

ARTYKULY

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ADIAPHORIC VARIANTS AND HISTORICAL SEMANTICS:
A CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses two adiaforphic variants in the handwritten tradition of a *fabliaux* by Jean Bodel, *Le vilain de Farbu: barbeoire* (ms. **B**) and *papeoire* (ms. **H**). Both *couplets d'octosyllabes* (the one containing *barbeoire* in **B** and the one containing *papeoire* in **H**) are coherently integrated into the textual structure to the point of appearing practically interchangeable. But the two variants are less interchangeable: if *barbeoire* could easily replace *papeoire* in **H**, since both have in common the seme of frightening, of terrifying, which is used to connote the woman's attitude, *papeoire* would have little meaning in relation to *arbalestiax* in **B**, whether it is intended as 'jester' or purely as 'crossbowman'. This leads us to suppose that the original lesson is *papeoire*, a term that, if not already used to designate the mannequin attested in later Picardy folklore, at least bears the meaning in which we recognise its etymological root, 'devourer', an attribute always associated with the figure of the monster. This term was certainly familiar to both the author and the copyist of **H**, both Picards, but probably not to the copyist of **B** (or to the copyist of an antigraph at the highest levels of this branch of stemma) who, not understanding it, may have considered it appropriate to intervene in the phrasal system in order to adapt it to a known noun close to the original unintelligible one.

KEYWORDS: Jean Bodel, *Le vilain de Farbu*, *barbeoire*, *papeoire*, adiaforphic variants

STRESZCZENIE

Artykuł analizuje dwa warianty adiaforyczne w tradycji rękopiśmiennej *fabliaux* Jean'a Bodel'a, *Le vilain de Farbu: barbeoire* (ms. **B**) i *papeoire* (ms. **H**). Oba *couplets d'octosyllabes* (ten zawierający *barbeoire* w **B** i ten zawierający *papeoire* w **H**) są spólnie wkomponowane w strukturę tekstu do tego stopnia, że wydają się praktycznie wymienne. Jednak te dwa warianty są mniej wymienne: o ile *barbeoire* mógłby z łatwością zastąpić *papeoire* w **H**, ponieważ oba mają wspólny sem przestraszenia, przerażenia, który jest używany do przywoływania postawy kobiety, o tyle *papeoire* miałby niewielkie znaczenie w odniesieniu do *arbalestiax* w **B**, niezależnie od tego, czy chodzi o "błazna", czy tylko o "kuszniaka". To skłania nas do przypuszczenia, że pierwotnym doświadczeniem jest *papeoire*, termin, który – jeśli nie był już używany do określenia manekina występującego w późniejszym folklorze pikardyjskim – to przynajmniej ma znaczenie, w którym rozpoznajemy jego etymologiczny rdzeń, czyli "pożeracz", atrybut zawsze kojarzony z postacią potwora. Termin ten był z pewnością znany zarówno autorowi, jak i kopiście **H**, obu pikardyjczykom, ale prawdopodobnie nie kopiście **B** (lub kopiście antygrafu na najwyższych poziomach tej gałęzi stemmy), który, nie rozumiejąc go, mógł uznać za stosowne interweniować w system frazeologiczny w celu dostosowania go do znanego rzeczownika bliskiego pierwotnemu, niezrozumiałemu.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: Jean Bodel, *Le vilain de Farbu*, *barbeoire*, *papeoire*, warianty adiaforyczne

LE VILAIN DE FARBU

The text of *Le vilain de Farbu*, one of the eight fabliaux attributed to Jean Bodel¹, is found only in two codices²: the scarce fortune of its manuscript, compared to others that evidently enjoyed greater favor among readers, and therefore among copyists³, is perhaps an indication of the modest appeal of its plot, in which the *vis comica* gives way to a moralising intent that draws its pivotal element from the variously frequented repertoire of anti-villanesque satire (Belletti 1977).

The plot can be briefly recapped as follows: a woman sends her husband and their son Robin to buy a rake and a cake, with enough money to pay for both purchases and their lunch. In the marketplace, a blacksmith had left a red-hot iron in front of the forge, in order to make fun of the fools who would burn themselves if they grabbed it. The *vilain* falls for it, but the boy does not: he spits on the iron and when he sees it sizzling, he is careful not to pick it up. His father is impatient to know why he did not pick it up, and the boy explains that, as it sizzled once in contact with saliva, it must have been incandescent. Back home, the hungry man asks his wife to prepare a bread and milk soup. Delighted by its fragrance, he demands that it be poured into the bowl without even allowing it to cool, but, mindful of Robin's teaching, after taking a big spoonful of the soup he spits into it and, since the phenomenon he had already witnessed does not occur, he swallows it in one go, burning his mouth, tongue and throat. He then asks his son why the trick he had recently learned had not worked and the boy simply replies: "sire [...] par saint Pere, / ja mar de çou serez douteus; / caus fers n'est mie mortereus"⁴ (vv. 126–128: sir [...] by Saint Peter, / never again will you have doubts about this: / that an iron is no bread and milk soup). The ending laments the distortion of natural parameters: "si est mais li siecles menés / que li fius engigne le pere, / si n'est mais jors qu'ice ne pere / ci et aillors, si com je cuit, / car plus sont li enfant recuit / que ne sont li viellart barbu" (vv. 130–135: the times are now such / that the son deceives the father, / and there is not a day that this does not appear in all evidence / here and elsewhere, as I believe, / because children are more cunning / than the old bearded men).

¹ Jean Bodel was born around 1165 in Arras and died there in 1210. In addition to eight *fabliaux* and one *fable*, his works include the *Jeu de Saint Nicolas*, the *Chanson des Saisnes*, five *pastourelles* and the *Congés*.

² **B**: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 354, ff. 10va–11va, from North-Eastern France and dating from the mid-13th century; **H**: Paris, BNF, fr. 2168, ff. 45ra–vb, copied in Picardy at the end of the 13th century. To these should be added a *descriptus* (partial: the copy is limited to ff. 45–91 and 209–214) of **H** (Paris, BNF, Arsenal, 2770) commissioned in the 18th century by La Curie de Sainte-Palaye, whose annotations are preserved in the margin.

³ Such as *Du vilain de Bailluel* (five manuscripts) and *De Barat et de Haimet, Des sohaiz que sainz Martins dona anvieus et coveitos, De Gombert et de deus clers* (four manuscripts).

⁴ Quotations from Nardin (1965). Here and below translations are mine.

A distortion subsumed in the oxymoronic *topos* of the *puer senex* (Curtius 1993: 115, 226) (Robin, taken to the market “por çu qu’il aprengé et amorge”⁵, already knows how to dispense teachings to his father) which, by referring to the logic of the world upside down (Bachtin 1979), frees the final “moral”, and with it the whole story, from the somewhat simplistic reflection in which the decadence of the times is deplored.

This does not detract from the fact that the story is oversized in view of the conclusions to be drawn from it. In fact, it gives ample space to irrelevant and marginal details, substantially unrelated to the main guideline along which the narrative development unfolds: thus the detailed calculation of the expenses that the woman makes in relation to the sum given to her husband, divided between what she had asked to buy (three *mailles*⁶ for a rake and two *deniers*⁷ for a cake: vv. 7–8) and their meal (three *deniers*: one for beer and mackerel, and two for bread: vv. 14–15), as well as the excessive expenditure for the latter, such as to ensure that only five *mailles* were left from the amount received, so that, three having been spent for the rake, the remaining money was barely sufficient to obtain a “maufait, plain de lie” (v. 65: badly made, full of lumps) *gastel*, rather than a “tout tendre” (v. 9: nice and soft) one as his wife would have liked – having in fact budgeted two *deniers* for it.

Details that in the end seem to have no other function than that of highlighting the neglectful nature of the protagonist, his vacuity, to strongly emphasise his absolute cluelessness when it comes to a shrewd management of money and, above all, to a minimal, elementary predisposition for monetary transactions. Even so, it does not go beyond supporting one of the most abused leitmotifs of the caricatural representation of the peasant, stressing its inadequacy in the face of changing socio-economic scenarios.

Even because the only detail that could have influenced, albeit tangentially, in a humorous way, the development of diegesis is that poor *gastel* that could well have motivated the woman’s anger and is instead unexploited in this sense: in fact, the wife refrains from any comment on the matter, limiting herself to ask for it to her husband who, in return, and evidently unsatisfied with the lavish meal, urges her to prepare him a *morteruel*:

“Ou est – fait ele – mes gastiaus?”

“Ves le ci – fait il – mais mon vueul
en feriés vous .I. morteruel
orendroit, car je muir de faim” (vv. 74–77)

(“Where is it – she says – my cake?” / “Here it is – he says – but I want / you to make me a milk soup / right away, because I’m starving”).

⁵ V. 21: “so that he learns and adjust”.

⁶ The *maille* was equivalent to half a *denier*.

⁷ It is the *lectio* of B (.II.) while H reports .I.: an evident mechanical error in transcription that would make the initial distribution of costs identical to the final one, without giving reason for the poor quality of the *gastel*. A poor quality which instead stems from the fact that the protagonist has spent more than expected on food and drink.

A CONTROVERSIAL *COUPLET*

It has been said that on his arrival at home the *vilain* is badly received by his wife, who approaches him aggressively. An episode that the manuscript tradition attests with significant variants:

sa femme le met a raison
 ki l'uis devers le cortil oeuvre
 de lait sanlant ni fesist oeuvre
 papeoire ni arbalestiaus
 u est fait ele mes gastiaus (**H**, transcription from the manuscript)

(his wife addresses him / opening the door from the courtyard side: / such a threatening air would not have / a *papeoire* nor an *arbalestiaus* / “Where is – she says – my cake?”).

sa feme le met a raison
 qui l'uis de vers la cort li uevre
 de l'autre sanblant ne fait oeuvre
 si dist tost o est mes gastiax
 barbeoire d'arbalestiax (**B**, transcription from the manuscript, italic solves the abbreviations)

(his wife addresses him / opening the door from the courtyard side: / she expresses no other thought / and immediately says: “Where is my cake / *barbeoire d'arbalestiax*?”).

It should be noted that while the two versions agree on the overall meaning, the identity of the rhymes – skipping the graphic-morphological discrepancies – conflicts with the “fluctuating” structure of an *octosyllabe* whose meaning, if not obscure, is at least controversial. In addition, this *octosyllabe* occurs in both manuscripts with slight variations (“papeoire ni arbalestiaus” / “barbeoire d'arbalestiax”) supporting alternative signifying processes. In the two codices this verse has an inverted position inside the *couplet*: this implies firstly a different referent of its construction – in **H** the wife, in **B** the husband – and then a different grammatical function of the latter.

In **H** the two nouns, which have the same syntactic value, are juxtaposed and coordinated with reinforcing purposes originating from a redundancy, if not lexical at least metaphorical, called to constitute an effective simile that the narrator uses to visually evoke the threatening and frightening appearance of the woman. On the other hand, in **B** they compose a nominal syntagma in which the second term constitutes the complement of specification of the first, a nominal syntagma that in the question posed to the *vilain* in the form of direct discourse is used with an allocutive and obviously insulting function⁸: an usage that acquires an even more marked incisiveness since, among the *fabliaux* of Jean Bodel, *Le vilain de Farbu*

⁸ About the use of allocutives in Jean Bodel's works, see Denoyelle (2016).

registers the lowest percentage of forms or expressions intended to denote the allocutary (Denoyelle 2016: 4)⁹. This contributes to increase the icastic efficacy of its relational values, which prevail over the purely deictic ones, thus highlighting and enhancing, through an emotional marker, the hostile character of such a linguistic act.

It is still necessary to attribute a correct meaning to the common term *arbalestiaus* / *arbalestiax*, figuring in both codices albeit in different graphical forms. In his *Lexique comparé des fabliaux de Jean Bodel*, Pierre Nardin does not hesitate to give it the meaning of ‘arbalète, petite arbalète’ (Nardin 1942: 13). In relation to the circumstances in which it is pronounced (“ici terme d’injure”) (Nardin 1942: 13), he translates it as “ridicule arbalète” (Nardin 1942: 88): certainly, on the basis of Godefroy’s *Dictionnaire de l’ancien et moyen français*, which quotes the verse as it appears in **H** within the entry *arbalestel*, thus proving that the noun is understood in accordance with the definition of diminutive of *arbalète* formulated for the headword.

Meaning by this that, although linguistically unexceptionable, it turns out to be completely inappropriate from a semantic point of view since, on the one hand, the use of the word within the utterance in which it appears is incongruous if we assume it in its proper sense of ‘small crossbow’; and on the other hand, we do not find any occurrence in which it is assumed with metaphorical connotations¹⁰.

Raleigh Morgan Jr’s proposal that *arbalestiaus* can be understood as a synonym of *jogleor* (Morgan Jr 1954: 296) is certainly more pertinent, a solution that would remove this term of comparison – whether direct (as in **H**) or translated (as in **B**) – from the sphere of the inanimate and return it to that of the human, rendering less artificial the figurative adherence to the referents to which it is related. This hypothesis is based on vv. 283–285 of Jean de Condé’s *Dit des jacobins et des fremeneurs*, where *joueurs d’arbalestiaus* are associated, along with *enchanteurs* and *faus entregeteurs*, as belonging to a common category. This induces the scholar to link the former to the terminological constellation belonging to the figure of the jester, in which the latter traditionally participate, to begin with the consideration that the *jeu de l’arbaleste* was a very popular “social game” in the Middle Ages and therefore it could be have been part of the “repertoire” of jester entertainment (Morgan Jr 1954: 297).

But, more simply, *arbalestiaus* also refers to the person who handles the crossbow, the crossbowman who, as Morgan himself points out, in medieval language is often cloaked in negative nuances oscillating between ‘man without restraint or measure’, ‘cheater’, ‘clumsy’, ‘boorish’ (Morgan Jr 1954: 297).

⁹ Corinne Denoyelle fixes this percentage at 86% (only 2 lines out of 14 would contain an allocutive). It should be noted, however, that she refers to the Nardin’s edition, based on **H** where the construction occurs in another form and is therefore not included in the calculation.

¹⁰ As Nardin himself rightly points out, at least with regard to the *corpus* of *fabliaux*: «nous n’avons pas trouvé dans les fabliaux d’autre exemple de cette expression» (Nardin 1942: 13).

BARBEOIRE

As for the *barbeoire* of **B**, we have the opportunity of tracing back, with a certain approximation, a plausible concrete correlative of it through a series of textual references that allow us to grasp, albeit roughly, its physiognomy. Among these, two occurrences in one of the Oitanic translations of the *Historia Karoli Magni et Rotholandi* (otherwise known as *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*¹¹), the *Version française III*^{e12}, are of great importance:

li païen firent autressi trois batailles. La premiere
eschiele fu de gent a pié qui avoient unes barbeoires¹³
a merveilles hideuses et cornues, totes semblanz a
deables, et tenoient tuit en lor mains tymbres (XLII, 13–16) (Walpole 1976: 157).

(the pagans also made three battalions. The first / line-up was of foot soldiers who had incredibly frightening / horned *barbeoires*, resembling devils, and they all held drums).

[...] il comencerent donc tuit ensemble a ferir
lor tymbres. Si tost com li cheval a la nostre gent oïrent
le grant fereiz des tymbres et il virent les barbeoires
si laides¹⁴ et si espoëntables, il comencerent a foïr autressint
come tuit desvé (XLIII, 3–7) (Walpole 1976: 157).

([...] they then began to beat / their drums together. As soon as the horses of our people heard / the great noise of the drums and saw the *barbeoires* so horrible and so frightening they began to flee / as if mad).

The above passages have as their source the chapter XVIII of *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, which in some manuscripts is entitled “De bello larvarum” or “De bello larvarii”:

cumque appropinquaret, iubente Karolo, prima turma militum nostrorum, venerunt ex [parte] paganorum contra equos singulos ex nostris singuli pedites habentes larvas barbaras, cornutas, daemonibus consimiles, tenentesque singuli singula timpana, que manibus fortiter percutiebant. Quorum voces et sonitus equi nostrorum mox ut audierunt terribilesque illorum

¹¹ From the beginning of the 13th century there are six different autonomous versions. For a comprehensive overview of the romance translations of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, see Piccat (2001: 13–25).

¹² Dating from 1206–1207, the thirty-two manuscripts from which it has been handed down attest to its considerable circulation.

¹³ A Some manuscripts record the variant *noires barbeoires*.

¹⁴ The adjective returns shortly afterwards to qualify the counterfeit features of the enemies, called “ledes features” (XLIII, 19).

similitudines viderunt, nimis pavefacti, quasi amentes fugere coeperunt, et nullo modo eos milites tenere potuerunt¹⁵.

(and when at Charles' command the first squadron of our soldiers came forward, from the ranks of the heathen came against each of our horses men on foot with barbarous, horned, demon-like masks, each of whom had a drum which he beat loudly with his hands. As soon as the horses of our people heard their noise and saw their horrible appearance, they were extremely frightened and began to run away almost mad, and the soldiers could not hold them back in any way).

In the light of the variant *barbatas* attested in place of *barbaras* by some manuscript¹⁶, one can explain the compendium of the locution “larva *barbatas*”, probably contained in the Latin model, in a noun, *barboires*, which was clearly heard as the vernacular equivalent, i.e. ‘bearded mask’.

This solution had already been adopted by the oldest version, the *Chronique dite Saintongeaise*, which, however, uses the term *barbote* (variant *barboce*¹⁷), certainly mindful of the Franco-Occitan scripta «sprinkled with gasconisms» of the (lost) original, which was the source of the poitevin adaptation through which the text¹⁸ was handed down to us:

quant Karles comanda que nostre premeire bataille chevauchias e se ferist entre les sarrazins, li sarrazins a pie vindrent avant; si orent feites une barbotas cornues qui resembloient deable, e tenoient en lurs mainz campanes qu'il sonoent molt durament. Quant li cheval aus nostres crestiens oient ço e virent les espaontamenz, si orent si grant poor qu'il començarent a foir arriere come deive, car cil qui desus estoient retenir ne les poient (de Mandach 1970: 308).

¹⁵ We propose here the text of the so-called ‘short’ version of the *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* based on the manuscript that, according to C. Meredith-Jones, should best represent a stage of elaboration very close to the original one (BNF, Nouv. f. lat. 13774, XII–XIII sec.) (Meredith-Jones 1972: 164).

¹⁶ The so-called ‘long version’ (which the Meredith-Jones edition faces to the short version by choosing Codex Callixtinus to represent it) in fact includes the variants *barbas cornica* (BNF, lat. 5452); *barbatas et cornutas* (BNF, lat. 3768 with the entire C family); *barbaras* (BNF, lat. 7531); *barbatas* the other manuscripts.

¹⁷ This is the graphic form of the term in ms. 124. Cf. A. de Mandach (ed. par), *Chronique dite Saintongeaise*, Tübingen, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1970, p. 336. The editor puts forward the hypothesis that the nouns *barbote*, *barbere*, *barboires* are the result of a calque of the second term of the Latin binomial *larvas barbaras* and only later would the association with ‘barbe’ < BARBA. However, the fact remains that the entire C family of manuscripts from which the Latin *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle* contains the variant *larvas barbatas et cornutas*, and when the writer’s source was a text belonging to this group, the calque from the determinant *barbatas* (instead of the determinate *larvas*) would find a plausible motivation in its connotative values, more evident than the generic *barbaras*. Finally, it should not be overlooked that Étienne de Bourbon also uses a similar noun, *barbo*, with a meaning close to that of the *barboces* in the *Chronique Saintongeaise* (Alexandre-Bidon, Berlioz 1998: 170).

¹⁸ This is the conclusion reached by André de Mandach (de Mandach 1970: 7), who significantly subtitled his edition as *Texte franco-occitan inédit ‘Lee’. A la découverte d’une chronique gasconne du XIIIème siècle et de sa poitevinisation*.

(when Charles ordered our first squadron to ride and attack the Saracens, the Saracens advanced on foot: they had made themselves horned *barbotes* resembling a devil, and were holding bells in their hands that rang with great force. When the horses of our Christians heard this and saw the bogeymen, they were so frightened that they began to run back as if mad, so that those who were on them could not hold them back).

Similarly, the *Version française IV^e* (the *Chronique* of William de Briane, composed around 1214–1216 and preserved in a single manuscript) where the mask used by the Saracens is called *barbere*¹⁹:

les sarazyns estuerent devaunt nos gens, devant checun chival un, e avoyent en soun chef une barbere cornue e ly coverit tote la teste si ke a pis. Ensement avoyent li autres, e semblerent debles e teneyent tabours et tympanas e fereyent ensemble si k'e[n] ne oist mye Deux tonaunt. De la noyse e des barberes se espounerent nos chivaus e tournerent le dos e s'enfuyèrent si ke les chivalers ne les poeyent reteiner (861–868) (Short 1973: 55)²⁰.

(the Saracens were in front of us, one in front of each horse, and he had a horned *barbere* on his head, and it covered his whole head up to his chest. So had all the others, and they looked like devils, and they had drums and kettledrums in their hands and beat them together in such a way that no thundering God could be heard. Our horses became frightened by the noise and the *barberes* and turned back and fled in such a way that the horsemen could not hold them).

Similarly, the *Version française I^e* (dating the first decades of the 13th century and hand down by nine codices) has an analogous form to that of *Version III^e*, *barboere*:

si com la premiere eschele de noz chevaliers aprocha la premiere eschele des sarrazins, tuit cil avoient barboeres cornues semblanz a deables, et si tenoient timbres qu'il feroient de lor mains durement et fesoient grant noise. Quant li cheval as nos chevaliers oïrent la noise et les voiz et les sons, et il virent lor semblances si laides, il commencerent a foïr de la peur qu'il orent aussi comme desvé, si que li chevalier nes pooient en nule maniere retenir (Walpole 1985: 27)²¹.

(as soon as the first troop of our horsemen approached the first troop of Saracens, they all had horned *barboeres* that looked like devils, and they had drums that they banged with their hands and made a great noise. When the horses of our knights heard the noise and the voices and the sounds, and saw their threatening appearance, they began to run away as if mad with fear, so that the knights could not hold them back in any way).

¹⁹ This detail distinguishes William de Briane's *Chronique* from the *Chronique dite Saintongeaise* with which it shares the same source.

²⁰ The noun *barbere* returns, in the same form but in the plural, a little further on (877).

²¹ The term *barboere* is used again shortly afterwards (p. 28), in the plural, with the same graphic form.

It is interesting to note that another of the codices that have handed down this same version has “larvas barbatus”, using the noun + adjective scheme (“barboires barbues”) and making a lexical choice which, by establishing the equivalence *larva-barboire*, gives the second substantive the unequivocal meaning of ‘mask’, sufficiently “neutral” to need the determiner *barbue* to define its hairiness:

quant la premiere eschiele de nostre gent aprocha, li paiens vindrent, contre chascun cheval uns, et avoient barboires barbues et cornues qui sambloient diables et tenoit chascuns an sa main un trimple que il batoient de lor mains. Quant li cheval a nos genz vident les barboires et oïrent les sons des tabors, si orent tel paor qu’il nos porent tenir, ains s’an fuirent comme desvé (Buridant 1976: 104)²².

(when the first host of ours approached the pagans they advanced, one against each horse, and they had horned and bearded *barboires* that looked like devils and each had a drum that they beat with their hands. When the horses of our people saw the *barboires* and heard the sound of the drums, they were so frightened that they could not restrain them and fled as if mad).

On the meaning of the allotropes *barbeoire*, *barbote*, *barbere*, *barboere*, *barboire* there are no doubts: *barboire* translates *larva* in the *Petit vocabulaire latin-française du XIIIe siècle*²³, and in the passage of the *Chronique de Turpin* cited in the *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française* the association of *barboce* with *deguiser* and *faulx visaiges* escapes any remaining possibility of misunderstanding:

iceulx meschants infideles qui estoient a pied se mirent en avant et se desguiserent d’aucune maniere de faulx visaiges en prenant aucunes barboces cornue tellement quils ressembloyent a dyables et ennemis d’enfer (Godefroy: s. v. *barbote*)²⁴.

Similarly, a 14th-century glossary quotes: “barbussiaux ou faulx visaiges” (Godefroy: s. v. *barbussiau*). Hence the use of *barboire* to indicate a ‘masquerade’ in the *Moyen français* (*FEW*: s.v. *barba*), a meaning which Du Cange perhaps uses

²² The noun of the mask still occurs twice in the forms *barboires* and *barboires*.

²³ See F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne langue française*, s. v. *barbeoire*, where it is noted that the term *barboire* was still used in Belgium when the *Dictionnaire* was published (i.e. in 1883). This is also confirmed by du Cange (*Glossarium*, s. v. *barbator*) who reports a similar use in Aquitaine and Auvergne: “unde etiamnum barboires vocantur Belgis nostris, barbadoires Gabalitanis, barbauts Arvernisis”.

²⁴ The quotation is simply indicated as having been taken from an edition of 1835: the presence in it of the form *barboque*, which can be traced back to one of the manuscripts that have handed down the *Chronique dite Saintongeaise* (BNF, fr. 124), and its linguistic form, would lead one to suppose that the reference to that edition is that “espèce d’édition critique en style Renaissance ... adapté au goût du public de Rabelais, développé de manière romantique” printed in 1527, to which André de Mandach refers when tracing the history of this manuscript (de Mandach 1970: 163). The term *barboiere* has the meaning of ‘mask’ also in the passage from the *Vies des Pères* (13th century) cited by the *Dictionnaire* (mistakenly) s. v. *barbeloter* (“aucuns i a qui vestu ont / barboieres por resambler / deable et por espaventer”: there are some who have worn / barboieres to resemble / devils and to frighten) as confirmed by the justification for its use: “por rassembler”.

to interpret the *barbatoria* mentioned by Gregory of Tours: “barbatoriam celebrare, larvatum incedere, ludere, nugari ... cum multo vero similis videatur id esse, quod mascarade nostri vocant” (Du Cange: s. v. *barbator*).

On this basis, and accepting the hypothesis of Raleigh Morgan Jr according to which *arbalestiaus* is synonymous with *jogleor*, the insulting motto with which the woman insults her husband, “barbeoire d’arbalestiax”, would have a meaning close to that of ‘jester’s mask’, an expression whose coherence is corroborated by the homology of the elements that compose it, since the mask is contemplated among the “tools” of the jester’s trade.

PAPEOIRE

The question remains whether in **H** *papeoire* is simply the result of a misreading of the correct lesson, i.e. *barbeoire*, or if it finds a cogent motivation in the syntactic and semantic structure of the *octosyllabes* containing it. It should be noted that the *Dictionnaire de l’ancien et moyen français* does not lemmatize the term, but rather includes it among the variants of *barbeoire* on the basis of what Claude-François Menestrier reports in *Origine des ornemens des armoiries*, which mentions the *papoire* of Amiens among the “ridicules” feasts celebrated in many cities of France where, on certain solemnities, “on representoit des rois, des reines, des animaux étranges, et de monstres qu’ils nommoient des gargoüilles” (Menestrier 1680: 362). The association with the headword is justified by the fact that the *papoire* would be an artefact assimilated to the category of the mask:

les *papoires* étaient des figures de dragons et de serpents que portaient à Amiens, à la fête du St-Sacrement, des personnages revêtus du costume d’apôtres, de prophètes, d’anges, etc. A St-Quentin, dit M. Lorrin, ce mannequin avait une bouche énorme, dans laquelle les dévots jetaient toute sorte de provisions, lesquelles servaient à ceux qui faisaient mouvoir le mannequin, pour faire bombance après la procession. M. Hécart raconte que des usages du même genre existaient à Mons, à Ath, à Douai et à Valenciennes (Godefroy, s. v. *barbeoire*)²⁵.

The direct source – one sentence is in fact taken verbatim – although not quoted, is Gabriel Hécart’s *Dictionnaire rouchi-français*, which provides us with some additional information on the subject:

²⁵ The custom of throwing foodstuffs into the mouth of a puppet in the form of a dragon has been testified in Metz since the 16th century on the feast of St Mark, 25 April, when the Graouilly – the great dragon chased away by St Clement – was carried in procession, claiming a small loaf of bread for its iron tongue from every baker it met along the way (Michaux 2000: 41). A tradition that was still alive in 1910 (Barbé 1910: 19).

Papoire, femme qui va et vient dans le voisinage médire de l'un et de l'autre; babillarde. Voici une note curieuse de M. Lorrin. «je crois ce mot picard (il se dit effectivement à St. Quentin) il me semble avoir entendu parler d'un grand mannequin qu'on portait in procession à Saint-Quentin et qu'on nommait la *papoire*. Ce mannequin avait une bouche énorme dans laquelle les dévots jetaient toutes sortes de provision lesquelles servaient à ceux qui fesaient mouvoir le mannequin à faire bombance après la procession». M. Lorin m'engage à vérifier ce fait dont il n'a qu'un souvenir confus. Ces sortes de mannequins étaient fort à la mode autrefois dans les processions. À Mons le mannequin est un dragon avec une énorme queue; à Ath et à Douai ce sont des géants avec leur famille. Au commencement de juillet on accourait de sept à huit lieues à la ronde, à Douai pour voir Gayant, sa femme, sa fille et *binbin* (bambin). Cette mascarade inusité a d'abord amuse beaucoup; on s'en servait pour faire la quête pour les prisonniers; mais enfin la brillante mascarade des Incas a remplacé avantageusement ce ridicule mannequi (Hécart 1834, s. v. *papoire*)²⁶.

Maurice Rivoire also mentions this custom in his *Description de l'église cathédrale d'Amiens*, referring to the procession that took place in Amiens on the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament and its claimed etiology, which he unhesitatingly describes as “fabuleuse”:

des gens vêtus en apôtres, en prophètes, en rois, en anges et en juifs assistaient aussi à cette procession. On y portait en outre deux figures de bêtes affreuses qu'on nommait *papoures*, avec un grand nombre de vergettes blanches et de torches allumées. Ces *papoures* étaient des serpens. Ces animaux monstrueux étaient, disait-on, des représentations des certaines mouches extraordinaires qui infectèrent l'air et occasionnèrent une contagions dans Amiens. Mais cette origine est fabuleuse (Rivoire 1806: 211).

Although Rivoire sees in it a pre-Christian heritage, he allows himself to be misled by his erudite spirit which, without even attempting to fill the temporal gap with the suggestion of possible phylogenetic relations, leads him centuries back to the *fabula atellana*:

les chrétiens d'alors avaient emprunté cette coutume, comme tant d'autres, des payens. Dans le lexicon de Plaute, *manducus* est la meme chose que ces *papoures*. Ces bêtes avaient la gueule béante: on leur faisait clacquer le dents l'une contre l'autre (Rivoire 1806: 211).

²⁶ With regard to the “brilliant mascarade des Incas” that replaced the *papoire*, it would appear that this was due to the particular favour enjoyed by the Jean-François Marmontel's work *Les Incas, ou la destruction de l'empire dou Pérou* (1777), a work present in the Valenciennes reading room, which was then republished by the Société des ouvriers typographes du Nord in 1842 (Gerson 2003: 196). Its origins date back to 1825: “the masquerade of the Incas, was originally composed only of individuals wearing the costume of the ancient inhabitants of Peru; but it must not from thence be imagined that it dates from the reign of Charles V, who united under his sway, the Flemings and Peruvians; no, the institution of the Incas at Valenciennes, boasts not near so distant an origin; it only arose in 1825, at which period it succeeded the far less brilliant masquerade of Binbin; when, wishing to adopt more striking and picturesque costumes, that of the Incas was decided upon, which is all that there is Peruvian in its origins” (Percy, Timbs 1836: 255–256). See also Gerson (2000).

This does not prevent him, certainly encouraged by the semantic correspondence, from integrating the meagre description with interesting information on the shape of these puppets whose jaws were plausibly opened wide thanks to hinges applied to the jaws so as to allow the opening and closing of the mouth and the consequent banging of the teeth together²⁷.

But even if *papeoire* has some vague connection with the concept of masking, nevertheless the etymon contradicts this assimilation, highlighting its arbitrariness: whereas *barbeoire* is a transparent derivative of ‘beard’ – and in fact it is defined as “masque qui avait une barbe” (Godefroy: s. v. *barbeoire*) – *papeoire* is instead unquestionably modelled on the Latin *pappare*, from which the oitanic *paper*, ‘mâcher, avaler, engloutir’ (Godefroy: s. v. *paper*), derives. It is true that both allude to a face, and in particular to a grotesque face, one frightening because of its hirsute hairiness²⁸, the other distorted in the act of gobbling voraciously, but if in the first case this is the result of a synecdochic procedure, in the second case this procedure is ‘grafted onto’ previous metonymic dynamics which, by enucleating from the act of eating, focus on the anatomical datum of the mouth²⁹.

It is a term, *papeoire*, which is indeed well suited to the dummy with the enormous mouth in which at St Quentin, Mons and Amiens the devotees threw bread or other foodstuffs, and which is equally well suited to render concretely the woman’s “lait sanlant”, such that «a dragon with gaping jaws or a crossbowman» would not have had it. In this case the meaning of ‘crossbowman’ fits the context well: a meaning that, among others, Raleigh Morgan Jr attributes to the noun *arbalestiaus*, here to be understood in the translate sense of ‘man without restraint or measure’ and thus threatening³⁰.

CONCLUSIONS

Since we are dealing with a bipartite stemma, it is obviously impossible to apply the Lachmann method to determine, between *barbeoire* and *papeoire*, which is the best lesson. On the other hand, not even the Bédierian method of the *bon manuscrit*

²⁷ An elementary mechanism that we find, operated by a rope, also in some calendar masks still in use in Eastern Europe. On this subject, see Barillari (2005: § 2).

²⁸ The link between hairiness of the face and inspiring terror is clearly evident in the medieval lexicon, both Latin and vernacular, which uses derivatives of *BARBA* to designate horrific figures evoked for deterrent purposes. *barbualdus*, *barbuardus*, *babrenaldus*, *barbo*, *barbou*... (Alexandre-Bidon, Berlioz 1998: 166–171).

²⁹ This explains the meaning *babillarde*, ‘gossip’, ‘chatterbox’, recorded by Gabriel Hécart for the entry *papoire*. This meaning is also shared by the Oitanic corradical *papeteor*, ‘babillard’, deverbal of *papeter*, ‘babiller’ (Godefroy: s. v. *papeteor*, *papeter*). About the connection between *papoire*, understood as mask, and the sound component, see Brusegan (2000: 47–48).

³⁰ Cfr. *supra*, § 2.

can help us: **H** is certainly preferable³¹, not so much because of its picard linguistic form³², which is close to that which the lost archetype must have possessed, but above all because of the greater carelessness of **B**, which tends towards linguistic and syntactic simplification, it also has a lacuna after v. 30: it lacks a *couplet* which is not inessential, since it contains the expedient used by Robin to understand whether the iron is hot or not (Nardin 1965: 43–44). But with regard to the group of verses that are the object of this study, the greater or lesser reliability of a witness as a whole is far from being diriment when one considers the reworking to which both manuscripts have been subjected, and the difficulty of determining in which branch of the tradition and when this reworking occurred. Both textual solutions, moreover, are coherently integrated into the textual structure to the point of appearing practically interchangeable. But the two variants are less interchangeable: if *barbeoire* could easily replace *papeoire* in **H**, since both have in common the seme of frightening, of terrifying, which is used to connote the woman's attitude, *papeoire* would have little meaning in relation to *arbalestiax* in **B**, whether it is intended as 'jester' or purely as 'crossbowman'.

This leads us to suppose that the original lesson is *papeoire*, a term that, if not already used to designate the mannequin attested in later Picardy folklore, at least bears the meaning in which we recognise its etymological root, 'devourer', an attribute always associated with the figure of the monster. This term was certainly familiar to both the author and the copyist of **H**, both Picards, but probably not to the copyist of **B** (or to the copyist of an antigraph at the highest levels of this branch of stemma) who, not understanding it, may have considered it appropriate to intervene on the phrasal system in order to adapt it to a known noun close to the original unintelligible one.

In any case, this is in many respects a foregone conclusion, but it has been reached by means of a process that, guided by philological investigation, has allowed us to open up a few glimmers of beliefs, customs and traditions through the *realia* that are linked to them and of which they are a concrete expression.

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³¹ It was the manuscript chosen first by Raynaud and then by Nardin.

³² Let us recall, in fact, with Gianfranco Folena, that "nelle tradizioni volgari l'intervento del copista sulla lingua è fatto normale, organico, la lingua è viva e continua a vivere per tutto il corso della tradizione manoscritta", therefore a manuscript with linguistic forms more in line with that of the original text is not for this reason only preferable to others conformed to the language of the copyist (Folena 1961: 17).

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