurped power:

De maint castel, de mainte tor
Est saisis li fiex Eliduc.

(vv. 5056-57)

Gautier stresses the efficiency, prudence and comprehensiveness of Ille's handling of the matter:

De tous se venge onniement,
 Ne mie soursaliement,
 Mais tout par sens et par mesure.

(vv. 5069-71)

The next time he is called upon to perform a demanding task on the battlefield occurs when he goes to help Ganor in her hour of need. In v. 5684 Ille returns to Rome, where the Greek Emperor is once again besieging the land. The Romans have now been under siege in a *chastel* for five or six days (v. 5689). The emperor's main desire is to have Ganor as his wife. Ille, as always, knows immediately what to do. One of his friends is a *preude castelain* (v. 5709) with a remarkably strong castle, and he sends word for him to meet him «en une lande» (v. 5720). Ille makes all the arrangements and the next day they set out, with Ille riding in front followed by thirty excellent knights. They arrive at the castle under siege and spread out their armour. Gautier shows his insistence on Ille's organisational abilities by having him make a speech (vv. 5776-98 «par grant conseil et par esgart» (v. 5775). The besieged Romans have decided on one great effort to settle the issue one way or the other and Ille and his companions can see the battle from where they are: knights are being killed and wounded, saddles are emptied, lances are broken, helmets sent flying off heads or knocked down over them. Ille orders his men to strike only when the Romans tire and to make use of the sunlight on their shiny new armour.

Suddenly Ille's men «poignent vers l'ost lance levee» (v. 5855) and are ignored by the Greeks who think they are merely reinforcement. The enemy are described by Gautier as «li felon, li Diu anemi» (v. 5876). Ille strikes a Greek:

Illes vait ferir un Grifon
 Parmi l'escu paint a lion
 Li met le fer de Cornualle,
 L'auberc li ront et li desmalle,
 Le fer li conduist sos l'aissele,
 Mort le trebuce de la sele.

(vv. 5885-90)

Ille's companions are equally effective and after a large number of the Greeks have been slain a messenger goes to the Greek emperor, telling him that there are now one thousand Illes on

the battlefield. One of the besieged Romans spots that Ille himself is there and during more fighting the Greek Jonas attacks Ponce of Nantes wounding him and leaving part of the iron and wood of his lance in his thigh. Ille attacks Jonas:

Jonas vait ferir en l'escu,
Que d'eur a autre l'a fendu.
Plaine sa lance jus l'envoie
Navré a mort. Quil veut, se l'oie!

(vv. 5965-68)

The battles continues fiercely and the besieged Romans join in. Ille remains behind to restrain Ponce's wound and the Greeks, who «sevent plus de guere» (v. 6007), take over the «piece de tere» (v. 6008) and push their opponents away. There would have been a mortal pursuit, if Ille had not noticed this:

Saut el cheval, l'escu saisist
Et prent le lance de pumier.

(vv. 6012-13)

He makes another exhortatory speech, and after a further assault from the Bretons, who are «chevalier buen» (v. 6033), the Greek emperor heads for the harbour and Ille's supporters create havoc amongst his men. Ille hands over the prisoners to the Romans. The battle is won.

Ille has ust one more military task to accomplish before he can enjoy the fruits of his success. Ganor has returned to Rome and been betrayed by ten of her noblemen who are riding out towards the battlefield in order to hand her over to the Greek emperor. Having learned of this and decided how and where to attack the traitors, Ille handles this matter with the nonchalance and efficiency of a true hero. The battle lasts for only twenty-two lines (vv. 6453-60, 6479-92). But even this short scene is interrupted by an account of Ganor's reaction to events (vv. 6461-78). When it is all over, Ille becomes Ganor's husband and is crowned Emperor of Rome by the pope («De Rome est Illes emperere | Et rois et sire et commandere», vv. 6553-54). He and Ganor live happily ever after.

Ille et Galeron can be described as a chivalric romance. Love plays an important role within the story, but without Ille's chivalric exploits love would have no function or at least a different function within the thematic structure of the text. Gautier presents the biography of a *chevalier* from his birth and youth

in Brittany until his rise to the eminent position of Emperor of Rome. Ille is the son of a minor nobleman and he has inherited his father's fine qualities and his commitment to loyal service. His spectacular rise, first to become seneschal of Brittany, then seneschal of Rome and finally Emperor of Rome, is due almost solely to his chivalric skills. These skills are demonstrated in recognizable geographical locations and always in the context of a battle against other knights, fought in realistic circumstances. Ille does not visit the Other World or fight single combats at a ford. His world is not that of the heroes of antiquity and he is not driven onwards by any mission or forced to live his life as the plaything of the gods. His opponents are professional soldiers like himself, not giants or men with supernatural characteristics. His foremost struggle against overwhelming odds is when numerical superiority favours the opposition. He defeats these superior forces with skill and planning, not with the help of a magic ring or a ferocious animal.

Whatever its precise date of composition, the story of Ille's adventures emerges from the far-off world of the *romans anti-ques* and stands in stark contrast to the often mysterious Arthurian world of Wace and Chrétien de Troyes. *Ille et Galeron* is one of the first romances, perhaps the first, in which love and chivalry play a dominant and complementary role and anything we can glean about Gautier's attitude towards and use of chivalry is important within the context of the development of this theme in romance. It is noticeable that Ille's view of chivalry is entirely secular. He does not fight for a religious cause or formally embrace any altruistic conception of chivalry which would appear to have been directly influenced by the Church. The first of his three principal battles (against Hoel) is as the aggrieved party, his second (against the Lord of Constantinople) as a mercenary and the third (against the same opponent) to fulfil his promise to Ganor that he would help her in her hour of need. On all three occasions Ille fights for the possession of land. Gautier is clearly committed to the principle of the rightful ownership of land and his romance can be seen as a hymn to individual prowess as a means whereby this can be achieved.

The battles themselves are narrated in such a way as to illustrate Ille's strategic skills and his great personal prowess. The battle scenes are quite lengthy, but a variety of means are employed to break up the pattern of the account to avoid mo-

notony: Ille has not arrived, he is using rusty armour, injury has placed him on the sidelines, etc. He is particularly good at making use of his friends to help him win his victories and at masterminding plans whereby the enemy can be defeated with the minimum of effort. All in all chivalry in *Ille et Galeron* is the use of military skills, practised at the *quintaine* and in tournaments, for purely feudal ends. When he fights as a mercenary, Ille is as much dedicated to his personal rehabilitation as to the cause for which he fights. But Gautier insists nevertheless on a number of important virtues. When honours are heaped upon him, Ille remains humble. He accepts the various offices made available to him with gratitude and protestation of unworthiness. Gautier's ideal knight must of course set great store by the concepts of honour, compassion and justice:

Il et honors, c'est bien tot un
Et canqu'il ont lor est commun.

(vv. 3800-01)

.ii. choses a li chevaliers,
Qu'il est piteus et justiciers.

(vv. 3804-05)

But he must also not be too talkative and not boast of his accomplishments. Early in the text Gautier tells us that Ille is particularly popular because in his lodgings he is the least talkative knight who has ever ridden a horse (vv. 212-17). He does not mix *janglerie* with *chevalerie*:

Ne melloit nule janglerie
A se haute chevalerie.

(vv. 223-24)

Gautier's conception of 'haute chevalerie' requires that a knight should only undertake significant activities («rice ovragne», v. 245) and never be fainthearted when there is good work to be done («Ainc de bien faire ne se fainst», v. 247). When a true knight has the leisure and a break from the real business of fighting on the battlefield, he can deal with smaller issues of individual justice and human need. Once Ille has defeated Hoel and brought peace to Brittany, he sets about righting wrongs and manifesting firmness and strength in the face of injustice:

Les tors abaisse et fait les drois
Et en justice est fors et rois.

(vv. 1207-08)

He succeeds in overthrowing «mainte male costume» (v. 1209) and in subduing the arrogant («les orgillex plaisse», v. 1210). Later, whilst the messengers are away looking for Galeron in Brittany, Ille demonstrates his ability to be a «bons voisins» (v. 3787). He provides succour for the neediest members of society:

Les nus conselle et les descax,
Les povres et les orfenins.

(vv. 3785-86)

Thus, although his best and most demanding work for the Romans is done on the battlefield, outside the city, Ille is nevertheless willing to perform good deeds within the city. These good deeds secure for him the title of «saviour» (v. 3794) and «protector» (vv. 3796-97). In this context we can note that on winning his first horse in the fight against the Greeks it is to the «plus povre chevalier» he can find that he presents it (vv. 2137-40). But the fact remains that the successful knight is shown by Gautier to be in a position to achieve great things, to impress his male peers, but also to find love by impressing ladies of higher station than himself. One notes that his love creates far more anguish for him than his prowess. But Gautier is optimistic enough to find a harmonious solution to any problems which present themselves.

One of Gautier's most significant remarks about chivalry might be seen as coming in an ironic context. In the final chivalric episode, in which Gautier is at his most virulent against treachery and felony (see vv. 6237-40, 6300-01, 6316, 6346-47, 6370, 6420, 6432, 6438, 6446, 6481-82, 6489), Ganor remarks to her own men who have taken her captive:

Chi a bele cevalerie
Por apaier cuer de pucele
Et d'une haute damoisele!

(vv. 6192-94)

«Bele cevalerie» is clearly a view of the world and a pattern of behaviour which detests treachery and anything which is inimical to true nobility or which appertains to «gent perverse» (v. 6330). Clearly, for Gautier, just to be a good knight is not enough. Hoel is described as a «bon chevalier | Hardi et combatant et fier» (vv. 670-71). But the fact that he «trop aime traïson» (v. 673) constitutes a «mesproïson» (v. 674) which scarcely

enables his view of *chevalerie* to be qualified as *haute* or *bele*. Gautier wants chivalry to be something which is not debased, something memorable which will be profitable in the long-term (*venir a bien*):

Cevalerie que on vent
 Par jangler menu et sovent
 Ne puet au lonc a bien venir,
 Car nul n'en daigne sovenir.

(vv. 227-30)

Needless to say the incarnation of chivalry is the heroic figure of Ille himself: «Onques a nul jor ne se plainst | Cevalerie de son cors» (vv. 248-49). Brave, handsome and wise («Il est et preus et biax», v. 257; «Et preus et sages et senés», v. 1203), he is the very flower of chivalry (vv. 1049, 4089). Off the battlefield he is *humain*, *franc*, *douç* and *deboinaire* (vv. 210-11, 908). The weak rulers of Brittany and Rome («foible duc», v. 157, «fobles hom», v. 2007) need a man with Ille's chivalric virtues. A man like Ille, who has been exiled from his own lands by someone who is as good a knight as Hoel («Ille escillierent li baron», v. 155), also needs exceptional abilities to recover his lands. Moreover, all the «prodome» in an area need someone such as Ille to provide them with protection, someone with whom they can join forces honourably (vv. 860-63). Above all women, when they are left in charge of the government of their territory, as both Galeron and Ganor are, need a man of Ille's calibre in whom they can trust, someone to whom they can entrust the welfare of their people and who can «maintenir la terre» (v. 1437) and «maintenir le povre gent» (v. 3532). The pope tells the Emperor of Rome that no war would be bold enough to break out against Ille («Car jamais guerre n'iert tant ose | Qui contre lui s'ose movoir» vv. 3540-41). When it reaches the pinnacles of accomplishment achieved by Ille, chivalry, as presented by Gautier, can permit even a minor nobleman to accede to genuine political power and it can enable him and entire communities to pass from a state of «grant paine» (v. 6567) to one of «mervillose joie» (v. 6576).

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