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The Aesthetics of the Chroniclers of the Fourth Crusade and the Gothic–Scholastic Episteme

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Prolegomena

In the 12th century, Geoffroy de Vinsauf suggested in his *Poetria Nova* that the writing of a poem could be compared to the building of a house, for 'he who would found a house sets no rash hand to work, but metes it out first with the measuring line of his heart.'[1] And here is how, also in the XIIth century (approximately 1165) the author of the *Roman de Troie* described the creation of his own work:

> Mais Beneeiz de Sainte More
> L'a contrové e fait e dit
> E o sa main les moz escrit,
> Ensi tailliez, ensi curez,
> Ensi asis, ensi posez.

[And Benoît de Sainte-Maure / This novel wrote and made,/ With his own hand the words down laid / Thus cut, thus shaped /Thus laid, thus arranged.][2]

The use of architectural terms ('cut', 'shaped', 'arranged', 'laid') in connection with literary creation in the work of Benoît de Sainte-Maure is hardly surprising, as the lengthy Trojan story contains some of the most important descriptions of towns and

buildings in the French literature of the XIIth century.[3]

But if poets speak the language of architects, what language do the architects themselves speak? Around 1240, nearly one century after Geoffroy de Vinsauf and Benoît de Sainte-Maure, architect Villard de Honnecourt wrote in his famous *Album* that he had designed the ground-plan of an ideal 'chevet' after intense debates with his friend, Pierre de Corbie. The expression used by Honnecourt to describe these conversations is *inter se disputando*, which actually belonged to the scholastic vocabulary. The notorious *disputationes* had therefore gone beyond the borders of Parisian academic circles and into the architectural jargon.

Halfway between Sainte-Maure and Honnecourt, at the dawn of the XIIIth century, stand the major chroniclers of the fourth crusade: Geoffroy de Villehardouin, Robert de Clari and Henri de Valenciennes. In a medieval world where architects, poets and philosophers frequently borrowed words from each other, it is only natural to wonder what language the chroniclers spoke.

When we set out to explore the chronicles of this crusade that was mysteriously deviated towards Constantinople, we can get carried away easily by the vaguely oriental setting of the story. It is far more dangerous though to forget that Villehardouin, Clari and Valenciennes were born at a time when France was busy debating about Scholasticism (the Averroist scandal, the condemnation of Abélard at the Council of Sens in 1140) and building cathedrals (the Basilica of Saint Denis in 1144, the Madeleine of Vézelay in 1150, Notre Dame in Paris in 1163).

Obviously, the three chroniclers may have ignored some of the decisive moments of their time. Yet it is impossible for a modern scholar to overlook the crucial relationship between three cultural aspects of the XIIIth century: Gothic architecture, Scholasticism and the crusade chronicles.

The geometry of the text

In the three prose chronicles of *La Conqueste de Constantinople* by Geoffroy de Villehardouin, Robert de Clari and Henri de Valenciennes, the reader can still identify countless oral traces. One of the most important aspects of orality in the French medieval literature is the use of the formulaic expressions such as 'oiez segneurs' ('give ear, my Lords'), 'comme vous pourrez oir avant' ('as you will hear later on'), 'or vous lairrons de cela, si dirons' ('now we shall leave off speaking about'). Versification (in octosyllabic or decasyllabic lines) is the second crucial aspect of orality.

As a result of the persistence of oral reflexes in the emerging prose historiography in French, the style of the three chronicles is rather formulaic and repetitive. Thus, as revealed by the meticulous dissertation of Gérard Jacquin[4], the transitions between episodes (or paragraphs) in the chronicles of Villehardouin, Clari and Valenciennes, often show reflexes inherited from the oral tradition. For instance, Robert de Clari introduces most of the narrative digressions by the formula 'or vous lairons chi ester' ('now we shall leave off here…'):[5]

> *Or vous lairons chi ester* des pelerins et de l'histoire, si vous dirons de chu vaslet et de l'empereur Kyrsaac, sen pere, comment il vinrent avant. (XVIII, 1-4)
> [*Now we shall leave off here* about the pilgrims and the fleet, and we shall tell you about this youth and the emperor Isaac, his father, how they arose.][6]

> *Or vous lairons chi ester* de l'estore; si vous dirons le mesfait dont li marchis haoit, l'empereur de Constantinoble. (XXXIII, 24-26)
> [*Now we shall leave off here* about the fleet and tell you

about the injury for which the marquis hated the emperor
of Constantinople.]

This is also the case for announcement formulae such as 'si come
vous porroiz oir avant' ('as you will hear later on'), which are often
penned by Clari and Valenciennes, especially towards the end of a
sentence, although less frequently by Villehardouin. As for
recapitulations and flashbacks, the famous 'si con vos ai conté' ('as
I said earlier') of the epic tradition becomes 'si con vos avez oi
arriere' ('as you heard earlier') with Villehardouin.

The sense of an underlying epic tradition is enhanced even
further by the structure of the sentence and the abundant repetitions
of grammatical connectors. Although the sentences can at times
reach a considerable length in the chronicles, it is interesting to note
that the clauses that make up the compound sentences rarely have
more ten or twelve syllables, which is highly reminiscent of epic
lines. When reading a fragment from Villehardouin's chronicle, the
reader cannot help but imagine Villehardouin dictating – in a
cadenced rhythm – to a scribe, or a courtier reading the chronicle in
a rhythmical fashion, as in a *chanson de geste*:

Ha ! com granz dommages fu / quant li autre qui alerent
aus autre porz/ ne vindrent illuec ! / Bien fu la crestientez
hauciee/ et la terre des Turcs abaissiee ! (XVI)
[Ah! The grievous harm and loss / when those who should
have come thither/ sailed instead from other ports! / Right
well, if they had kept their tryst, / would Christendom
have been exalted /, and the land of the Turks abased!][7]

Also, the combination of the smaller clauses within a long
compound sentence and the transition from one sentence to the next
are almost constantly achieved through a restricted number of
connectors such as 'et' ('and'), 'si' ('thus,' 'if'), 'quant' ('when'),

'lors' ('then'), or through the relative pronoun 'qui' ('who'), as in the following excerpt from Villehardouin:

> *Lors* prist li marquis congié *et* s'en ala vers Salonique, à totes ses genz et à tote sa fame ; *et* avec lui chevauchièrent li message l'empereor ; *et si* com il venoit de chastel en chastel, *si* li furent rendu de par l'empereor, *et* la seigneurie tote. *Et* vint à Salonique ; *et* cil qui la gardoient la rendirent de par l'empereor. (LXVII)
>
> [The marquis *then* took leave, *and* went towards Salonika with his people, and with his wife; *and* with him rode the envoys of the emperor; *and as* they went from castle to castle, each, with all its lordship, was restored to the marquis on the part of the emperor. *So* they came at Salonika, *and* those who held the place for the emperor surrendered it.]

The rhythmical and highly repetitive style of the three chroniclers bring about the idea of a prose palimpsest out of which the underlying verse text has been erased, even though there is no actual verse *architexte* for these stories.

Nevertheless, we should note that the oral or epic reflexes are radically transformed, once transposed in prose historiography. For example, almost every sentence in the chronicles starts with 'et' ('and'), 'si' ('if', 'thus'), 'lors' ('then') or 'quant' ('when', 'as'). It is almost impossible, however, to find epic poems in which each line starts with these initial words. Plus, repetitions of the same exact word in the same paragraph may be abundant in the chronicles, but they are far less frequent in epic poems.

True, oral traces are fairly frequent in the incipient French prose, but they are part of a radically different narrative framework. First of all, the chronicles of the fourth crusade place the narrative in a very precise chronological and historical frame, whereas the plot

of an epic text always takes place *in illo tempore*, in a remote, yet timeless past. In sharp contrast to epic literature, the very *incipit* of the chronicles implies, both with Villehardouin and with Clari (but not with Valenciennes, whose chronicle is a sequel to the work of Villehardouin) three elements: 1) the names of the acting monarchs;[8] 2) the initial fact, i.e. Fulk of Neuilly 'preaching the cross' and summoning the Christians to embark on a crusade;[9] 3) an exhaustive list of the main crusaders.[10]

Secondly, as soon as the chronological markers are inserted, the repetitive character of the text acquires a semantic quality that it did not have in the epic literature. The repetition remains an oral trace, but it also becomes a means for the chronicler to emphasize the meticulousness of his account. Furthermore, the use of the chronological framework is not limited to the *incipit*, as it is echoed throughout the text by the dates of religious holidays:

> *Après la Pasque, entor la Pentecoste*, encomencierent à movoir li pelerin de lor pais. (X)
> [*After Easter and towards Whitsuntide* the pilgrims began to leave their own country.][11]

> *Après*, quant ce fu fait, si fu li *Noel* passé, si fu près de l'entrée du *Quaresme*. (LXIX)
> [*Afterwards*, when all this was done, *Christmas* was past and it was nearing the beginning of *Lent* (...)].[12]

In addition, when calendar or liturgical dates are absent, the words 'quant' ('when') or 'lors' ('then') and other link-words make (or give the impression of making) the rhythmical connection between a chronological indication and the next-in-line calendar date. It would appear, therefore, that the repeated grammatical connectors become substitutes for chronological indicators.

The repetitions, the grammatical connectors and the

chronological indicators – appearing at very regular intervals – constitute what I call the *geometrical framework* of the narrative. It is almost as if the writer had first designed the framework of the chronicle, and then used the historical events to 'fill in the blanks'. It would be far more accurate, though, to say that the geometrical framework works as a transitional device between epic and prose. As medieval audiences were far more familiar with the epic framework, they were likely to perceive prose as a chaotic text. The geometrical framework is there to organize prose in such a way that the chronicler is free from epic constraints, and it also allows him to organize his *matière*. The *geometrical prose* is therefore a type of prose that is characterised by the quest for syntactic order and grammatical coherence (even though grammatical coherence does not necessarily mean coherence of the historical content).

The geometry of the text reaches a particular intensity with our chroniclers and one could rightly state that such a rigorous coherence of the text, especially at sentence level, was not equaled by contemporary texts. However, if we carefully read other contemporary writings, we realise that this tendency towards an almost geometrical order characterises the whole literary period. Moreover, even non-literary texts display this tendency; Erwin Panofsky thus comments (on texts written between 1130 and 1270):

> Whether we read a treatise on medicine, a handbook of classical mythology such as Ridewall's *Fulgentius Metaforalis*, a political propaganda sheet, the eulogy of a ruler, or a biography of Ovid, we always find the same obsession with systematic division and subdivision, methodical demonstration, terminology, *parallellismus membrorum*, and rhyme.[13]

The geometry of architecture

The chroniclers of the fourth crusade are not the only artists for whom near-mathematical rigour is of paramount concern. They share the concern for *measure* and *order* with other artists as well, and with architects in particular.[14]

The discovery of Vitruvius' writings (at the end of the XIth century and the beginning of the XIIth), which lay great emphasis on the very notions of *measure* and *order*, allowed medieval architects to appreciate more fully the importance of geometry and physics. In his study *The Gothic World* (1100-1600), John Harvey provides an enlightening image of how decisive Vitruvius' influence was on medieval architects:

> At Monte Cassino in Italy one of the monks had made a compendium of Vitruvius in 1100, and it cannot be a coincidence that 'ordinatio' and 'dispositio,' the two primary components of architecture described by the Roman writer, were used throughout the Middle Ages to describe the work done by the chief building masters who had charge of works of architecture.[15]

> As examples of technical devices contained in Vitruvius, and put into practice by the Gothic builders, may be instanced: the use of bond-timbers, and of bond-stones (*parpeyns* in medieval parlance) running from face to face of a wall; the use of alder-wood or oak for piles; the relationship of the human body and of numbers to the proportions of buildings; acoustic vases (in Classic theatres, and Gothic choirs); the structural idea of piers and arches, requiring end abutment; methods of levelling.[16]

The architecture of the XIIth century did borrow ideas from Vitruvius' writings, but it developed them into its own style, which we know as Gothic architecture. One of the most important features of the Gothic architecture is the omnipresence of the straight line, in contrast to the rounded surfaces in the Romanesque architecture. The Romanesque had also used straight lines, but the Gothic architecture extended and multiplied them, making linear structures one of its basic elements. This transition from the Romanesque rounded line to the Gothic long straight line has its literary equivalent in the transition from verse writing to prose in the chronicles. In contrast to the short octosyllabic or decasyllabic epic line, the chronicles make abundant use of long sentences. As I have noted, Villehardouin and Clari endeavour to render the events they witnessed in as linear and chronological a manner as possible.

The second main feature of the Gothic architecture is structural repetitiveness. When we look at a Gothic cathedral, we notice that it is made up of a series of repetitions (with occasional variations) of a number of basic structures to be found at regular intervals. Thus, the columns of the cathedral are usually divided into two or four parallel rows of columns, echoed outside the cathedral by flying buttresses and inside by the minor columns (especially in the smaller chapels). The same goes for the windows of the cathedral, which echo each other both along the north-south axis and along the east-west axis. The repetition of various architectural elements also creates an effect of symmetry, but symmetry seems to play a lesser role in Gothic architecture than does the linear multiplication of identical elements, which can at times create an effect of infinite repetition.[17]

The paragraphs and the sentences that make up the chronicles of the fourth crusade display the same feature, as a simple word, link-word or other, can be repeated *ad nauseam*. An attentive reader of the chronicles could hardly forget certain passages such as chapter XCV of Clari's work, where almost every independent

sentence begins by 'quant' ('when'):

> *Quant* la messe fu chantée, si s'assamblerent li esliseur et
> parlerent en leur conseil d'uns et d'autres (...)
> *Quant* il furent si acordé ensemble et leur conseil dut
> departir, si chargierent la parole à dire à l'evesque de
> Soissons. *Quant* il furent départi, si s'assamblerent tout cil
> de l'ost pour oïr et pour escouter qui on nommeroit à
> empereeur; *quant* il furent assamblé, si furent tout coi.
> [*When* the mass was chanted, the electors assembled and
> took counsel together, and they talked of one and of
> another (...). *When* they were agreed together and their
> council was about to break up, they gave the bishop of
> Soissons the charge of saying the word. *When* they had
> separated, all those of the host assembled to hear and to
> learn whom they would name emperor. *When* they were
> thus assembled, they were all very quiet.][18]

Significantly, the word 'quant' ('when') is one of the main pillars of
the chronological linearity of the chronicles.

Thirdly, it is important to note the progressive divisibility of
Gothic architecture. It is again Erwin Panofsky who points out that,
during the High Gothic period,

> supports were divided and subdivided into main piers,
> major shafts, minor shafts, and still minor shafts; the
> tracery of windows, triforia, and blind arcades into
> primary, secondary, and tertiary mullions and profiles;
> ribs and arches into a series of moldings.[19]

The macrocosm of the cathedral is thus echoed in the microcosm of
the elements making up the cathedral. One only needs to look at the
naves of the cathedrals of Saint-Denis or Amiens to notice how the

pillars of the cathedral are divided, in the upper part of the nave, into lesser pillars, which support the windows or a second storey. And when the lesser pillars of the upper level support the windows, we also notice that the windows themselves are subdivided into smaller windows, thus creating an effect of *mise en abyme* (at Saint-Denis, for instance). The reader may have noticed in the chronicles, that the long sentences which are made up by shorter ones – yet with the same incipit – reveal the same aspect of Gothic aesthetics, which is the progressive divisibility of a single expressive unit:

> *Quant* il furent départi, si s'assamblerent tout cil de l'ost pour oïr et pour escouter qui on nommeroit à empereeur ; *quant* il furent assamblé, si furent tout coi.
>
> (Clari, XCV)
>
> [*When* they had separated, all those of the host assembled to hear and to learn whom they would name emperor. *When* they were thus assembled, they were all very quiet.]

Lastly, Gothic architecture displays – exactly as the style of the chronicles – a homogeneous texture. Homogeneity seems to be the result of repetition and progressive divisibility combined. Repetition, occurring both at the macro- and the micro-level, creates the impression of a continuum of the text, whether literary or architectural. Of course, the chronicles of the fourth crusade are not cathedrals, just as cathedrals are not chronicles. Nevertheless, one could hardly fail to notice structural similarities between Gothic architecture and the Constantinople chronicles. Moreover, the similarities do not stop there.

The logic of the text

As we have seen, the chronicles are remarkable for their extremely rigorous – albeit at times monotonous – style. Monotony, however, only confirms the sense of homogeneity. This sense of order is

conveyed, first and foremost, by the chronological meticulousness
of the narrative. Yet it is also conveyed by the stereotyped
connections between clauses (within the sentence) and sentences
(within paragraphs). When reading the chronicles, one senses that
the stereotyped link-words connect the events in a logical
cause-and-effect chain:

> *si* commenchierent a dire l'uns a l'autre : «chist est
> vaillans et hardis, quant si grand hardement prist a faire.»
> *Tant que* li Griu disent entr'aus: «Faisons le bien! faisons
> de chest vaslet empereur! » *Tant qu*'il s'i acorderent tout
> entr'aus.   (Clari, XXII)
> [*And* when they were all assembled there, they began to
> say to one another: "He is valiant and brave, since he
> dared to do this great hardihood." *Finally* the Greeks said
> among them: "Let us do the right thing. Let us make this
> youth the emperor." *And in the end* they were all of one
> accord.] [20]

In the extract quoted above, the connection between sentences is
created through the mere juxtaposition of clauses and sentences.
But this kind of logical sequence can also be created by what Gérard
Jacquin calls connection by repetition,[21] which consists in repeating
within a sentence one or several words that appeared in the previous
clause or sentence:

> Quant li chevaliers furent issu hors des uissiers, si
> accueillient à *chacier* ces Grieus, si les *chacierent* jusques
> à un *pont* qui pres estoit du chief de la cité; de sur ce *pont*
> avoit une porte ou par ens li Grieu passerent et s'enfuirent
> en Constantinople. Quant il furent revenu de *chacier* ces
> Grieus, si parlerent ensemble; tant que li Venicien disent
> que leur vaissel n'estoient mie à seür, s'il n'estoient en

port; si prisent conseil qu'il les mestroient en *port*.

<div align="right">(Clari, XLIII)</div>

[When the knights were come forth from the transports, they began to give *chase* to the Greeks, and they *chased* them as far as a *bridge* which was near the head of the city. On this *bridge* there was a gate through which the Greeks passed in their flight to Constantinople. When the knights were returned from *chasing* the Greeks, they all talked together until the Venetians said that their vessels would not be in safety unless they were in the *harbor*, so they decided to put them in the *harbor*.][22]

Thus, through juxtaposition and repetition, the linear sentence becomes a long linear logical sequence. And much like the straight line in Gothic architecture, the linear logical sequence is characterised by repetition and subdivision. Paragraph CVII of Villehardouin's chronicle repeatedly makes use of the word 'et' ('and'), gradually dividing the sentences beginning with 'et' into smaller units beginning with 'et' as well:

Et lors pristrent un message cil qui furent a Nichomie au mostier Sainte-Sophie retorné (…), *et* l'envoièrent batant en Constantinople à l'empereor Henri ; *et* li mandèrent qu'ensi ere avenu, que pris ere li seneschaus et sa gens, *et* il estoient assis au mostier Sainte Sophie à Nichomie, *et* n'avoient mie viande à plus de cinq jors ; *et* seust de voir que se il nes secoroit, que il estoient mort et pris.

[*(And)* Then did those who had returned to the church of St Sophia in Nicomedia (…), take a messenger, *and* send him flying to Constantinople, to the Emperor Henry; *and* they told the emperor what had befallen, how the seneschal had been taken with his men; *(and)* how they themselves were besieged in the church of St Sophia, in

Nicomedia, *and* how they had food for no more than five days; *and* they told him he must know of a certainty that if he did not succour them they must be killed or taken.][23]

It is also worth mentioning that the chroniclers make abundant use of the words 'si' ('thus') and 'ensi' ('thus'), which enhance the sense of logical narration.

One must however acknowledge some incoherent, contradictory and, up to a point, illogical aspects of the chronicles. If the text seems extremely logical at the micro level, the macro level of the narrative is far more complex. In Villehardouin's chronicle in particular, there is a clear gap between the first part of the chronicle (which narrates the events that took place before the assault on Constantinople, when the crusaders were still united) and the second part. The tone of the first part is triumphant, while in the second part one senses an unexpressed pessimism in Villehardouin's voice, as the spoils of war divide the crusaders after the conquest of Constantinople, and the narrative itself seems to be falling apart.

The unity of the crusaders seems to matter less for Robert de Clari, who adopted the point of view of the poorer soldiers (*menuz genz*), and even less for Valenciennes, whose chronicle is a sequel to Villehardouin's. However, for Geoffrey de Villehardouin – the military commander *and* the writer – the unity of the crusaders *and* of the narrative is a crucial issue. Gérard Jacquin is certainly right when he asserts that 'after Villehardouin's diplomatic and military endeavours, writing is for him the only way to find a sense of coherence.'[24] But it seems that his chronicle is unable to restore coherence entirely. After the desertion of a part of the army in the first part of the chronicle, Villehardouin had found it useful to minimise the impact of this setback. The tone of chronicle is still triumphant and Villehardouin felt confident that the 'traitors' would eventually be punished. And yet, after the arrival in Constantinople

or, to be more precise, after the crowning of Baldwin of Flanders as emperor, the army of the crusaders is falling apart. Most barons are fighting over the booty, while a few crusaders strive to mobilise the rest of the army against the Bulgarians and the Wallachians. The narrative, much like the crusading army, spreads itself thin, as Villehardouin is struggling to keep track of simultaneous events.

Robert de Clari was able to write long digressions on the marvels of Constantinople not only because those descriptions interested the readers, but also because the dispersion of the main plot allowed him, from a narrative viewpoint, to introduce anecdotes in his story. As for Geoffrey de Villehardouin, one can notice that after the last paragraph of chapter LXVII, where he states that 'ors comenca l'on les terres a departir' ('that is when [the crusaders] started dividing the conquered territories among themselves'), the expressions that constitute transitions from one episode to another multiply considerably:

> *En cel termine*, si avint que l'empereres Morchufles, qui avoit les oeils traiz (cil qui avoit meurtri son seignor l'empereor Alexi, le fil l'empereor Isaac, celui que li pelerin avoient amené en la terre), s'enfuioit outre le Braz coiement et à peu de gent. (LXVIII)
>
> [*In those days* it happened that the Emperor Mourzuphles, whose eyes had been put out – the same who had murdered his lord, the Emperor Isaac's son, the Emperor Alexis, whom the pilgrims had brought with them to that land – it happened, I say, that the Emperor Mourzuphles fled privily, and with but few people, and took refuge beyond the straits.][25]

> *En icel termine*, ravint autresi que li marquis Bonifaces de Monferrat, qui ere vers Salonique, prist l'empereor Alexi (qui ere cil qui avoit a l'empereor Isaac traiz les yeux), et

l'empereris sa fame avec.

[It came to pass, *at this time* also, that the Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, who was near Salonika, took prisoner the Emperor Alexius – the same who had put out the eyes of the Emperor Isaac – and the empress his wife with him.][26]

The abrupt end of Villehardouin's account is caused not only by the death of Boniface de Montferrat, a very close friend of his, but also by a narrative dead end. The marshal of Champagne seems at a loss for a common denominator – one that could help him to recover the narrative unity of the first part – of all these parallel actions. Be that as it may, this yearning for logic in the chronicles of ·the fourth crusade points to a general tendency in Gothic culture towards analytic dissection and, where possible, synthetic recombination of knowledge.

The logic of scholasticism

Scholasticism represents a permanent attempt (a *queste*, as medieval literature puts it) to reconcile faith with reason. A few decades after Villehardouin, Thomas Aquinas stated in his *Summa Theologica* – which actually reflects philosophical issues that had obsessed scholasticism since the twelfth century – that faith needed a rational language in order to explain itself:

> Sacred doctrine makes use of human reason, not to prove faith but to make clear (*manifestare*) whatever else is set forth in this doctrine.[27]

Even though reason is not capable, according to Aquinas, to prove faith, the attempt to elucidate the nature of faith will help reason

elucidate (*manifestare*) itself as well. Thus, what seemed to be a clash between faith and reason is actually a beneficial relationship for both of them. Thomas Aquinas's idea of *manifestatio* also implies that both reason and faith need to further develop the linguistic tools they use in order to better explain themselves. According to Erwin Panofsky,

> this could be done only by a scheme of *literary presentation* [our emphasis] that would elucidate the very processes of reasoning to the reader's imagination just as reasoning was supposed to elucidate the very nature of faith to his intellect. Hence the much derided schematism of formalism of Scholastic writing which reached its climax in the classic *Summa* with its three requirements of (1) totality (sufficient enumeration), (2) arrangement according to a system of homologous parts, and parts of parts (sufficient articulation), and (3) distinctness and deductive cogency (sufficient interrelation) which is enhanced by the literary equivalent of Thomas Aquinas's *similitudines*: suggestive terminology, *parallelismus membrorum* and rhyme.[28]

Thus, Villehardouin, Clari and Valenciennes' obsession for clarity is not an isolated phenomenon, for the 'postulate of clarification for clarification's sake' is, according to Panofsky, the defining hallmark of the Gothic-scholastic era.[29] The long sentences of the chronicles, with their sequences of shorter clauses, the numerous time indications, and the long lists of crusaders, correspond to the scholastic *principle of sufficient enumeration*; architecturally, they correspond to the straight line. Similarly, the clauses making up long sentences are, to a point, literary equivalents of the philosophical syllogisms. The abundant use of grammatical connectors in the chronicles ('et', 'si', 'quand') correspond to the

principle of sufficient articulation in Scholasticism. In this respect, Panofsky brings in another interesting piece of information on the structure of scholastic treatises:

> We take it for granted that major works of scholarship, especially systems of philosophy and doctoral theses, are organized according to a scheme of division and subdivision, condensable into a table of contents or synopsis, where all parts denoted by numbers or letters of the same class are on the same logical level; so that the same relation of subordination obtains between, say, sub-section (a), section (1), chapter (I) and book (A) as does between, say, sub-section (b), section (5), chapter (IV) and book (C). However, this kind of systematic articulation was quite unknown until the advent of Scholasticism.[30]

The chronicles do not use the system of subdivision into numbered sections, sub-sections, chapters and books, yet the same system of text sub-division is there, as the grammatical connectors work much like the numbers and letters that Scholasticism uses to divide its works of scholarship.

Thus, although the *modus essendi* of literary and philosophical texts remain very distinct, it is nonetheless obvious that the chronicles of the fourth crusade and the philosophical works of Abelard, Albert the Great, Alexander of Hale, Saint Bonaventura and Thomas Aquinas have a fairly similar *modus operandi*. There is a sense of Scholasticism even in Villehardouin and Clari's failure to achieve a final synthesis between the two parts of their stories. One of the distinctive features of Scholasticism were the *disputationes de quolibet*, the public philosophical duels. The *disputationes* began by the presentation of a personal point of view – the *videtur quod* – supported by quotations from various *auctores*. The reply to the first

thesis came in the *sed contra*, i.e. the antithesis. The philosophical works of scholasticism integrated such public debates in their deep structure and, in this respect, Hegel's famous triad (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) or the famous French dissertations 'en trois parties' are all heirs of medieval scholasticism.

If we take as parallel the title of Abelard's famous *Sic et Non*, it is possible to equate the first part of the chronicles to a *sic*, the thesis of the unwavering unity of the crusaders and of the narrative. But the desertion of a part of the army unobtrusively brings in the *non*, which will manifest itself fully in the second part. Unlike Scholasticism, however, Villehardouin and Clari do not achieve a real synthesis of the *sic* and *non*. Instead, they merely bring the story to an end, which is tantamount to a scholastic *respondeo non dicendum*.

Final synthesis

This essay has considered the evidence of common denominators between the various facets of medieval culture between 1130 and 1270. What we have observed is tantamount to a Foucaldian *episteme*. Panofsky had already foreseen the outlines of the Gothic-scholastic *episteme*, although without structuring them in a system.

The Gothic-scholastic *episteme* is characterised by a series of tendencies which may be classified under four main headings:

1.   the linearity principle (chronological narrative and long sequences of sentences in the chronicles; the extended straight line in architecture; sufficient enumeration in philosophy);

2.   the repetition principle (repetition of grammatical connectors and of other words in the chronicles; parallel straight lines and structures in architecture; repetition of the main argumentative points in philosophy);

3.   the progressive divisibility principle (sub-division of

paragraphs and sentences in literature; sub-division of the Gothic cathedral; the structure of the scholastic treatises in philosophy);

4.   the synthesis principle (failed in the Constantinople chronicles, yet successful in architecture: the exterior and the interior of the cathedral; the synthesis of *sic et non* in the *respondeo dicendum* of Scholasticism).

In this essay I have confined myself to 'sufficient articulations' and 'sufficient interrelations' between three aspects (literary, architectural and philosophical) of the *episteme*. The list of the common denominators is undoubtedly far from complete, and I am confident that further research in music, medicine and painting will help create a 'sufficient enumeration' of the domains which make up the Gothic-scholastic *episteme*.

NOTES

[1] See John Harvey, *The Gothic World, 1100-1600. A Survey of Architecture and Art* (London, Batsford, 1950), p. 25.

[2] Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Roman de Troie*, E. Baumgartner and F. Vieilliard ed. (Paris, Lettres Gothiques, 1998), lines 132-135; my translation.

[3] And also, towards the end of the novel: 'Ci ferons fin, bien est *mesure*' ('Here the story comes to an end, as it is appropriate'), Benoît, *Troie*, lines 30301-2.

[4] Gérard Jacquin, *Le Style historique dans les récits français et latins de la quatrième croisade* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 1986).

[5] Other translations of 'or vous lairons chi ester' are also possible: 'Now let us speak of this no further.' Literally, 'Now we shall let you rest/stand here about.'

[6] Robert de Clari, *The Conquest of Constantinople*, Edgar Holmes McNeal ed. and trans. (New York, Columbia University Press, 1936); my emphasis.

[7] Villehardouin and Joinville, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, Sir Frank Marzials ed. and trans. (London, Dent, 1957), p. 15.

[8] Robert de Clari (I): 'Il avint, en icel temps que li papes Innocens estoit apostoles de Rome, et Philippes rois de France, – uns autres Philippes estoit qui estoit empereres d'Alemaigne, et l'Incarnation estoit de mil et deus cens et tris ans ou quatre (…)', 'It happened, in that time when Pope Innocent was pope of Rome and Philip was king of France (there was another Philip who was emperor of Germany) and [when] the year of the incarnation was one thousand and three or four…' Geoffroy de Villehardouin (I): 'Sachiez que mil et cent et quantre-vinz et dix sept anz après l'incarnation Nostre Segnor Jesu Crist, au tens Innocent, apostole de Rome, et Phelipe, roi de France, et Richart, roi d'Engleterre (…)', 'Be it known to you that eleven hundred and ninety-seven years after the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the time of Innocent Pope of Rome, and Philip King of France, and Richard King of England…'

[9] Clari (I): ' (…) que uns prestres estoit, maistres Fouques avoit à nom, qui estoit de Neuilly, une paroisse qui est en l'évesché de Paris. Cil prestres estoit mult prudons et bons clers, et aloit preschant par les teres des croix, et molt de gens le suivoient, pour ce qu'il estoit si prudons que Damedieu faisoit molt grans miracles pour lui; et molt conquist cil prestres d'avoir à porter en la sainte terre d'outremer', 'there was a priest, Master Fulk was his name, who was of Neuilly, a parish which is in the bishopric of Paris. This priest was a right worthy man and a good clerk, and he went through the land preaching the cross, and many people followed him because he was so worthy a man that God wrought great miracles for him. And the priest won much wealth to be carried to the Holy Land overseas.' Villehardouin (I) : ' (…) ot un saint home en France qui ot nom Folques de Nuilli (cil Nuillis siet entre Laigni sur Marne et Paris; et il ere prestres, et tenoit la paroisse de la ville. Et cil Folques dont je vos di comença à parler de Dieu par France et par les autres terres entor; et sachiez que Nostres Sires fist maints miracles pour lui.(…)', 'there was in France a holy man named Fulk of Neuilly – which Neuilly is between Lagni-sur-Marne and Paris – and he was a priest and held the cure of the village. And this said Fulk began to speak of God throughout Isle-of-France, and the other countries round about; and you must know that by him the Lord wrought many miracles.'

[10] Clari (I): 'Adonc fi croisiés li cuens Thiebaus de Champaigne, et Baudouins li cuens de Flandre, et Henris ses freres (…)', 'In that time Count Thibaut of Champagne was given the cross, and Baldwin, count of Flanders, and Henry his brother (…)'; Villehardouin (II): 'En la terre le conte Tibaus de Champaigne se croisa Garniers li evesques de Troies, li quans Gautiers de Briene (…). Avec le conte Loeys se croisa Gervaises del Chastel, Hervis ses fils, Johans de Virsin (…). En France se croisa Neules li

evesques de Soissons, Mahius de Monmorenci, Guis li chastelains de Couci ses niés (…)', 'In the land of Thibaut of Champagne took the cross Garnier, Bishop of Troyes, Count Walter of Brienne (…). With Count Lewis took the cross Gervais of Chatel, Hervee his son, John of Virsin (…). In the Isle-of-France took the cross Nevelon, Bishop of Soissons, Matthew of Montmorency, Guy the Castellan of Coucy, his nephew (…)'.

[11] Villehardouin, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, p. 12.

[12] Clari, *Constantinople*, ed. McNeal, p. 31.

[13] Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (London, Meridian, 1968), p. 36.

[14] Again, it is Panofsky who reminds us that music is no exception. Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, p. 39: 'music became articulated through an exact and systematic division of time (it was the Paris school of the thirteenth century that introduced the mensural notation still in use and still referred to, in England at least, by the original terms of 'breve', 'semibreve', 'minim', etc.).'

[15] The words 'ordinatio' and 'dispositio' were adopted first by scholasticism.

[16] Harvey, *The Gothic World*, p. 26.

[17] See Worringer, *Form in Gothic* (London, Putnam, 1927), p. 53: 'The antithesis between classical ornament and Northern Gothic ornament requires a more exhaustive consideration. The fundamental difference in the character of these two manifestations of art must also be demonstrated in detail. When comparing the two styles of ornament, the first point that strikes one is that Northern ornament lacks the concept of symmetry which from the beginning was so characteristic of all Classical ornament. Symmetry is replaced by repetition. It is true that repetition of a single motive plays its part in Classical ornament also: but such repetition is of an entirely different nature. In Classical ornament there is a general inclination towards repetition of the selected motive the opposite way round, as if in a mirror, thereby avoiding the appearance of endless progression produced by repetition. By repetition of this reversed kind, a feeling of serenity, of completion in the rhythm, is created; this successive arrangement gives an effect of restful addition which never mars the symmetry. By a structure of pauses, the organically guided sensibility of Classical man gave ever-recurrent accents of rest to the movement derived from repetition, a movement which threatened to pass beyond the organic measure and become mechanical. By this repetition in reverse order, demanded by the organic feeling, the hurrying, mechanical activity is, as it were, bridled. On

the other hand, in Northern ornament, the repetition does not bear this restful character of addition, but has, so to speak, a character of multiplication. The intervention of any desire for organic moderation and serenity is here lacking. A continually increasing activity without pauses or accents is set up and repetition has only the one aim of giving the particular motive a potential infinity.'

[18] Clari, *Constantinople*, ed. McNeal, p. 115; my emphasis.

[19] Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, p. 48.

[20] Clari, *Constantinople*, p. 52; my emphasis.

[21] Jacquin, *Le Style historique*, pp. 185-96.

[22] Clari, *Constantinople*, p. 69; my emphasis.

[23] Villehardouin, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, p. 129; my emphasis.

[24] Jacquin, *Le Style historique*, p. 6.

[25] Villehardouin, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, p. 80; my emphasis.

[26] Villehardouin, *Memoirs of the Crusades*, p. 81; my emphasis. And just a few lines later: « *A cel termine*, se parti Reniers de Trit de Constantinople, et s'en ala vers Finepople, que l'empereres Baudoins li avait donée. » (LXIX) ; 'At that time, Renier of Trit left Constantinople, and went towards Philippopolis, which the emperor had given him (…)'.

[27] Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa theologica*, qu. I, art. 8, ad. 2, quoted in Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, p. 29.

[28] Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, p. 31.

[29] Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, p. 35.

[30] Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture*, p. 32.