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Leslie C. Brook

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A Knight with Reservations: the Role of Dinadan in 'Escanor'

The edition of *Escanor* by Richard Trachsler has made this late verse romance more accessible than hitherto¹. It was composed by Girart d'Amiens c. 1280 and dedicated to Eleanor of Castile, wife of Edward I. The poem consists of some 26000 octosyllabics, and involves basically two separate quests which eventually come together: that of Kay for Andrivete, and that of Gauvain to clear his name in response to a false accusation. This latter motif is not original, but Kay, while retaining his traditional attributes, notably a robust tongue and some ill-temper, now becomes a principal character inspired by love, and after many vicissitudes he eventually wins his bride, who has reciprocated his love since their first meeting early in the poem.

Besides these main characters, including the somewhat mysterious and elusive Escanor, a small but significant role is played in two scenes in the first half of the romance by Dinadan. He first appeared as a character in the *Prose Tristan*, and his role there as a knight who criticises aspects of knight errantry and refuses to be tied to an *amie* has already attracted some critical attention². Trachsler himself devoted a short article partly to his role in *Escanor*, but principally to show that Girart had an intimate knowledge of the prose romances and of romance in general, and to confirm that he borrowed the character of Dinadan from the *Prose Tristan*³. It still remains to examine more closely the use and effectiveness of Dinadan in *Escanor*, in which once more he criticises some chivalric practices and is wary of female companionship.

Dinadan first appears in the poem in a comic scene between himself, Mordred and his *amie*, and Kay (vv. 613-1630), and in this episode he is tested principally in respect of his chivalric duties. Kay is on his way to Northumberland to take up the challenge of a proposed tournament, for which the prize is the hand of Andrivete. Ironically, though, he has set out not to win the girl's hand, but merely to impress his companions at court, where he has been stung by their teasing and mockery. He is accordingly lost in thought at their perceived injustice to him when he happens upon

(1) G. D'AMIENS, *Escanor: roman arthurien en vers de la fin du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Richard Trachsler, 2 vols, TLF 449, Genève, Droz, 1994. All quotations are taken from this edition.

The only previous edition of this poem is by Henri Michelant, *Der Roman von Escanor*, Bibliothek des Literarischen Vereins Stuttgart, 178, Tübingen, 1886.

(2) Notably in Alfred Adler, *Dinadan, inquiétant ou rassurant*, in *Mélanges Rita Lejeune*, 2 vols, Gembloux, Duculot, 1968, vol. II, pp. 935-43; and

Keith Busby, *The likes of Dinadan: the role of the misfit in Arthurian literature*, «Neophilologus», 67 (1983), pp. 161-74. In addition R. KINDRICK *Dynadan and the code of chivalry*, «BBSIA», 27 (1973), pp. 232-37, examines his role in Malory.

(3) R. TRASCHLER, *De la prose au vers: le cas Dinadan dans l'Escanor de Girart d'Amiens*, in Gerold Hilty, *Actes du XXe Congrès International de Linguistique et Philologie Romanes*, 5 vols, Tübingen-Basel, Francke Verlag, 1993, vol. V, pp. 401-12.

Mordred's *amie*, who has been left at a fountain with a dwarf, while Mordred and Dinadan, who is accompanying him, have temporarily gone off into the forest on hearing a damsel's cries for help. Because he is preoccupied, Kay fails to hear Mordred's *amie* when she greets him, and she takes strong exception to what she interprets as his rudeness in ignoring her. She speaks disparagingly of him, her words being echoed by the dwarf. When Kay becomes aware of what they are saying about him, he does not understand their attitude, but in turn insults the damsel and throws the dwarf into the fountain. Mordred and Dinadan return to find the damsel in tears; they chase after Kay, challenge him, and all three are wounded in the subsequent fights.

When Mordred and Dinadan are introduced at the start of this episode, Mordred is characterised in just a few words («Car en lui n'ot que fausseté, / Felonie et desloiauté», vv. 651-52), whereas Dinadan's character and attitude are described much more fully, as he would probably be less familiar to the reader. The detail provided hints at an intention to give him some prominence. He is said to be:

Uns chevaliers bien renonmez
 Et de ses compaignonz amez
 Et de touz ceuz ou il hantoit,
 664 Car cortois et sages estoit
 Et plainz de toutes bones mors,
 Fors tant qu'a son gré par amors
 N'amerait, ce dist, en sa vie:
 668 N'avoit de fenme amer envie,
 N'avoit cure de lor deduit,
 Car on l'en ot pieça si duit
 Et chastiié si laidement
 672 Qu'il avoit fait un sairement:
 Et quel? que dame ne pucele,
 Tant fust savelleuse ne bele,
 N'auroit en conduit a nul jor
 676 Ne ne garderoit a sejour.

Dinadan, then, possesses good qualities and is well liked, but he is wary of being involved with a woman, a caution evidently born of experience. Following the above extract the narrator goes on to tell us that Dinadan always tried to avoid any company that might bring him harm, and explains that it was against his will that he was persuaded by Mordred to join him and his *amie* on their way to court, as he feared that Mordred's fiery nature might lead him into undesirable situations; nor did he trust the damsel, whom he considered to be «mal enseingnie» (v. 704). However, his reported first actions in the poem merely convey his correct knightly reflexes, as he has set off with Mordred to respond to the other damsel's cries for help. He reassures her that her assailant, Brun sanz Pitié, will not be allowed to harm her (vv. 764-65) and lectures Brun on his persistent cruelty to others and his unknighly behaviour. He and Mordred both unsuccessfully chase after Brun, and as they return to Mordred's *amie* they discuss the damsel's lucky escape and the punishment that Brun deserved. Dinadan's actions are therefore initially normal by knightly standards and are praiseworthy. It is when the two knights discover the plight of Mordred's *amie* that he becomes more interesting and distinctive. As soon as Mordred learns that Kay has upset his *amie* with insults, he pursues him, despite the efforts to restrain him by Dinadan, who wisely says that he knows Kay, and knows that he would not have acted as he did had he not first been provoked. He offers to go and speak to Kay himself, and discover from him exactly what had taken place, in order to prevent Mordred from accusing Kay or attacking him without reason. Nevertheless he is unable

to stop Mordred from catching up with Kay, and in the ensuing encounter Mordred is wounded and unhorsed.

Mordred's defeat poses a Cornelian-type dilemma for Dinadan concerning duty: he is angry that his travelling companion has been seriously wounded, but is reluctant to challenge Kay, as they both belong to the king's household, for to attack him would infringe their shared code of honour:

- 1180 Car Kez et il d'une maisnie
Sont compaignon par sairement,
Ne parjurer si laidement
Ne se vaudroit pas volentiers,
1184 Car c'est un trop vilainz mestiers.
Or que fera il? Il ne set,
Fors tant qu'il dist que Dix le het,
Quant si granz meschiez li avint
1188 Qu'en tele compaignie vint
Dont bienz ne li pooit venir.

He reminds himself that he had resolved not to be drawn into accompanying any damsel or knight who might bring him trouble, and bitterly regrets having allowed himself to be persuaded to accompany Mordred and his *amie*. He becomes therefore indirectly a second victim of Mordred's damsel, and something of a reflection of Kay, involved in a disagreement against his will. He fears that Mordred has been mortally wounded on account of his *amie* («Car par li, ce sai ge de voir, / Est Mordrés, je croi, a la mort», vv. 1206-07), and knows that having agreed to travel with him he must now avenge him. To fail to do so would be cowardly, but equally it would be wrong to attack a stable companion:

- 1225 «Et si sai: je me mefferai,
Car grant desloiauté ferai
De mon compaignon corre seure».

He nevertheless challenges Kay and both are unhorsed and wounded. There is irony here, in that he is a double for Kay as a victim of the damsel, yet he is also attacked by him. As they pick themselves up Kay enquires who he is and why he has attacked him, and Dinadan explains how he unwillingly became involved with Mordred and his damsel, «une garce mal ensaignie» (v. 1318), and now feels justly punished for his imprudence:

- «Mais j'avoie petit apris,
1324 S'est bien drois qu'ensi m'en soit pris;
Une autre fois aprendrai
Tant que pluz sages reserai».

The harassed Kay's scathing reply to the chastened Dinadan highlights the difficult choices knights may be called on to make:

- «Dynadan, dist Kez, bien conois
1328 Que vo cortoisie .ij. nois
Ne vaut, a ce que vous moustrez.
Ainz est vos sairemens outrez,
Dont povrement vous avanchiez,
1332 Car en touz lix me deüssiez

Garder par droit conme vo cors:
 Car tez est jurez li acors
 De toz noz compaingnonz ensamble».

Dinadan's failure to protect Kay represents a further irony. He defends his action by stating his obligation to avenge harm done to a travelling companion, though he regrets having had to do so in this case:

1360 «Mais n'est pas tot a ma seance,
 Dont mout me poise durement:
 Ne m'en sai celer autrement».

Kay explains to Dinadan how he was insulted by the damsel, and once the situation is understood on both sides their differences are quickly over and they go their separate ways to seek healing for their wounds. Dinadan ensures that Mordred is tended to before returning to court without him, despite Mordred's reluctance to let him go.

When Dinadan reaches court at Caerleon, he follows normal custom by relating his adventures to the king and his entourage. Arthur's reaction is to laugh at Kay's encounter with the damsel and dwarf, but Dinadan and Mordred are criticised for attacking him. There is some sympathy expressed for Kay, but none for Dinadan, who is merely teased at being unhorsed, and while Dinadan tries to defend his pride, stating that better knights than he have in the past suffered humiliation, and that the king will mock worse than he, Arthur criticises him further for abandoning Kay's *amie* and not bringing her to court under his protection. This comment opens the way for Dinadan to show once more his contempt for the damsel who brought him so much trouble, thanks to Mordred, and he expresses his general mistrust of damsels who accompany knights, who in turn deserve all they get if they allow them to do so:

«Je pri a Diu mesavenir
 Puist a toz ceuz qui conduiront
 1600 Fenme par païs ne menrront,
 Car nule n'en fait-bon conduire,
 Fors por genz grever et destruire,
 Puis ne s'en font se moquier non.
 1604 Maint honme preu, de grant renon,
 Sont peri par lor compaingnie».

Moreover, he does not want the love of any woman «Je lour claim quite lor danger», v. 1611). Arthur protests conventionally that love of a woman is inspirational for knights, but Dinadan is adamant that he wants nothing to do with them, as they bring only trouble: «Car onques jor n'en oi que paine / Et honte et mal, sanz bien avoir», vv. 1626-27), a comment which is greeted with general laughter from the court.

At this point Dinadan's participation in the poem is suspended, while a new episode begins in which Gauvain is sent to re-establish order in Brittany, where a revolt has taken place. So what has Girart achieved by including Dinadan in this early part of the narrative? To begin with, the whole episode of Mordred and his *amie* could be excised from the poem, as it has no direct bearing on the plot. Kay could simply have gone straight to Northumberland, but Girart clearly wished to broaden the narrative scope with some incidentals which would allow further light to be shed on one of his principal characters, and on the protocol within which he and other knights operated. Above all, the tone is intended to be basically comic: firstly the comedy of self-absorption, which insulates knights from an awareness of their immediate surroundings and can lead to

disaster, as we know from the *Chevalier de la Charrete*. What is more natural, after all, than for Kay, smarting under the treatment he has just received at court, to be thinking about it to the point of distraction as he rides along? There is, too, the comedy of manners, in the haughty, almost tyrannical attitude of the damsel, quick to perceive a slight and unleash her angry tongue. A streak of anti-feminism characterises in fact this part of the poem, and it will reappear later in the scene between Andrivete and Dinadan. The overriding comic thread in this episode, however, concerns Kay, who seems to run into trouble at every turn: court, damsel, then an unasked for encounter with a fellow knight who wounds him. This emphasis is understandable in a romance that gives a prominent role to Kay and is about to develop his character in an unexpected direction by making him fall in love⁴. As for Dinadan, he is not strictly necessary for the scene, yet it would be the poorer without him. His philosophy of avoidance of trouble highlights the dangers of knighthood, obligation and involvement, while the plight in which he finds himself comically confirms his pessimistic view of romance damsels, and makes him in his victimhood a reinforcing double for Kay. The situation also demonstrates the conflicting principles to which knights can become prey. Dinadan's subsequent reception at court then brings out a certain harshness and lack of sympathy from a king and courtiers ever ready to criticise and mock. Is Girart making a political point? Without Dinadan, Girart would have had to use Mordred or a messenger to inform the court of Kay's progress, which would have been less effective and less entertaining.

Dinadan's second scene occurs some ten thousand lines later, and this time, while his chivalric principles are again explored, he plays a role comparable with that of Kay in the earlier scene, as he is directly involved in an encounter with a woman, in this case no less a person than the heroine, Andrivete. By this time Kay and Andrivete have fallen in love during the tournament at Bamburgh⁵, but a complex sequence of events and misunderstandings has separated them. Kay is back at court believing a false rumour that Andrivete has married another; Andrivete has managed to escape from the captivity of her uncle Aiglin, who has tried to arrange a marriage advantageous to him since the death of her father, and is now on her way to court to try to meet up with Kay. She has already met up with Espinogre, who offers to accompany her, but she declines. Then Dinadan appears, and immediately Espinogre challenges him to a joust, with the conventional words «Biauz sire, gardez vous de moy!» (v. 11769). When Dinadan refuses, on the grounds that there is no dispute between them, Espinogre is surprised at the expression of an attitude that runs counter to knightly custom, and he thinks he is being mocked: «Avenir / Ne vi ainc ce, vous me gabez!» (vv. 11785-86). Dinadan's response to Espinogre's charge of cowardice is that knights challenge one another simply because they are encouraged to do so by women to keep up «sifais geuz» (v. 11804), and that he has no intention of risking spilling his own blood unnecessarily⁶. Espinogre's observation that Dinadan is clearly not in

(4) Kay in love does not cease to be a comic figure. He will spend much of the text separated from his beloved, who hides from him when she is unsure of his feelings towards her, and while others know who and where she is. He is also the butt of much teasing from Arthur, in response to which Kay is hardly an «Arlequin poli par l'amour», since he replies in crude, uncourtly language (vv. 22539 and 22546).

(5) When he first falls in love at the tournament, Kay is convinced that through the inspiration of love one can achieve whatever one wants (v. 4271), and that love is a morally improving experience (v. 4297 ff.). This offsets Dinadan's arid attitude, and reinforces what Arthur said to Dinadan at court.

(6) This refusal to respond positively to the challenge is adapted from the *Prose Tristan*. At one point Dinadan is challenged by a knight errant: «... et dist a Dynadant, ki ja estoit delés lui: «Sire chevaliers, gardés vous de moi! A jouter vous couvient.» Dynadans conmenche a sousrire quant il entent ceste parole, si li respont tout maintenant: «Dans chevaliers, se Dieus vous doinst boine aventure, ne sariés vous en autre guise saluer chevalier errant fors que disant: 'gardés vous de moi, a jouter vous covient'? Se Dieus me saut, chis salus n'est pas courtois. Et vous, que savés ore se je sui orendroit aaisiés de jouter?»» (*Le Roman de Tristan en prose*, ed. PH. MÉNARD et al., TLF, 9

love then allows Dinadan to reiterate forcefully his unwillingness to be involved with women: «- Miex ameroie a poi estre ars, / Dist li autres, c'amie eüsse» (vv. 11816-17)⁷, and to restate his view already expressed in the earlier episode that he will not fight for a woman's love:

- 11828 «Car, par le foi que je vouz doi,
 Pour dame ne pour damoisele,
 Tant soit savereuse ne bele,
 Ne me quier metre én aventure [...]
 11841 Je sui d'eles amer si las
 Que quite lor claim lor solas,
 Lor deduit et lor cortoisie,
 11844 Car en vie mesaaisie
 Et en dolor vit qui les croit».

It is apparent again from v. 11841 that he speaks from experience. On the other hand the narrator makes it clear once more that despite his words Dinadan was a braver and worthier knight than he might sound:

- Cil chevaliers estoit sanz faille
 Bien connoissanz et preuz et sages,
 11860 Et mout estoit ses vasselages
 Pluz granz que souvent ne contoit.

He was in fact much respected at court for his wisdom («Car preuz ert et de grant savoir, / Sages et en fais et en dis», vv. 11876-77), but he was not always taken seriously (vv. 11882-83a)⁸.

The encounter with Espinogre might have ended there, had not Andrivete, overhearing Dinadan's words, declared that she had never heard such slander of women and wished him ill:

- 11900 Quant il fait si grant fellonie
 Que de dire tel vilonnie
 De dames ne de damoiseles.
 Et por l'amor de ses noveles

vols, Genève, Droz, 1989+, vol. IV, ed. J. CLAUDE FAUCON, 1991, §117.14-22); and a bit further on: «- Comment? Dynadan, fait li chevaliers. Ne volés vous donc maintenir la coustume du roiaume de Logres? Ja estes vous chevaliers errans! - Chertes, ce est voirs, fait Dynadans. Mais quant je voi que mout grant acoisson ne me mainne a joster ne a combattre, je m'en suefre mout volentiers, car je ne vieng mie grantment en liu u je ne truisse tel encontre. Tous jours truis je chevaliers ki me dient quant il m'encontent: "Gardés vous de moi, sire cevaliers! A joster vous couvient". Ce est orendroit une coustume si commune par tout le roiaume de Logres que li chevalier errant ne sevent dire li un as autres fors que "Gardés vous de moi!" Je truis chestui salu en tant de lieus que, s'il m'anuie, ce n'est mie mout grant merveille. Pour coi je les refus du tout et refuserai en tous lieus a mon pooir» (*ibid.*, §118.19-33). Dinadan views such encounters as childish and dangerous: «Issi voirement m'aït

Dieus, or puis je bien dire pour voir que je ne vi onques si fole gent ne si niche com sont li chevalier errant du roiaume de Logres qui pour noient se vont toute jour metant a mort, et pour noient se racordent. Voirement font il com li petit enfant ki legierement se courechent ensamble et mout legierement se racordent!» (*ibid.*, §115.17-23).

(7) Dinadan refuses to involve himself in love in the *Prose Tristan*, too: «D'Amours ki si vait tourmentant et metant son sergant a mort me gart ore Dieus, et de tele amour me desfende!» (IV, §82.20-21); and «Et pour ce gart je mon cuer o moi, que je ne quier, si m'aït Dieus, que dame ne damoisele en ait la saisine jour que vive» (*ibid.*, §82.56-58).

(8) There is an error in the line numbering in the Trachsler edition here. The numbering has slipped, so that the line numbered 11884, should actually be 11885. However the computer-generated error corrects itself on the next page at line 11912. This problem also occurs on some other right-hand pages.

11904 Li veut mal si tres durement
 Qu'ele ne peüst nulement
 Autant nul chevalier haïr.

This may seem an emotional over-reaction from the poem's heroine, and encouraged by Espinogre she proceeds to berate Dinadan at some length for slandering women (vv. 11924-72), which is unbecoming in a knight. Like Kay in the earlier encounter with Mordred's *armie*, Dinadan feels himself unjustly attacked by a damsel to whom he has done no personal wrong, and understandably enquires: «Dame, que vous ai ge meffait?» (v. 11977). He compares her sharp tongue to that of Kay, ironically suggesting that they would suit each other, and adds the crucial information that Kay currently has no *amie*, having been jilted and tricked by a damsel in Northumberland, who has just married an inferior husband.

However purely entertaining this meeting between Andrivete and Dinadan might be on the level of lively comment on knightly conduct and in the tension between the two characters, the prime purpose is clearly to inform Andrivete of the moves by Aiglin behind her back to discredit her in Kay's eyes. Realizing that Dinadan knows more, and without giving herself away, Andrivete encourages him to say more by expressing surprise that such a damsel should exist. She then learns that Kay had intended to go to rescue her in Northumberland, until he had heard that she had married unworthily, a presumed situation which allows Dinadan to deliver a general condemnation of women's unprincipled behaviour:

12076 «Mais a fenme granment ne chaut
 S'ele choisist ou bas ou haut,
 Mais que face sa volenté:
 Ja n'i gardera parenté
 12080 Ne biauté ne senz ne justece,
 Fors la ou ses talenz s' adrece».

Dinadan also reports that Kay has become so disillusioned that he now mistrusts all women, a view which reflects his own; and that had Aiglin not given Andrivete to someone of low birth, Arthur would have waged war against him to save her inheritance. Dinadan condemns her for her alleged betrayal and for rejecting the good counsel of the faithful *chastelain* Yonet. Like Gauvain, Andrivete thus becomes a victim of a false accusation.

The situation becomes more dramatic and testing for Dinadan with the chance arrival of Lancelot's brother Hector, who issues the usual challenge to joust, an invitation declined by Dinadan but accepted by Espinogre, who is then badly wounded. Dinadan's reaction is again to condemn useless jousting:

Et dist que bien sont avuglé
 Li chevalier de la Bretaingne,
 12320 Car l'unz l'autre ocist et mehaigne
 Sanz achoison et sanz meffait.

However, he knows that honour dictates that he now fight, and that he is obliged to report his actions at court, whether they be successes or failures (vv. 12336-39); but in his view the custom of jousting is dangerous and infantile:

«Pour coi m' estuet ainsi chevir
 Et la volenté assouvir

Des fox qui de ce s'entremetent,
 12344 Qui pour noient a mort se metent,
 Pour noient fors que par enfance».

While Dinadan is resigned to his fate, Andrivete, «qui tant haoit / Dynadan que pluz ne pooit» (vv. 12359-60), because of what he had said about women and reported about her in particular, cannot resist taunting him with the fact that he was happy to insult women, but is afraid to confront an adversary in knightly combat. So we are presented again with a damsel quick to take offence and to display a sharp tongue. It is not, however, her goading that makes Dinadan face Hector, but his sense of honour. He is immediately unhorsed by Hector and then left alone with Andrivete, as both Hector and Espinogre ride off. Dinadan laments his unmerited fate:

«Diex, dist il, c'avoie je fait
 12444 Ce chevalier, ne quel meffait
 Pour coi corre me deüst seure?»

His fall and wound prove to him again the foolishness of jousting, as he comments to himself ironically about the honour it has bestowed upon him and the reception he will receive at court when they hear news of it. To add to his misery Andrivete in her anger displays no compassion, but heaps further sarcasm upon him (vv. 12479-516). Seeing no reason for her hostility towards him, Dinadan addresses her as «damoisele contralieuse» (v. 12527), and asks her to leave him alone, but Andrivete threatens to stay with him to bring him more trouble, reiterating her hatred of him for defaming women:

«Et vouz hé, et si doit Dix faire!
 12560 Car chevaliers qui veut deffaire
 Les dames ne les damoiseles,
 Les meschines ne les puceles
 Doit bien Dix et li monz haïr».

Dinadan decides that silence is the best answer to her sustained verbal assault, and rides away («Et s'enfuit parmi une lande», v. 12601). On this occasion there is no follow-up scene at court which would demonstrate further reaction there to his attitudes and adventures.

Dinadan's second appearance in the poem is spread over some thousand lines, and although the central purpose is to keep Andrivete informed of Aiglin's machinations and of Kay's reaction, the lengthy scene is also used to question the custom of jousting, when no prior offence is involved. Knights may be inspired by the wish to impress an *amie* by displaying prowess, but jousts can be dangerous, and by implication a distraction from the more serious business of fighting for causes and protecting the innocent. Dinadan has ample proof that even involuntary involvement with a damsel can bring trouble, and although his attitude is basically selfish and too all-embracing, Andrivete's sharp-tongued reaction to someone who is in part only the messenger of unwelcome news is not very attractive⁹. Girart may well be trying too hard

(9) Girart shows Andrivete in a much better light when she deliberately informs Arthur that Gifflet is safe, knowing that he would be worried about his welfare (v. 14448 ff., esp. vv. 14466-70); and

subsequently she contacts Gauvain and arranges with him to help him find Gifflet if he will in turn promise to help her against Aiglin and reconcile her with Kay.

to ingratiate himself with his dedicatee¹⁰, and in so doing makes his heroine precisely the kind of damsel that Dinadan could with some justification be wary of!

The scene may seem over-long and repetitive in what Dinadan and Andrivete say to each other, but the length is not really out of proportion with the leisurely pace of the rest of the poem. As for Dinadan, he has now sufficiently made his points, and there is no further role for him once the second narrative strand gets under way. He therefore appears only in the first half of the poem, in the scenes concerned with Kay or Andrivete. Trachsler feels that Dinadan, along with other elements adapted from the *Prose Tristan*, are not particularly well integrated into Girart's poem¹¹. Yet Dinadan's gloomy attitude, prone to self-fulfilling prophecy, is undeniably entertaining and casts an interesting light on the heroine and on assumptions about knighthood and *courtoisie*. Dinadan is, of course, no more than an incidental character. We are never told, for instance, what had made him so wary of involvement with women. Nevertheless he is ideally suited to add spice to the encounters that Kay and Andrivete meet on their journeys. He is far from being a one-dimensional character who just happens to report Aiglin's manoeuvrings to Andrivete and then disappears. He is basically a comic figure, involuntarily involved like Kay in troubles not primarily of his making, when all he wants is a quiet life, but he is never a buffoon like Kay. At court, moreover, Dinadan is a respected figure, and Arthur regrets that he is not there more often, describing him as one «qui n'est pas / Chevaliers c'on doie meffaire» (vv. 6788-89), while the narrator explains that he is not often at court because he prefers to improve himself as a knight errant (vv. 1522-23), but this presumably implies fighting for causes, not futile jousting. The attitude of his companions, too, is summed up later in the poem, when Dinadan sets out with them to find the captured Gifflet. They like him, and bear with his criticisms:

Dynadanz refu el voiage,
Dont lié furent, n'i ot celui,
Car nuz hon ne fust avoec lui
14396 Qui sa compaignie n'amast,
Conment qu'il les mesaamast¹².

Dinadan may well be a borrowed character, but in the rather loosely constructed narrative that is *Escanor*, his two appearances can be said to be skilfully used, in that each time he performs a useful role as commentator or informant, while his critical views of chivalry are lightened by his rather comic misfortunes and the laughter with which his words are greeted at court. On the other hand his criticism of futile jousting puts the reader in mind of *La Queste del saint Graal*, which brilliantly shows the stupid waste of life in the Gauvain-Yvain fight. So despite the comedy, Girart may actually be on Dinadan's side in this, reflecting a clerical view of the world, in which knights do not spill blood foolishly, but only in good causes. A clerical outlook may also account for the pious tone of the closing thousand or so lines of the poem, recalling not only *La Queste del saint Graal*, but also the end of *La Mort le Roi Artu*; and, too, in the portrayal of the female characters, a topic which has already been studied elsewhere¹³.

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(10) The praise of Guinevere (vv. 12867-91) may also have been penned partly with his dedicatee in mind.

(11) TRACHSLER, *De la prose au vers ...*, p. 409.

(12) In the *Prose Tristan* Dinadan is not a particularly bad character. He fights when he has to and is a friend of Tristan. He accordingly mocks Marc and leads him into fights to humiliate him

(IV, §36 ff.). He also strikes up a friendship with Palamides (§82 ff.) and composes the defaming *Lai voir Disant*, which he then has sung in front of Marc in revenge for Marc's insulting letter to Guinevere (§184 ff.).

(13) See my *Demons and angels: female portrayal in Escanor*, «Reading Medieval Studies», XXVIII (2002), pp. 23-38.