



Translated, with an Introduction, by Tina Kane

# THE TROYES MÉMOIRE



THE MAKING OF A  
MEDIEVAL TAPESTRY

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE  
CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

THE TROYES *MÉMOIRE*  
THE MAKING OF A MEDIEVAL TAPESTRY

The Troyes *Mémoire*, a late-fifteenth-century manuscript preserved in the archives of the town of Troyes, France, is the sole surviving example of a set of written instructions used in designing tapestries during the Middle Ages. It is unique in its presentation of detailed information on how patrons and church officials communicated complex iconographic material to the medieval artists commissioned to paint cartoons for tapestries. It is here translated into English for the first time, with full introduction and extensive notes. The volume also includes a translation of excerpts from another richly informative document from medieval Troyes, the Account Books of the Church of Sainte-Madeleine, which introduces us to the actual people who worked together, between 1416 and 1430, to produce a set of tapestries for the town's oldest church. These texts shed important new light on an era when tapestry represented a supreme form of art.

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE  
CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

ISSN 2044–351X

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# THE TROYES MÉMOIRE

## THE MAKING OF A MEDIEVAL TAPESTRY

With excerpts from the Account Books of the Church of Sainte-Madeleine

*Translated with an introduction by*

TINA KANE

*Foreword by Nancy Willard*

*Latin translated by Robert D. Brown*

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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First published 2010  
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978-1-84383-570-7

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd  
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK  
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.  
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620, USA  
website: [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com)

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library

The publisher has no responsibility for the continued existence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

Designed and typeset by Tina Ranft, Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK

Printed and bound in Great Britain  
by CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham and Eastbourne

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For Chris





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## Acknowledgments

My primary acknowledgement is to Philippe Guignard, who drew attention to the *Mémoire* in 1851 with the publication of his annotated transcription. Without his work, this important manuscript might have gone entirely unnoticed. Many other acknowledgments are due, both to institutions and to people who have helped me. As a result of a travel grant in 2003 from The Metropolitan Museum of Art and grants from the Susan Turner Fund at Vassar College in 2005 and in 2008, I was able to spend time at the archives in Troyes, France, to work with the original manuscripts there. In addition, publication was made possible by further generous support from the Susan Turner Fund at Vassar (my thanks to the members of the Committee on Research). The staff of the Archives Départementales de l'Aube offered patient and considerate assistance; in particular, I wish to thank the director, Nicolas Dohrmann, for granting permission to publish the *Mémoire* and the monograph by Philippe Guignard. Noël Mazières kindly reproduced the images I needed, as did Pascal Jacquinet from the Troyes Médiathèque. The staff of the Image Library at The Metropolitan Museum of Art has also been very helpful.

I am grateful, as well, for the assistance of Professor Robert D. Brown, of the Classics Department at Vassar College, who, with generosity and skill, translated the Latin quotations in the *Mémoire* for this book. For their patient help with the translation from the French, I owe much to my good friends Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sartarelli, who, as distinguished translators, have the inspired gift for providing the *mot juste*. Sophie, especially, shared her knowledge unstintingly and offered invaluable advice throughout the project. The eminent translator and poet Richard Howard also furnished support and counsel. And here I must thank Sylvie LeFevre, professor of French Medieval Literature, French and Romance Philology Department, Columbia University, for helping me to decipher fifteenth-century script and for tracking down the identity of Pierre Desrey. Nancy Freeman Regalado, professor of French, Medieval and Renaissance Center, New York University, has also been generous with her time and knowledge. Mark and Olga Fox have unfailingly encouraged me in my work.

I owe thanks to Nancy Willard for the Foreword and much more. Since 2002, I have had the inestimable pleasure of teaching at Vassar College with Nancy on topics of medieval tapestry and narrative. Thanks must also go to the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program, the Department of English, and our students at Vassar, for this opportunity to explore different aspects of medieval art and literature.

The Cloisters at The Metropolitan Museum of Art has employed me since 1978 as a tapestry conservator. Working in the Textile Conservation Department of the museum has given me ample opportunity to study closely its medieval tapestry collection. Particular thanks go to all my colleagues there, and to Florica Zaharia, now Conservator in charge. Nobuko Kajitani, former head of the department, with her unparalleled expertise, first introduced me to tapestry conservation. And my longtime colleague in the department, Alice Blohm, transmitted her enthusiasm and deep respect for the great works we have had the privilege of conserving.

Adolfo Salvatore Cavallo's magisterial catalog of the medieval tapestries in the Metropolitan Museum provided me with inspiration for pursuing tapestry studies, and I continue to benefit from his generosity as he proffers information from his seemingly endless store of knowledge about tapestry. Thomas Campbell, the new director of The Metropolitan Museum, has done much for tapestry with his two tapestry exhibitions, in 2002 and 2007, and I am grateful to him for his support.

The Textile Society of America provided the occasion for publishing my preliminary paper about the Troyes *Mémoire*, in the society's Symposium Proceedings of 1998. Over the past two years, it has been the thoughtful and helpful encouragement of Caroline Palmer, editorial director of Boydell & Brewer, and her staff, that has brought this project to fruition. In particular, thanks are due to Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Robin Netherton, whose careful reading, erudite commentary, and editorial suggestions have been invaluable.

Last and most, my deepest thanks go to my dear friend and spouse, Paul Kane, for everything.



## Foreword

Several years ago I saw what proved to be one of the most popular exhibits ever shown at the Ann Arbor Public Library in Michigan. For forty years one of the librarians had been collecting the items people had used as bookmarks and forgotten to remove before returning the books. They included snapshots, ration stamps, grocery lists, letters, a prayer card, a hastily scrawled map with directions to somebody's house—the detritus of everyday life, items to be used but not preserved. How fortunate we are when, by accident or design, such things are saved. They are primary sources, unfiltered and uninterpreted, that give us a direct connection to what earlier people ate, wore, grieved over, and admired. For an eloquent defense of this approach, you have only to look at Eileen Power's introduction to *Medieval People*, published in 1924:

Social history sometimes suffers from the reproach that it is vague and general, unable to compete with the attractions of political history either for the student or for the general reader, because of its lack of outstanding personalities. In point of fact there is often as much material for reconstructing the life of some quite ordinary person as there is for writing a history of Robert of Normandy or of Philippa of Hainault; and the lives of ordinary people so reconstructed are, if less spectacular, certainly not less interesting.<sup>1</sup>

A remarkable document of this kind is the Troyes *Mémoire*, a set of detailed instructions written in the fifteenth century for the artists who would paint the cartoons from which a series of six tapestry panels were to be woven. The tapestries would show the legends of St. Urban and St. Cecilia. Giving both saints their due would not be a simple matter. Since the tapestries themselves were never woven, how fortunate for us that a copy of these instructions survived and that Tina Kane has made this previously untranslated work available to us. Her gracefully rendered translation was made from the original manuscript, and it goes without saying that social historians, medievalists, and art historians all will find her work invaluable.

Less obvious but no less important is what the Troyes *Mémoire* offers to writers and critics concerned with the art of narrative itself. It was not enough to state that Maximus was killed for saying under oath that he saw angels receiving the souls of two martyrs.

1 Eileen Power, *Medieval People* (1924; repr., Mineola, N.Y., 2000), ix.

Accuracy is all, especially in the telling of miracles, and, like a good scholar, the author cites his sources:

This is written in the *Mirror of History* of Master Vincent Gale, doctor in holy theology: “Then Maximus swore with an oath that at the hour of their passion he had seen shining angels and their souls departing from their bodies like virgins from a bedchamber, which the angels carried in their bosom into Heaven.” (p. 117)

Since the scenes described are not yet created, they are narrated in the future tense, and the artist who must paint them is always reminded of the reason for these instructions: “In order to make these things clear and apparent, a landscape will be depicted” (p. 87). The short narratives in verse designed to appear under the images serve the same purpose. And as anyone who has ever attended a convention knows, name tags are a great help in identifying strangers: “Glorious St. Urban will be inside, in papal attire, with his clergy. That is to say, he will be with the four bishops named before, and the three deacons, each of whom will have his name written in a visible place on his clothes” (p. 87).

The description of events in the lives of St. Urban and St. Cecilia are as specific as the stage directions in the miracle plays; both include directions for gesture and facial expressions. But tapestry designers have an additional constraint: like children of an earlier generation, dialogue is seen but not heard. The solution reminds us that there is nothing new about comic strips: “From St. Urban’s mouth will emerge another speech scroll on which shall be written: ‘Devoutest ones, champions of Christ, do not fear the raging wolves.’ All this will fully represent the text of the said legend” (p. 155).

Tina Kane is wise enough to also give us the names of real people who worked on tapestries, people very much like those who might have worked on this set had they been woven: Jacquet the painter, Brother Didier the author, the seamstress Poinsette. The description of the tapestries that never were is all the more poignant when eternity brushes mortality, and we are given a glimpse into the world that the artists who painted and wove similar tapestries knew.

*Nancy Willard*



## Preface

As a tapestry conservator, living in New York, I have had the privilege of working on some of the masterpieces of medieval tapestry.<sup>1</sup> During my years of professional practice, I have developed a great respect for the extraordinary skills of the anonymous artisans who created these tapestries, and have often wondered about their lives and how they all managed to work together to create these works of art. I also became curious about how the tapestries themselves were designed. Sometimes the iconographic programs in medieval tapestries are highly complex, and, in studying the pictorial content of them, I became interested in who was responsible for organizing this material and how they went about it. Often these tapestries depict narrative cycles derived from medieval literature. Did the artists themselves compile these visual narratives? Or was there another step in the design process before the artists began their preliminary drawings? If that was the case, how was this information communicated to the artists and cartoon painters who prepared the designs for the weavers?

Early tapestry histories did not generally dwell on design and production, or, for that matter, on details about weavers and other artisans. However, these matters were not entirely overlooked. In my reading I noticed that there were two fifteenth-century manuscripts from Troyes, France, mentioned frequently by tapestry historians.<sup>2</sup> One was an account book from a church in Troyes listing payments to a group of artisans working together to produce a tapestry for the church. The other, from later in the century, was a set of instructions for the iconographic content to be portrayed in a choir tapestry for another church in Troyes. Although nearly all tapestry historians, as well as some art historians and social historians, mentioned this primary material, only brief excerpts of the manuscripts were quoted. I became interested in this material and located a copy of a nineteenth-century transcription by Philippe Guignard, archivist of the Département de l'Aube in Troyes. Both manuscripts contained precisely the sort of information on the working practices of medieval artists and

1 For three decades, I have conserved and restored tapestries from the collection of the Cloisters at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as fine tapestries from other museums and private collections.

2 See the Introduction for additional references. Here, however, I will mention two. The first I found was in W. G. Thomson, *A History of Tapestry*, rev. ed. (London, 1930), 133–35. Thomson briefly describes one document as “an interesting account of the actual procedure” of making a set of medieval tapestries for a church in Troyes. The other, he says, was “one of the most complete specifications for a set of tapestries that could be imagined.” The second reference to these manuscripts I encountered was in Eugène Müntz, *A Short History of Tapestry From the Earliest Times to the End of the 18th Century*, trans. Louisa J. Davis (Paris, 1885), 130–32.

craftsman that I had not been able to find elsewhere. Since both documents contained important source material known to only a handful of specialists in medieval art and history, I concluded that it would be worthwhile to make this material more widely available in an English translation. That is the genesis of this book. I should add that, during the course of my investigations, I also discovered convincing evidence of who wrote the Troyes *Mémoire*. Until now, the manuscript has been considered to be the work of an anonymous author, but in the Introduction, I suggest it was written by Pierre Desrey, *orateur, acteur*, and native of Troyes.

The manuscripts that are brought together here provide a rare glimpse of the people involved—and the various steps they took—in carrying forward two separate tapestry projects. These individuals include the scholars who drew up the written instructions; the artists or image-makers who translated the words into visual narrative scenes and then executed full-scale designs for the weavers; the workers who prepared some of the actual materials involved; and finally, the weavers who realized the project. In particular, the texts demonstrate how a church official or scholar went about designing a narrative cycle for a set of tapestries. We will see how he would transform history and legend into images for artists and craftsmen to draw, paint, and weave. And we will be introduced to various saints and martyrs, an angel, an emperor and his mother, a Roman prefect and his henchman, a jailer, a devil, and a cast of many others, all assuming their places in a pageant-like medieval tableau.

We will also look at what might happen to a series of written instructions after they are given to artists responsible for a project. Along the way, we will meet some memorable characters, including a convivial Dominican friar, a seamstress and her assistant, a painter, an illuminator, a weaver and his nephew, a metalworker, a cabinetmaker, and even some incendiary nuns. And we will see, as well, what wine and bedsheets have to do with weaving a tapestry for a church.



# Introduction

## THE TROYES MÉMOIRE

At the end of the fifteenth century, in the cathedral town of Troyes, in the Champagne region of France not far from Paris, the Church of Saint-Urbain of Troyes commissioned a group of painters to design a set of tapestries depicting the legends of St. Urban and St. Cecilia. A scholar was brought in to write a detailed set of instructions for the artists, who were to produce cartoons for six tapestry panels which, when viewed together, would constitute a single continuous narrative of two famous martyrdoms. It was an ambitious project and entailed a complicated interweaving of the lives of several saints and martyrs. The tapestry panels were to hang on special occasions around the choir stalls in the church, to honor St. Urban and the family of the donor who paid for them. But, for reasons unknown, the tapestries were apparently never woven. That is as much as we know of the story, and that little is partly conjecture, pieced together from the evidence that survives.

The *Troyes Mémoire*<sup>1</sup> is that evidence, consisting of the written instructions by the author who imagined quite precisely what these tapestries were to look like, and what they were to convey. (See Plate 1 for an image of folio 2r.) It is also the only known surviving full set of directives of this length and detail, for tapestry or any other comparable work of art from the period.<sup>2</sup> The *Mémoire* is a complete and finely tuned account of how image and text are to work together, providing a unique look at the complex and sophisticated world of iconography exemplified by the narrative and artistic productions of the Middle Ages. At the same time, it also provides insight into the way patrons and advisers communicated with artists. That this manuscript survived at all is a cause for wonder, or—as is said frequently in the *Troyes Mémoire*—*admiracion*.

This book, *The Troyes Mémoire: The Making of a Medieval Tapestry*, offers, for the first time in English, the Troyes manuscript (or *Mémoire*). The original document is in the holdings of

1 The full title is “MÉMOIRE pour l’ordonnance des hystoires et misteres qu’ilz seront contenus, faicts et portraits en une tapisserie, où, notamment sera démontrée, et par escript déclarée, la vie, légende et dévoute conversation du glorieux saint Urbain, martyr et premier Pape de ce nom. [MÉMOIRE for the organization of the *hystoires* and *misteres* to be included, made and portrayed in a tapestry, where the life, legend, and sacred company of glorious St. Urban, martyr and first Pope of this name, will be memorably represented and described in writing.] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French are by Tina Kane, and translations from Latin are by Robert D. Brown.

2 A comparison can be made between the *prix-faits*, or contracts drawn up for artists, and the *Troyes Mémoire*. *Prix-faits* were notarized legal documents that set forth the details of an artist’s commission. For a discussion of *prix-faits* and other working documents similar to the *Mémoire*, see pp. 29–31.

the Archives Départementales de l'Aube in Troyes (MS 10 G 8). It consists of a 46-folio manuscript. Another copy, with numerous additions and interpolations, is divided into six separate codices, five of which are still extant.<sup>3</sup> These are also in the Archives in Troyes (10 G 8, 2-6), and correspond to each one of the tapestry panels (excepting the first). The manuscript and copies, while not dated, appear to have been composed around the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>4</sup>

For purposes of comparison, this translation is presented along with a transcription of the original manuscript into modern type. The folio numbers are noted in the English translation and *en face* in the French transcription.<sup>5</sup> This transcription also follows the line breaks of the original manuscript to facilitate and encourage future study and discussion of the handwritten codex.<sup>6</sup>

### *The Author: Pierre Desrey*

The author of the Troyes *Mémoire* was thought to be unknown. The most prominent scholar to have worked in depth on the *Mémoire*, Philippe Guignard, speculated that the author was a canon of the Church of Saint-Urbain but was not able to specify an individual. There is good reason now, however, to believe that the author can be identified. Recent scholarship convincingly associates the *Mémoire* and an author who lived in Troyes in the last half of the fifteenth century. The history of this attribution is as follows.

To begin with, the original codex and each of the five copy notebooks close with the same motto: *Tout par honneur* ("In all good faith"), with the initial capital "T" embellished with what appears to be a stylized acanthus leaf (see Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> That phrase, *Tout par honneur*, was the motto (*la devise*) attributed to the author and chronicler Pierre Desrey, a native of

3 It is clear from a note written toward the end of the eighteenth century on the first page of the copy for the second tapestry panel that the first notebook has been missing since then.

4 To be more precise, the Troyes *Mémoire* (Troyes, Archives Départementales de l'Aube, archived as MS 10 G 8) is a 46-folio manuscript with a cover and 36 pages written in a medium-quality cursive Secretary script that was prominent in France in the fifteenth century. There is no sign of any ruling. This is also true for the separate copy notebooks. All are on good-quality paper, in quarto, with each folio (or page) 8.5 inches (21.6 centimeters) wide by 11.6 inches (29.5 centimeters) high. The bifolios are folded at the center and sewn with bast fiber cord. The writing is in non-corrosive brown ink. The quoted Latin texts are underlined throughout, freehand, apparently in the same ink as the cursive. There are many corrections and interpolations. The watermark on the cover sheet of the main codex is a shield with three fleurs-de-lis. The watermark on the rest of the sheets appears to be a hand holding a four-leaf flower or clover. The watermark is identical for all sheets of the copy notebooks. There are numerous light blue and red stains on some sheets of the copy notebooks (possibly paint), and the lower edges of all the copy notebooks have been damaged by moisture. Otherwise the codices are in good condition.

5 The French transcription is based on the work of Philippe Guignard (1820–1905), as published in Philippe Guignard, ed., *Mémoires fournis aux peintres chargés d'exécuter les cartons d'une tapisserie destinée à la collégiale St.-Urbain de Troyes, représentant les légendes de St. Urbain et de Ste. Cécile* (Troyes, 1851). The copy used for this study is that found in Troyes, Archives Départementales de l'Aube, MS HB 238. All subsequent references to this source are cited as HB 238. Before appearing in this monograph, Guignard's edited version of the *Mémoire* was first published in *Mémoires de la Société d'Agriculture, des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres du Département de l'Aube* 15, 2nd ser., 2, nos. 9–16 (1849–50), 421–534. This can be found in the New York Public Library (\*EN S211) and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

6 For example, another study might usefully date the script of the codices more precisely. Such work in paleography and codicology is beyond the scope of this present book, but it is hoped that this translation will focus interest on the *Mémoire* and encourage additional study.

7 The first letter of the first word in codex 10 G 8 (*Mémoire*) is also embellished with the same acanthus leaf, but upside down.

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*Figure 1:* The last folio of the second copy notebook of the *Troyes Mémoire* (Troyes, Archives Départementales de l'Aube, MS 10 G 8-2, fol. 12r), showing the motto of Pierre Desrey, *Tout par honneur*. Image: Noel Mazières.

Troyes, who lived ca. 1450–1514.<sup>8</sup> Although little is known about Desrey's life, there is sufficient information available about his work to strengthen an association with the *Mémoire*.<sup>9</sup>

As far as can be ascertained, the first scholar to discuss Desrey's authorship of the *Mémoire* in any detail was Henri Monceaux, Conservateur at the Musée d'Auxerre, in an 1895 article in the *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de l'Yonne*:<sup>10</sup>

Dans le même temps le chapitre de Saint-Urbain (l'une des églises de Troyes) ayant désiré faire exécuter en tapisserie de haute lisse la vie de Saint-Urbain en vingt-deux hystoires, une description fut faite de chaque tableau à exécuter et cette description eut pour auteur Pierre Desrey qui la signa encore de sa devise: "Tout par honneur." (241)

[At the same time the Chapter of Saint-Urbain (one of the churches of Troyes) having wanted to commission a high-warp tapestry of the *Life of Urban* in twenty-two hystoires, a description was made of each tableau to be done, and Pierre Desrey was the author of this description, signing again his motto: "Tout par honneur."]<sup>11</sup>

8 The use of personal mottos or "devices" as the equivalent of signatures is well documented. Johan Huizinga, for example, refers to the motto as "a favorite object of careful cultivation during the late medieval times," pointing out that such phrases are not, like proverbs, "wisdom generally applied, but are entirely personal adages." Emblems, he notes, "complement mottoes. They either illustrate the mottoes in tangible form or are loosely connected with them." Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago, 1996), 275–76. E. R. Curtius similarly writes that, during this period, "mottos (devices), which were often interpreted by 'emblems,' were popular in France." Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York, 1953), 345–46. It is not clear what the relationship is between Desrey's motto and his emblem. The motto itself might refer to a medieval parable or a saying, but so far research has turned up no such connection—though it does appear on the family shield of the families of Desnos and Matignon; Mrs. Alfred Gatty, *The Book of Sundials* (London, 1940), 367. The acanthus leaf is such a common decorative motif that it would be difficult to assign it a symbolic meaning in this instance. In addition to the mottos attributed to Pierre Desrey in the Troyes *Mémoire*, two more examples of *Tout par honneur* can be found in the holdings of the Archives of Troyes in the Médiathèque de l'Agglomération Troyenne (henceforth called the Troyes Médiathèque). These are in several folios of poems that the nineteenth-century scholar and archivist Théophile Boutiot (1816–75) attributed to Pierre Desrey. Théophile Boutiot, *Inventaire manuscrit des Archives Anciennes de Troyes: Registres, 2:375–77, reg. Q 1*. The handwriting of the poems appears identical to the script of the Troyes *Mémoire*.

9 Desrey's writings indicate a wide-ranging knowledge, such as that found in the *Mémoire*. His works include a version of *La Danse Macabre* in Latin, 1490; a translation of Nicholas de Lyra's *Les Postilles et Expositions des Epistres et Evangilles Dominicales*, 1493; another translation, of Werner Rolevinck's *Fleurs et Manières des Temps Passés*, 1495; a compilation, *Généalogie avecques les gestes et nobles faitz d'armes du très preux et renommé prince Godefroy de Bouillon*, 1504; *Parément et triumphe des Dames d'Olivier de la Marche*, 1510; and contributions to the *Grandes Chroniques de France* on Monstrelet, 1512, and Gaguin, 1514. Several poems have also been attributed to Desrey. For a chronological list of Desrey's works, see François Roudaut, "Pierre Desrey," in *Le Beau XVIe Siècle Troyen: Aspects de la vie politique, économique, artistique, littéraire et religieuse à Troyes de 1480 à 1550*, ed. Pierre-E. Leroy (Troyes, 1989), 279–82.

10 Henri Monceaux, "Les Le Rouge de Chablis," *Bulletin de la Société des Sciences Historiques et Naturelles de l'Yonne*, 1895, 240–46.

11 Monceaux noted Desrey's motto at the end of the third volume of the manuscript *Mystère de la Passion du Troyes* (1490), Troyes Médiathèque, MS 2282: "On attribue à Pierre Desrey une partie du poème lui-même, et plusieurs des changements ajoutés dans le manuscrit paraissent écrits de sa main ainsi que sa devise: 'Tout par honneur' placée à la fin du troisième volume." [A part of the poem itself is attributed to Pierre Desrey, as well as many of the emendations in the manuscript which appear to be written in his hand along with his motto: *Tout par honneur* placed at the end of the third volume.] An initial inspection of fol. 222 of MS 2282 (the final folio of the third day) in the collection of the Troyes Médiathèque fails to confirm Monceaux's statement; *tout par honneur* does not appear at the end of the third volume. Instead, there is the elaborate signature of Brochart, the primary scribe of the Troyes *Mystère*. However, the handwriting in the sections of the play attributed to Desrey bears a close similarity to the handwriting of the Troyes tapestry *Mémoire* (see note 8). While not as conclusive as finding *tout par honneur* in both manuscripts, the nearly identical script supports Monceaux's and Boutiot's claim that Desrey composed the Troyes *Mémoire*.

Earlier, in 1874, Théophile Boutiot mentioned Desrey and the tapestries in *Histoire de la Ville de Troyes et de la Champagne Méridionale* in a paragraph on tapestry production in Troyes in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries:<sup>12</sup>

Le Chapitre de St-Urbain, voulut, à la fin du XVe siècle, faire exécuter, en tapisserie de haute lice, et en vingt-deux histoires, la vie de saint Urbain. La description en est écrite par Pierre Desrey, littérateur troyen. (271)

[At the end of the fifteenth century, the Chapter of Saint-Urbain commissioned a high-warp tapestry, in twenty-two *histoires*, on the life of St. Urban. The description of the tapestry was written by Pierre Desrey, an author and scholar from Troyes].

Until recently, Monceaux's and Boutiot's direct connection of Desrey with the Troyes *Mémoire* were the only such mentions that had come to light, and apparently the motto itself was the primary proof.<sup>13</sup> More recently, in 1989, François Roudaut, in an essay on Pierre Desrey, definitively listed the tapestry *Mémoire* as one of Pierre Desrey's works.<sup>14</sup>

While this alone may be sufficient, the assertion is persuasive on a number of other counts as well. First, there is the fact that Pierre Desrey lived in Troyes precisely during the years the *Mémoire* was composed, and was active as a writer during that time. In the *Chronicles de Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, Desrey refers to himself simply as an "orateur de Troyes en Champagne."<sup>15</sup> Scholars who have worked with the Troyes *Mémoire* have assumed, along with Guignard, that the composition was compiled by a church official, but that would not be the case with Desrey. While the title *orateur* can signify either a cleric or a prose writer, there is no mention anywhere of Desrey as a member of the clergy, so his use of *orateur* should be taken to mean solely "prose writer."<sup>16</sup> Since the *Mémoire* was certainly written by an adept or "professional" writer, Desrey fits that description at the right time and in the right place.

Second, Desrey is known to have translated both Werner Rolevinck (*Fleurs et Manières des Temps Passés*) and Vincent of Beauvais (selections from *Speculum Historiale* and a prose version of the *Swan-Knight* (*Chevalier au Cygne*), summarized in his *Speculum Naturale*).<sup>17</sup> As

12 Théophile Boutiot, *Histoire de la Ville de Troyes et de la Champagne Méridionale* (1874; repr., Brussels, 1977), 4:270–2.

13 It is possible Monceaux reached his conclusion upon reading Philippe Guignard's 1851 publication on the Troyes *Mémoire*, which is mentioned in a note. "Les Le Rouge de Chablis," 241 n. 1.

14 Roudaut, "Pierre Desrey," 277–92. Roudaut's article on Desrey is preceded by an essay written by Roudaut and Henri Jeannet, "Les Ecrivains de la Champagne Troyenne de 1480 à 1550," 265–75. This concludes with a synoptic chart noting that P. Desrey "À la fin du XVe siècle compose un 'Mémoire,' à forme historique et descriptive pour les cartons d'une tapisserie à Saint-Urbain." [At the end of the fifteenth century, (Desrey) composed a historic and descriptive *Mémoire* for the cartoons of a tapestry for Saint-Urbain.] The authors also date the *Mémoire* as having been written in 1492. The note to this entry, without being specific, refers the reader to 10 G 8 in the Archives de l'Aube, the cote number for the codex in the Archives. The codices for the tapestry *Mémoire* in cote 10 G 8 are housed with various records from the Church of Saint-Urbain. It is possible these authors found a specific reference to the transaction and the date somewhere in these records. However, for this study, it is unfortunate this assertion was not documented more specifically.

15 Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, trans. Thomas Johnes (London, 1877), p. XXXV. Enguerrand de Monstrelet's dates are ca. 1400–53.

16 This is the conclusion that Monceaux comes to in "Les Le Rouge de Chablis," 243 n. 1.

17 Arthur Augustus Tilley, *Studies in the French Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1922), 20, refers to the *Généalogie avecques les gestes et nobles faitz d'armes du très preux et renommé prince Godefroy de Bouillon* (Paris, 1504) as "The work of Pierre Desrey, part being translated from the *Speculum Historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais." Tilley's work is available online at <http://www.archive.org/stream/studiesinfrenchr00tilluoft> (accessed Feb. 19, 2010).

we will see, Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale* (or *Mirror of History*) is the primary text consulted by the author of the *Mémoire*; moreover, Werner Rolevinck's work is also used (see "Latin Texts," p. 13). Neither would be considered obscure texts, but the author of the *Mémoire* is obviously steeped in both of them, as Desrey himself must have been as a translator.

In a comparison of the prose style of the *Mémoire* with Desrey's known work, some idiomatic similarities stand out. To take one example, Desrey is fond of repeating grammatical structures, especially linking similar terms with *et*, as in "de la vraye et entière delibération du tres chrestien roy Charles VIII, pour la conqueste et recouvrance de son royaume de Sicile" [of the true and complete deliberation of the very Christian King Charles VIII, for the conquest and recovery of his kingdom of Sicily].<sup>18</sup> This form of *synonymia* is typical of the *Mémoire* as well, as in "À l'intencion et dévotion du donneur de la dicte tapisserie seront faicts et protraicts ung priant et une priante: mains jointes et genoulx flexis: iceulx honnestement vestus et habituez, avecques aucuns enfans, filz et filles" [In recognition of the request and pious devotion of the donor of the said tapestry, a man and woman praying will be represented and portrayed: hands joined and kneeling; finely dressed and clothed, with some children, sons and daughters].<sup>19</sup> Although this rhetorical device is common to the period, and not peculiar to Desrey, nonetheless, after years of studying the *Mémoire*, reading Pierre Desrey produces a shock of recognition.

Finally, an indirect but very telling argument in favor of Desrey's authorship stems from his involvement in theater. Desrey, as mentioned, is named as one of the contributors to *Le Mystère de la Passion de Troyes*, based on the 1455 *Mystère de la Passion* of Arnoul Greban. This grand spectacle, with no less than 212 speaking parts, was first performed in Troyes in 1482. The performance went on for several days and was attended by large crowds. The *Mystère* was performed annually thereafter through the first decade of the sixteenth century. The original manuscript of *Le Mystère* was donated in June 1490 to the town of Troyes, where it is preserved today.<sup>20</sup> In a critical study and linguistic analysis of the text published in 1987, Jean-Claude Bibolet notes that several authors collaborated on the text and that local tradition had it that one of them was Pierre Desrey.<sup>21</sup> Bibolet quotes an 1854 article by Boutiot:<sup>22</sup>

La seconde partie de la première journée est d'une autre main: sans doute d'un autre auteur. Celui-ci peut être Pierre Desrey, que nous verrons un peu plus loin remplir le rôle de Dieu le père.

[The second part of the first day is by another hand: without doubt this is another author. Perhaps this is Pierre Desrey, who we will see further on filled the role of God the Father.]<sup>23</sup>

18 From Desrey's addition to the chronicles of Monstrelet, quoted in Hans Hauser, "Études critiques sur les sources narratives de l'histoire de France au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Annales et Chroniques," *Revue d'Historie Moderne et Contemporaine* 5 (1903–4): 475; emphasis mine.

19 See Translator's Notes, pp. 63–4; emphasis mine.

20 Troyes Médiathèque, MS 2282.

21 Jean-Claude Bibolet, *Le Mystère de la Passion de Troyes: Mistere de la Passion Nostre Seigneur, Troyes XV<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Geneva, 1987).

22 Théophile Boutiot, "Recherches sur le Théâtre à Troyes au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Mémoires de la Société d'agriculture, des sciences, arts et belles-lettres du département de l'Aube*, 2nd ser., 5 (1854): 419–54.

23 Bibolet, *Mystère de la Passion de Troyes*, xxii. The quotation is from Boutiot, "Recherches sur le Théâtre à Troyes," 446. Bibolet emends Boutiot's remark to say that Desrey actually played the role of Jesus Christ, for which he was paid 100 *sous* (adding that this was considered to be a large sum at the time). Bibolet provisionally attributes to Desrey lines