

«NILLA PORA NUZA BAISAR» PHYSICAL LOVE AND LOVE CONVERSATIONS IN THE ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPT OF THE *ROMAN DE JAUFRE* (PARIS, BNF, FR. 2164)

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Received: 25 Jan. 2016 | Revised: 15 Feb. 2016 | Accepted: 16 Feb. 2016 | Available online: 21 June 2016 | doi: 10.1344/Svmma2016.7.14

### Abstract

Il manoscritto illustrato del *Roman de Jaufre* non è così semplice e infantile come si potrebbe pensare. E' invece ben organizzato, con circa 250 scene illustrate per un totale di 110 carte. The illustrazioni sono sempre vicino ai versi che illustrano. Nella prima parte abbondano le avventure cavalleresche, rese nelle immagini attraverso uno stile realistico, vivace e cruento. Nella seconda parte invece, dopo il cambio di mano del copista, sono più numerose le scene di corte, con banchetti e col matrimonio tra i due protagonisti. Nel primo foglio avevamo trovato un Cupido alato in atto di scagliare una freccia, mentre l'unica lettera abitata del codice rappresenta una donna, forse Brunissen, nel momento in cui avviene il fidanzamento. Il momento del matrimonio invece pare quasi una scena di incoronazione. Sappiamo che il romanzo era dedicato al re d'Aragona, e che, dalle evidenze codicologiche, stilistiche e testuali il manoscritto è datato alla seconda metà del Duecento. Per questo proporrei di cercare come contesto di produzione gli ambienti alti che circondano la corte di Pietro il Grande e Costanza di Sicilia.

**Parole chiave:** amore, sensi, manoscritti miniati, Medioevo, Roman de Jaufre, Occitano, Re d'Aragona, Aljafería, Saragozza.

### Abstract

The illustrated manuscript of the *Roman de Jaufre* is not as simple and naïf as we may think. It is well organized, with approximately 250 illustrated scenes for only 110 folios. The images are always close to the part of the text they illustrate. In the first part of the manuscript we see mainly fighting and chivalrous adventures, with a very realistic, crude, and vivid style. In the second part, after the change of scribe, we see more courtly scenes, with the banquets and the joy of the court for the marriage between the two main characters. On the first *folio* a winged cupid is shooting an arrow, and the only inhabited initial of the manuscript depicts woman, maybe Brunissen, at the moment of the engagement. In contrast, the image of the marriage looks more like a coronation scene. We know that the *roman* was dedicated to a king of Aragon; we also know, from codicological, stylistic, and textual evidence, that the manuscript is dated around the second half of the thirteenth century. Therefore, I propose to search for the original context of production the cultured milieu that surrounded the court of Peter the Great of Aragon and Constance of Sicily.

**Key Words:** Love, senses, illuminated manuscripts, Middle Ages, Roman de Jaufre, Occitan language, King of Aragon, Aljafería, Zaragoza.

The *Roman de Jaufre*<sup>1</sup> is the only surviving Arthurian romance written in *langue d'oc*, given that the later *Blandin de Cornualha* is only mistakenly included among the texts of the “Matter of Britain.” Composed probably in the early thirteenth century by an anonymous author of Occitan-Catalan background, *Jaufre* experienced considerable success over time through adaptations in the Iberian area (where its Castilian version spread), and even in the Spanish colony of the Philippines (with a translation into Tagalog). The narrative unfolds through the wonderful adventures of the protagonist, Jaufre, who departs from Arthur’s court to chase Taulat de Rougimont, and eventually wins the affections of the lady Brunissen and marries her.

As for scholarly interest and critical debate, Raynouard mentioned the romance for the first time in his *Lexique Roman* (RAYNOUARD 1844), which was one of the first studies that focused on works written in Occitan. From that moment onwards, Jaufre gradually garnered more attention, surely thanks to Gaston Paris and the general climate of rediscovery of medieval texts of the nineteenth century. The first critical editions, however, were produced in the twentieth century, and were authored first by Breuer (BREUER 1925) and later by Brunel (BRUNEL 1943). The debate grew increasingly lively in the middle of the last century with figures such as Jeanroy (JEANROY 1941), Rita Lejeune (LEJEUNE 1948), Martí de Riquer (RIQUER 1955), and most recently René Nelli and René Lavaud (NELLI, LAVAUD 1960), and still Michel Zink (ZINK 1989), Jung (JUNG 1991) and Charmaine Lee (LEE 2006).<sup>2</sup> The scholarly problems repeatedly addressed regarding this work are especially related to its dating, to the identification of the specific king of Aragon the romance is dedicated to, and to the contextualization of the text within the linguistic, literary, and cultural framework of the Occitan-Catalan area. Recently, the contributions by Michel Zink, Antoni Espadaler (ESPADALER 1997) and Charmaine Lee seem to have reached an agreement with respect to a relatively late dating, namely the years of the reign of King Jaume I of Aragon, called the Conqueror, that followed the conquest of Mallorca. Another fact that has been accepted by the majority of scholars is that the anonymous author was acquainted with the works of Chrétien de Troyes, which provided the basis for an Occitan revision that is often ironic and parodic. More recently, among the scholars who have contributed to spice up the debate on the production of this romance in verse it was mainly Espadaler who dated it to the end of the reign of Jaume of Aragon. If we consider this hypothesis, the period of both the composition and dissemination of the work (between the 1260s and the 1280s) would precisely coincide with the ascent to the throne of the *infant* Pere, who married Costanza of Sicily and was later involved in the conflict of the Sicilian Vespers. A recent essay by Lucia Lazzerini (LAZZERINI 2012) seems to share the same opinion. Her hypothesis is influenced by these recent critical approaches, and she attempts

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the elaboration of a contribution entitled “Jaufre e Brunissen: testo-immagine-censura nel manoscritto illustrato del *Roman de Jaufre* (Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164)” that was presented at the International Congress “Senses and Sensuality in Middle Ages,” Barcelona, 20-22 May 2015, organized by ARDIT (Associació de recerca i difusió Interdisciplinària en Cultures Medievals).

<sup>2</sup> Hereinafter, all the quotations from the *Roman de Jaufre* are based on the Italian edition by Charmaine Lee (LEE 2006); the English versions provided are based on Lee’s own Italian translations from the original.

to place the production of the illuminated copy of the romance preserved today in Paris in the Occitan-Catalan scene of the 1270s and 1280s. Her research is the result of an ongoing doctoral thesis, which has so far established a comparison between the images of the manuscript Paris, BnF., fr. 2164 and the paintings of the Alfajería Palace in Zaragoza. This paper aims instead to emphasize the key role played by the love story between the protagonists, Jaufre and Brunissen, in a romance eminently considered as chivalric and adventurous; their union and mutual feelings pervade the narrative in various ways and on different levels.

In short, the romance recounts the story of Jaufre, a knight who arrives at Arthur's court on Pentecost and immediately departs to chase after Taulat de Rougimont, who has killed one of Arthur's knights before the Queen and threatens to return every Pentecost to repeat the same violent feat. In the course of this search, the protagonist stumbles upon a long series of negative characters who come after him and, of course, he defeats them all. About midway through the romance, Jaufre finally confronts Taulat and emerges victorious. Then, once the initial quest is accomplished, the narrative core of the second part of the romance focuses on the adventures that lead Jaufre to marry the lady Brunissen. In fact, the work ends with their arrival to Monbrun as husband and wife and the festivities held at the court.

Whereas, as has been noted, the romance was the subject of numerous studies throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the illuminated manuscript preserved in the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris has not aroused much interest. The volume was donated to the Royal Library in the seventeenth century, after the death of its owner Philippe de Béthune. Before that, little is known about the origin of the codex. In his critical edition of 1943, Brunel carried out a brief codicological analysis but claimed that the miniatures in the manuscript did not have any "artistic value" (BRUNEL 1943: XXI). The material features and illustrations of this codex have remained quite forgotten; however it has recently been on display at the exhibition "*La legende du Roi Arthur*" of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris, Site François Mitterrand). In the catalogue entry, the manuscript is described as naive and as a book that was not meant for adults but for children (DEL COURT 2010: 152-153). The latest and most comprehensive publication covering the codex is the recent *Gothic Manuscripts* by Alison Stones, which situates the manuscript in a southern region without overwhelming objective evidence or further clarification: "Late thirteenth century?" "Narbonne, Toulouse, Aix, Avignon?" (STONES 2014).

The present paper focuses on the issues related to the love story and the feelings between the knight and the lady Brunissen, and is based on the research conducted—albeit not in depth—on both *Jaufre* and the aforementioned illuminated codex in the fields of art criticism, history of miniature, and cultural history. Despite being secondary to the more general research on the origin of the manuscript and the artistic context in which it was produced, this approach could shed some light on a fundamental detail: the recipients or sponsors of both the romance and

the illuminated copy itself. Here, we concur with Espadaler's hypothesis on the late date of composition of the romance; therefore, the composition of the text and the production of the manuscript had to be close in time.

The manuscript consists of 110 folios (with some minimal gaps) and about 250 illuminated episodes. The dimensions of the codex are modest (205 x 160 mm), which made it suited to be transported, easily manipulated, and (ultimately) leafed through and read. The visual impact of this object of allegedly simple and childish miniatures, however, is that of a manuscript in which a rapid style with watercoloured images adds to the careful illustration of each part of the romance, the presence of traces of gold leaf in decorated initials, and the skilful matching of the physical and mental proximity between text and images. Leaving aside judgements about aesthetic value along the line of what is beautiful and what is not, what is high and what is low quality, this raises the question of the function of this volume, in view of the care with which it was conceived, designed, and of various details of its material production. Besides the illustration of battles and fantastic adventures, a particular theme stands out among the vast array of images—about 250 for a total of 110 folios: the love story between the two characters. We are going to look at it from both the literary point of view and regarding the artistic performance. The chivalric and Arthurian narrative intersects with the love story between two lovers, which is fully illustrated in the manuscript preserved in Paris, whose precise geographical origin and dating is, as already noted, unknown. The analysis of the key points of the love story between the two main characters, the way in which they are represented, and the highlighted scenes and episodes could provide a way to understand the reasons behind the production of the manuscript, or suggest a hypothesis about its recipients. Although this work is usually described as a chivalric romance, the love story has a particular significance in the narrative as a whole, which has to do with the upbringing of the knight, but also with the amorous education of the lady, and on the enhancement of the virtues that they both put to the service of their subjects once united in marriage.

The first meeting between the two protagonists of the story occurs at a point when the knight is tired, wandering without sleep or rest, and seeks nothing but a place to find a bit of solace. The canon for the meeting of the two lovers in the “garden of love” is here overthrown, for Jaufre, exhausted, enters it with the one and only purpose of sleeping, and the idea of winning the favour of a lady is far removed from his thoughts (fol. 37 v.). Thus, the narrator, letting the knight go into the “orchard” and settle down with his horse (“E Jaufre es canbaterratz/Ez es en el vergier entratz,” ll. 3180-3182) presents the owner, Brunissen:

El vergier es d'una pulcella/Que a nom Brunesentz la bella/E son castel a nom Monbrun (ll. 3069-70). [The garden belongs to a maiden / Whose name is Brunissen the fair / And her castle is called Monbrun]

The maiden has no father, mother, husband, nor brother: all have died and she alone holds the estate. Physically, Brunissen is described as perfect, fresh, and white, but in the illuminated codex these passages do not include her depiction.

E sa boca es tant plasentz/que par, qui ben la vol garar,/C'ades diga c'om l'an baisar (ll. 3158-60). [Her mouth is so pleasant / that it seems, looking at it / That it always invites a kiss]

However, this very first description already foreshadows a non-spiritual but physical love, made of glances but also of “invitations to kiss.” The theme of the wasteland is also introduced at this point: Brunissen suffers and grieves, and that same torment affects all of her lands and those who live in them.

The arrival of Jaufre into the garden disturbs the already troubled sleep of Brunissen, who then sends her servants time and time again. The servants wake Jaufre three times, but the knight engages them in combat and defeats them every time to return to his only purpose, sleep (fols. 38r–40v); the comic climax is provided by the scene where Jaufre is lifted up by brute force and carried to the castle (fol. 41r) before Brunissen (fol. 41v, fig. 1).

Brunissen is very upset, and yet Jaufre “keeps staring at her and likes her more and more ... the more obstinate he sees her, the more he feels attracted to her.” Nevertheless, Brunissen notices Jaufre’s kindness “love’s dart has struck her heart,” a line which refers to the scene of the first folio of the codex, where in fact we find a love god shooting an arrow (fol. 1 r.). The relation of the lady with the feeling of love is physical in nature:

Mas non pot pausar ni dormir/Car amors la ven assilli/que la fai volver e girar/e de son lieg sovent levar (ll. 3745-48). [She cannot rest or sleep / Because Love comes to assail her / and she tosses around again and again / and often gets up from bed]

Brunissen states her own will: she wants to love Jaufre not for his wealth, but for his courage. The lady, at this point, gets dressed to go to Jaufre in order to make sure that he does not flee the palace; at the same time the screams of the whole court are heard, so that Jaufre asks the barons who are watching him what is happening, but instead of answering, they actually attack him. The barons strike him with weapons, until they believe him dead, but Jaufre waits until everything calms down to escape. In the meantime, at a moment of danger to his life, he thinks of the beauty of Brunissen in sensual terms:

Ben er donc cel benausos/Que s'amor pora gavaina/Ni lla pora nuza baisar (ll. 3894-96). [Lucky the one / Who will earn her love / And kiss her naked]

His thoughts of kissing the bare skin of Brunissen are again interrupted by the shouts of the people in the castle: Jaufre's only option is to flee. Meanwhile, the lady, warned of the attack against the knight, runs into his room believing him dead. Codex fr. 2164 does not include scenes depicting the night thoughts of the two lovers, on the contrary, at this point the manuscript shows the image of the lady who seeks her knight without finding him, and draws attention to the sense of touch, for Brunissen touches an empty bed (fol. 46r, fig. 2). The lines here express her lust for the knight and return to the theme of the kiss, given that the lady would like to kiss Jaufre even dead.

Ab tant venc ves lo lieg de briu/Que tot mort lo cujet baisar/Car non pot mais l'amor celar/E leva  
ls draps e cant no l vi/Per pauc de son sen non issi/C'aissi com forsenada crida (ll. 4088-93).  
[She went straight to his bed / Where she hoped to kiss him in death / Because she is no longer  
able to hide her love / She lifts the sheets, and not seeing him / She almost went out of her mind /  
And screamed like a mad woman]

In this first encounter with the lady, Jaufre's body is actually a removed and fleeing body; a body that is first lifted, then wounded, and finally absent. His presence is physical and real, while at the same time it is also longed for through the loving thoughts of the lady, who at some point decides to act: she gets dressed and goes to him. Jaufre, his journey resumed (fol. 45r), has not yet completed his mission in defence of Arthur's court, and thus avoids the embrace and the union with Brunissen, the only representative of a well-established female power in her castle that commands her steward to go and search for Jaufre.

The turning point in both the romance and the illumination of manuscript fr. 2164 takes place around folio 60, when Jaufre finally finds and defeats Taulat. The work of the first copyist ends on folio 65 and is continued by a second copyist that carries on until the end of the volume. The abrupt change, whose causes are unknown, took place from one column to the other on the same folio and in the middle of a quire. This could be due to the sudden death of the copyist or to a decision made by the client, who would have been searching for the more elegant effects that can be found after folio 65, much more focused on courtly and choral scenes than on combats. Both hypotheses are not mutually exclusive, for perhaps they made a virtue of necessity. An overview of the entire codex shows that the *mise-en-page* is better managed in the second part, and not only is the copyist more elegant, but the illustrator also seems to execute drawings more freely. From folio 65 onwards, the narrative focuses on courtly aspects related to the story of Jaufre and Brunissen, and the same goes for the illustrations, which depict choral scenes with knights, courtly life, banquets, and other fantastic themes. It is interesting to point out a few details on folio 65: Jaufre's name at the top of the page is emphasized by a wreath formed by the lengthening of the initial's shaft that seems to outline a shield featuring a coat of arms. There is also a scene of homage and covenant, and finally Jaufre holds a banner and a shield bearing a

cross, which he stresses by pointing at it with the hand that firmly grasps the object. From this point onwards, after defeating Taulat, Jaufre can finally reach Brunissen:

E pueis tenra ves Brunesentz/On es sos cors e son ententz (ll. 6295-96) [He will go to Brunissen/  
Where his heart and even his thoughts are]

Love causes him both physical and psychological suffering, for:

Que l manjar li tol el dormir/Tot solatz e tot esbaudir/Car ades non ve Brunesentz (ll. 6704-06).  
[Prevents him from eating and sleeping / Deprives him of all joy and happiness / Because he can  
not see Brunissen]

At the time of the second encounter between the two, the lady is described as an apparition of light and beauty:

Relusi e menet clardad/Que tuit en son enluminat/cels que l'anavon environ (ll. 7160-63). [She  
shined and radiated light / So that she illuminated / all those around her]

The banquet is prepared, and during the feast the two stare at each other and sigh. Love once again causes Brunissen a physical reaction:

Ez az ella puiet el vis/Lo sanc del cors, si que rogis (ll. 7279-80). [Her body's blood shows in  
her face and she blushes]

The description of love toys here with the metaphor of the arrow that strikes the innermost part of the body—*mezolla* and *os* [marrow and bone]— and goes on through continuous sensual outbursts.

Don plaing e sospira soven/E trasal e reviu e mor/E pensa ades en son cor/Can poira la sazor  
vezer/Que l puesca entre sos bratz tener (ll. 7344-48). [[Brunissen] complains and sighs often  
/ And winces, comes alive and feels faint / And thinks constantly in her heart / When will the  
moment come / When she can hold him in her arms,

At the same time, Jaufre experiences reactions that have to do with the sensory sphere when he observes Brunissen and talks to her:

mor ez esconpren ez art (ll. 7359). [dies, feels feverish, and burns]

It is here that the author reelaborates the genre of the conflict of love in the context of the romance in verse: the two characters, each in their own room and bed, think about love, its wounds, its joys, and about who is worthy or unworthy of love. At this point Brunissen cites pairs of famous

lovers as examples of foolish and thwarted love: Floris and Blancheflour, Tristan and Iseult, Fenice and Cligès, and Dido and Aeneas. The next morning, after a sleepless night, the two lovers finally declare their love for each other, but Brunissen underlines how their bond is to be enshrined in the bond of marriage:

This our love will only end with death (l. 7929).

Meanwhile, Melian (who Jaufre saved from Taulat and plays the part of a feudal vassal of Brunissen in the romance) arrives at the court of Monbrun and horses are saddled to go and receive him. While the couple is on its way to meet Melian, two women approach Jaufre and ask for his help (fol. 80 r, Fig. 3). Brunissen, annoyed, replies:

Pulcella, ben parlatz en fol/Car qui per forsa no l mi tol/N'aurai ieu tot so que desir/Enantz que l lais da me partir (ll. 8115-18). [Girl, you speak foolishly / Unless he is taken away from me by force / I will have everything I want from him / Before letting him depart]

Brunissen imposes her will, which is depicted in the manuscript through a very expressive gesture: Jaufre is stopped from fulfilling his chivalric duties and is blocked by a physical movement of the woman. In truth, Jaufre seems happy to decline, because, he says, he will help the lady in distress only

Cant lo mieu afar aurai faitz (l. 8133). [once I have handled my affairs]

Jaufre's affairs have no doubt to do with his union with Brunissen, which is first matrimonial, and later carnal. After a lavish feast, Jaufre confides his love precisely to Melian. Melian himself at some point asks:

...mas que us deman/si volriatz sa drudaria (ll. 8244-45). [...I am asking / if you desire her carnally]

To which Jaufre responds:

Seiner, o ieu, s'esser podia/Que nula ren tan non desir (ll. 8246-47). [Yes sir, if it could happen / There is no other thing I wish so much]

At this point Melian also has a conversation with Brunissen to assess whether the knight's feelings are reciprocated; once satisfied of their mutual love, he decides to bring the matter to the gathered court, which consents to the union. It is in this passage that we find the only historiated initial of the manuscript, which depicts the lady (fol. 83r). The preceding line is the one in which everyone



accepts the union, while the female face that can be identified as Brunissen is inside a letter P, corresponding to the line that follows:

Parleren de Jaufre ueimais (l. 8341). [Now we will talk about Jaufre]

The portrait of a woman in an inhabited initial leads to a reflection on the issue of female self-representation in codices that were precisely meant for women, such as the initials depicting the female owners of later Books of Hours. The episode of the narrative emphasized here marks a turning point in the evolution of the story. This passage is also related to an illustration in the incipit of the manuscript where a little god of love is in the act of throwing an arrow, which in turn, in light of what the lines describe, could be connected to the darts present in the thoughts of the two protagonists. According to the analysis of the manuscripts of the *Bestiaire d'Amour* carried out by Xenia Muratova (MURATOVA 2003) the presence of the god of love, or Cupid, suggests an object produced within a “courtly milieu and conceived as a sign of love or as a wedding gift” (“ambito cortigiano e concepito come segno d’amore o regalo di nozze”) (MURATOVA 2003: 424). Moreover, in her volume *Sealed in Parchment* on the illustrated manuscripts of Chrétien’s romances produced in Picardy, Sandra Hindman suggests that the performance of this type of literature did not involve a wide audience, but that these texts were instead meant to be read by ladies to knights or to a small circle of people that would listen but were also close enough to be able to look at the images (HINDMAN 1994: 83). These assumptions point the research on the commission, use, and function of the manuscript towards a singular event on the occasion of which it would have been produced; for instance, the marriage between two prominent figures of the Occitan-Catalan society and the circle of the king of Aragon, to whom the work was dedicated. Furthermore, the recipient could have been a woman. This theory would also turn on its head the current widespread notion that this was a chivalric codex, and would instead emphasize the role of women in the wider issue of performance of illustrated manuscripts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

This initial hypothesis is also endorsed by what happens later: at this point the court is preparing to leave because the union between Jaufre and Brunissen also needs to be sanctioned by Arthur. During the journey, the two ladies Jaufre refused to help reappear (fols. 84r–86r). One of them draws him towards a fountain, and the second one, the fairy of Gibel, drags Jaufre to an underwater world where the fairy lives under the threat of the evil Fellon. The name of this fairy, Gibel, is precisely the connection between romances, the Mediterranean world, and the Arthurian legends spread across Italy, Spain, and the Midi. Mongibel is in fact another name for the Etna, in Sicily, where Arthur was said to have ended up after his death or disappearance (as the poem *Detto del Gatto Lupesco* recounts). The illustrations here show Jaufre’s lifeless body and the tears and despair of Brunissen and the whole court. The scenes of grief are successfully depicted in a rather expressive way: women tear at their hair, someone tries to pull the body from

the fountain by holding on to a foot, Brunissen mourns, sometimes desperate and sometimes resigned, as a Madonna watching Christ being taken down from the cross. The messianic themes of death and rebirth, purification through water, and the trip to a sub-aquatic and fantastic world remain to be better studied, particularly in light of their singular representation. Jaufre, who seems dead and then emerges victorious from the waters, is depicted inside a cup, which looks like a fountain but also as a baptismal font. Moreover, at the end of the thirteenth century, the romances in prose linked to the continuation of *Perceval* were already widespread. These texts focused on a religious rereading of the story of the Grail; a mysterious object in Chrétien that was then reinterpreted as a chalice. Following Espadaler's aforementioned most recent dating, the romance would have been composed and spread in the last years of the reign of Jaume I; the same period in which the *infant* Pere married Costanza of Sicily, the daughter of King Manfredi. The cultural context of production of a manuscript so lavishly illuminated could be related to the upper echelons of the entourage of the sovereign, since the romance is dedicated to an unspecified king of Aragon. It should also be noted that the themes that linked the events narrated in the book of Revelations to the figure of the *infant* Pere had already developed in the context of the court of Pere and Costanza after the wedding in Montpellier in 1262, even before the passing of Jaume I and the *infant's* ascent to the throne. Thus, after his marriage to Costanza, the *infant* inherited the messianic features that had earlier been attributed to the figure of Frederick II, as Martí Aurell has established in several of his publications (AURELL 1992: 227).

Were the name 'Gibel' to be interpreted in connection with the Etna—which could be the case—the romance would show a young knight, as was the *infant* himself, who saves Sicily from an enemy, just as Pere did after the Sicilian Vespers when he restored the island to Costanza as the last legacy from her father. This interweaving and overlapping of history and fictional episodes leads back to the narrative: at this point, once the fairy of Gibel is freed from Fellon, Jaufre can return to the surface while the enemy is carried on a stretcher (fol. 92v). It is precisely with this scene that I suggest to identify the wall painting discovered after the restoration works carried out in the Aljafería Palace in Zaragoza (Fig. 4), the symbol of Aragonese power—so much so that, even today, it is the seat of the Regional Parliament of the *Cortes de Aragón*. This painting is mentioned in a mid-fourteenth century letter of King Pere IV ordering the *Merino* of Zaragoza to “enrajolar e trespolar la camera moresca de l' Aljafería de Saragoça en les parets de la qual es pintada l'Historia de Jaufre” [tile and pave the Moorish chamber of the Aljafería in Zaragoza, whose walls depict the story of Jaufre] (RUBIÓ I LLUCH 1908).

The actual presence of these paintings, also mentioned by Loomis (LOOMIS 1938), could only be verified after the recent renovations. Clovis Brunel likened the architectural spaces depicted in the illuminated manuscript with this palace, stressing that the paintings in this important hall—so important that, for example, Pere III and Costanza were crowned there in 1276—bore witness

to the great popularity of this romance in the Aragonese court and its dissemination both as oral narrations and, no doubt, through codices written within this cultural milieu (BRUNEL 1943: XXII).

Thus, Jaufre emerges from the underwater world of the fairy of Gibel, and they all arrive at Arthur's court where the union between the protagonists can finally take place (fol. 97v):

A faitz Brunesentz e Jaufres/Amdos venir denant l'autar/E pres a cascun demandar/Se l'uns a del autre agrat/Ez amdui an o autreia (ll. 9755-60). [He invites Brunissen and Jaufre/ To stand before the altar / He asks each of them/ Whether they want the other / And both agree]

This union is especially interesting if the details of the illustration in folio 97v (Fig. 5) are taken into account. Not only do the two characters become husband and wife, but they are also crowned. A third character whose function needs further clarification stands next to Brunissen, albeit barely visible: a religious seems to interact with the other characters, although he is not mentioned in the text. He bears the typical tonsure and could represent a Franciscan, however, in contrast with the usual depiction of mendicant orders, he is wearing shoes. In any case, we know, for example, that Costanza was particularly devoted to the Franciscan order, and in 1266 she had the nunnery of Santa Clara built in Huesca. It seems that the whole scene would be better interpreted as a coronation or as the blessing of two sovereigns than as a wedding.

Jaufre and Brunissen finally return to Monbrun where their union is also celebrated, and have their beds prepared:

Pueis Brunesentz es s'en intrada/En sa canbra tota privada/E pueis Jaufre es s'en intratz/Apres ve ls vos ensem colgatz/Ar son Brunesentz e Jaufre/ambui ensem, ez anc per res/Neguns non cujet, en vertat/Pogues esser: tan tost colgat/Foron, que pogge esser ver;/Tant n'avia cascun voler (ll. 10873-82). [Then Brunissen entered / Her chamber alone / Jaufre entered after her / And there they lay together / Now Brunissen and Jaufre are / United, and in no way / Could the two of them have imagined that this would / Be true: that truly / They would lie together so soon / For they both wanted it so much]

And later:

Aissi jagron aquella noitz/Que anc ren non lor fes enoitz/di ren quel or plagues a far (ll. 10893-95). [So they lay together that night / And nothing disturbed them / From what they wished to do]

It is at this precise point that the final physical union between the two protagonists takes place, as the lines and the images so well describe. The image on folio 109v (Fig. 6) depicts the kiss as it was understood in the Middle Ages, a symbolic gesture of a deep union between two characters, which in this case is also as the prelude to a complete union full of Eros. This is not

an affectionate gesture, but a sensual one, which is completed by the embrace and the strong hold the two characters have on each other. In the various stages leading to the carnal union, as Jean de Meung theorized in the *Roman de la Rose*, the first one is the vision, that is, the sense of sight, and the total physical union between the two lovers is but the last. The kiss thus belongs to an intermediate stage: the touching of mouths and breaths, that is, of the intangible parts of the body.

In this case this is not a sinful union for, following Brunissen's own reasoning, it belongs to the matrimonial sphere. The last illustration of the manuscript, connected to the aforementioned passage, is therefore the one that represents the final physical union between two lovers, now husband and wife, after a series of adventures that have made the knight worthy both of the lady and of the right to rule over Monbrun. The miniature was partly censored, probably by later owners that considered it too explicit. The embrace is still noticeable, while the two faces joined in a kiss cannot be clearly discerned. It is unknown at what point in the history of the codex and its owners this censure took place, but this would certainly not have happened had the image not proved extremely expressive and perhaps even obscene.

The kiss is a sign of covenant and union, a true seal between the two protagonists of the romance but also, nearing the end of the manuscript, a return to the incipit, to the god of love and the praise to the king of Aragon.

Ultimately, the manuscript conveying the romance of Jaufre, a symbol of the king of Aragon, is very complex and can be interpreted on several levels that link the romance itself with the images of the codex, and perhaps with the history of the Aragonese house. Most of the scenes described by the text are illuminated and are accompanied by decorated initials, with some traces of gold leaf still extant. All these features, highlighted here through the analysis of a single aspect of the manuscript, the love relationship between the two protagonists, would suggest that it was commissioned by and intended for a member of the upper echelons of society. Furthermore, given the role played by the female protagonist, it would seem that the recipient was a woman or that it was produced on occasion of a wedding. To conclude, the exact origin of this codex has not yet been pinpointed and its production has not yet been attributed to a specific workshop or circle of itinerant artists. However, it is possible to hypothesize on the background of the sponsors, the artists, and the recipients as belonging to the circles of intellectuals, artists, and politicians who gravitated towards the Aragonese court in the second half of the thirteenth century; if not specifically around Jaume I at the end of his reign, perhaps around Pere III and Costanza of Sicily, between their marriage (1262) and coronation (1276) up to the eighties of the thirteenth century and the Sicilian Vespers (1282).

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Fig. 1 - *Roman de Jaufre*, Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164, fol. 41v.





Fig. 2 - *Roman de Jaufre*, Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164, fol. 46r.



Fig. 3 - Roman de Jaufre, Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164, fol. 80r.



Fig. 4 - Zaragoza, Aljaferia Palace, mural painting depicting the *Roman de Jaufre* (photo by Riva Efstifeeva)



Fig. 5 - *Roman de Jaufre*, Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164, fol. 97v.



Fig. 6 - *Roman de Jaufre*, Paris, Bnf, fr. 2164, fol. 109v.