



The Author Hearing the Story of Gillion de Trazegnies in Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies, 1464, Lieven van Lathem, illuminator, and David Aubert, scribe. Tempera colors, gold, and ink on parchment, 15 5/16 x 11 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 111, folio 9

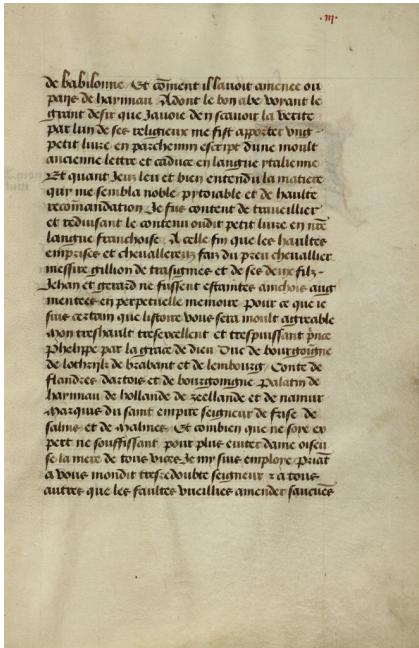
**PROLOGUE, FOLIOS 9, 9v, and 10**

**Prologue de lacteur du livre...**

[fol. 9] Comme il soit ainsi que environ a deux ans je traversoye par la conte de haynnau, en laquelle conte a par [fol. 9v] cy devant et ancoure a de present de la noble et vaillant chevallerie comme par les anciennes histoires est apparent, entre lesquelles au passer que je fis par une abbaye assez ancienne ou je veys trois tumbes haultes eslevees laquelle sappelle labbaye de lolive. Et pour ce que des ma jennesse ay este desirant et suis de scavoir les nobles et haulz fais advenuz par les vertueulz et vaillans hommes du temps passe moy estant en icelle abbaye enquis et demanday les noms de iceulx trespassez quy desoubz les trois tombes gesoient. Racompte me fut par labbe et couvent de leans que les corps des deux nobles et vaillans dames et leur mary ou mylieu delles estoit illec en sepulture. Leurs noms et surnoms me dirent lesquelz je veiz par escript alentour de leurs tombes. Et quant jeuz veu et leu lepitaffe diceulx trespassez je sceuz que le tresvaillant chevallier messire Gillion de Trasignies y gesoit en sepulture ou milieu de deux nobles et vertueuses dames en son vivant ses compaignes et espouses dont lune avoit este fille au souldan de babilonne pourquoy je ne me peuz trop esmerveillier. Adont je requis tresinstamment a labbe et couvent dillec que plus amplement me vouldissent racompter comment celluy seigneur de Trasignies avoit eu a femme la fille du souldan [fol. 10] de Babilonne et comment il lavoit amenee ou paijs de Haynnau. Adont le bon abe, voyant le grant desir que javoie den scavoir la verite, par lun de ses religieuz me fist apporter ung petit livre en parchemin escript dune moult ancienne lettre et caduce en langue ytalienne. Et quant jeuz leu et bien entendu la matiere quy me sembla noble,

**Prologue by the book's author...**

[fol. 9] As it happens, about two years ago I traveled through the county of Hainaut, where there [fol. 9v] once was and still exists a noble and valiant chivalry, as this ancient history, among others, makes manifest. I have been since my youth and remain eager to know the noble and high deeds achieved by the valorous and valiant men of lore and, since I was passing by a rather ancient abbey called Olive, where I saw three high raised tombs, I inquired at the abbey and sought out the names of the dead who lay buried in them. The abbot and those of the monastery therein told me that the bodies of two noble and courageous ladies and their husband in their midst were buried there. They told me their names and bynames, which I saw inscribed around their tomb. And having seen and read the epitaph to the dead, I learned that the most valiant knight, my lord Gillion of Trazegnies, lay buried there in the midst of two noble and virtuous ladies, who were both his companions and spouses during his lifetime, one of whom was daughter to the sultan of Egypt, which astonished me to no end. I then immediately bid the abbot and the monks to pray tell me at length how the lord of Trazegnies had had a sultan's daughter for a wife [fol. 10] and had brought her to the land of Hainaut. Seeing my great desire to know the truth, the good abbot thereupon had one of the monks bring a small book in parchment, written in Italian, in very ancient and obsolete writing. Having read and understood the matter that seemed noble,



Text page in *Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies*, 1464, David Aubert, scribe. Ink on parchment, 15 5/16 x 11 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 111, folio 10

**PROLOGUE, CONTINUED**

pytoiable et de haulte recommandation je fus content de traveillier et reduisant le contenu oudit petit livre en notre langue franchoise a icelle fin que les haultes emprises et chevallereuz faiz du preu chevallier messire Gillion de Trasignies et de ses deux fils Jehan et Gerard ne fussent estaintes ainchois augmentees en perpetuelle memoire.

**GILLION AND HIS TWO WIVES, FOLIOS 195 AND 195V**

[fol. 195] ‘Ma treschiere et bonne amie, moy estant prisonnier au souldan de Babilonne, il me fut rapporte et certiffie par ung chevallier nomme Amaury que vous esties morte denfant dont je fus tant dolant que je feis veu et serement de non jamais retourner pardecha. Et long temps apres ce je me remariay pardela a ceste noble princesse, que veoir pouez presentement, laquelle de sa grace ma plusieurs fois saulve la vie. Piecha feusse mort selle neust este. A Rome lay fait baptisier. A tousjours mais seres par elle loyaulment servie. Et tant que lame me respitera ou corps a elle nauray attouchement charnel [a elle] se avant elle ne alez de vie a trespas, ce que Dieu ne vueille.’

‘Sire, dist lors la dame de Trasignies, puis que ainsi est que vous dittes que ceste dame avez espousee et que par son moyen vous avez eu la vie respitee, ja Dieu ne plaise que jamais jaye a vous attouchement ne compaignie. Ains me voudray rendre au plaisir de Dieu en une abbaye de nonnains ou le remanant de ma vie je prieray Dieu pour vous.’

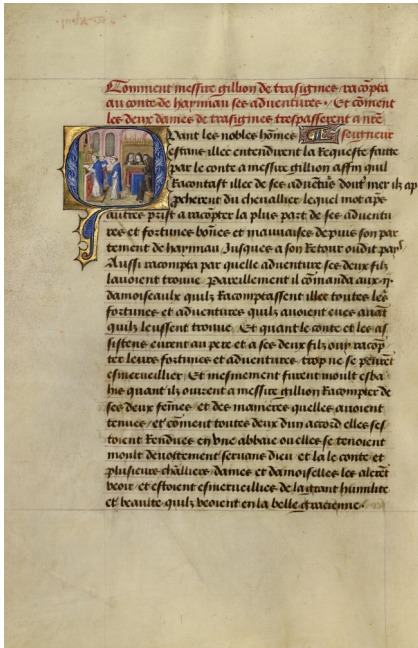
‘Dame, dist lors Gracienne, ja Dieu ne plaise que jour de ma vie je vous face tort de vostre leal seigneur et mary. Car [fol. 195v] raison et droit veulent

poignant, and highly commendable, I was glad to work on translating the content of the said little book into our French language, so that the high deeds and chivalrous feats of my brave lord Gillion of Trazegnies and his two sons, Jean and Gerard, do not vanish from memory but rather increase in perpetuity.

[fol. 195] ‘My dearest and good companion [Marie], while I [Gillion] was prisoner of the sultan of Egypt, a knight called Amaury reported and avowed to me that you had died with child. This pained me so greatly that I made a vow and pledged not to ever return from across the sea. And a long while after this, I remarried overseas this noble princess, whom you can behold here, who by her good graces saved my life several times. I would have long been dead had it not been for her. I had her baptized in Rome. From now until forever you will be loyally served by her. And for as long as my soul will be spared in my body I will not have carnal contact with her, unless you go from life to death before she does, may God not will it.’

‘Sire, spoke then the lady of Trazegnies, since the matter is such that you say that you wedded this lady and that by her influence your life was spared, may it never please God that I ever have intercourse or association with you. I would instead like to surrender myself to God’s service in an abbey of nuns, where for the rest of my life I will pray God for you.’

‘Lady, Gracienne then said, may it never please God that a single day of my life I rob you of your loyal lord and husband. For [fol. 196] reason and right demand



Initial Q: Gillion's Wives Marie and Gracienne during Mass at the Abbey of Olive in Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies, 1464, Lieven van Lathem, illuminator, and David Aubert, scribe. Tempera colors, gold, and ink on parchment, 15 5/16 x 11 in. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 111, folio 200v

### GILLION AND HIS TWO WIVES, CONTINUED

que de ses biens vous soies la dame et la maistresse veu que premierement et ainchois quil me veist oncques de long temps il vous avoit espousee. Et avec ce, vous luy avez apporte deux moult beaulx filz. Pourquoy jay delibere et conclut en moy meismes que de ce jour en avant je vous serviray et tendray loyalle compagnie non obstant que je soie fille de hault empereur non croyant en la sainte loy de Jhesucrist, en laquelle pour lamour de vostre bon seigneur et le mien je croy fermement et en celle voudray vivre et morir.

La bonne dame de Trasignies, oyant la noble dame Gracienne ainsi soy humilier vers elle, ayant regard a la grant jennesse, bonte et beaulte delle, et aussi a la haulte lignie dont elle estoit venue, ne se pouvoit assez esmerveillier. Adont les yeulx plains de lermes et les bras tous ouvers la print a embracer et doucement baisier en lui disant:

‘Ha a tresnoble dame, la tres grande humilite que japparchoy estre en vous me contraindra faire ung veu nulz fors Dieu ne le me feroit trespasser. Et est tel que jamais avec homme ne jerray mais le voudray servir tous les temps de ma vie en aucun monastere ou lieu solitaire. Assez me souffist davoir veu mon bon seigneur et mary.’

[fol. 196v] ‘Je vous prie quil vous plaise estre content de moy et que ceste noble dame et moy vous servons ung espace de temps sans nous vouloir oppresser de avoir quelque attouchement charnel de nuit ne de jour a elle ne a moy. Car lune et lautre avons fait ung tel veu moyennant que ce soit vostre bon plaisir de nous rendre en aucune religion pour illec acquerir le salut de noz ames et prier pour vous tant quil plaira a Dieu de nous donner pouvoir et entendement de ce faire.’

that you be the lady and mistress of his possessions, given that he had married you first long before he ever laid his eyes on me. And besides you have given him two most beautiful sons. I have therefore debated internally and decided for myself that from this day onward I will serve you and keep you loyal company, regardless of the fact that I am daughter of a great emperor, a non-believer in the holy religion of Jesus Christ, in which for the love of your and my good lord I believe firmly and wish to live and die.’

The good lady of Trazegnies, hearing the noble lady Gracienne humble herself thus before her, could not stop marveling on account of her great youth, goodness, and beauty and also the elevated lineage from which she had issued. At that, her eyes full of tears and with arms wide open, she began to embrace her and kiss her tenderly, telling her: ‘Ah, most noble lady, the great humility that I observe in you will compel me to make an oath that none other than God will make me break. And the vow is such that never with a man will I lay but I wish to serve God for the rest of my life in a monastery or some cloistered place. Having seen my good lord and husband has fulfilled me.’

[fol. 196v] “I entreat you that it please you to be satisfied with me and content that this noble lady and I serve you for a while but without her or me suffering the tyranny of any carnal contact with you by night or day. For we both have made such a vow, at your pleasure, to enter a cloister together, there to acquire salvation for our souls and to pray for you for as long as it please God to give us the power and ability to do so.”