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Who was the First French Translator of *Orlando furioso*?¹

Toshinori Uetani

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Many translations are anonymous and published without any indication of their translator. Even if a translator is clearly indicated on the title page, we don't always retain his name. Usually, he will be forgotten in the shadow of the original author after several centuries or even just months or years. Only some exceptional writers are known by their works of translation: Saint Jerome for his *Vulgate Bible*, Nicolas d'Oresmes for his Aristotle, Jacques Amyot for his Plutarch. Of many others, we know nearly nothing. Moreover, the situation can be complicated by the fact that many translators use one or several pseudonyms.

The first French translation of the *Orlando furioso* of Ariosto might be one of these books. In fact, the history of the diffusion of this translation is emblematic, if somewhat paradoxical. We are better informed about the identities of two revisers, Gabriel Chappuys and François Rosset, than about that of the first "anonymous" translator. In the preface addressed to Hippolyte d'Este, archbishop of Lyons, Jean Des Gouttes mentions the translator as a third person with no indication of his identity. That's why there has been continuous confusion about the identity of its translator since the XVIth century. In the XVIIIth century, a successor of Jean-Pierre Nicéron proposed Jean Martin.

In spite of its important influences on the Pléiade poets and its repeated publications until the XVIIth century, this translation has been criticized by those who republished it often with only a few "corrections". When François Rosset published the same translation in 1615 after Gabriel Chappuys' re-editions, he noticed more than two thousand errors in his predecessor's version. In the XXth century, Cioranescu, author of an important summary on the reception of Ariosto in France, was no less severe. He described the translator as a bad writer whose Italian was very poor.

Within the last decade, a few scholars have helped to revalue the text's literary merits. Nonetheless, their recent hypotheses about the identity of its translator are imaginary rather

¹ Text pronounced in April 2008, revised in September 2017 only for page layout, spellings and correction of one publication data on page 2.

than documented. Consequently, we have today several hypotheses about the authorship of this translation. Here is a summary of the different attributions:

1.	Jean de Nostredame	(1575)	Jean Des Gouttes
2.	La Croix Du Maine	(1584)	Jean Martin, Jean Des Gouttes, Jacques Vincent
3.	Antoine Du Verdier.	(1585)	Jean Des Gouttes
4.	Phlibert de Marechal	(1598)	Jean Martin, Jean Des Gouttes
5.	Nicéron	(1741)	Jean Martin
6.	L'abbé Goujet	(1744)	Jean Des Gouttes
7.	A. Cioranesco	(1939)	Jean Martin, Jean Des Gouttes, Jacques Vincent ?
8.	M.-M. Fontaine / R. Gorris	(1999)	Jean Martin and his workshop
9.	J. Balsamo	(1992 et 1999)	Jacques Vincent?
10.	M. Huchon	(1999)	Denis Sauvage?

In this confusion, I asked myself if an internal analysis of the text and a study of its relationship with the Italian original, paying close attention to habits and mannerism of translation, might shed light on the question. Then, a comparison of its linguistic profile with that of hypothetical translators should allow us to re-examine the contemporary bibliographical data and to draw a reasonable conclusion.

Therefore, in this paper I'd like to present to you:

1. First, some bibliographical data concerning the first Lyons edition;
2. Secondly, a brief microscopic analysis of the linguistic characteristics of the first *Roland furieux* in French, accompanied by a comparison of its linguistic profile with those of its two major proposed translators, Jean Martin and Jean Des Gouttes;
3. Thirdly, an examination of the original bibliographical data as evaluated in the XVIIIth century by two bibliographers, in order to clarify the origin of the confusion and re-evaluate the XVIth century bibliographical notices;
4. Finally, I'd like to draw a conclusion on this question of authorship. My conclusion will appear "old fashioned" rather than surprising, but I hope it will seem reasonable. Moreover, a close comparison of two versions of *Roland furieux* enables us to consider the relationships between the translation in French and the narrative genre of the chivalric novel.

This first French translation of *Orlando furioso* was printed in 1544. Here is the title page of its first edition.

D'amour fureur. Roland Furieux. Composé premierement en ryme Thuscane par messire Loys Arioste, noble Ferraroy, & maintenant traduit en prose Françoyse : partie suyvant la phrase de l'Autheur, partie aussi le stile de ceste nostre langue. – A Lyon : Chez Sulpice Sabon, pour Jehan Thellusson, 1544.²

Translation³

Orlando furioso. Composed firstly in Italian verse by Messire Luigi Ariosto, noble man of Ferrara, and now translated into French Prose: partly according to the author's « phrase », also partly (according to) the « style » of our language...

Here, the name of the author, Ariosto, is clearly mentioned, but not that of the translator. The signification of this title seems very clear at first glance, but it contains in its last part a surprising expression: “traduit en prose Françoyse: partie suyvant la phrase de l'Autheur, partie aussi le stile de ceste nostre langue (partly according to the author's « phrase », also partly (according to) the ‘style’ of our language)”. What does this mean? Is it in French? Is it in Italian? As we will see, this declaration expresses the salient characteristic of the language of this translation. Just after the title, you read an octave entitled “Au lecteur” To the reader”, a sort of advertisement:

AV LECTEUR
*Si d'Amadis la tresplaisante histoire
Vers les Francoys à eu nouvellement
Tant de faveur, de credit, & de gloire
Parce qu'elle est traduite doctement.
Le Furieux, qui dit si proprement
D'Armes, d'Amours, & de ses passions
Surpassera, en ce totalement
Avilissant toutes traductions.*

In this octave, we can clearly discern the aspirations of the producers of this publication to overcome the enormous success of another translation, this one from Spanish by Nicolas Herberay Des Essars, *Amadis de Gaule*, of which the first book was published in 1540 in Paris. This amounts to a declaration of rivalry between this Lyons' edition of *Roland furieux* and the Parisian bestseller *Amadis de Gaule*.

The book was printed by a printer named Sulpice Sabon, who also printed the *Delie* of Maurice Scève for the bookseller Antoine Constantin the same year. The privilege was given to Jehan Thellusson, a Lyons merchant, but it's worth noting that this translation of Ariosto is the only book known to be published by him. He was also related to Jean Des Gouttes, and they were from the same town, Saint-Symphorien.

² In-fol.; [5, 1 bl.], 1-244 f. (sig. *6, a-z⁶, A-R⁶, S⁴). Baudrier, *Bibliographie lyonnaise*, I, p. 422-423 ; IV, p. 314 ; Mortimer, *French Sixteenth Century Books*, n° 36, t. I, p. 47-48. Digital copy available online at *Gallica*: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k72718w.r=.langEN>

³ All English translations in this paper are mine.

In his preface dedicated to Hippolyte, Cardinal of Este, Jean Des Gouttes speaks of the translator in the third person and as a third person and pretends to report his conversation with him on the principle of translation. This could be true, or not. In any case, it will be Nicéron's main reason for assigning the authorship to Jean Martin.

Linguistic characteristics of the *Roland furieux*

The first choice clearly stated in the preface was to translate the hendecasyllabic octaves of Ariosto into prose. That gives a page layout very similar aspect to that of the novels of chivalry then in vogue. On this point there is hardly any difference between the French versions of *Amadis de Gaule* and *Roland furieux*. The translator explains his decision by the lack of time:

qu'il ne doubtoit point que l'Arioste tourné en prose francoyse ne perdist beaucoup de sa nayfueté : & pareillement qu'il ne conuint a quiconque le voudroit représenter en vers francoys, qui fussent d'aussi bon grace, & resonance, qu'il est en son original, employer a ce faire le labour de douze ou quinze ans : temps & terme de vie, que Nature (possible) ne luy concederoit :

Translation

He [the translator] didn't think that Ariosto, turned into French prose, lost much of his natural charm, [considering] also that anyone who would render him in French verses of as gracious harmony as the original would need to work for twelve or fifteen years—a span of time and of life that Nature would perhaps not accord him.

The second important point is the choice of literal translation, “word for word”. In the preface of Jean Des Gouttes, the translator mentions the reason for this:

Bien est il vray que ledict Translateur, outre la commune estimation de ceulx, qui sans faire difference de traduction a paraphrase, ne de paraphrase a glose, dient que tout fidele interprete ne rendra mot pour mot, à suyvi cest aultre Virgile presque tout de mot a mot: tant s'en fault il qu'il ayt obmis un seul traict de sa nayfve candeur.

Translation

It's indeed true that the translator in question, departing from the common view of those who, making no distinction between translation and paraphrase, nor between paraphrase and commentary, say that any faithful interpreter will not produce a word-for-word rendering, has followed that second Virgil almost word for word throughout, so far is he from omitting a single stroke of his natural spontaneity.

This declaration amounts to a critical reply to the 3rd rule recommended by Etienne Dolet in his treatise, *Maniere de bien traduire d'une langue en aultre*, published in Lyon in 1540:

[...] il ne se fault pas asservir jusques à la, que l'[']on *rende mot pour mot*. Et si aulcun le faict, cela luy procede de pauvreté, & deffault d'esprit. Car s'il a les qualités dessusdictes [a good understanding of the sense and the matter of the author and a good knowledge of two tongues of the original and the translation] (lesquelles il est besoing estre en ung bon traducteur) sans avoir esgard à l'ordre des mots il s'arrestera aux sentences, & fera en sorte, que l'intention de l'auteur sera exprimée, gardant curieusement la propreté de l'une, & l'aultre langue.

“Don't be so slavish to render word for word”. Against Dolet who discourages the translator from translating each word from the beginning of the sentence, and instead advocates

respecting the proper characteristics of the target tongue, the translator of *Roland furieux* pleads for the translation “word for word”. What is interesting for us is the practical realization of this principle by the author in his own work of translation. Indeed, the first French *Roland furieux* is very close to the original text: there are few omissions or additions. Moreover, the translation follows often very exactly the Italian syntax of the original.

Orlando furioso, III, 1

<i>Chi mi darà la voce e le parole convenienti a sí nobil soggetto ? chi l'ale al verso presterà, che vole tanto ch'arrivi all'<u>alto</u> mio concetto?</i>	Qui me donra la voix, & les parolles convenantes a si noble subject ? Qui a mes vers pretera les aesles, affin qu'ilz volent tellement, qu'ilz puissent parvenir a mon concept?
--	---

This literalism is systematic enough that we can nearly establish a correspondence between Italian words and French ones: often an Italian word is rendered by a word of which just the terminal letter is changed.

– acut also “aigu”	← <i>acuto</i>
– concent also “accordz”	← <i>concento</i>
– copie also “grand multitude”	← <i>copia</i>
– insanie	← <i>insania</i>
– proterve also “maling”	← <i>protervo</i>

Most of these words traced from Italian (here in red) have not been adapted in French, but you can observe here that these Italian words are sometimes translated by some other words more popular in French, too. The same observation can be made in the case of several adverbial expressions. In *Roland furieux*, these expressions are always translated by their exact French equivalent⁴.

Canto X, 19

<i>Il falso amante ; che i pensati inganni Veggiar facean ; come dormir lei sente ; Pian piano esce del letto, e de suoi panni Fatto un fastel, non si veste altrimenti; E lascia il padiglione [...].</i>	Le faulx Amant, que les pensées tromperies faisoient veiller, comme il la sentit dormir, plan plan sort du lict, et de ses drapz fait un faix, et sans se vestir aultrement laisse le Pavillon, [...].
--	--

The example of “piano piano” rendered by “plan plan” appears to us almost absurd, but the Italian word “piano” signifies “doucement (slowly)”, as well as “plan = étage (floor)”. Moreover these expressions will be very often used by Pléiade poets -- even “plan plan”.

Among these examples of dependence on Italian words or groups of words, the function words, like conjunctions or certain adverbs, give us the most interesting practice: we

⁴ Dans les expressions répétitives comme « *alhora alhora* / a l’heure a l’heure » ; « *piano piano* / *piano piano* » ; « *ad uno ad uno* / un a un »...

notice the nearly automatic translation of an Italian word by a French word or group of words, but in several ways.

• <i>forse</i>	→	possible
<i>forse</i>	→	peut estre
<i>forse</i>	→	d'aventure
• <i>prima che</i>	→	premier que
<i>prima che</i>	→	devant que
<i>prima che</i>	→	avant que
• <i>intanto</i>	→	entant
<i>intanto</i>	→	cependant

The Italian adverb “*forse*” is translated sometimes by “possible”, sometimes by “peut estre” or d’aventure”; another adverb “*intanto*” by “entant” and “cependant”. The use of this last form “entant” in the temporal sense of simultaneity is uncommon, and we don’t know any other example. We can see the intentional efforts of the translator to create a new French word that sounds as Italian as possible.

Sometimes, these “Italianized French words (français italianisés)” are used in close proximity to the properly French words. The following passage from the XVIIIth Canto gives an example of such a curious mixture:

“prima che”, in Canto XVIII, 2
e sempre, prima che dannar la gente,
vederla in faccia, e udir la ragion ch'usa;
differir anco e giorni e mesi et anni,
prima che giudicar negli altrui danni.

Et tousiours **premier que** condamner, veoir les gens en face, & ouyr leur raison : voyre differer plusieurs jours, moys, & ans, **devant que** juger au dommaige d'aultruy. (fol. 81 r°)

Here is another passage, where the adverb “*forse*” is repeated within a single octave:

“forse”, in Canto VI, 53

che **forse**, come è differente il viso,
 è differente ancor l'ingegno e l'arte.
 Tu saprai **forse** riparare al danno,
 quel che saputo mill'altri non hanno. -

car **possible** comme est different le visaige, sont encores differentz l'engin, & l'art. Parquoy tu scauras, **peult estre**, remedier au dommaige, ce que mille aultres n'ont sceu faire. (fol. 23 v°)

These co-occurrences of two different kinds of translation don’t seem to be either simple automatism or pure coincidence.

Roland furieux [...] maintenant traduit en prose Françoisse: **partie** *suyuant la phrase de l'Autheur,* **partie** aussi *le stile de ceste nostre langue.*

It is a result of an intentional writing. Now, after examination of these examples, we understand better the signification of the mysterious expression of the title page: « partly according to the author’s phrase, also partly (according to) the style of our language ».

The juxtaposition of “two styles” must be an experimental effort by the translator to “enrich the French with these copious Italian expressions”. For the translator, this intercourse must be in two directions:

[...] que sans s'appercevoir de la ryme en lisant, le Thuscan ne pourra ignorer nostre langue, comme le lecteur Francoys pourra aussi enrichir (ou il est indigent) son parler de ceste copieuse phrase Thuscane.

He supposes the possibility of a single text, a French translation in this case, that could be understood by Italian as well as French readers. Thus, the first French translation of *Orlando furioso* is one of those daring attempts to create a narrative language in the France of the Renaissance. In spite of some experimental aspects of the language, many passages of this translation recreate a rhythmical narration that marries very well with its chivalric plot.

Comparisons

Now, I'd like to examine two important hypotheses of attribution by comparing the linguistic characteristics of authenticated texts of the two authors with that of *Roland furieux*. I will focus principally on translation habits: how do translators render a word of the Italian original by an ordinary French word? Words of this kind would be supplied without any use of a dictionary, without any research into the sense or any interpretation of the deeper sense of the text.

1. Jean Martin

Jean Martin was born in Paris around 1507; he died before or during 1553. After his studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris, he served as secretary to Maximilien Sforza, former duke of Milan and Robert II de Lenoncourt, bishop of Chalôns-sur-Marne. It was in the year 1540's that he published many important translations in French from Italian and Latin -- Sannazar's *Arcadia*, Bembo's *Gli Asolani*, Vitruve's *De architectura* -- revised the *Songe de Poliphile*. From the late 1540's on, young poets of the Pléiade, including Ronsard and Du Bellay, dedicated several poems to him.

In 1544, the year of the publication of *Roland furieux* in Lyons, Jean Martin published in Paris the translation of Iacopo Sannazaro's *Arcadia*: *Arcadie de messire Jaques Sannazar*.⁵ The writing in this first modern classic of pastoral literature is experimental in many respects. The structure of *Arcadia* is based on the alternation of prose and verse. In his translation, Martin respects this structure and translates Italian prose in prose and verse in verse. His attitude in translating is flexible. Sometimes he respects the Italian syntax of the original and recreates rhythmic prose in French:

⁵ A Paris : par Michel de Vascosan, pour luy et Gilles Corrozet, 1544. Digital copy available on *Gallica* : <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k110564j.r=.langEN>

Arcadia, Prose, III, 1

Gia si tacevano i duo pastori, dal cantare expediti : quando tutti, da sedere levati, lasciando Uranio quivi con duo compagni, ne ponemmo a seguitare le pecorelle, che [...].	Ja se taysoient les deux pasteurs ayans achevé de chanter, quand nous levez de noz sieges laissames la Uranio avec deux compagnons, et suyvismes nostre bestail, qui [...].
---	--

In the passages in verse, he adapts the Italian text and elaborates his French verses:

Arcadia, Prose, III, 1

Tien piu alto il viaggio Accio che tua sorella Piu che l'usato dorma: Et poi per la sua orma Sene vegna pian pian ciascuna stella. Che se ben ti ramenti Guardasti i bianchi armenti	Monte plus hault d'un degré: Ta seur t'en scaura bon gré, Car elle prendra repoz Plus grand, & plus a propoz. Et faiz que suyuent ses pas Les estoilles par compas: Car aussi bien que nous sommes, Bergier fuz entre les hommes
--	---

In spite of the very different sentiments we feel in reading *Roland furieux* and *Arcadie*, it is very difficult to differentiate Martin's way of translating from the method of *Roland furieux*. However, we can find several divergent points in the manner of translating functional words. For example, Martin uses never the word "possible" to translate the Italian "forse" (perhaps). He prefers French words like "peult estre" or "d'adventure". Otherwise, Martin renders different words in Italian, such as "innamorato", "amoroso" or "amante", by the same French word "amoureux", when, in *Roland furieux*, these Italian words have their French equivalent, "enamouré", "amoureux" or "amant".

<i>Roland furieux</i>	<i>Arcadie</i>
• <i>Forse</i> → possible, peult estre	• <i>Forse</i> → peult ester / d'adventure – Never "possible"
• <i>innamorato</i> → enamouré	• <i>innamorato</i> → amoureux
• <i>amoroso</i> → amoureux	• <i>amoroso</i> → amoureux
• <i>amante</i> → amant / amy	• <i>amante</i> → amoureux / amy
• <i>Intanto</i> → entant / cependant	No occurrence of " <i>Intanto</i> "

As for the conjunction "prima che", in his *Arcadie*, Martin almost always translates it by "avant que", and only once by "premier que".

<i>Roland furieux</i> ⁶	<i>Arcadie</i> ⁷
• premier que : 79	• premier que : 1
• avant que : 20	• avant que : 16
• devant que : 26	• devant que : 1

These lexical habits in French and his stricter respect for French syntax distinguish him from the anonymous translator of *Roland furieux*.

⁶ Transcription of the first 27 Canti + some fragments: 991558 characters.

⁷ Entire transcription (257430 characters).

2. Jean Des Gouttes

Jean Des Gouttes was born in 1509 at Saint-Symphorien-le-Châtel near Lyons. In 1525, he probably began his studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Paris. Later, he is known to have been “receveur des dimes” at the Church of Lyons. He wrote several Latin verses for the publications of Benoît de Court and Etienne Dolet. As for the translations, Antoine Du Verdier describes an edition of his translation of a dialog of Lucian published in 1537 -- unfortunately lost, but we have several copies of his novel, *Le Premier livre de la belle et plaisante histoier de Philandre, surnommé le Gentilhomme, Prince de Marseille : Et de Passerose, fille du Roy de Naples*⁸, a pretty in-octavo printed by Jean de Tournes in 1544, the year of the publication of *Roland furieux*.

This chivalric novel relates, with many secondary episodes and digressions, the adventures of Philandre, the son of the king of Marseille who, in order to cure his “melancholy”, decided to go conquer the heart of the princess Passerose of Naples. Jean Des Gouttes presents this novel as an original work, but Sergio Cappello has revealed in it an important passage translated from an Italian chivalric poem, *Mambriano*, written by Francesco Cieco da Ferrara.

At the end of the Chapter 17, Philandre’s friend, confidant and accomplice Sclarion begins to tell his lover Camille a story of an old emperor Pinnamont, who wanted to marry a young woman knight Bradamant, who is also in *Orlando furioso*. The story of Pinnamont constitutes the content of the following chapter 18. In fact, this chapter is almost entirely borrowed from the Canto 15 of *Mambriano*, which Des Gouttes translates.

In translating hendecasyllabic octave, Jean Des Gouttes uses prose, like the “anonymous” translator in his *Roland furieux*. As it’s his “original” novel, Jean Des Gouttes translates the Italian text with more liberty as regards syntax as well as vocabulary. He also amplifies some description. However, the translation of some words reveals the same sensibility as that of the translator of *Roland furieux*. “*Insania*” becomes “insanie”; “forse”, moreover, is often translated by “possible”. At the same time, the use of some archaic words, like “illec”, or of the expression “a tant” in the temporary sense of “sur ce” or “alors”, is common to the genre of the chivalric novel.

What is remarkable for us is the small phrases containing a temporal indication that Des Gouttes often adds at the beginning of an octave.

⁸ A Lyon : par Jean de Tournes, 1544. 8°. Alfred Cartier, *Bibliographie des éditions des De Tournes imprimeurs lyonnais*, Paris, 1937 (réimpression Genève : Slatkine, 1970), n° 18.

Mambriano, XV, 32

	A tant il se meit en voye : & arrivez qui furent les Ambassadeurs,
<i>Tornato a Mambrian, lo avvisò corne La tregua era firmata e stabilita Per venti di con Rinaldo a suo nome,</i>	Mambrian fut adverty par eulx comme la trefve avoit esté accordee et establee pour vingt jours.

Mambriano, XV, 28

	A tant se taisoit l'amoureux Pinamont :
<i>Tanto avea grato il ragioner con lei, Che, senza mangiar, stato egli sarebbe Più intento [...]</i>	auquel tant estoit agreable la presence de sa Dame, & de louyr deviser, qu'il fust demeuré content un siecle entier avec elle sans manger :

Even in other passages of the novel, where he is probably composing an original text, he uses the same construction:

A tant se teut le jeune Prince Philandre : & se levant, essuye les plainctes de ses yeux, à fin que aucun ne se prinst garde qu'il y eust en son cueur aucune playe amoureuse. (p. 16)

A tant finerent les propos de la Pucelle de Naples, & de Madame Camile de Gennes, pourtant qu'elles se trouverent estre arrivees au Palays : [...] (p. 111)

We can find this kind of banal construction in other authors, such as Rabelais or Marot. In *Roland furieux*, the translator often uses it, for example, in translating an adverb like “*così*”:

VIII, 25

<i>Così mandò per tutta la sua terra suoi tesorieri a far cavalli e gente;</i>	A tant le Roy envoya par toute sa terre ses thresoriers ⁹ pour faire chevaulx, & gens.
--	---

Or he adds just “a tant” in order to mark the temporality and arrange the rhythmic balance of the phrase:

LXVI, 69

<i>Gli imbasciatori bulgari che in corte di Carlo eran venuti, come ho detto, con speme di trovare il guerrier forte del liocorno, al regno loro eletto;</i>	A tant les Embassadeurs des Bulgariens, qui estoient venuz en la court de Charles (comme i'ay dict) avec esperance de trouver le puissant Cheuallier a la Lycorne esleu en leur Royaulme,
--	---

But also he may slip in a short passage:

Orlando furioso, XXV, 21

Per ben saperne il certo, accortamente Ruggier le disse:	A tant Rogier douteux en ce qu'il pense pour bien en scauir la verité, luy dist expressement :
---	--

Orlando furioso XXII, 42

<i>Bradamante ode, e par ch'assai le prema questa novella, e molto il cor l'annoï ;</i>	A tant se teut la Damoyselle : & Bradamant qui l'avoit escoutée, semble que ceste nouvelle la fasche asses, & luy ennuye grandement le cueur :
---	--

⁹ Corr. tbesoriers

This manner of managing the narration by using adverbial formulas seems to be very familiar to the translator of *Roland furieux*, as well as to Jean Des Gouttes. In fact, it is Jean Des Gouttes himself who explains it in the preface to *Roland furieux*:

Et [ledict Translateur] n'y à adjousté seulement que quelque particularité de vocables **pour lyer les coupletz ou huictains** : qui par licence poëtique aulcunesfoys desjoignent ou reiterent une mesme sentence¹⁰.

The translator added only some particular words in order to joint verses and octaves. In any case, we note here that these two texts present very similar habits of translating and of arranging the narration. By the way, in the same preface, Des Gouttes expresses the predilection of the translator for chivalric novels:

[...] [le translateur] congnoissoit aussi que telles histoires (mesmes en nostre langaige) ont je ne scay quoy plus de gracieux. Et que ainsi soit, tesmoings en sont maintz Poëtes Provensaulx, & Picquardz, qui a cause de leur peu de grace, & rudesse de vers n'ont peu durer jusques a ce present Siecle plus heureux, ayant toutes langues, soient grammaticalles ou vulgaires, tousjours esté corrompues par la necessiteuse contraincte, ou trop grande liberté de Poësie¹¹.

Thus a reading of his own novel, *Philandre et Passerose*, leads me to believe that this profile of the translator of *Roland furieux* exactly matches that of Jean Des Gouttes himself. Moreover, he confesses his desire to publish his own work and not a translation of the other's writings:

Et quant a luy, pour ce que communement tous Traducteurs sont comparez aux blanchisseurs de murailles, ou laveurs de tableaux : qui se veulent acquerir nom pour illustrer le labeur d'aultruy : il voudroit reserver a sa louenge, ce peu de felicité de nature qu'il à en soy, a traicter & deduyre sujet : auquel s'il n'estoit si heureux que le divin Arioste à esté au sien, au moins il le feroit estre tel, qu'il ne seroit veu emprunté d'ailleurs, que de son naturel & acquis¹².

The novel *Philandre et Passerose* -- isn't it a fulfillment of his wish?

Bibliographical data and conclusion

After this brief exercise in close reading of these three texts, I propose to examine the contemporary bibliographic notices.

At the end of the XVIth century, the first bibliographies of French vernacular writers were published in Paris and Lyons. The *Bibliothèques françoises* by François Gruget, sieur de La Croix du Maine, and another *Bibliothèques françoises* by Antoine Du Verdier are the essential sources of the history of French vernacular literature of that time.

In his *Bibliothèque françoise*, published in Paris, in 1584, La Croix du Maine in at least three notices records *Roland furieux*.

¹⁰ Jean Des Gouttes, « A Reverendissime Seingeur Monseigneur Hippolyte de Este », in *Roland furieux*, f. *2.

¹¹ Jean Des Gouttes, *Ibid.*

¹² Jean Des Gouttes, *Ibid.*

JEAN DES GOUTES, Lyonnais

« Il a traduit d'Italien en François, les *Ceuvres* d'Arioste tant estimé en Italie » (p. 231)

JEAN MARTIN

« Il a traduit d'Italien en François le *Roland furieux*, imprimé » (p. 242).

JAQUES VINCENT

« Il a traduit d'Italien en François *l'histoire de Roland Furieux* ». (p. 197)

In three articles he repeats nearly the same thing: “Jean Des Gouttes, Jean Martin or Jacques Vincent translated *Orlando furioso*, or the Works of Ariosto, from Italian in French”. It's worth noting that no bibliographical details are given in any of these articles. On the other hand, the description by Du Verdier of the first translation of *Orlando furioso* is much more precise:

« JEAN DES GOUTES

a traduit en prose Française, *Roland Furieux*, escrit premierement en Tuscan par Chants & Stanzas. Auteur Loys Arioste gentilhomme Ferrarois. [imp. à Lyon f° par Jean Thelusson 1543. & Sulpice Sabon, & depuis à Paris 8°. par Claude Gautier & encore à Lyon 8°. par Barthelemy Honorat 1582.

La belle & plaisante Histoire de Philandre surnommé le Gentil'homme, Prince de Marseille & de Passeroze fille du Roy de Naples. [impri. à Lyon 8°. par Jean de Tournes 1544.

Lucian, de ceux qui servent à gaiges és maisons des gros seigneurs & bourgeois. Avec une Oraison dudit Lucian, contre la calumnie. [impri. à Lyon 16°. par François Juste 1537. »

(p. 709)

All the information about the three editions described here is correct. On the other hand, Du Verdier doesn't mention the translation of *Orlando furioso* in the article on “Jean Martin”, or in that on Jacques Vincent. For Du Verdier, as for Jean de Nostredames, the author of the preface was also without any doubt the translator of the whole book. It was only after the questioning of Jean-Pierre Nicéron that the doubt entered literary history, in spite of Goujet's denial three years later:

D'ailleurs Jean de Nostre-Dame, ou Nostradamus qui est mort en 1575. dit clairement dans son *Proësme* ou sa préface des vies des Poètes Provençaux, page VIII. que des Gouttes a traduit l'Arioste. [...] Mais sur la foi de nos deux Bibliothécaires, la Croix du Maine & du Verdier, & sur celle de Nostradamus, laissons cette traduction à Jean des Gouttes: nous ne lui ferons pas un grand présent. Son style, non-seulement suranné, mais devenu pour nous presque barbare, ne peut lui mériter aucun lecteur¹³.

Why should we not also leave the authorship of the monumental translation of Ariosto to the author of a little novel, Jean Des Gouttes?

¹³ Claude-Pierre Goujet, *Bibliothèque française ou Histoire de la littérature française*, t. VII, Paris, 1744.

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