The Breton “An Buhez Sante Barba – The Life of Saint Barbara” and its Contemporaries: a Comparative Study

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Acknowledgement

When Paul Widmer asked me to join him on the DFG-project “Kritische Edition des mittelbretonischen *Buhez Sante Barba* – Leben der heiligen Barba” I gladly accepted the opportunity. The topic for my thesis grew out of this project and I was and still am very grateful to Professor Widmer for giving me that chance and motivating me to develop my skills in Breton and French, even via skype if necessary.

Yet linguistics was never my strong suit and thus the topic that developed turned out to be of a literary nature. I am very grateful to Professor Poppe and his unending help and patience in discussing motifs, episodes, towers and fountains, but also the problems that arise from attempting such a project with a family.

Many people have helped and supported me during that time in various ways, and even if I will not be able to name them all, I would like to say a few thank-yous.

To Professors Longtin, Dietl, Fielitz, and Le Bihan for providing me with sources, insights, and their own findings on one or another topic that arose during my studies.

To my colleagues Ricardo Scherschel, Christina Fischer and Raphael Sackmann for sharing their findings on related Barbara-projects with me, to Theresa Roth for enlightening me with regard to numerous Latin-issues, to Drs. Elena Parina and Anna Bauer for being dependable sources on any matters academic, and to all members and friends of the Celtic department in Marburg for numerous coffee-breaks with open ears and hearts.

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Thank you all a million times over!
1. Introduction

A play was a one-off occurrence, virtually never repeated. Or rather if and when it was repeated, it was no longer the same play. [...] However, even if an existing text could be used, it was always, in the end, quite substantially modified, often for practical reasons [...]. [N]o completely original Passion Play has survived which was written after 1452. All were to some extent derivative of earlier plays. Even when no existing text was available, as in the case of a “new” saint’s play, the fatistes drew heavily on narrative texts.
(Runnalls 1999, 62-69)

The studies Graham Runnalls conducted on Medieval theatre are based on meticulous research. He did not only investigate the surviving manuscripts or print versions of the plays, but analysed various types of material relating to the performances of the plays, such as archive records, contracts, records of payments etc. This resulted in a very practical approach to the stage of late Medieval Europe. Although he focussed on the French Medieval theatrical world, his results apply well to the Breton context, which unfortunately has as yet not been investigated in such detail. That is why I have drawn on Runnalls’ work extensively in my study of the Breton saint’s play An Buhez Sante Barba – “The life of Saint Barbara” (referred to as An Buhez). I have attempted to understand how the Breton play may have been put on stage. Based on Runnalls’ findings, I have asked various questions of the Breton text: Who played the roles? What might the stage have looked like? How big was it and what constructions were essential for the performance of the play? Was the play meant to be performed at all? Due to the absence of any archival material, I was only able to approach these questions from the point of view of the text itself. This yielded good results, which I present in the following chapter on Medieval Theatre (chapter 2). However, more research, particularly in the archives of Brittany, would be immensely desirable in order to determine any hints with regard to the questions if, when and where the play may have been performed. The survey in chapter 2 will ‘set the stage’, so to speak, and provide the cultural and historical background for the literary approach to the text, which constitutes the core of my study. After illustrating the complex Breton rhyme scheme and the effort that went into the composition of the Breton play (chapter 3), I will address the questions why a Breton play about Saint Barbara exists in the first place and which audience it was intended for (chapter 4). After that, I will examine the play for possible sources the author may have had in mind by comparing each of the motifs in An Buhez to the corresponding sections in two French plays and two Latin legends (chapters 5-13).

The Breton play An Buhez has come down to us in three (four) print versions. These date from the years 1557, 1608 (two surviving copies) and 1647. Their inter-textual relationship
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was investigated by Ricarda Scherschel, who in her article also provides considerable detail with regard to the history of the prints and their layout. She concludes that there is “a close link between the 1608 and 1647 prints” and argues for a descent of the latter from the former. Furthermore, she suggests “that the 1608 print descends directly from the 1557 print, although a split descent of these two prints from a common ancestor cannot be ruled out completely” (Scherschel 2014, 13). With regard to the content, the three versions hardly differ and can be treated as the same text for the intents and purposes of my study. In 1888 Emile Ernault edited the oldest version of 1557, using the youngest version of 1647 to supplement the missing parts as the 1608 version was yet undiscovered. He included a French translation and a *Dictionnaire étymologique du Breton moyen* in his edition¹ and thus provided a very helpful tool for the study of the Breton play (Ernault 1888). The 1608 version was made accessible as a diplomatic text edition by Paul Widmer in collaboration with Christina Fischer and Ricarda Scherschel in 2013 (Widmer 2013). Widmer has also been working on a new edition with an English translation of the oldest version, taking into account the variant readings of both 1608 and 1647. As part of the project, I made the English translation and thus the English translations of the Breton play used in this study are my own. The numbering of the stanzas, however, corresponds to Ernault’s edition. It has recently come to my attention² that Yves Le Berre published a new edition with an introduction and a French translation of *An Buhez* (Le Berre 2018). Unfortunately, I could not include Le Berre’s edition in my thesis because it had already reached a state of near completion by the time I became aware of the new edition. However, it will be of great importance to any subsequent studies of *An Buhez*.

In order to find out which texts may have inspired the author of the Breton play, I have compared the Breton play to contemporaneous sources about Saint Barbara. First and foremost among these are the two French mystery plays about her, because they do not only have the same heroine, but also belong to the same genre. The older of these two French plays, *Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées* (referred to as *cinq journées*), has been preserved in one manuscript version, which is currently being edited by Mario Longtin and his colleagues Laurent Brun and Jacques Lemaire (*Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, BN fr. 976*). He has very kindly allowed me to use his work in progress for my studies, for which I am exceedingly grateful. Parts of the play were edited previously by Jun-Han Kim (Kim 1998). The manuscript version is dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (Longtin 1996, 5; Kim 1998, 365). The play consists of five days. The end and the beginning of each day are marked

¹In fact, Christian-J. Guyonvarc’h accuses Ernault of having used *An Buhez* merely as a means to publish the dictionary rather than to provide a true analysis of the play: “La Vie de Sainte Barbe a été ainsi le prétexte, pour Ernault, à la publication du *Dictionnaire étymologique du breton moyen*, mais non d’une étude de la pièce” (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 212).

²I would like to thank Prof. Nelly Blanchard for the reference.
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by stage directions, but not by introductions or epilogues. The play is of considerable length (23792 verses) and sophistication on the part of the author (fatiste). The younger French play, Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en deux journées (referred to as deux journées) was also edited by Longtin (Longtin 1996), and by Paul Seefeldt before him (Seefeldt 1908). Like the Breton version, the younger French play has come down to us in several print versions spanning more than a century. According to a list compiled by Petit de Jullieville in the nineteenth century (Jullieville 1880, 486), seven print versions of the play have survived. The oldest of these was printed between 1511 and 1517, the youngest is dated to the beginning of the seventeenth century. The play consists of two days, each of which is introduced by a prologue. In addition to the two plays that have been preserved in their entirety, there is a “role” of Saint Barbara. This was edited by Jacques Chocheiras (Chocheiras 1971) and is dated to the sixteenth century. Longtin discusses the relation of this fragment to deux journées in the introduction to his edition of the French two-day-version. He highlights the evident similarities between the fragment and deux journées, but as there are also some significant differences, Longtin suggests that the fragment may have been part of a three-day-production of the life of Saint Barbara (Longtin 1996, 5-10). I have not included this fragment in my study, partly because of its obvious similarity to deux journées. In addition to that, I gave preference to the texts that were able to provide more than a fraction of the play. Based on the results of the present study, it might be interesting to compare the fragment to An Buhez as a future project.

The contents of Saint Barbara’s legend are almost as varied as the accounts of her life. In general, it can be said that she is the daughter of a rich pagan (king) named Dioscorus and converts to Christianity due to an intuitive knowledge of Christian faith. In addition to this, she is instructed in Christian beliefs by different persons, depending on the source text, and baptised a Christian. Her father puts her into a tower in order to keep her and her beauty away from the eyes of men. This tower and/or a bathhouse are built for her use by a crew of craftsmen. Dioscorus orders these craftsmen to build exactly two windows into the tower/bathhouse, but after her conversion Barbara convinces the craftsmen to add a third window, representing the trinity, to the respective building. Upon discovering the addition, Dioscorus is furious and attempts to kill Barbara. Although she is able to flee, she is soon recaptured and then has to stand trial and torture. Eventually, Dioscorus kills her and suffers instant death by heavenly intervention.

The editors of the respective versions of the Saint Barbara plays all voiced some suggestions or assumptions with regard to the connection between the texts. Ernault perceives some similarities between An Buhez and deux journées, but finds more differences. He dismisses cinq journées mostly because of its sheer length and richness in motifs which cannot be found in An Buhez (Ernault 1888, IV). Seefeldt on the other hand dismisses any direct relations and in the
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introduction to his edition of *deux journées* he states:


(Seefeldt 1908, XV)

While I wholeheartedly agree that all three versions are highly individual works of art, I have reached different conclusions with regard to the interdependency of the texts on the one hand and the common source on the other. Gustave Cohen was probably the first to see striking similarities between *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* and accordingly suggests a relation between the two (Cohen 1956, 395-400). While Cohen’s assessment is much longer than that of either Ernault or Seefeldt, his comparison of the Barbara plays is part of a wider study of French Medieval theatre, which leaves room for more analysis. Kim has also drawn some general comparisons between *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* and states that “bien qu’il soit probable que l’auteur du Mystère en breton connaissait le Mystère du XVᵉ siècle [cinq journées] et qu’il en a exploité quelques épisodes, le Mystère en breton ne semble pas avoir un rapport direct avec le Mystère du XVᵉ siècle” (Kim 1998, 167). Kim continues by listing the differences between the two plays and refers to the episodes of Barbara’s refusal of marriage, her baptism, her perspective on the tower as a prison, the pool/fountain, and the shepherds (Kim 1998, 167f). Although all of this is true, some different conclusions can be reached when looking at the details. Furthermore, as I demonstrate in the following chapters, there are parts of the Breton play that are strikingly similar in style and structure to *cinq journées*, for example in the case of the hermit-pilgrim or the tower. Nevertheless, it is true that *An Buhez* is far from being a copy of the older French version. The younger French play, *deux journées*, appears to be much closer to *An Buhez* at first sight. Both have survived in more than one print version. The earliest of the respective versions were printed within fifty years of one another. In addition to that, both are of similar length and both have an introduction, which distinguishes them from *cinq journées*. These similarities are probably what Ernault refers to when he writes that “*(deux journées)* ressemble davantage à la rédaction bretonne” (Ernault 1888, IV). But apart from this, the two have few commonalities, a view which is shared by Longtin who notes “le peu de liens existant entre ce texte [An Buhez] et *Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en deux journées*” (Longtin 1996, 4). And yet, those commonalities that can be found are intriguing, such as the character of the hermit (*deux journées*) and the hermit-pilgrim (*An Buhez*). In addition to the similarities between the
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three plays, there are also some motifs in An Buhez that are, as Kim remarks on the matter of Barbara’s refusal of marriage (Kim 1998, 167), quite unique to the Breton version.

In order to expand the pool of possible sources, I have also considered two of the most popular prose versions of the life of Saint Barbara. One of these is the Latin version of the immensely popular Legenda Aurea, which is also the common source Seefeldt suggests as an ancestor of all three plays. However, Saint Barbara’s legend is not a part of the original version of Jacobus de Voragine’s compilation (1252-1260). Unfortunately, no study that dates the numerous copies of the Legenda Aurea, or provides a genealogy, came to my attention and it is thus difficult to determine exactly when Barbara entered the collection of saints’ lives.⁴ According to Kirsten Wolf’s introduction to her edition of the Old Norse-Icelandic version of Saint Barbara’s legend⁴, the “Legenda Aurea seems to have continually expanded to include additional lives” (Wolf 2000, 16). Theodor Graesse’s edition of the Legenda Aurea vulgo historia lombardica dicta, which does include Saint Barbara’s legend, became a standard source for scholars of the field, and it is also my source for the Latin Legenda Aurea version of Saint Barbara’s life (Graesse 1965). Unfortunately, Graesse neither provides a useful introduction nor notes to his edition. Wolf argues that this Legenda Aurea version has most likely come into existence some time after the end of the fourteenth century (Wolf 2000, 22). Thus, the Legenda Aurea version of Barbara’s life predates the Breton play by a maximum of 150 years rather than the 300 years of Jacobus de Voragine’s first compilation. Wolf bases her assessment on research by Baudouin de Gaiffier (Gaiffier 1959) and Albert Derolez (Derolez 1991), who have studied another popular Latin version of the legend of Saint Barbara. This is the second Latin version of Saint Barbara’s legend that I used for comparison (referred to as John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia). It is part of “a grand encomium on Saint Barbara composed in the last decades of the fourteenth century by a Flemish Augustine monk called John of Wakkerzeel (a village north of Louvain)” (Wolf 2000, 22). John of Wakkerzeel, who lived in the second half of the fourteenth century, was a great admirer of Saint Barbara’s and attempted to reconcile the numerous sources and pieces of information that were circulating about the saint at the time. His work “is characterised by an astonishingly uncritical attitude” (Derolez 1991, 202), which is reflected for example in his explanation of the location of Nicomedia, Saint Barbara’s hometown. This is particularly interesting, because it has a certain impact upon my study. Some of the legends about Saint Barbara suggest Heliopolis, others suggest Nicomedia, and some even give Tuscany and Rome as the

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¹I would like to thank Christina Fischer for providing me with her findings on the subject.

²The first 45 pages of this introduction are, in fact, a detailed yet concise analysis of the transmission history of Saint Barbara’s legend. Furthermore, it is firstly of a fairly recent date in comparison to similar papers (e.g. Gaiffier 1959), it is secondly easily accessible due to the fact that it was published in English and with an excellent index, and thirdly, provides a considerable amount of primary sources as well as literature published on Saint Barbara in various languages. Therefore, I have drawn heavily on Wolf’s work for my own introduction.
place of her martyrdom. John of Wakkerzeel attempted to reconcile Nicomedia and Heliopolis by explaining that the Heliopolis in Saint Barbara’s legend is that of Egypt rather than that of Syria, and that this was founded by the Bithynian king Nicomedes, which is why the city is also known as Nicomedia (Wolf 2000, 24; Wakkerzeel 1495, 6). This is interesting insofar as the hermit-pilgrim in An Buhez and the pilgrim in *cinq journées* travel between Alexandria and Jerusalem. If Nicomedia was located in what is today Turkey, the pilgrim would hardly pass it by en route. Heliopolis in Egypt, however, is right on track (chapters 2.4, 7.1). It is possible that this instance was the reason for Gaiffier to state that “c’est aussi notre compilation (John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*) qui inspire *Le mystère de sainte Barbe*, tragédie bretonne de XVIe siècle” (Gaiffier 1959, 12). Although he does lamentantly not become more precise, Gaiffier apparently observed some obvious similarities between John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *An Buhez*. Furthermore, John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* was immensely popular, which is attested by the high number of manuscript copies that have survived (Gaiffier 1959, 9f). The popularity of John of Wakkerzeel’s compilation endured into the age of print and an incunabula from the year 1495 has survived and thankfully been digitised (Wakkerzeel 1495). It was also translated into and published in French, German and Dutch (Gaiffier 1959, 11). The latter has also been digitised and served me as a point of reference in difficult passages (Wakkerzeel 1497).

The number of (re-)prints of her plays, the wide distribution of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and the addition of Saint Barbara’s legend to the *Legenda Aurea* attest to the popularity of the saint. According to Lynette Muir, “among the women, the most renowned were St. Catherine of Alexandria and (in France) St. Barbe or Barbara” (Muir 1986, 139). Saints Barbara and Catherine of Alexandria are joined by Saints Margaret of Antioch and Dorothy to form the group of the *quattuor virgines capitales* (Wolf 2000, 1). Saint Barbara is also part of the group of the *Vierzehn Nothelfer*, who are induced in the hour of need. This cult is strongest in Germany, where folk beliefs and customs concerned with Saint Barbara are still commonplace among practising Catholics. Each of the fourteen auxiliary saints is ascribed a particular power against different problems, such as a certain disease. In the case of Saint Barbara it is her potential as an intercessor at the hour of death that qualifies her for the group (Wolf 2000, 28f; Wimmer 1980, 1433). Furthermore, Saint Barbara was and often still is worshipped by miners and artillerymen, but her patronage extended significantly on the basis of – sometimes creative interpretations of – her legend (Carpentier-Bogaert, Catherine and Françoise Baligand 1997, 71-150). As suggested by Muir, Saint Barbara was worshipped particularly strongly in

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5 Tuscany and Rome figure strongly in John of Wakkerzeel’s account of the translation of her relics (Wolf 2000, 22).

6 Sainte Barbe n’est pas seulement la patronne des mineurs et autres corps de métier ayant un rapport quelconque avec la foudre ou le feu... comme les artificiers, salpêtriers, fondeurs, couleuvriers, arquebusiers, poudriers... Elle ne protège pas uniquement ceux que leur travail mène sous la terre. Elle patronne aussi les fourreurs, les
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France, but she was also an exceedingly popular saint in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany (Wolf 2000, 34-37). Worship of Saint Barbara expanded during the thirteenth century and reached its climax between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (Wimmer 1980, 1433). The prime example for this is the fact that her legend was put on stage sixteen times between 1450 and 1550 in France alone (Longtin 2003, 1; see also Julleville 1880, 181), which makes Saint Barbara’s legend “the most frequently performed of all saint’s plays in France” during that time (Muir 1986, 165).

The earliest written testimony of her legend is dated to the seventh century and is probably of Egyptian origin (Wolf 2000, 1, Wimmer 1980, 1432). Evidence of her worship before that time is her patronage of a fourth-century monastery in Edessa, of a seventh-century Coptic basilica in Kairo, as well as of several churches in Constantinople (Wolf 2000, 3; Wimmer 1980, 1433). In Western Europe, the earliest testimony of her veneration is a fresco in the Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome, dated to 705/706. From there, her popularity spread northwards and she is traceable as a patron saint of churches north of the Alps from the eleventh century onwards (Wimmer 1980, 1433). Further evidence of the veneration of Saint Barbara is her inclusion in the European martyrologies. According to Wolf, “the first notice of the feast day of Saint Barbara occurs in the historical martyrologies [sic.] of Rabanus Maurus (776/784-856), Archbishop of Mainz, and Ado (ca. 800-875), Archbishop of Vienne.” Appearances of Saint Barbara in earlier martyrologies have been judged to be late additions, which is why her feast day “was expunged in the new Roman calendar published in 1969 after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)” (Wolf 2000, 12f). This does not have much impact on folk beliefs and/or customs. The absence of Saint Barbara from early martyrologies is in accordance with the fact that while legends about her are preserved in Syriac, Greek and Latin, there are no written sources that can be dated to her lifetime. Furthermore, her legend can be regarded as “a mosaic of commonly used topoi” (Wolf 2000, 3), which lends support to the assumption that Saint Barbara is not a historical figure. It is therefore not surprising that the accounts of the time and place of her martyrdom vary. Her death, however, is predominantly located in Nicomedia in the year 306 (Wimmer 1980, 1432).

In order to be able to compare the different versions of the legend of Saint Barbara, I have isolated specific motifs and looked at the structure of the respective versions. A similar method was employed by Séamus Mac Mathúna in his study of the Medieval Brendan material. Like the

pelletiers, les chapeliers. Elle serait aujourd’hui encore titulaire d’une quarantaine de patronages dont la plupart trouvent leur origine dans le récit légendaire de sa vie qui peut donner lieu à des interprétations très différentes” (Carpentier-Bogaert, Catherine and Françoise Baligand 1997, 71).

In fact, Saint Barbara’s absence from the Roman calendar seems to remain widely unknown. As part of a Catholic youth organisation, I have spoken to several people, including a priest, about Saint Barbara’s deletion and nobody was aware that her feast day had been officially removed from the calendar.
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legend of Saint Barbara, the legend of Saint Brendan has come down to us in several versions and languages. The *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* – “The sea-voyage of Saint Brendan” – survives in 120 Latin manuscript copies and was translated into Anglo-Norman, Old French, Provençal, German, Dutch, Flemish and Norwegian (Mac Mathúna 1994, 313). Mac Mathúna compares the voyage tale to the *Vita Brendani*, which survives in both Latin and Irish but was not transmitted intact (Mac Mathúna 1994, 321f). The *Vita* contains two episodes of sea voyages conducted by Saint Brendan, which led Mac Mathúna to look for commonalities between the two versions of the saint’s life. In his study, Mac Mathúna compares the structure of the respective tales on the one hand and isolated episodes common to both versions on the other. He concludes that despite the fact that “episodic detail is so close in some instances, [...] there is no proof here of slavish borrowing” (Mac Mathúna 1994, 339). Mac Mathúna’s method of comparison was a useful inspiration to my own approach to the legend of Saint Barbara. Therefore, I have begun by dividing the Breton play into episodes, in which the respective motifs familiar from the general legend of Saint Barbara are detectable. I use the term “episode” instead of the term “scene”, which is more familiar from a theatrical context. However, “scene” together with “act” are commonly used terms for the subdivision of plays and as these are not employed in *An Buhez* it would have been misleading to speak of “scenes”. Medieval theatre commonly employed “days” (French: “journées”) as a method of subdividing a play. Such a “day” is usually based on the number of verses that could be performed on stage within one theatrical session, which in the beginnings of Medieval theatre lasted about one Sunday or feast day; hence, the distinction of the two French plays into a play containing five days (*cinq journées*, the older play) and one containing two days (*deux journées*, the younger play). Unlike the two French plays, the Breton play does not provide information on the exact number of days it is subdivided into. In the introduction, it illustrates the action of the first day, only, and does not specify how many more days the performance was to last. It is, however, reasonable to assume a three-day performance for the play as it stands. Further details on the subdivision of *An Buhez* will be given in chapter 2, which also illustrates the Breton play’s historical and cultural background.

The following table provides an overview of the episodes of the Breton play and their respective contents. Some episodes are clearly related to one another or form a discernible group (e.g. stanzas 1-31). In some cases, the beginning and/or end of an episode is not clearly identifiable and could belong to either the preceding or the following larger group (e.g. 395-405). The numbers of the stanzas are the same as in Ernault’s edition:
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<table>
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<th>stanza (s)</th>
<th>episode/motif</th>
<th>contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1 - 4</td>
<td>the witness</td>
<td>introduction of Barbara and her father king Dioscorus, who has workers build a tower for her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 21</td>
<td>introduction</td>
<td>summary of the action of the first day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 - 31</td>
<td>devils</td>
<td>partitioning of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 - 79</td>
<td>tower &amp; building process</td>
<td>Dioscorus introduces himself and his wish to have a tower built for the protection of his daughter; he sends for workers who begin building the tower for him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 - 129</td>
<td>Barbara’s education &amp; conversion</td>
<td>Dioscorus sends for a schoolmaster to educate his daughter; Barbara displays an intuitive knowledge of the Christian God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130 - 138</td>
<td>the hermit-pilgrim</td>
<td>Barbara meets a hermit-pilgrim who tells her of Origen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 - 185</td>
<td>Origen, Valentine &amp; baptism</td>
<td>Barbara sends a messenger to Origen; he sends her a teacher (Valentine), who instructs and baptises her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>186 - 203</td>
<td>moving into the tower</td>
<td>upon finding a foreigner (Valentine) in his daughter’s chambers, Dioscorus has her move into the tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>204 - 240</td>
<td>lords &amp; marriage proposal</td>
<td>two lords approach Dioscorus about imprisoning his daughter and her status as an unmarried heiress; Barbara refuses to marry → first estrangement of father and daughter; end of first day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241 - 254</td>
<td>third window</td>
<td>Dioscorus leaves, Barbara’s request for the third window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255 - 280</td>
<td>fountain, cross in stone &amp; idols</td>
<td>Barbara revives a fountain, draws a cross into a stone with her bare finger and defies the idols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281 - 385</td>
<td>discovery of third window, flight through the stone</td>
<td>Dioscorus returns, discovers the third window and confronting Barbara about it attempts to kill her; a stone opens for her and she is able to flee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>386 - 394</td>
<td>shepherds &amp; Barbara’s recapture</td>
<td>Dioscorus searches for his daughter; one of two shepherds betrays her location to him, and Dioscorus recaptures her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>395</td>
<td>imprisonment &amp; inquisition</td>
<td>Dioscorus imprisons Barbara, then accuses her in front of the provost, who in turn questions her about her beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450</td>
<td>torture 1</td>
<td>upon her refusal of abdication, the provost has her tortured; 3 torturers + Claudin; bound and beaten with clubs and bull-puzzles, rolled in a barrel spiked with metal pieces, rubbing salt into wounds, beating with hair shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>493</td>
<td>prison &amp; visit by Christ</td>
<td>Barbara is returned to prison where she is visited by (a vision of) Christ, who heals all her wounds and assures her of his love for her → likely end of second day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>534</td>
<td>torture 2</td>
<td>Barbara repeats her refusal of abdication, the provost has her tortured again; burned with torches, beaten with hammers, breasts cut off, chased naked through streets → divine intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>649</td>
<td>enraged Dioscorus</td>
<td>very short intermediary episode initiating the following action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>653</td>
<td>Barbara’s prayer</td>
<td>Barbara makes a request that the souls of her followers will be specially protected; Christ grants her this favour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>680</td>
<td>Barbara and Dioscorus on the mountaintop</td>
<td>Barbara tries to convince Dioscorus of the mistake he is about to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>724</td>
<td>Barbara’s final prayer</td>
<td>short prayer; her last words in the play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>727</td>
<td>morality episode</td>
<td>Beezlebub and Conscience appear and each tries to lead Dioscorus in the direction of good and evil, respectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>782</td>
<td>end</td>
<td>Dioscorus beheads Barbara and despairs immediately; Beezlebub takes his soul to hell; the king’s end is witnessed by Claudin and his companion; Valentine buries Barbara’s body</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The episodes and motifs that appear in *An Buhez* are for the most part also present in at least one other source. This fact forms the basis of my study. However, even if two or more texts employ the same motif, it is not always embedded into the same episode, nor does the order of motifs and episodes, respectively, always match. Nevertheless, the texts often correspond in a striking way. Mac Mathúna voices a similar opinion with regard to the comparison of the Brendan-material:
1. Introduction

In considering the interrelationships between the various voyage texts, it is important that sufficient prominence be given to episodes which combine similarity of content with more or less the same sequencing. Neither the detail nor the sequencing need match exactly in order to establish a common nucleus.

(Mac Mathúna 2006, 147)

Although my approach to the material is quite similar to Mac Mathúna’s, I employ the term “motif” rather than “nucleus” mainly for two reasons. For one, some of the commonalities are also part of a larger pool of common motifs, such as for example “(the maiden in) the tower”, which is also familiar from fairy tales. For another, the term “motif” suggests a slightly larger scale than “nucleus”, which is more suitable to my study. In the following chapters, I therefore examine one motif after another and compare it to its counterparts in the four other versions in order to point out commonalities. The study progresses along the order of events as provided by An Buhez and thus corresponds to the order in the table above. An Buhez has two remarkably idiosyncratic episodes. One of these is the morality episode, which does not appear in any of the other versions (chapter 13.2). The other is the fountain, which appears to be a Breton adaptation of the bathhouse that is more common in the other versions of the legend of Saint Barbara (chapter 11). The two French plays each contain several episodes and/or characters that are unique to them and do not appear in An Buhez. The presence of Barbara’s mother and the fact that, during her torture, Barbara spends one of the nights in prison together with a prostitute, whom she converts to Christianity, are the most prominent examples for such singularities in deux journées. However, many other details that figure in the other sources were changed or omitted in deux journées. Longtin includes a list of those deviations in the introduction to his edition of deux journées (Longtin 1996, 16f). In the case of cinq journées, a list of episodes that do not appear in An Buhez (or deux journées) would be extensive. The play is extremely long and detailed (five days, 23792 verses), and while it mirrors the legend as presented by John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia in large parts (cf. Kim 1998, 375-377), it also expands upon it, partly from the necessity of adapting the subject matter to the stage (e.g. the pilgrim who tells Barbara of Origen, chapter 7.1). Since the focus of my study is on the Breton play, I have only looked at those episodes that correspond to An Buhez, although their respective contents often differ. However, I did not include the episode about Barbara’s torture in great detail in this thesis. On the one hand, it is a very long episode in all three plays and would have taken considerably more time and space to analyse in detail. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the detailed analysis of the torture episode will lead to any unexpected insights. Even without the additional information the torture episode may or may not provide, it is clear that the Breton play consists for the most part of motifs and episodes common to the life of Saint Barbara, but includes some highly individual episodes that I did not encounter in any of
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the other four versions under consideration. This points to the fact that the author has likely used or at least known other sources apart from the ones I compared to *An Buhez*, not only with regard to the contents of the play, but also with regard to the genre (chapter 13.2). With regard to the results of the direct comparison between the Breton play and the four sources under consideration in this study, it appears that *An Buhez* has a certain relation with both *cinq journées* and the *Legenda Aurea*. It corresponds particularly closely to either version in some cases, for example in the case of the baptism to the *Legenda Aurea* and in the case of Barbara’s education and her encounter with the pilgrim-hermit to *cinq journées*. Direct correspondences between *An Buhez* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* are difficult to isolate due to the fact that *cinq journées* usually corresponds to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, too, and thus provides the same information. However, there is one detail that might hint at a more direct relationship between *An Buhez* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* in the case of the fountain/bathhouse-episode (chapter 11). Direct correspondence between *An Buhez* and *deux journées* is rare. The only really intriguing example for an exceptional commonality between the two texts is the name of the character “the hermit” (chapter 7.1). Those episodes that do correspond to one or several of the other sources often still display individual features, for example in the case of the building process of the tower, or the shepherd episode (chapters 6, 12). All this suggests that the author of *An Buhez* has not based the play on any one source in particular, but instead created a very individual piece of art. This impression is supported by the fact that the author employed a typically Breton rhyme scheme throughout the entire play which is considerably more complex than the pair rhymes employed by the two French plays (chapter 3).
2. Medieval Theatre

Mais en tant qu’historiens du théâtre, c’est notre devoir de chercher à faire ressortir non seulement les qualités d’un texte, mais aussi la vision de son metteur en scène. (Runnalls 2002, 134)

In the case of Middle Breton plays, this is particularly important, for their great value as testimonies of the Breton language and the linguistic interest therein has often overshadowed theatrical or literary research (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 212; Le Duc 2006, 269). Therefore, I would like to consider An Buhez in a context of European Medieval theatre and share some considerations with regard to whether and if so how it may have been put on stage.

According to Lynette Muir (Muir 1995), Brittany and Cornwall began to develop their theatrical culture only after they “came under the influence of their more powerful neighbours”, France and England. Indeed, the Breton plays are very similar to their French contemporaries. An Buhez shares most of the general features that distinguish medieval theatre from (early) modern theatre. Therefore I mostly rely on studies of French medieval theatre in order to evaluate the Breton play. It is precisely because of the strong resemblance of the Middle Breton plays to their French contemporaries that the early scholars of the Breton texts have been extremely critical, which Gwennole Le Menn illustrates clearly in the first chapter of his “Histoire du théâtre populaire Breton XVème-XIXème” (Le Menn 1983, 7-24). The most judgemental attitude is maybe reflected by Anatole Le Braz:

[Le] Catholicon (1464), une Vie de sainte Nonne, des Heures en moyen breton, un mystère de la Passion, un mystère de sainte Barbe, une Vie (en prose) de sainte Catherine, une poème intitulé Le Miroir de la Mort, tels sont les premiers monuments écrits de la littérature bretonne. Par la composition comme par les sujets, ils sont d’essence toute françoise.

(Le Braz 1905, 231)

However, it is hardly surprising that Breton theatre was influenced by its French counterpart, firstly because of the geographical proximity of the two cultures, and secondly because of the dominance of French theatrical works:


(Brauneck 1993, 315)
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It is therefore not surprising that such successful entertainment served as an inspiration outside of France, as well. Three Middle Breton plays apart from An Buhez have come down to us, two of which appear in Le Braz’ list of Middle Breton literature (s.a.): An Passion⁸, An Buhez santez Nonn⁹ and An Buhez Sant Gwenole¹⁰.

Medieval theatre includes a wide variety of stage performance such as for example the liturgical drama, which is an early form, and the later and sometimes massive productions of mystery and morality plays.¹¹ In this study I will focus on mystery plays or French “mystères”, due to the fact that An Buhez and the two French plays of Saint Barbara belong to this genre. According to Runnalls, “Mystère is the widely-employed label for most of the Passion plays and large-scale saints’ plays of the 15th and early 16th centuries” (Runnalls 1998, 52) and refers to a “[dramatization] of narrative material based on the Bible (Old and New Testament), on the lives and miracles of the saints, and on the virgin Mary” (Runnalls 2004, 3). However, “mystère” is by far not the only term employed in the title pages or introductions of plays. Other terms used in the French versions are “vie”, “histoire”, “jeu”, “miracle”, “moralité”, and occasionally “livre”, “passion”, “martyr”, and “representation”. None of these terms refers exclusively to plays, but the additional descriptive phrase “par personnages or a personnages […] is really the key expression which distinguishes dramatic from non-dramatic literature” (Runnalls 1998, 55f). In the case of An Buhez the descriptive term is, of course, “vie” or “life”. Instead of “par personnages”, however, the phrase “euel maz custumer he hoary”, which can be translated as “like it is customaryl done in a play”, is used and supports the same idea, i.e. that the text is based on an actual dramatic production (4).

It is important to note that even the earliest of the Breton versions of mystery plays date from the sixteenth century and even though any performances may have occurred at a significantly earlier date, at least the written versions as they stand coincide with the later tradition of mystery play performances in France. However, as Runnalls points out, “it is difficult to say when the last performance of a mystery took place in France”, because the theatrical culture evolved and changed without a clean break (Runnalls 2004, 5). Nevertheless, the year 1548 marks a turning point in the history of medieval theatre in France, for the Parlement issued an edict which “sought to restrict large-scale, outdoor public performances of biblical plays, in particular those which the audience had to pay money to attend” (Runnalls 2004, 5). While this edict was directed at the Paris Confrérie de la Passion¹², other edicts restricting the production

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⁸Three print versions from 1530, 1609 and 1622; edited by Villemarqué 1866 and Le Berre 2011.
⁹One manuscript, dated to the end of the 16th century; edited by Ernault 1887b and Le Berre 1999.
¹⁰One manuscript-copy from 1716 (Le Pelletier 1716), which dates the text to 1580; edited by Ernault 1932-1933 and Widmer 2013.
¹¹For an overview of medieval theatre in Europe see Brauneck 1993; for an overview of French medieval theatre see for example Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, Bordier 2009, Knight 1983, and also Frank 1954.
¹²The Confrérie de la Passion was a group “whose main function was the performance of mystery plays” (Runnalls
and performance of mystery plays in some of the larger cities of France followed (“Bordeaux in 1556, Rennes in 1565, and in Flemish towns in 1559”, Runnalls 2004, 5). However, “outside the Paris area and in the remoter provinces, mystery plays were put on until the early seventeenth century” (Runnalls 2004, 5), which fits well with the evidence from Brittany: “en Bretagne [...] le théâtre restera vivant au XVle siècle, et probablement au début du XVIIe siècle, comme le montrent plusieurs interdictions” (Le Menn 1983, 36). These repeated prohibitions apparently could not persuade “ces braves gens” that staging the lives of the saints and God was an “oeuvre impie” (Cohen 1956, 400). Guyonvarc’h, on the other hand, claims that even the remoteness of Brittany did not keep it from the controversies the theatre faced in the cities:

La rareté des oeuvres est déjà un signe: le théâtre en langue bretonne n’a pas eu longtemps la faveur de clergé, la faveur officielle s’entend. C’est que, lorsqu’il apparaît, le genre du mystère est déjà condamné, tant par la Réforme que par la Contre-Réforme qui s’annonce.
(Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 212)

The loss of favour with the clergy and the officials are the main reason for the restrictions placed upon the performance culture of the late Middle Ages. As Enders illustrates in her chapter The Laughter of the Children, the solemn deeds of Jesus, the apostles and the saints were not meant to be mocked by the public, but this is precisely what happened when inept amateurs intoned the saintly lines wrong or some of the special effects – such as, for example, the descent of the Holy Ghost – did not work and thus lead to considerable mirth and amusement on the part of the audience, but not at the appropriate instances. Furthermore, attendance at the Sunday masses was impaired because people would leave early or not attend at all in order to obtain better seats for the performance (Enders 2002, 105-117; cf. Runnalls 1998, 98f). Such behaviour was particularly offensive to the emerging Protestants, and “[e]ven in countries where the Catholic Church remained the dominant form of worship they did not survive the pressures of the Reformation” (Allen 1983, 75). Runnalls makes a similar point when he says that “[t]he plays no longer appeared to be in keeping with recent changes in theology, both Catholic and Protestant” (Runnalls 1998, 89) and refers to another reason for the decrease of mystery play performances from the sixteenth century onwards:

Most of [the complete or partial texts of some 500 plays written in French and performed in Medieval France] were written and performed between 1450 and

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1998, 67). In 1402 Charles VI granted them the right to publicly perform Passion and mystery plays in Paris, both in their abode as well as in the open (Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 58f). It “was composed of lesser clergy and the more devout members of the general public and tradesmen” (Allen 1983, 77). See also Runnalls 1995, 480.
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1550, i.e. during the period of relative calm between the end of the Hundred Years War and the beginning of the Wars of Religion [...]. Successful theatre requires favourable social conditions. (Runnalls 1998, 63)

However, the situation in Brittany differed slightly from that in central France. While there are no records of performances, the reprinting of existing mystery plays flourished in Brittany in the seventeenth century (4). This corresponds with the fact that in the rest of France, the (re)printing of mystery plays was at that time already moving away from Paris to the other centres of print, such as Lyon, Rouen, and Troyes (Runnalls 1999, 38), and was on a general decline. According to the data gathered by Runnalls, only 21 of the 123 editions of mystery plays printed between 1485 and 1630 have been issued after 1550 (Runnalls 1999, 36). This strengthens the impression that mystery plays were retreating to remoter places and that while their general loss of popularity had already begun in the capital, it reached even the outlying regions of France, albeit at a later time.

2.1. The Days

“Favourable social conditions” as mentioned by Runnalls (Runnalls 1998, 63) were partly necessary simply because the performance of a play could take a long time. Plays were performed during a number of (often consecutive) Sundays and/or Feast Days. Hence, plays were divided into “days”, or French “journées” instead of “acts” and “scenes”, which are the terms of division familiar to our contemporary perspective on theatre. The very short plays could be performed within one day, but the large-scale productions such as the Valenciennes Passion plays of 1547 and 1549 lasted twenty-five and twenty days, respectively (cf. figure 2), and the Acts of the Apostles play, which was performed in Paris in 1541, lasted thirty-five days (Runnalls 2004, 7; Runnalls 1998, 98f). It is unknown exactly how long a “day” was, but Runnalls has conducted some very useful studies to that effect. Based on evidence of two plays (the Mystère de Saint Martin, performed at Seurre-en-Borgogne in 1496, and the Mystère du Viel Testament, performed in Paris in 1542), he suggests that a day could be divided further into a matinee and an après-disnée and that each session would then have lasted about 4 hours, “which means that, on average, [a] performance proceeded at the rate of about 500 lines of written text every hour” (Runnalls 2004, 8-9). An Buhez appears to have been divided into days, as well, and the contents of the first day at least are mentioned in the introduction:

An Introduction

[...
[20] Ez deuz an broys tut discret

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Da mannat dezy reiff priet
Ha ne deuruoe quet concedaff
Rac mazoa dren fez demezet
Da Iesu crist ann ministr net
Na ne deuruoe quet nemeta.

[21] Chetu aman an dez quentaFF
Em entroit a recitaFF
Guelhaff maz gallaff quentaFF pret
Da dan eil dez ez discuezher
Dich vn tra arall mar galler
Gant gracc Doe roen ster mar queret.

The Introduction: / [...] The countrymen of the learned people came / in order
to ask to give her a spouse / and she did not want to concede / because she was
married through the faith / to Jesus Christ the holy priest / and she did not want
anyone else but him. // Voilà, here of the first day / in my introduction I narrate /
as best I can first of all / and with regard to the second day will be presented / to
you one other thing if it is possible / with the grace of God the king of the stars if
you wish. //

If the first day did end at the specified point of the action, it would end after stanza 240 and
thus after roughly 1.440 lines of text. Between stanzas 240 and 241 there is a distinct lack of
information with regard to the changes evidently taking place in the Breton play. As indicated
in the introduction, two lords visit Dioscorus and talk to him about his daughter’s prospects
for marriage. After they have left Dioscorus, they discuss Barbara’s unwillingness to marry on
their way home (238-240). The next stanza (241) is spoken by Dioscorus again. He explains that
he will now go on an excursion of an unspecified nature and does not refer to his daughter’s
refusal of marriage or any other part of the past stanzas in any way. Instead, he gives further
instructions about his tower to the master worker. Thus, he must either have summoned the
master worker to his palace, or visited the building site on the way to his “mission”. Similarly,
Barbara appears to change her place during the assumed break after stanza 240. She has been
moved into the tower by her father in stanza 203, and when he visits her again later (225-230),
there is no reason to suppose that she has changed her place in between. In stanza 248 she
speaks to the craftsmen in order to request the third window. While it is possible that Barbara
shouts out of her window during the ensuing conversation, it is more likely that she visits the
craftsmen “downstairs”, because after the conversation she moves on to the fountain, and this is

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2. Medieval Theatre

unlikely to be situated above ground level (11). In any case, there is clearly a contextual break at this point, which is supported by an inconsistency in the rhyme scheme between stanzas 240 and 241. As will be discussed in 3, such inconsistencies can serve to highlight a break in the action of the play. Unfortunately, there is no stage direction to indicate the beginning of a new day (or any other change in the action of the play), nor is there a second introduction at this point or anywhere else in the Breton play. While the concept of a new introduction for a new day is familiar from *deux journées* as well as from other French plays, it is not a universal feature. In the case of *cinq journées*, for example, the beginnings of new days are clearly marked by the Latin phrase “Incipit [number] liber misterii beate Barbare virginis” (‘Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, BN fr. 976’), but there are no introductions at the beginning of a new day. In his article on the *Mystère de Saint Laurent*, Runnals argues that

les éditeurs de mystères avaient tendance, naturellement, à supprimer [des prologues et des indications scéniques], lorsqu’ils transformaient un manuscrit de théâtre en un livre destiné à la lecture privée

(Runnals 2002, 123)

or as Vicky Hamblin puts it “prologues and epilogues [...] generally accompanied a performance but did not necessarily accompany the surviving copy” (Hamblin 2012, 37). In fact, even in famous Shakespeare’s time it was not yet common to include the division into acts and scenes in the printed versions of the plays, for as Wells notes: “none of the texts of Shakespeare’s plays printed in his lifetime [...] marks any divisions into either acts or scenes. The plays were printed continuously” (Wells 2016, 412f).

Both *An Buhez* and *deux journées* begin with an introductory episode spoken by more than one person. In the case of *An Buhez*, there is “An test” (‘the witness’), who speaks the first four stanzas. In contrast to the two French plays about Saint Barbara, the Breton play does not depict any miracles associated with Barbara in the end. These miracles usually serve to establish the saint’s holiness (Longtin 2005, 343). It is possible that the witness in *An Buhez* serves a similar purpose, that of legitimising the plot of the play and stating its importance. The witness mentions some key elements of the play, namely Barbara and her father king Dioscorus, who has craftsmen build a tower for her in their place of residence, Nicomedia. Then, the actual introduction begins, which summarises the action of the first day (stanza 5-21). After that, the devils appear for the first time (5) and the story proper begins in stanza 32. In *deux journées*, the prologue introduces all the actors of the play and sends them to their respective places. This is clearly intended to help the audience understand the roles and purposes of the respective characters they will encounter on stage. In contrast to the introductory section of *An Buhez* it does not provide a summary of the plot. The most intriguing part of the introduction in
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deuX journées, however, is the “folle [femme]”, who gives a short monologue on her life of easy virtue directly before the plot of the play begins. This contrasts strongly with the more solemn subject of the saint’s life. Longtin notes that “cette façon de débuter est des plus singulières” and wonders if it possibly serves to assure the audience’s attention (Longtin 1996, 30). The French and the Breton play thus do not have much in common with regard to the content of their respective introductions. Another French mystery play, the Mystère de Saint Laurent, has similarities with both types of introduction. It is similar to An Buhez insofar as its prologue also provides a summary of the plot, although in the case of Saint Laurent the plot of the entire play is summarised. The prologue of Saint Laurent also describes the stage design in considerable detail. Structurally, this resembles the introduction of the characters in deux journées, because both introduction point out one feature or character, respectively, after the other. However, Saint Laurent and An Buhez have more in common, for neither includes stage directions that indicate the plays’ division into journées, but both are too long to be performed in one session. Runnalls has identified three sections of similar length in the play and thus claims that the performance of Saint Laurent likely took three days (Runnalls 2002, 124). In the same manner, it is possible to identify opportunities for breaks in the Breton play, as well. As discussed above, the first day likely ended after stanza 240. Allowing a similar length for the second session/day of An Buhez, the next break in the play would likely occur around stanza 500 (Ernault 1888, iv). And indeed, at that point we meet Barbara in prison, where she spends some time between her torture sessions, and where Jesus visits her in order to heal all her wounds. This would make an excellent setting for another break, because time needs to pass within the play. The question is whether the break occurs before or after the intermediate episode in prison (493-533). Both, the beginning (492/493) and the end (533/534) of the episode have an inconsistency suggesting a break of some kind and/or a movement of the characters on stage (3.1). If the break was to occur before the episode in prison, the actor of Jesus would not have had to spend the entire day on stage awaiting his entry during the last half hour of the performance, for Jesus does not appear on stage before then. Of course, the actor could simply have sat on his seat and only entered the stage shortly before appearing in the play, or he may well have enjoyed watching the performance from his possibly elevated position (2.4). Nevertheless, it might have been considered serviceable for the action of the third day to begin with Barbara in prison, where she is visited by Jesus, who would then appear for the first time on this last day of the play. With regard to the contents, however, the break would probably fit better after the episode in prison, because then the first day would end with Barbara’s prayer after she has received a great gift from God. This could create a cathartic effect for the audience and the next day could then resume the action with the Provost calling for Barbara to be brought before him again in 534:
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[534] Duet flam aman pep vnan ahanech
Guytebunan pur buan oar an lech
Entroch ma flech pêp pe huech ezech fcaff
Et da quercat tizmat finchat batant
Barba guerches ent eprés em prefant
Efpediant dam hoant de tourmantaff.

Come here, indeed, every one of you / all of you, very quickly, on the spot / all together my lads, five or six strong guys, / shall go to fetch quickly, go on, immediately, / the virgin Barbe, truly, into my presence / quickly, to torment her according to my wish. //

This speech is very interesting, because it may well be addressed – at least partly – to the audience. Ernault’s translation is quite similar to the above: “Que chacun de vous vienne ici sur-le-champ; allons, mes garçons, que cinq ou six gaillards vigoureux aillent me chercher [...] Barbe [...]” (Ernault 1888, 125). However, he translates the expression “oar an lech”, which often means “right away, on the spot”, in a more literal way as “onto the field”. Similarly, a more literal translation of the following lines would be “among you my lads five or six husbands, easy, go to fetch [...] Barbara [...]”. It would be unreasonable to assume that among the four torturers that have made Barbara suffer in the previous episode and will do so in the next are five or six husbands. Of course, there may simply be a kind of mob on stage who is instructed by the Provost to fetch Barbara. But it is worth considering that the Provost is actually calling the audience to the place (‘lech’) of the theatre when he calls for “every one of you / all of you” (‘pêp vnan ahanech / Guytebunan’) to “come here” (‘Duet aman’), assuming that among the people will likely be “five or six husbands/heads of the family” (‘pêp pe huech ezech’). These “heads of the family” may well be familiar with the concept of headstrong daughters and relate to the situation accordingly. Thus, the Provost’s speech can at least be considered to be addressed to a double audience. Ernault also suggests that “il semble qu’un nouveau prologue serait à sa place, après la strophe 533, pour commencer une troisième journée, ou un troisième acte” (Ernault 1888, iv). His distinction between “journée” and “acte” suggests that he also considered a scenario of having two sessions of about 1.800 lines each in one day with a break in between, as proposed by Runnalls for the Mystère de Saint Martin and the Mystère du Viel Testament (s.a.; Runnalls 2004, 8-9). Moreover, this approach to structuring the action of the play fits the description given in the introduction of An Buhez best, for the introduction mentions the end of one day and then suggests a second or other day (“eil dez”, 21), but not a third.
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2.2. The Production of a Play

Apart from the time it took to perform the plays, there was a considerable amount of preparation and material that went into a mystery play performance. It was a very time consuming and costly business, which is why the plays were not usually put on by individuals, but by groups of influential members of a town.

Although for the most part of the Middle Ages, the Church supported and participated in the performance of miracle and mystery plays, the Church rarely initiated such performances. Most frequently, the organisers were religious societies, for example the confréries, or the town administration. (Runnalls 1998, 67)

If plays were put on by a confraternity, these would often choose to put on a play on the day of their annual assembly, which usually took place on their patron saint’s feast day. They would also very likely choose the subject matter accordingly, i.e. put on a play about their patron saint. Performing a saint’s play on his/her feast day was generally common practice (Runnalls 1998, 66). In the case of Saint Barbara this is slightly problematic, because her feast day is the fourth of December, which makes a multiple day-long outdoor performance an uncomfortable prospect. Some performances seem to have taken place inside:

The masons who sponsored performances of the Parisian Mystère de saint Christofle in the mid-sixteenth century did so in a celebration that wound its way through city streets before moving into a private ‘abode and place’ (‘logis et lieu’ Runnalls 1973, xxvii).

(Hamblin 2012, 50)

But such performances and their sets had to be small because the amount of space available in a guildhall was limited, as was the amount of time allotted to the performances. The guild needed time for its annual business and other activities on the day of assembly, and thus it “circumscribed many aspects of the plays themselves” (Runnalls 1998, 70). Thus, most of the large-scale performances had to take place out of doors, where there was enough room for the stage and the audience.

There were no theatre houses in the Middle Ages. These came into use during the Renaissance period and were not yet in use for the performance of mystery plays. Instead, the stage and set of a play had to be built individually, which was laborious and costly:

For each large-scale performance, a special theatre had to be built – and then taken down again afterwards. The medieval method of staging was also very
space-consuming. This method, known nowadays as the décor simultané, meant that all the sets – representing, say, Heaven, Hell, a town, a castle, a room, a church – that would be required by the action were placed in the playing area at the beginning and stayed there during the whole performance. There were not curtains or scene changes. Actors would thus have to move from one set to another. (Runnalls 1998, 71)

In contrast to Runnalls’ depiction of the Medieval Stage, Hamblin allows for a certain flexibility with regard to the sets: “some of [the sites] were part of the permanent “eschaffaux” that enclosed the theater [sic!], while other sites consisted of movable props that were brought into place for the appropriate scenes” (Hamblin 2005, 195). In any case, the size of a theatre was determined by the plot of the play that was to be performed, but the available space could in turn limit how much of a saint’s legend would be portrayed on stage (Runnalls 1998, 91). As will be discussed below, the stage required for An Buhez involved several sets and places. It would have needed some space. Runnalls suggests that town squares were the most popular sites for a stage, and cemeteries were another, due to the amount of space each of these public locations offered (cf. Runnalls 1998, 71).

The physical place a theatre occupied was therefore very much at the centre of a town. The impact on the lives of the citizens was considerable. They were involved in the production of the play as actors, for there were hardly any professional actors yet and the roles fell to those citizens who could read and thus study their roles, and who were able to spare the time, i.e. the middle class (cf. Runnalls 1998, 75). Smith mentions professional acting as one of the occupations associated with the profession of the jongleur. The jongleurs often seem to have supplied the fools (stultus, who appears frequently in cinq journées), for example, but appear not to have been restricted to that kind of role (Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 51-54). Non-professional actors appear to have been more common, however, and Runnalls lists members of the bourgeoisie such as priests, barristers, royal counselors and magistrates for a mystery play performance in Paris in 1536 (Runnalls 1998, 76; 166f). Before mystery plays fell out of favour with the Church, priests would often play the religious – and thus often the main – roles of Christ, the saints, or God, an arrangement that was deemed appropriate according to Runnalls (Runnalls 1998, 75). Of course, the clerical class was generally well qualified to act on stage due to the fact that they were mostly literate as well as used to speaking in front of an audience. Reasons for acting were manifold, and while Smith claims that the professional actors did – or at least tried to – make a living from their art (Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 52), the non-professional actors’ reward was “usually social and personal, rather than financial” in nature and “they traditionally had to supply their own costumes”, as well (Runnalls 1998, 76). Nevertheless, “[p]laying a role in a major mystery play was a highly esteemed and desirable
situation” and could lead to a certain rivalry during auditions (Runnalls 1998, 75). In addition to the personal glory, actors did receive a reduction on the entrance fee, which was a particularly motivating factor for the less wealthy but literate theatre-goers (Runnalls 1998, 169). Acting was thus surely not a way to become rich, but it held certain attractions, not least of which was the proximity to the theatrical event, for actors and spectators were often the same. There was a considerable amount of variety with regard to the place the spectators occupied during a performance, as well as a good deal of movement:

Spectators gathered either on the ground, on scaffolds, or in the rooms of the houses with windows looking out onto the square, according to the entrance fee they had paid. The diversity of these viewing sites makes it difficult to specify a single location associated with the audience and also points to the fluidity between the spaces designated for performers and those reserved for audience members. (Weigert 2015, 98)

With regard to women on stage, we can assume that their absence from the stages was a phenomenon coined by the Elizabethan era. In the professional milieu of the Middle Ages, the women’s presence is often masked because their husbands take precedence in lists and contracts. But while the “première liste des jongleurs et jongleursse de Paris” lists eight women, they are certainly a minority (Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 54-57). Runnalls confirms that in the case of non-professional actors, women did also appear on stage, but as an exception rather than regularly (Runnalls 1998, 75).

In addition to participating on stage, the inhabitants, merchants and craftsmen of a town took part in the production of a play as suppliers of expertise and material (cf. Runnalls 1998, 69-77; Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 62-64). In order to build stages and scaffolds, a considerable amount of wood was necessary, which was supplied by local wood merchants (although sometimes they could not satisfy the entire demand and wood had to be brought in from further afield). Carpenters and builders would then construct the stages and scaffolds (if required). Painters were responsible for the stage design and worked on the décors and props. This task was at least as important as the construction of the stage and scaffolds, since it was indispensable for creating the atmosphere and realism of a play. Weavers and tailors supplied and made cloth for the costumes and tapestries. Actors, artists and audience required nourishment and drink during the rehearsals and the performance, which was sold to them by local bakers, brewers and so on. There are many other examples illustrating that “[a]lmost all the economic and productive capacity of the town was thus swallowed up by the performance for several weeks” (Runnalls 1998, 73). Rehearsals and performances were organised by the director (meneur du jeu), who was responsible for the movements and the effects on stage, but
also for the duplication of manuscripts such as roles for the actors, and keeping of records such as noting the names of the actors and the characters they played (Runnalls 1998, 77). Another important figure was the author (fatisté) of a play, who worked on the text and manuscript. Runnalls says of the fatistes that they “appear to have been a special breed; they [...] travelled far and wide in pursuit of their art” and that “[t]hey plundered other existing plays when these were available” (Runnalls 1998, 68). Apparently, the fatistes often had main occupations such as minor churchmen, lawyers or court officials (Runnalls 1998, 70). Instead of creating a text in advance for a play performance, they worked and updated the text continually as the preparations of the play progressed. The plot on the page and the plot and conditions on stage were therefore in a constantly changing relationship, and the author served as mediator (cf. Runnalls 1998, 68-70; 85; 91). In the case of An Buhez it seems that the contents of certain episodes have been influenced by the conditions the author encountered during the preparations of the play (6, 11). It ism however, impossible to judge whether any of the offices (director, stage designer, author) were fulfilled by more than one person and, if so, whether they were of local origin or came from further afield. But it seems certain that the author (or compiler) of the Breton play was from Brittany, for he must have had considerable command of the native language and style in order to create the work of art An Buhez is.

All the workforce and material required by the production of a play had to be paid. According to Runnalls’ data, the entry fees the spectators had to pay did not suffice to balance the costs. Thus, mystery play performances were loss-making (Runnalls 1998, 78-80), but this does not appear to have discouraged Medieval people from putting plays on stage (Julleville 1880). According to Runnalls, several reasons for a performance can be traced from the available historic evidence:

rivalry between towns or guilds (the play is a way of demonstrating the supremacy of one town over another); to ward off a natural disaster like the plague or a drought (the play has the same function as a collective prayer); to obey the wish of an important individual (the performance is a political necessity); to attract visitors to the town (the play is a commercial event, a loss-leader).

(Runnalls 1989, 92)

Particularly the aspect of attracting visitors to town would have served to balance the amount of money that went into the production of a play because visitors would of course generate income for the local merchants. Apart from these practical reasons, a mystery play performance was a very special event. It offered a diversion from everyday life on the one hand and may well have served to strengthen the identity of a town’s citizens on the other hand, because it often
2. Medieval Theatre

told the (hi)story of a local patron saint (Brauneck 1993, 325). Frank and Fox illustrate what a play performance may have meant for a Medieval audience when they say that “to witness miracles being performed before one’s very eyes by the founder of one’s monastery or by the holy man from whom one’s town took its name, these were experiences calculated to hold the rapt attention of medieval spectators” (Frank 1954, 198) and “[f]or thousands of spectators these plays may well have constituted a unique and intensely moving occasion” (Fox 1974, 254), respectively. This, particularly in combination with the fact that mystery play performances were a costly business, shows clearly that mystery plays were not an economic but a social event of considerable scale and importance. In Paris, where mystery play performances were a regular business, the impact may not have been so great, but in the rural towns of Brittany a mystery play performance was bound to make an impression on the citizens. It would therefore be rewarding to investigate the archives of Brittany and look for any records of performances that may have taken place in the Middle Ages.¹³

2.3. The Stage Directions

The introduction of An Buhez gives an account of the plot rather than provide information of the staging and stage-design, as does the Mystère de Saint Laurent in a most illuminating manner (Runnalls 2002, 123). An Buhez has a total of 101 stage directions of varying length and information content. Hamblin conducted a study of the stage directions (French didascalias) in the Siège d’Orléans. She distinguishes between five categories of stage directions:

1. les didascalies directives: celles qui annoncent une pause musicale et qui indiquent où vont les acteurs entre les lieux différents; [...]  
2. les didascalies descriptive: celles qui indiquent les gestes et l’habillement des personnages; [...]  
3. les didascalies spatiales: celles qui indiquent la place des lieux, la composition des secrets ou les besoins scéniques tels que la présence d’une chaise ou d’une arbre; [...]  
4. les didascalies temporelles: ce sont les rubrique en prose qui font commencer et clore l’action de la journée ou de la demi-journée; [...]  
5. les didascalies narratives: celles qui racontent des événements non-annoncés qui ont lieu entre les discours des personages; [...].

¹³It has recently come to my attention that a PhD thesis on a closely related subject was successfully defended by Clément Saliou in 2019 ("Vie théâtrale dans le Nord-Ouest de la France (Bretagne, Pays de la Loire, Poitou, Aunis) du XIIIe au XVIe siècle"). I am looking forward to reconsider my own studies in the light of his findings.
2. Medieval Theatre

(Hamblin 2002, 94)

When applying Hamblin’s approach to An Buhez, it is also necessary to adapt her categories in order to fit the Breton play better. An Buhez has about 100 comments of a directive/descriptive nature in between two stanzas, which I will refer to as stage directions for lack of a better term. Most of these can be categorised as directive in so far as they usually indicate which character speaks, sometimes indicating the addressee as well. These would fit Hamblin’s first category, but while Hamblin also includes stage directions providing information with regard to music in this category, there are no such stage directions in An Buhez.14 This is remarkable, because “the use of musical interludes” is deemed a universal feature of mystery play performances (Hamblin 2005, 196). As Hamblin suggests, the “directive” stage directions often indicate the direction of a character’s movement, but many of these also describe the action taking place on stage. As there are no stage directions indicating what the characters wear, I have adapted the second category to include those stage directions describing the action on stage. Such “descriptive” stage directions are plentiful in An Buhez, but do not seem to fit into any of Hamblin’s original categories. Furthermore, “les didascalies spatiales” are difficult to determine, because the stage directions in An Buhez hardly ever describe where a place is to be or how it is to look. Props are sometimes mentioned, e.g. hammers during the episode of Barbara’s torture, but such information is usually part of a descriptive stage direction indicating the action that takes place on stage. Similarly, some of the descriptive stage directions include information about the place the respective character/s occupies/occupy, but are not of an exclusively spatial nature. Therefore, I have added “local” and/or “props” to those descriptive stage directions that provide information on the respective subject. There are no stage directions complying with the fourth category, “didascalies temporelles”, in An Buhez. The fifth category is special, because stage directions of this kind cannot be found between the stanzas, but within the stanzas. I will therefore discuss those separately. In order to provide an overview of the stage directions in An Buhez, I have listed them all in a chart. The first column refers to the stanzas between which they can be found. The second and third column contain the actual stage directions in Middle Breton and their English translations, respectively. The fourth column offers suggestions with regard to the categorisation of the respective stage direction. However, in contrast to Hamblin’s approach, the stage directions in An Buhez cannot be sorted. Instead, almost all of them (95% ) belong to the category of directive stage directions, but accumulate additional functions, such as also being “descriptive”, or providing information on a “local” aspect, or on “props” required on stage at a particular point in the play.

14The possible exception may be the stage direction 78/79 “Aman e can an mecherouryen – Here the workers sing now”, but this refers to the characters on stage rather than to the musicians accompanying the performance.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>Breton</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(0/1)</td>
<td>An aelez a dezrou canaff</td>
<td>The angels begin to sing</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4/5)</td>
<td>An introduction</td>
<td>The introduction</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21/22)</td>
<td>Lucifer a dezrou</td>
<td>Lucifer begins</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(25/26)</td>
<td>Belzebuth a comp</td>
<td>Beezlebub speaks</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(31/32)</td>
<td>Aman ez dezrou an ystoar.</td>
<td>Here begins the (hi)story.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(48/49)</td>
<td>Aman ez ariff meflager Dioscorus da comp ouz vn mefr mecherour.</td>
<td>Now arrives the messenger of Dioscorus in order to speak to a master worker.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(51/52)</td>
<td>An meflager aya da lauaret de mefr ezeu duet an mecherouryen.</td>
<td>The messenger goes to tell his master that the labourers have come.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(60/61)</td>
<td>Aman diofcorus aya da difceuez dan mefr mecherour an lech han daffuez da ober an tour.</td>
<td>Here Disocorus goes to show the master worker the place and the material to build the tower.</td>
<td>directive/ &amp; local &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(68/69)</td>
<td>An mefr an euffr a diuis gant e mecherouryen euit ober homecher.</td>
<td>The master of the work speaks with his workers in order to (make them) do their work.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(78/79)</td>
<td>Aman e can an mecherouryen.</td>
<td>Here, the workers sing now.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(79/80)</td>
<td>Dioscorus à quacc da claflq vn mestr à scol da disquiff e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus sends (someone) out to search for a tutor to instruct his daughter (at home).</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(82/83)</td>
<td>An meflager a comp ouz an mefr a fcol hac a lauar.</td>
<td>The messenger talks to the schoolmaster and he says.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(84/85)</td>
<td>An mefr a fcol a falut diofcorus.</td>
<td>The schoolmaster greets Dioscorus.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(88/89)</td>
<td>Dioscorus a comp ouz e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus speaks to his daughter.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(89/90)</td>
<td>Sante barba a refond de tat.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara replies to her father.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(92/93)</td>
<td>An mefr da fante Barba.</td>
<td>The master to Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(102/103)</td>
<td>Dioscorus a lauar da mefr e merch fante Barba.</td>
<td>Dioscorus says to the master of his daughter Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(108/9)</td>
<td>Sante barba a lauar de mefr.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara speaks to her Master.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(109/10)</td>
<td>An mefr a respôt dan ytron fante Barba.</td>
<td>The Master answers to the lady Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(125/6)</td>
<td>Aman he mefr he les hehunâ hac aya buanec digâty: ha neufe equeff un ermit pirchîrin peheny alaur:</td>
<td>Here her master leaves her to herself and goes, irritated, away from her and then she finds a hermit-pilgrim, who says:</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(129/30)</td>
<td>Aman an ermit a quëff fante barba hac he falt.</td>
<td>Here the hermit meets Saint Barbara and grets her.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(138/9)</td>
<td>Sante Barba de feruicher.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara to her servant.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(143/4)</td>
<td>An feruicher à comp oz Origenes.</td>
<td>The servant speaks to Origen.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(145/6)</td>
<td>Origenes à lauar de feruicher.</td>
<td>Origen speaks to her servant.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(148/9)</td>
<td>Origenes à lauar de feruicher.</td>
<td>Origen speaks to his servant.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(150/1)</td>
<td>Origenes à quacc e cloarec Valentin dà comp oz fante Barba.</td>
<td>Origen sends for his cleric Valentine in order to speak to Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(158)</td>
<td>Valentin da feruicher fante barba.</td>
<td>Valentine to the servant of Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(176/7)</td>
<td>Sante barba a ftoudan nouglin.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara kneels.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(185/6)</td>
<td>Aman ez arriff Dioscorus.</td>
<td>Here arrives Dioscorus.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(186/7)</td>
<td>Sante Barba a respond de tat: ha Valentin aya ehent.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara answers her father and Valentine goes his way.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(192/3)</td>
<td>An mefr mecherour a quemên Dioscorus da guelet ac ef fo groat mat fondamant e tour.</td>
<td>The master worker sends for Dioscorus to see if the foundation of his tower is made well.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(195/6)</td>
<td>Dioscorus aya da guelet an tour.</td>
<td>Dioscorus goes to see the tower.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(203/4)</td>
<td>Aman dou autrou bras a querêt fante Barba/fo foezet oar an pez ara he tat dezy: hac ez lauar an eil de guile.</td>
<td>Now two great lords of the relatives of Saint Barbara, who are astonished what her father does to her, and one speaks to the other.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(224/5)</td>
<td>Dioscorus aya da compz ouz e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus goes to speak to his daughter.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(226/7)</td>
<td>Sant e Barba à refpont de tat.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara answers her father.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(230/1)</td>
<td>Dioscorus aya da lauaret dàn autrounez an refpont.</td>
<td>Dioscorus goes to tell the lords the answer.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(234/5)</td>
<td>Aman an autrounez a que-mer conge diouz Dioscorus.</td>
<td>Here the lords take leave from Dioscorus.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(239)</td>
<td>Aman ezœont do bro: hac ez lauar an eil de guile.</td>
<td>Here they go to their lands and the one speaks to the other.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(243/4)</td>
<td>An mefr mecherour a compz ouz e tut.</td>
<td>The master worker speaks to his people.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(255/6)</td>
<td>Aman ez queff an feunten fech.</td>
<td>Here she finds the fountain dry.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(256/7)</td>
<td>Aman ez flouff oar he douglin.</td>
<td>Here she kneels.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(258/9)</td>
<td>Aman ez queff an feunten leun.</td>
<td>Here she finds the fountain full.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(262/3)</td>
<td>Aman fante Barba ara gàt he bes gli byet en feunten vn croas en men/peheny fo hoaz enhaff: hac ez lauar:</td>
<td>Here Saint Barbara makes with her finger – moistened in the fountain – a cross in a stone which is still on it and she says:</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(276/7)</td>
<td>Aman ez pet doe oar he doulin en e cambr.</td>
<td>Here she prays to God on her knees in her chamber.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(280/1)</td>
<td>Diofcorus a deu e veig.</td>
<td>Dioscorus returns from his voyage.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(282/3)</td>
<td>Diofcor9 a deu e òffridy:haç aya de tour.</td>
<td>Disocorus returns from his mission and goes to his tower.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(283/4)</td>
<td>Aman pan fell ouz an tour ha guelet groaet try frenet ez lauar dan mecherour:</td>
<td>Here when he looks at the tower and sees that three windows were built he says to the worker:</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(304)</td>
<td>Diofcor9 a côps ouz e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus speaks to his daughter.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(327/8)</td>
<td>Sante barba a refpont.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara answers.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(336/7)</td>
<td>Sante barba a refpont.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara answers.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(358/9)</td>
<td>Sante barba a pet doe de diffèn: ha neufe vn men bras en em digoras hac he cuzas ouz he tat a predere neufe he lazaff.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara begs God to defend her and then a great stone opened (itself) and covered her against her father, who then intended to kill her.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(362/3)</td>
<td>Meffager Diofcorus a refpôt dezaff.</td>
<td>Dioscorus’ messenger answers him.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(363/4)</td>
<td>Diofcor9 a goulèn ouz claudin.</td>
<td>Disocorus demands from Claudin.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(367/8)</td>
<td>Aman gueguen ha riuallen aya dan menez da miret hoz deauet.</td>
<td>Here Gueguen and Riuallen go to the mountain to tend their sheep.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; local &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(370/1)</td>
<td>Amâ ez guelôt fante barba ouz techet rac he tat: hac ez lauar Riuallen drouc.</td>
<td>Here they see Saint Barbara fleeing from her father and evil Riuallen speaks.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(374/5)</td>
<td>Diofcorus a goulèn e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus asks for his daughter.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(375/6)</td>
<td>An berger mat Riuallen.</td>
<td>The good shepherd Riuallen.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(377/8)</td>
<td>Goudefe ez goulèn ouz an drouc berger:</td>
<td>Then he demands of the bad shepherd:</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(378)</td>
<td>An drouc berger Gueguen.</td>
<td>The bad shepherd Gueguen.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(379/80)</td>
<td>Riullen a lauar da Gueguen</td>
<td>Riullen speaks to Gueguen.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(382/3)</td>
<td>Neufe ân drouc berger so couertiflet en vn men maibr: hac e deffuet a quelyen raden. Hac ez lauar fante barba.</td>
<td>Then the bad shepherd is transformed into a marble stone and his sheep into grasshoppers. And Saint Barbara says:</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; props</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(383/4)</td>
<td>Sante Barba a fell ouz ân eff.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara looks towards heaven.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(390/1)</td>
<td>Dioscorus a croc en e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus catches his daughter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(394/5)</td>
<td>Dioscorus a côps ouz e tut.</td>
<td>Dioscorus speaks to his people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(396/7)</td>
<td>Dioscorus ara he miret en prifon didâ poan an buhez.</td>
<td>Dioscorus has her guarded in a prison under a life sentence.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(405/6)</td>
<td>Dioscorus a clem e merch ouz an prouoût.</td>
<td>Dioscorus accuses his daughter in front of the provost.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(416/7)</td>
<td>Dioscorus are e merch ouz he cannaff bede an prouoût ouz lauaret dezy.</td>
<td>Disocorus leads his daughter beating her to the provost talking to her.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive &amp; local</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(417/8)</td>
<td>Aman he prefant dan barner.</td>
<td>Here he presents her to the judge.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(421/2)</td>
<td>An prouoût a comps ouz fante Barba.</td>
<td>The provost speaks to Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(449/50)</td>
<td>Aman ez comps an Prouoût ouz e peu ar bourreu.</td>
<td>Here the provost speaks to his four executioners.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(454)</td>
<td>Aman an bourreuyen a diuiq fante Barba.</td>
<td>Here the executioners undress Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(466/7)</td>
<td>Aman hoz em queffont fcui: hac ez lauar Agripant.</td>
<td>Here they find themselves tired and Agripant says:</td>
<td>directive/ descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(477/8)</td>
<td>Claudin dan prouoût.</td>
<td>Claudin to the provost.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(491/2)</td>
<td>Aman ez lauaer en prifon.</td>
<td>Here she is put into prison.</td>
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<td>French Text</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
<td>Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>(492/3)</td>
<td>Sâte barba ara he oraefon en prîfon: ha quen buhan lefus a deuz de confortaff.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara makes her prayer in prison and at once Jesus came to comfort her.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; local</td>
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<tr>
<td>(495/6)</td>
<td>Iefus a cóps en baradoes.</td>
<td>Jesus speaks in paradise.</td>
<td>directive &amp; local</td>
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<tr>
<td>(533/4)</td>
<td>An prouoft ara digacc fante Barba.</td>
<td>The provost has Saint Barbara brought.</td>
<td>directive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(538/9)</td>
<td>Claudin a digar an prîfon.</td>
<td>Claudin opens the prison.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(540/1)</td>
<td>Claudin fo abaiflet ouz he guelct falu.</td>
<td>Claudin is dumbfounded at seeing her sound.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(543/4)</td>
<td>Claudin he prefant dâ barneur.</td>
<td>Claudin presents her to the judge.</td>
<td>directive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(563/4)</td>
<td>An prouoft ara ober tan euit e tourmêta.</td>
<td>The provost has a fire made in order to torment her.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
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<tr>
<td>(576/7)</td>
<td>An prouoft a gourchemên dan tirâtet he cânaff gant morzolou.</td>
<td>The provost commands the tormentors to beat her with hammers.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
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<tr>
<td>(578/9)</td>
<td>Aman ez quemeront hoz morzolou hac ez lauar Agripant.</td>
<td>Here they take their hammers and Agripant speaks.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; props</td>
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<tr>
<td>(592/3)</td>
<td>Aman ez trocher he diu broff.</td>
<td>Here both her breasts are cut (off).</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
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<td>(608/9)</td>
<td>Claudin da fante Barba.</td>
<td>Claudin to Saint Barbara.</td>
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<td>(609)</td>
<td>Claudin dan prouoft.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(623/4)</td>
<td>Iefus a quacc e ael de golo.</td>
<td>Jesus sends his angel to cover her.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(628/9)</td>
<td>An ael a golo figur fante barba.</td>
<td>An Angel covers Saint Barbara’s figure.</td>
<td>directive (&amp; props)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(636/7)</td>
<td>Aman ez difparty an ael: hac lauar an prouoft.</td>
<td>Here the angel departs and the provost says:</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(648/9)</td>
<td>Dioscorus euel den arragiet.</td>
<td>Dioscorus like an enraged man:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>(650/1)</td>
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<td>Dioscorus takes Saint Barbara by the hand and takes her to the mountain.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive &amp; local</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(652/3)</td>
<td>Sante Barba ara he pedên.</td>
<td>Saint Barbara makes her prayer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(672/3)</td>
<td>Iefus a lauar dän ael.</td>
<td>Jesus speaks to the angel.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(723/4)</td>
<td>Amā fante barba ara he oraefon.</td>
<td>Here Saint Barbara makes her prayer.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(726/7)</td>
<td>Amā an diaulou a incit Diofcorsus da hafaff lazaff he merch. Sathan a comp.</td>
<td>Here the devils incite Dioscorus to hurry to kill his daughter. Sathan speaks.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(742/3)</td>
<td>Confiancc a comp.</td>
<td>Conscience speaks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(744/5)</td>
<td>Bezlebut a côps a eneb côffiance.</td>
<td>Beezlebub speaks against Conscience.</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(770/1)</td>
<td>Diofcorus da bezlebut.</td>
<td>Dioscorus to Beezlebub.</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(771)</td>
<td>Diofcorus da confiancc.</td>
<td>Dioscorus to Conscience.</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(782)</td>
<td>Diofcorus a dipên e merch.</td>
<td>Dioscorus beheads his daughter.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive (&amp; props)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(782/3)</td>
<td>Diofcorus a difemper.</td>
<td>Dioscorus despairs.</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(796/7)</td>
<td>Bezlebut a comps ouz diofcorus.</td>
<td>Beezlebub speaks to Dioscorus.</td>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(806/7)</td>
<td>Valentin baelec/ a enterr fante Barba.</td>
<td>Priest Valentine buries Saint Barbara.</td>
<td>directive/descriptive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(813)</td>
<td>Finis.</td>
<td>The End.</td>
<td>descriptive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is surprising how few information the stage directions provide about the places the characters are in and the props required by the action. Only fourteen stage directions indicate a place that a character occupies or goes to. Several of these are very precise, such as 276/7 “Here she prays to God on her knees in her chamber” or 495/6 “Jesus speaks in paradise”. Some are, however, less informative, for example when the lords “go to their lands” in 239 after taking their leave from Dioscorus, or when “Dioscorus leads his daughter […] to the provost […]” (416/7). Stage directions providing information on the use of props are equally rare; there are only ten. Similar to the “local” stage directions, some are very precise, such as 578/9 when the torturers “take their hammers”. Others are rather vague, as for example in 60/1, when
Dioscorus shows “the master worker the place and the material to build the tower”. In two additional cases, the required props have to be guessed instead of being mentioned, which is why the “props” appear in brackets in the chart: 628/9 when the angel covers Barbara, but the stage direction does not indicate what she is covered with, and 782 when Dioscorus beheads his daughter, but the stage direction does not mention a weapon.

Furthermore, not every action taking place on stage is illustrated by a stage direction. Often the information on what a character does or where he/she moves can be found within the spoken text. Hamblin calls this particular version of directing the characters “didascalie narratives” (Hamblin 2002, 94), Wells calls them implicit stage directions and highlights their importance in a time when stage directions were not as frequently employed as modern editions of plays may lead to believe (Wells 2016, 417). There are many examples in An Buhez that fit into this fifth of Hamblin’s categories (s.a.). In fact, all episodes rely on this way of directing the characters towards their respective goals. For instance, after Dioscorus has finished instructing the master of the craftsmen about the tower and he in turn has communicated the king’s wishes to the craftsmen, they begin to move around. They look for a spot to lay the foundation; they carry stones and equipment to the building site; they help one another out in general. None of this is supported by a stage direction, thus the entire action that takes place has to be gleaned from the craftsmen’s dialogue (69-78). Similarly, when Barbara has to go and live in the tower, there is no stage direction to mark exactly when she is supposed to move into it. Instead, Dioscorus tells the audience that she has to enter the tower now: “Rac fe tizmat finchat batant / Et ênhaff eșpres em prefant / Bezeṭ diligent ous antren” (“Therefore quickly, evermore immediately / go into it [the tower], truly, in my presence. / Be swift at entering!”, 203). Later, when Barbara leaves the building site after having made the request for the third window, her movements and her surroundings are illustrated very precisely by her speech instead of a stage direction:

[255] Meya heb fellell da fellet
Oar vn tro a me caffo quet
Un bânhech dour net da quêtaff
Dan feunten mat fo diadreff
Ma hunan ha heb den gueneff
Er hoant fo em eneﬀ da euﬀ.

I go straightaway to see, / on the spot, if I will find / a drop of clear water first of all, / to the good fountain which is (hidden) back there / on my own and without anyone with me / because there is a wish in my mind to drink. //
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Barbara tells the audience that she will now move (“meya” – ‘I go’) to a secret place (“to the good fountain which is hidden back there” – ‘Dan feunten mat fo diadreff’), and she will be alone there (“on my own and without anyone with me” – ‘Ma hunan ha heb den guenneff’). It is very important for her to mention all this, because the place cannot in fact be hidden – the audience needs to be able to see the place and see it well, for Barbara will perform her first miracle there and impress a cross into a stone with only her finger. Moreover, Barbara is not actually alone on stage. The other actors will remain in their respective positions, which in case of the craftsmen at the building site is very close by. It is therefore necessary for Barbara to explain that she is alone at the fountain. Furthermore, when Barbara sacks the idols and abuses them fluently in stanzas 269-276, it is again her lines that indicate quite clearly what she is doing: “Crotch ez vifais heb flachaff / Araff dit ha da depitaff” (‘I spit in your motionless face and I defy you!’; 272).

Another very interesting example of the narrative stage directions is Barbara’s torture. There are only a few stage directions about the kinds of torture Barbara is to endure: that she is to be undressed, that a fire to burn her flesh is to be lit, that she is to be beaten with hammers and that her breasts are to be cut. In addition to those, the characters state that she also suffers being bound with ropes (455), walking while being beaten with clubs and bull-puzzles (456-7), being rolled down the streets in a barrel spiked with nails (471), having salt rubbed into her wounds (482), being beaten with a hair-shirt (486), and finally being chased through the streets naked (618), although most of these tortures are prevented or allayed by divine intervention. Those stage directions that do instruct the characters during this episode of torture are always supported by the characters’ lines:

*An prouofl a gourchemën dan tirätet / he cânaff gant morzolou.
[577] Cza fergantet clequet na tardet muy
Morzolou calet haftet pe fonget huy
Gruet ornezy vn tourny an muyhaff
[...]*

*The provost commands the tormentors / to beat her with hammers: / Well, sergeant, find, tarry no more, / strong hammers, hurry!, what do you deliberate? / Employ the most violent effort upon her! [...]/*

This fits well with Hamblin’s analysis that mystery play performances “alternate speech with action, rather than integrating the two” (Hamblin 2005, 195). In many cases, the actors announce their movement/action and then complete it, which is exactly what Barbara is doing in 255 (s.a.). Hamblin’s description of the torture episode in *Le Mystère de saint Christofle* (Run-
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Though An Buhez equally well: “During the torture scenes that dominate the last half of the performance, the king’s henchmen also perform their gestures after having first announced them aloud” (Hamblin 2012, 46). Both, Hamblin and Longtin stress that this doubling of gestures and words has been practised by all fatistes and was a characteristic feature of the (late) Middle Ages: “N’est-elle pas monnaie courante tout au long du Moyen Âge, tous genre confondu, et cela dès les premières chansons de gestes jusqu’aux romans de chevalerie tardifs?” (Longtin 2010, 209; c.f. Hamblin 2005, Hamblin 2012, 47). Hamblin also underlines the importance of the “didascalies narratives” as markers of the genre:

These embedded staging cues are one of the features that distinguish theatre texts from their literary cousins, in that the visual or gestural act predicted in the text is necessary in order to complete the narrative. In mystery plays, this ‘speech then action’ convention moves the narrative forward and helps the spectators to identify décors representing places, performers representing persons, and movement representing both time and space.

(Hamblin 2012, 45f)

This is entirely true for An Buhez, as all major events are invoked by the characters’ speeches and never only by stage directions. These may serve as additional sources of information on a character’s following action and movement. But they are clearly of limited importance in comparison to the information provided by the characters’ lines. A very good example of this is the fact that in one of the key episodes of Barbara’s life, her visit to the building site of the tower in order to make the craftsmen add a third window, there is no stage direction to indicate either her request or its being followed by the craftsmen. Yet it becomes perfectly clear from the dialogue between Barbara and the master worker, and even more so from Dioscorus’ reaction upon returning to the tower, that the modification has been made in answer to Barbara’s request.

2.4. The Stage Design

As has been discussed, medieval plays were usually performed outdoors on stages built for the exclusive use of one specific play. What this stage looked was highly dependant on the contents of the play and limited by the resources of the town that mounted the production. Some French plays provide considerable information with regard to their staging, for example the prologue of Le mystère de saint Laurent. Furthermore, there are other sources, such as contracts made in the course of the production of a performance, which provide additional or

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15Interestingly enough, one of the torturers in Le Mystère de saint Christophe is named “Agrippart” (c.f. Hamblin 2012, 46), which is very similar to “Agrippant”, who is one of the torturers in An Buhez.
background information about the play productions, and sometimes give an insight into the
stage design, as well (Hamblin 2012). In the case of the Breton plays such helpful sources of
information have yet to be discovered. But even though the stage directions mentioning a
particular place are sparse, a lot can be gleaned from the plot of the play.

The two images that are frequently presented when discussing medieval theatre and its stage
designs are Jean Fouquet’s Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia (figure 1) and the stage design of the
Passion Play performed at Valenciennes in 1547 (figure 2). According to Weigert, “Fouquet[’s
Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia] presents what was identified as the medieval ‘theater in the
round’; the Valenciennes frontispiece depicts its linear platform stage” (Weigert 2015, 24) and
“relate[s] to an actual performance” (Weigert 2015, 104). Runnalls illustrates a stage design that
appears to be a cross between the two when he describes an oval structure that “consiste en
une vaste aire de jeu entourée de 39 loges rangées en deux lignes courbes” (Runnalls 1998, 172),
and which has served for another Passion Play performed at Châteaudun in 1510. While any
of these stage designs could theoretically have served as a model for An Buhez, I consider the
design of the Valenciennes Passion Play most helpful and well applicable with regard to depict-
ing the contents of the Breton play. The image of the Valenciennes frontispiece clearly shows
several “lieux”, or “places”. These are platforms or scaffolds on which the performance takes
place. They can have multiple storeys, which can be accessed via ladders or steps. In between
these places, the actors can move, for example when travelling from one place to another. In
such a stage design, the line between audience and actors is slightly more pronounced but still
permeable, for the stage and the places are easily accessed. While the Valenciennes frontispiece
depicts a raised stage, this would not be necessary for An Buhez. The scaffolds representing the
various places of a play could also be placed on the ground instead, thus saving a considerable
amount of building work and timber. In the following sections I will try to illustrate which
designs An Buhez might have required and what the respective places could have looked like.

2.4.1. Nicomedia

Although Nicomedia is not exactly part of the stage design, it is the place where the entire
action is supposed to take place. Barbara is the daughter of the king of Nicomedia, which is
established in the second stanza spoken by the witness (‘Merch dan roe voe hy / A Ycomedy’,
2) and then repeated in the introduction:

Da Dioscorus den ruset
Rac affet a ycomedy
Ezoa hy merch leun a guerchdet
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[...]

This maiden, who I have named / to Dioscorus, cunning man, / indeed of Nicomedia
/ was she, daughter full of virginity / [...]. //

The audience does not learn more about that place, since the introduction continues with a summary of the plot instead. When the devils appear, they apportion the world among them and the only continent that is singled out is Asia, which is assigned to Beezlebub:

Lucifer.

[29] An bet so diusiset seder
En teir queffran splann eu an guer
Pep a carter a quemerhet
[...]

[30] Dide bezlebuth deputet
Ez roaff Asy hep muy quet
[...]

Lucifer: / The world is clearly divided / into three parts; the word is clear / you each take a quarter / [...]. // To you, Beezlebub, deputy, / I give Asia, without much ado. / [...] //

Although Lucifer does not refer to Barbara or Dioscorus in any way, the implication is clear, because no other continent is given to one particular devil or even mentioned by name. Beezlebub is the elected tempter of the people who populate the part of the earth where the action of the play takes place. Locating Nicomedia in Asia is in accordance with the modern understanding: “Nicomédie (en Bithynie, sur le littoral sud de la mer noire)” (Le Berre 2011, 152). However, once the hermit-pilgrim enters the action, the situation becomes a little more complicated. He is on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land: “I have to go [...] / truly, on a righteous pilgrimage / to the tomb of Jesus” (‘Memeux da monet [...] / En pirchirindet affet rez / Da bez Iefus [...]’; 126). When he meets Barbara, she asks him where he comes from and he answers: “Very much directly from Alexandria / I come indeed, do not doubt” (‘Tout batant a Alexandry / Ez deuaff affet na lequet fy’, 131). It is quite unlikely that a pilgrim would come by Bithynia when travelling between Alexandria and Palestine (figure 3).

As I will discuss further in 7.1, the episode is strikingly similar to *cinq journées* in several details, which in turn corresponds closely to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. In his compilation,
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John of Wakkerzeel attempted to reconcile the numerous accounts of Barbara’s martyrdom. According to some of the legends this took place in Heliopolis, while others suggest Nicomedia, and even Tuscany and Rome occur. Therefore, John of Wakkerzeel explained that the Heliopolis in Barbara’s legend is that of Egypt rather than that of Syria, which is located near Alexandria. The Egyptian city was, according to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, founded by the Bithynian king Nicomedes, which is why the city is also known as Nicomedia (Gaiffier 1959, 22f). In both *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* the (hermit-)pilgrim travels between Alexandria and Palestine and passes by Nicomedia on the way. Thus, both plays apparently concur with John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* insofar as Nicomedia is in Egypt, in which case Africa should be assigned to Beelzebub instead of Asia. However, it is quite possible that this discrepancy did not occur to the author, let alone the audience, of *An Buhez*. Both places would likely have been considered a remote part of the world, located on a different continent, but not necessarily required further specification. Nevertheless, the discrepancy is a noteworthy detail, because the episode of the devils does not correspond to any other of the texts compared in this study, while that of the hermit-pilgrim clearly does (7.1).

2.4.2. Hell

The play begins with the witness and the introduction. These, however, clearly focus on the contents of the play rather than the places to be seen on stage. After the introduction, the devils begin to speak and Lucifer calls his allies to himself: “Alianc hoz em auancet” (‘Allies, advance!’, 22). On a modern stage Lucifer would probably step in front of the curtains and call for his allies, who would then likely appear at different positions, possibly having been seated among the audience, and approach the stage. Apart from Lucifer’s entry and the curtains, this may indeed be the case in *An Buhez*, as Weigert points out:

The figures that most forcefully demonstrated the permeability of the spatial division between audience and performers were the devils. Whereas the hell-mouth was a solid framework constructed on scaffolding for a Passion performance, the devils had the potential to erupt into the crowds of spectators. They were not confined to the physical structure of the scaffoldings but could hop off them and run around among the spectators.
(Weigert 2015, 99)

Runnalls is of a similar opinion when he points out that the line between audience and actors, and thus between “théâtre et scène”, was thin to non-existent. Those citizens acting in the

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16I thank Dr. Natalia Petrovskaia for pointing that out to me during a talk she gave on *Délw y Byd*. 
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plays would be sitting and watching the performance in between their appearances on stage, wearing the costumes required by their roles (cf. Runnalls 1998, 172). Therefore, the devils may well have been sitting in the audience awaiting their turn.

Lucifer, however, is different. When describing the different performances of the French mysteries, Hamblin explains that in one case “Lucifer [...] sits chained to his throne above Hell” (Hamblin 2012, 43). While there is no stage direction in An Buhez that proves such a setting, the fact that Lucifer calls his allies to himself is indicative of a similar arrangement. He may not be chained to a chair, but he appears to be restricted to a particular space. Unfortunately, Lucifer only appears at the beginning. In the end, shortly before Conscience enters the stage, it is Satan that instructs Beelzebub to ensure the complete corruption of Dioscorus’ soul. Yet Satan appears in the same way Lucifer did in the beginning: “Cza mazouchuy ma alliancc / Benefet cleuet ma fetance” (‘Well, where are you my allies? / Approach in order to hear my judgement!’, 727). This suggests that Lucifer and Satan are the same character, and in turn further promotes the idea that the head-devil is confined to a particular space. As the devils begin the play by apportioning the world among them (24), it would be conceivable that they are indeed upon a raised space, which would offer them a better overview.

Dioscorus’ death at the end of the play also suggests that the place of hell may be a construction of more than one storey:

Jesus:
[790] [...]  
Digor heb grap en vn fтрap ân abim  
Reun a venim ha frim inefimabl  
Glan gant tan gor deour Dioscorus

[...]

Satan:
[792] [...]  
Digueriff abim an ty man  
Maz duy gät touffoul dan goulet  
Prefant antier corff haisperet
[...]

[793] Ordrenaff tizmat en flat man  
Foultr ha curun dre fortun glan  
Quemefquet a tan breman fcaff
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Hac et prefant gant tourmant bras
De ditumpaff an quentaфф pas
Dàn iffern diblas az gaffaff

[...]

Bezlebut
[...]

[797] Ne alhes flach heb ataig mez faicho
Dàn iffern yen [...]

Jesus: / [...] open in an instant without trickery the abyss / full of venom and unspeakable cold! / Devour Dioscorus with a blazing fire! / [...] //
Satan: / [...] I open the abyss of this house / so that he will go to the bottom with a whirlwind / instantly, completely, body and soul. / [...] // I order immediately, on the spot, / you, lightning and thunder, according to the destiny, / together with fire, now, / go with great torture / to precipitate him at once / into the most despicable, terrible hell. // [...] //
Bezlebub: / [...] you would not be able to move! Without putting a leash (on you)
I will drag you with me / to the cold hell [...]. //

That Dioscorus is to be drawn into an abyss which is opened by Satan could be realised by a two-storey construction with Satan on the upper level and a door or an entry on ground level, through which a hellish scenery might be visible, quite possibly involving flames and noise. Dioscorus could then be issued through that door by Beezlebub and taken into hell, while light and noise (“lightning and thunder”, 793) are produced on stage.17 The way in which the characters describe hell would almost be worthy of the Valenciennes frontispiece (figure 2), except for the other souls already suffering tortures in hell that do not feature in An Buhez.

When discussing a massive production at Châteaudun, Runnalls illustrates how much effort could go into the design of hell:

This [assistant stage designer] had a team of 20 men, who worked underground, producing the noise and smoke associated with Hell. He bought large quantities of salt-peter to make gun-powder, and, with either parchment or metal casings,

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17If Barbara could indeed go through the door into the tower, there might be deliberate parallels between the two episodes (2.4.4).
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made large numbers of fire-works and rockets to be projected from Hell. (Runnalls 1998, 73)

Even though the stage design of An Buhez may not have been quite as elaborate, there does appear to have been a certain amount of pyrotechnical support involved, if the characters’ speeches are indeed supportive of the action on stage.

2.4.3. The Royal House

The story proper begins with Dioscorus and his intentions to build a tower for Barbara. There is no stage direction to illustrate the place Dioscorus occupies. But the action taking place around him indicates that he is settled in one place and that other characters come and "visit" him there. In the beginning, Dioscorus tells his messenger to “go surely, be true, / to find for me quite quickly workers” (‘quaes seder bez certen / Da clasq diff flour presour mecherouryen’, 39), to which the messenger answers “I will go, truly, with pleasure” (‘meyel plen a venant’, 40). The king repeats the order again and then the craftsmen begin to speak among themselves. There is no stage direction to indicate a change of place at this point, but when the messenger arrives at the craftsmen’s place, this is underlined by a stage direction: “Now arrives the messenger of Dioscorus in order to speak to a master worker” (‘Aman ez ariff mefflger Diofcorus da comps ouz vn mefr mecherour’, 48/49) and his speech makes it perfectly clear that the king is in the city while he and the craftsmen are not (yet):

Ret eu dich don hef fngion monet
Rac en effet gourchemënet net voe
Ez refech lem hef quen quen a breman
Tut a mecher guenech fclaer an kaer man
Da prezec glan pur buhan ouz an roe.

Master artisan, skilled and industrious! / You need, really without deceit, to go /
– because indeed it was clearly ordered / that you would lead without further ado
now / workmen clearly with you into the city – / indeed to very quickly discourse
with the king. //

Similar to Dioscorus’ repetition of his order to the messenger, the master answers by first repeating the information that he must go “I will surely go with you fully without sorrow” (‘Meyel certen guenech plen hep enoe’, 50), and then stressing the necessity for a change of place again by wanting to know “to which end [the king] summons [him]” (‘pe da pën em
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quemèn’, 50). The messenger then approaches the king in order to notify him of the craftsmen’s arrival: “The messenger goes to tell his master / that the labourers have come” (‘An mefflager aya da lauaret de meffr / ezeu duet an mecheroureyen’, 51/52). On the one hand, this back and forth way in which the characters move serves to highlight the king’s elevated social position. On the other hand, it illustrates the spatial dimension on stage. The physical gap between the king’s place and the craftsmen’s place could likely have been bridged by shouting. But in the reality within the play, there is some space in between the two places. The messenger thus enhances the impression of separate places by “[linking], both spatially and thematically, disparate sites on the playing area” and becomes a theatrical device (Hamblin 2005, 196).

The spatial action repeats itself in the next episode, when the king sends his messenger to find a schoolmaster for his daughter: “Dioscorus sends (someone) out to search for a tutor to instruct his daughter (at home)” (‘Diofcorus à quacc da clafq vn mestr à scol da difquiff e merch’, 79/80). The conversations between the king, the messenger and the schoolmaster are very similar to the previous ones between the king, the messenger and the master worker. When Dioscorus informs the schoolmaster of his task, we learn more about Dioscorus’ place. Welcoming the schoolmaster the king says: “May you be greatly welcome indeed / master of reason, without being hesitant come into (the) house!” (‘Duet mat meurbet affet rauhbet huy / Mefr a fquent hep bout lent duet en ty’, 86). Dioscorus mentions his house again when he commands the schoolmaster to move in with the royal family in order to assure the highest quality of education for Barbara: “It is necessary that you move so that you will be carefree / now with her in my good and decent house / for a long time and I will compensate you” (‘Ret ez chenchet maz vihet dibredre / Prefant ganty en ty mat ha fier / A hir amfer ha moz remunero’, 103). Barbara, too, is summoned in order to meet her schoolmaster: “Come my sweet, little daughter” (‘Duet ma merchic douzcic’, 89). It is not clarified where Barbara was before her summons, but she has probably simply stood or sat in a slightly removed place close by.

When Barbara is visited and then baptised by Valentine, the play does not provide much information on Barbara’s whereabouts. But the fact that she is to “play the invalid” (‘gruet an claff’, 166) suggests that she is in her room in the royal house. While it could be possible that the stage design involved some structure signifying at least two rooms, it is more likely that Barbara is simply in the same place that has previously been occupied by her father. The impression of two rooms in one place could be achieved by movable props as suggested by Hamblin (s.a., Hamblin 2005, 195), for example a throne for the king and a mattress for Barbara’s private room. These could then be exchanged in order to comply with the respective part of the play. In order to assure the characters’ privacy required by the action on stage, Dioscorus must in turn have moved to a place slightly apart, like Barbara did before being summoned to meet the schoolmaster. This would fit well with the stage direction indicating the king’s return after the
baptism has been performed (“Here arrives Dioscorus – Aman ez arriff Diofcors”, 185/6), since he must have been absent in order to arrive. Thus, while the royal house appears to consist of more than one room when reading the play, the performance space only requires a single place that can be occupied by at least three people and possibly some props like a throne for the king and/or a mattress or stretcher for Barbara to “play the invalid” on, but even these are dispensable.

It appears that the royal house functions as a permanent place for Dioscorus to which he can withdraw when he is not needed elsewhere in the play. This is indicated by the fact that characters approach him in order to talk to him, as do the lords in 206 for example: “Let us go quickly regarding her father and to him / in order to learn from him all the considerations” (‘Eomp diouz he tat tizmat ha dauettaf / Euit gouzout an holl doux diouttaf’). Similarly, the master worker sends for him in order to ask him to inspect the progress at the building site: “The master worker sends for Dioscorus to see if the foundation of his tower is made well” (“An mefr mecherour a quemên Diofcors da guelet ac ef fo groat mat fondamant e tour’, 192/3). If my assumption is correct, the actor of Dioscorus will have spent more than half of the play in the place of the royal house, similar to Lucifer who resides in the devils’ place. In contrast to Lucifer, however, Dioscorus can leave his place and when he does it is a noteworthy change of place. During the play, Dioscorus leaves only once, when he goes on an unspecified mission in 241 (“Memeux da monet heb quet fy / Gant effet en vn queffridy / Monet ènhy a ftudiaff – Without any doubt I really have to go / on a mission: / I plan to concern myself with it”). It is then that Barbara makes her move to request the third window. This on-stage absence of the king provides the setting in which Barbara can descend from her tower and speak to the craftsmen.

2.4.4. The Building Site and Tower

The third place that is introduced in the play is the building site which becomes the tower. During the conversation of the master and the king a stage direction indicates this place for the first time: “Here Dioscorus goes to show the master worker the place and the material to build the tower” (‘Aman diofcors aya da difcuez dan mefr mecherour an lech han daffuez da obre an tour’, 60/61). The consecutive action depicts the building site as one of the focal points of the play. It appears that the tower is being built on stage during the performance, for the master worker asks Dioscorus to come and inspect the progress (s.a.). Dioscorus approaches the building site in order to clarify the number of windows he wants his tower to have (242), and Barbara in turn approaches the craftsmen in order to request the third window (248). However, it is striking that the master worker wants the king to “to see if the foundation of his tower is made well” (‘da guelet ac ef fo groat mat fondamant e tour’, 192/3), and merely 10 stanzas later
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Dioscorus tells Barbara to enter the tower and live in it from now on: "Rac fe tizmat finchat batant / Et ènhaff efpres em prefant / Bezet diligant ouz antren" ('Therefore quickly, evermore immediately / go into it [the tower], truly, in my presence. / Be swift at entering!', 203). The speeches in between indicate the progress that has either already been made or is possibly taking place while the characters are talking. The master worker begins by telling the king that "I have gladly begun your pretty tower" ('Hoz tour flour net ameux dezrouet', 194). And when Dioscorus goes to visit the tower, he talks himself and the audience into believing that the tower is ready for Barbara to move into:

*Dioscorus aya da guelet an tour*

[196] Mecherour mat dam grat a pep flatur
Ouz dalchaff plen fouueren ha den fur
Dam pligardur ouz eux fur figureut
Vaillant meurbet ez labouret feder
Heb neb rebeig na breig en hoz mecher
Coant hac antier ezeu felaer prederet

[197] Ret ve gant firiff ez ve eff achiuet
Maz liquiff fcaff ènhaff hep tardaff quet
Ma merch guerch net da miret a het fpacc
Me dalcho hy hep fy heuiziquen
Certen eno nep tro ne guelo den
Cre na feu en dre nep termen en facc.

[198] Heb dale muy me ftydy he dicaczc
Pan eux heb vicc propiczc logeiczc acc
Camprou ha placc dilacc en pep faczon
De herberchiaff rac fcaff he logaff hy
Acrèn ènhaff a mennaff neraff fy
Euel ma fpy hep muy dilacion

* Dioscorus goes to see the tower. / I find you a good workman in every way to my taste, / fully supreme, and a wise man. / You have certainly designed to my pleasure, / you surely work very skillfully / without any reproach nor trouble in your workmanship, / clearly, it is thought through orderly and completely. // It would be necessary that it would be accomplished zealously / so that I can quickly put into it without tarrying / my virginous daughter to guard her for some time. /
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I will hold her, without doubt, from now on / surely there, (at) no time will a man look her, / (neither) strong nor healthy, by no means, in the face. // Without more delay I intend to bring her / because there is enough lodging without opportunity for vice, / chambers and free space in every fashion / to accommodate her, because I want to lodge her soon, / completely in it (the tower), I do not doubt, / according to my intent, without more delay. //

The question is how the tower is represented on stage. Do the craftsmen build an actual tower? If they do, which material do they use? Is this tower big enough to be entered into? And if it is possible for Barbara to go into the tower, how does the audience see her when she is inside? For the first day it would suffice that the craftsmen laid a foundation, possibly made from real or realistic looking stones, because they joke about carrying them in stanzas 74-76. That Dioscorus issues Barbara into the tower in stanza 203 (s.a.) suggests that some sort of construction including a door or an opening has been added to this foundation. However, this would have had to be accomplished very quickly, as there are only ten stanzas between the foundation being mentioned and Barbara entering the tower. Therefore, it is quite possible that the tower is not big enough to be entered into, but instead appears as a kind of prop that transforms this part of the stage into the place of “The Tower”. The actors could then simply perform in front of the tower. Such a setting has been suggested by Hamblin for the performance of Saint Estienne’s play (1548; unedited): “the platforms or décors must have been relatively small in size. Thus, performers either come forward or stand in front of a décor” (Hamblin 2012, 44).

During the second day, the design of the tower becomes more complicated due to the fountain and the dispute over the number of windows. When Dioscorus mentions his unspecified mission in stanza 241 (s.a.), he also commands the craftsmen to make but two windows. Shortly after Dioscorus has left, Barbara approaches the craftsmen and asks them to add a third. She states that they have already made two: “seeing that you have made, obviously, / only two since you began” (‘Guelet nozeux groaet heb quet gou / Nemet dou a pan dezroufoch’, 248). Upon his return, Dioscorus discovers three windows, which is indicated by a stage direction on the one hand: “Here when he looks at the tower and sees that three windows were built he says to the worker” (‘Aman pan fell ouz an tour ha guelet groaet try frenfet ez lauar dan mecherour’, 283/4), and by his speech on the other hand: “There, up high, I see / three windows when I take a closer look” (‘Vahont a vhel ez guelaff / Try frenfet feul maz arhuefla’, 284). If the stage design wanted to represent this change in the number of windows, the set could hardly consist of a real tower. If indeed a prop is used, windows made of painted cloth could simply be pinned onto it. A more complicated design could involve a two-storey scaffold with a door at ground level and a balcony structure at the top, from which the windows – again probably being made
of painted cloth or wood – could be hung. This more complex design could accommodate Barbara’s chamber, in which she prays according to a stage direction: “Here she prays to God on her knees in her chamber” (‘Aman ez pet doe oar he doulin en e cambr’, 276/7). Her chamber could be represented by the upper storey of the scaffold. The argument between father and daughter over the third window in stanza 304 could also take place, there. The accompanying stage direction merely states that “Dioscorus speaks to his daughter” (‘Diofcor9 a côps ouz e merch’, 304), but not where he goes in order to do that. However, it is equally conceivable that the conversation takes place in front of a prop of the tower, as suggested above.

In his article on the corresponding episode in cinq journées, Longtin argues that the masons did not act within a realistic setting, but used their speeches and accompanying gestures to create the world of a building site out of some basic props (Longtin 2003, 10, 13). Like in cinq journées, the workers in An Buhez comment frequently upon what they are doing on stage. Thus, Longtin’s supposition that the extensive verbalisation of the processes on stage points towards a less elaborate setting would hold true for An Buhez, as well. About the tower in its advanced building stages he suggests that

le décor devait être peint sur une immense toile. On aurait déroulé le décor progressivement jusqu’à ce que la tour apparaisse au public dans sa totalité. (Longtin 2003, 15)

With regard to the windows, he concludes that the French play did not employ actual windows, because the plot does not require the windows to function. While they need to be looked at from the outside and need to be visible to the audience so that the conflict between the king and his daughter can result from their presence, the windows are never part of the action in any other way (Longtin 2003, 19). This is the same in An Buhez, and so is Longtin’s statement that the tower is a key element of Barbara’s legend. It is therefore inconceivable that there were no actual windows the king could become enraged over (Longtin 2003, 24). Longtin concludes that while there have most likely been windows visible on stage, these were no realistic windows able to be opened or even looked through (Longtin 2003, 30). As the two episodes are rather similar with regard to structure and contents (6), Longtin’s arguments are also very suggestive for An Buhez.

After Dioscorus’s discovery of the third window and the reasoning behind its construction, he threatens to kill his daughter:

[358] Meray dit cruell meruell yen
En plac man breman oar en en
Ez renty dyen da eneff
[...]

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Mez lamo pep tu a buhez
[...] gant ma cleuzz

I will cruelly put you to the cold death! / In this place, now, on the stone / you will return your soul. / [...] / I will remove every bit of your life / [...] with my sword. //

She escapes due to divine intervention, the manner of which is supplied by a stage direction: “Saint Barbara begs God to defend her and then a great stone opened (itself) and covers her against her father, who then intended to kill her” (‘Sante barba a pet doe de diffen: ha neufe vn men bras en em digoras hac he cuzas ouz he tat a predere neufe he lazaff’, 358/9). The astonished Dioscorus states “that the stone swallowed her now” (‘En he loncas breman an men’, 360), which likely refers to the stone on which he apparently planned to behead her. It is very striking that the particularly descriptive stage direction is the only one to make use of the past tense. All other stage directions are in the present tense and thus indicate an action that takes place at the time. In addition to that, the usual pattern of the actor announcing the action before completing it is broken (c.f. Hamblin 2005, 195, 198) I therefore suggest that this stage direction may serve a different purpose than only directing the action. Depending on the complexity of the set on stage and the creativity of the director, Barbara could have been covered by a stone in an action so clearly visible that the entire audience was able to see it and no further explanation was necessary. She may also simply have left the place of the tower, possibly being covered by some sort of prop on her way, and the stage direction was read out by someone in order to explain the action that took place on stage. In this case it would make perfect sense for the stage direction to be in the past tense, for it would be a narrative device to illustrate the action rather than serve as an instruction to the actors. It would also explain why none of the characters makes it quite plain what has happened, but instead there is only the one line in stanza 360 to indicate that Barbara has been swallowed by a stone. It is also possible that this stage direction was specifically added to the print version in order to clarify the events that would have been visible on stage. And, of course, it might be a simple mistake by the author or the printer, especially since the stage directions are exempt from the rhyme scheme.

Furthermore, the tower is apparently located next to a fountain. Barbara approaches the fountain after having made the request for the third window in order to find a drink there. Barbara illustrates where she is going in stanza 255: “to the good fountain which is (hidden) back there” (‘Dan feunten mat fo diadreff’, s.a.) and adds in stanza 263: “The fountain is well and properly full / of pure water next to the tower” (‘Feunten fo leun mat ha natur / Equichen an tour a dour pur’). As will be discussed in 11, I consider it possible that an actual fountain,
or saint’s pool, may have been employed to represent this place in the play. If this was so, the tower would have to be erected close by. In any case, the fountain – whether it is a prop or an actual fountain – needs to be accessible by Barbara, since she must be able to interact with it. This is indicated by the following stage direction: “Here Saint Barbara makes with her finger – moistened in the fountain – a cross in a stone which is still on it [...]” (‘Aman fante Barba ara gât he bes gli byet en feunten vn croas en men/peheny fo hoaz ênhaff [...]’, 262/3). Looking at the depiction of the Valenciennes frontispiece (figure 2), there is a garden-like structure on the left hand side, between the places “une salle” and “le temple” and in front of “Nazareth”. A similar way of surrounding and thus connecting the tower and the fountain with a fence might be worth considering for An Buhez, because it would support the description of the fountain being “(hidden) back there” (‘diadreff’, 255).

2.4.5. The Mountain

This place of the mountain is hardly described. It is first mentioned when Dioscorus states that he will look for his daughter in the mountains:

[365] Ret eu gouzout piu he fouten  
Rac meya tizmat a flat plen  
Da gouzout a den an menez  
En quarter fe he guelfe quet  
[...]

It is necessary to know who is helping her. / Therefore I will go quickly, in all my might, / to find out whether anyone in the mountains / would have seen her in the area in question. / [...] //

At that time, he is probably still located in the place where Barbara has disappeared. There is nothing to suggest that she might be hiding in the mountains. The mountain is next mentioned in a stage direction that indicates a change of place: “Here Gueguen and Riuallen go to the mountain to tend their sheep.” (‘Aman gueguen ha riuhallen aya dan menez da miret hoz deauet’, 367/8). There, the two shepherds “see Saint Barbe fleeing from her father and evil Riuallen speaks. // Hey! Listen! / Tell me, do you know where Barbe is going? (‘Amä ez guelôt fante barba ouz techet rac he tat : hac ez lauar Riuallen drouc. // Hau cleu / Lauar a te goar maza Barba’, 370/1f). The language employed by the shepherds suggests that the mountain is not immediately recognisable as a place, for they frequently remind the audience of their whereabouts. During the shepherd episode (368-390) the word “mountain” (‘menez’) is used
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five times, always in a way that highlights the current whereabouts of the characters, for example in stanza 368: “Do we go, Gueguen, to the mountain / to tend our sheep today?” (‘A ny ya gueguen dan menez / Da miret hon deffuet vetez’), or “I have not at all seen her / coming into this mountain nor ascending” (‘Me e neb guis ne guilis quet / Duet en menez man na goureet’, 376). There has got to be enough room for the two shepherds, possibly with sheep or props representing sheep, for Barbara to go past and hide somewhere, and for the king to approach the shepherds, possibly with his entourage. Such range could best be accomplished by situating the mountain in between other places on ground level. While an upper storey setting would help to illustrate the higher ground on a mountain, and would improve visibility, the movements required by the play would be much harder to accomplish than on ground level. This is probably why the characters refer to their setting so frequently. In accordance with these references, there might be a painted backdrop depicting a mountain scenery. This method has been suggested by Hamblin for the portrayal of a river in Le mystère de saint Christofle: “the hermit points out a river that was likely no more than a painted backdrop: ‘Do you see that wide river?’ (‘Vois tu celle riviere grant?’)” (Hamblin 2012, 46).

The next episode that takes place on the mountain is Barbara’s execution. In this case, there are not many references to the place. Only one stage direction, which is taken up by Dioscorus’ speech, indicates that he takes Barbara to the mountain: “Dioscorus takes Saint Barbara by the hand and takes her to the mountain” (‘Dioëcorus a quemer fante barba diuar an dorn/ hac he re en menez’, 650/1) and “come to the mountain – also where you will end – / to die coldly” (‘Dueux dan menez yuez maz finuezy / Da meruell yen’, 651). Apparently, it is either not of particular consequence where the following action takes place, or the setting was considered to have been established well enough during the first episode taking place there. However, the entire end of the play appears to take place in the mountains, for there is no stage direction or embedded cue to indicate that the action shifts to a different place. However, the fact that an angel descends, probably from paradise, in order to collect Barbara’s soul, and Beezlebub can come from hell in order to collect that of Dioscorus, suggests once again that the mountain is located in an in-between position.

2.4.6. The Provost’s House

Dioscorus speaks to the provost for the first time in stanza 406. According to the stage direction accompanying that stanza, “Dioscorus accuses his daughter in front of the provost” (‘Dioëcorus a clem e merch ouz an prouost’, 405/6). The following conversation indicates that they are in the provost’s house:

\[^{18}\]When discussing the sixteenth century mystery play Sacrifice d’Abraham, Barbara Craig suggests that “the sheep herded by the shepherds may well have been real” (Craig 1983, 75).
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Dioscorus:
[406] [...]  
An doeou louen heb quen fy  
Ro miro pep tro huy ho ty  
Ouz vileny feul maz vihet.

An prouoft.  
[407] Autrou louen fouueren ordrenet  
Duet mat em ty adeffry ra vihet  
[...]

Dioscorus: / [...] / The fervent gods, without any doubt, / may they guard you  
and your house always / against villainy as long as you will live. //  
The provost: Good lord, legitimate sovereign, / may you be surely welcome in my  
house! / [...] //

According to a comment Loupart makes during the torture episode, the provost’s house is in  
the town centre: “we have arrived in the town-centre / so that the judge will take a look”  
(‘Arriuet omp a plen en kaer / Maz guelo vn darn an barner’, 477). This is in accordance with  
the information that Barbara will be “interrogated here in public” (‘aman dirac an bet [...]  
interroget’, 414). It appears that the provost stays in his place during the whole play. Either,  
the characters approach him, like Barbara who is always brought before him: “I will lead her  
before you right away” (‘Dirac hoz face en plac e digacziff’, 414), “come to bring quickly, go  
on, immediately; / the virgin Barbe, truly, into my presence” (‘Et da querchat tizmat finchat  
batant / Barba guerches ent e prés em prefant’, 534), and “bring her to the place of custom. /  
Make her come, my friends” (‘He digaczc dan placzc a faczon / Gruet ma tut mignon he donet’,  
536). Or the torturers call for him to look: “look lord, do you see, / whether she is not seriously  
chastised” (‘Autrou fellet aguelet huy / Andeu hy defeffy caftizet’, 467), “and provost, is she  
roasted? / Look, how is she prepared?” (‘Ha prouoft an deu hy roflet / Sellet penaux ez eu  
aufet’, 576). Yet there is never an indication that the provost leaves his place in order to look.  
The provost can apparently observe the torture well from his place:

Agripant.  
[454] Naret heb mar nemet arhuetf  
Hôn fellet hac ez vihet teft  
Peguen oneft ez rempefier.  
[...]

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Agripant: / Do nothing but observe, without doubt! / Watch us and you will be
witness to / how a thorough beating is given! / [...] //

And he is close enough during the torture to be able to command the torturers to change their
methods:

[471] Rac fe crèn me gourchemên net
Ez clefquet tachou heb gou quet
Ha bezet fcoet/ muy eguet mil
A plen en pip dren difcriabaff
De ruyllaff ha de fcandalaff
[...]

Therefore I explicitly command / that you fetch nails without any deceit / and
let there be more than a thousand of them, / hammered right into the barrel, as I
instruct, / in order to roll and to torture her. / [...] //

Towards the end, Barbara is bound to a post close by the provost:

An prouoft.
[566] Goudefe frefq et da quemefq clefquet
A dou en dou flambefou heb gou quet
Gante affet ezeu ret credet diff
Lesquiff dam poft tèn ha toft he coftou
[...]

[569] [...]
Rac fe certen gruet he haeren en mat
Oz vn poft prèn gât querdên tèn men bry
[...]

The provost: / Then, quickly go together and fetch / in groups of two torches
without any trickery, / with them, indeed, it is necessary, believe me!, / to burn her
ribs strongly and violently to my post. / [...] // Therefore certainly bind her well /
to a wooden post with strong ropes, certainly, / [...] //

This wooden post is the only information provided about the place of the provost. That he uses
“to my post” (‘dam poft’, 566) suggests that the post is part of his place. While it is possible that
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there is an isolated wooden post stuck into the ground somewhere close by the provost’s place, it is more likely that he refers to one of the supporting posts of the construction that makes up his house, i.e. his place. It could also be one of the posts supporting a two-storey construction of which the provost occupies the upper level. The impression that the provost is located in a raised position is strengthened when he comments during the last part of the torture, in which Barbara is to be chased through the town (i.e. in between the various places and sets of the theatre) naked:

[618] Quecet hy lem dirac ma drem breman
En holl ruou knech ha tnow gant fouzan
[...]

[621] A fe moz pet na fellet tro
Rac me a diabell ouz fello
Me aznauezo neb fo scaff
[...]

Chase her before me, now, / along all streets, high and low, with terror / [...] //
Hence, I ask you, do not fail at all! / because I will observe you from afar / I will spot anyone who is soft. / [...] //

Such a two-storey construction with the provost’s place on the upper level could then accommodate the prison on ground level. A prison is also found in the Valenciennes frontispiece (figure 2). This appears to be underground and it can hardly have been possible to see what would have taken place inside. In the case of An Buhez, the prison needs to be well visible because Jesus visits Barbara there in order to comfort her and heal her wounds. This is probably why the characters describe the horrors of the prison quite elaborately, so that the audience will be able to grasp the terrible situation despite the fact that Barbara is not in fact imprisoned in a hole:

An provoft.
[489] Orcza tizmat dam pligadiur
Lequet hy en lech clos ofcur
Da miret fur hac aflaret
[...]

Claudin.
[491] Me lacay certen heb quen bry
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En vn prifon a melcony
En vn abry diamabl
En vn lech ort ha difordren
Re vil hac auill ha bilen
Dirac pep den hac inrenabl.

*Aman ez laquaer en prifon.*
[492] Duet dâdrot nac ouch mar notabl
Da vn toull vil abhominabl
[...]

The provost: / Well then, quickly, following my wish, / put her into a dark, enclosed place / to be guarded, under lock and key, / [...]. //
Claudin: / I will certainly put her without any regard / into a prison of grief / into an unpleasant shelter / into a nasty and vile place / very wretched and odious and ugly / for everyone and intolerable. //
*Here one puts (her) into prison. / Come quickly, however noble you might be, / into the wretched, abominable hole / [...]. //*

According to a stage direction, the prison can be opened: “Claudin opens the prison” (‘Claudin a digor an prifon’, 538/9), which suggests a door, or some sort or entrance. Again, there is not much information provided about this place. It appears to be slightly removed from the provost’s place, for he needs to command the torturers to fetch Barbara back to him after she has been imprisoned (493-533). Furthermore, the provost appears to be unable to see what happens in the prison:

An Provost:
[566] [...]  
Groa he donet gant effet competant
An mechantes en efpres em prefant
Maz guliiff coant an feblant fo ganty

The provost: / [...] make her come with suitable effect / truly, into my presence, the wretch, / so that I will nicely see the state she is in. //

Both these impressions could be accomplished by placing the prison beneath the provost’s place. However, the prison and the provost’s place might simply be two separate places on
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ground level. There is no way of knowing, since An Buhez does not provide enough information on this.

2.4.7. Paradise and Alexandria

Paradise is mentioned only once in a stage direction: “Jesus speaks in paradise” (‘Jesus a comp en baradoes’, 495/6). There is nothing in the play to indicate how this place may have been designed, whether it was elaborate or simple. It is highly likely that Jesus remains in paradise, except when he visits Barbara in prison. Then, he announces his movement before completing it: “I go benevolently to the wide world” (‘Meya cloar dan douar esparet’, 496). While this is customary in Medieval theatre (s.a.), the action is apparently relevant enough to be announced. Thus, in analogy to Dioscorus, Jesus can leave his place and when he does so, it is a noteworthy action (2.4.3). In addition to Jesus there seems to be at least one angel dwelling in paradise. The angel functions, quite appropriately, as a messenger of Jesus and announces his arrival to Barbara in prison:

An ael.
[497] Barba bez ioaus dre an cas
Ez deu lefus dre e graciufdet
Roen fent en quentel daz guelte.
[...]

The angel: / Be joyous, Barbe, due to the fact / that Jesus comes out of his mercy,
/ the king of the saints, in order to see you. / [...] //

When Barbara is to be chased through the town naked, Jesus sends his angel to her, again:

Iefus a quacc e ael de golo.
[625] Ma ael quae vuel euelhèn
Ha quemer vn couricher guèn
Ha di quàen pan gourchemènaff
Da golo clõar ma cares
[...]

Jesus sends his angel to cover her. / My angel, go humbly forth / and take a white kerchief / and descend, because I command (it) / to warmly cover my friend. / [...] //
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It is interesting that Jesus commands the angel to “descend” (‘difquên’), for it suggests a raised position for the place of paradise. While this is not surprising, there is, unfortunately, not much evidence for it, either. When Barbara greets Jesus in prison, it becomes clear that he, too, has descended in order to come to her:

Sante Barba.

[509] Autrou louen dreis pep heny
Penaux en bet e priset huy,
Euit quefridy quen bihan,
Bezaff euElhên difquennet,
[…]

Saint Barbara: / Good Lord above everyone! / However do you deign / for such a minor thing / to descend thus / […]? //

However, descending from heaven is simply the usual way for Jesus and the angels to move, as Barbara illustrates in one of her explanatory monologues: “What an event it will be, at the time / when he will descend from heaven with a naked sword” (‘Eno pebez tro vezo hên / Pan duy ân eff gant clezef guên’, 350). Nevertheless, paradise is often depicted as a raised place, like in the Valenciennes frontispiece (figure 2) or in Le Mystère de saint Christofle, which had “a twelve-foot tall Paradise [sic!] tower covered in wooden planks with a door at the base” (Hamblin 2012, 40). Furthermore, if hell did indeed occupy a raised position as I suggested above, it would be fitting for paradise to be on an equal level, at least.

However, this raises the question of what kind of place may have occupied the ground level. The most practical solution would be for the ground level to house Alexandria, i.e. Origen’s place. It would fit the heavenly context best, if Origen, one of the fathers of the Church, were to dwell there. During the first day, Barbara hears of Alexandria from a hermit who comes by Nicomedia on his way to Jerusalem, and who tells her that she will find an instructor of the Christian faith there:

An ermit.

[131] Tout batant a Alexandry
Ez deuaff affet […]

[132] En Alexandry ancien
Credet faczun ezeux vn den
So hanuet plen Origenes
2. Medieval Theatre

hennex fo criten ha den fur
hac a goar prezec e lectur
Me ouz assur croeadures.

The hermit: / Very much directly from Alexandria / I come indeed [...]. // In ancient Alexandria / believe (it) entirely!, there is a man / who is called Origen. / Him, he is a Christian and a wise man / and he is able to teach his holy texts / I assure you, child of God. //

Barbara sends her servant to Alexandria in order to ask Origen for his support in becoming a Christian: "It is necessary that you will go, do not delay!, / indeed on a mission / to Alexandria for me" ('Ret ezehet na tardet muy, / En effet en vnz queffridy, / Da Alexandry euidouff', 139). The stage direction “the servant speaks to Origen” (‘An feruicher à compz ouz Oringenes’, 143/4) marks the beginning of the very short part of the play, merely sixteen stanzas (143-160), which takes place in Alexandria. Of these sixteen stanzas, twelve are spoken by Origen. Due to the shortness of the episode and the fact that there is no information provided with regard to the whereabouts of Origen or the design of his place, his place has likely not been very specific in design. Therefore, I would consider locating Alexandria beneath the set of paradise a particularly practical decision. Because even though paradise itself does not host a lot of action, either, it would have been a prestigious set and likely been designed with some care, due to its status as Jesus’ dwelling place. The inherent dignity and obvious link to Christianity of a figure like Origen would fit well into that context. Although there is not much text to judge from, I would suggest that Origen, like king Dioscorus, sits on a chair or throne and is approached by the other characters, particularly by the servants. According to one of the stage directions, he "sends for his cleric Valentine" (‘à quacce cloarec Valentin’, 150/1) and then commands him to go and instruct Barbara in the Christian doctrine:

[151] Quae prefant chapelan antier,
[...]
Defq an guerches da diuifat,
Da entent en mat he Latin.

[152] Lên dezy creff an flat diuin,
Hac ân natur an fcriptur din,
Hac an diciplin an dreindet
E mam guerches hac à Iefu,
Ha pe dre termen contenu

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Effoe pep tu confituit.

Go now, loyal chaplain / [...] / instruct the girl to differentiate, / to understand her Latin well. // Read to her emphatically of the divine essence / and of the nature of the holy scripture / and of the doctrine of the trinity, / its virgin mother, and of Jesus / and through what constant design / he was created, in all respects. //

While he clearly tells Valentine what to say and to “stay with [Barbara] according to her wish” (‘Ha diouz he hoant chomet ganty’, 156), and not to move away from her (‘Na flachet textelp diouty’, 156), the authority of his role appears to stem from his accomplishments as a church father rather than his social status as in the case of the king or the provost.

2.4.8. Closing Remarks

The above discussion of the places that appear in An Buhez suggests that there would have been at least five places, four of which may well have consisted of more than one storey. However, it is equally possible that the stage design was very basic and that hell and paradise, for example, were simply located each on a small dais, while the rest of the places were represented by appropriate small props, for example a throne for king Dioscorus to sit on, representing the royal house, and a tower that could not be entered into or stood on, but in front of which the action could take place (s.a.). It is similarly unclear whether the stage was set in front of the audience, i.e. a linear stage, or whether the audience sat in a circle (or oval) around it, i.e. a theatre in the round (cf. Runnalls 1998, 91). Both stage designs could be realised on the basis of the text, although I consider a linear production more practical due to the amount of places involved. In a circular construction at least half of the audience would have difficulty seeing the performance at times, if indeed the stage contained all the places suggested by the contents of An Buhez for the entire duration of the play (cf. Runnalls 1998, 71). If the play was performed in the round, it is therefore likely to have consisted of a very basic set without any multi-storey constructions. Another factor that discourages the idea of multi-storey constructions on the stage of An Buhez is the absence of stage directions indicating that characters move up or down. As Hamblin notes for the complex stage design of the Mystère de saint Laurent, the play “required a multitude of stage directions in order to coordinate a series of parallel actions that crossed and climbed four scaffolds multiple times over a period of eight to twelve hours” (Hamblin 2012, 42). However, in the case of An Buhez two-storey constructions would be adequate to the purpose. The upper sections would be occupied (mostly) by stationary characters. Thus, a direction to approach a certain character would suffice to direct another character up- or downwards.
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Partly, the information provided by Hamblin 2012 about the plays of *Saint Christofle* and *Saint Estienne*, respectively, could be applied to *An Buhez*, as well. In contrast to the French *Saint Christofle* play, there are unfortunately no performance contracts or similar sources for the Breton play that could support any such speculations. Nevertheless, it may be instructive to point out the similarities. Hamblin writes that “from those contracts it is clear that a confraternity of Parisian masons staged a *Saint Christofle* play” (Hamblin 2012, 40). As I illustrate in 6, *An Buhez* places considerable emphasis on the depiction of the building process and the working crew, and the role of the master builder makes a particularly authentic impression. I therefore suggest that the builders of the town that worked on the sets and stage(s) of *An Buhez* may have been closely involved in the production of the play, possibly in a way similar to that of the Parisian masons.

Whether or not this is due to the authority of the masons, the *Saint Christofle* play required considerable building work, namely “two separate raised platforms which faced each other” of twenty and thirty metres in length, respectively. The shorter platform was used as a stage, the larger hosted the audience, thus providing a sharp separation between the performers and the spectators. On the stage, the actors moved laterally between the places (*lieux*) and props (*décors*), without having to move up or down.

The contracts mention the following staging *lieux*: a decorated backdrop six feet high that hung the length of the platform, a twelve-foot tall Paradise tower covered in wooden planks with a door at the base, two eighteen-foot long planks that formed a gallows for the torture scenes, and a masonry Hell mouth. Since the Paradise tower was to be placed at one end of the platform, we can assume that Hell was at the opposite end, as tradition would have dictated.

(Hamblin 2012, 40)

While *An Buhez* requires similar places on stage, the effort and money required to build two huge platforms may or may not have been spared. Another possibility is a staging arrangement like the one required for the *Saint Estiennes* play. There, the “performers do not simply move laterally; instead, they move on ground level or across platforms about the staging space when they are directed to process or search for someone” (Hamblin 2012, 43). In that play “a few *décors* are higher than others” and a “chapel [...] is located under paradise” while “Lucifer [...] sits chained to his throne above Hell”. It would fit the contents of *An Buhez* very well if the actors were to move in between the places in order to illustrate travelling or searching. Instead of a chapel, Alexandria may have been beneath paradise and while Lucifer/Satan would not necessarily have been chained to his throne, he very likely remained stationary at some elevated spot in the Breton play. There is one detail in *An Buhez* that might point towards a
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more basic staging arrangement. In *cinquante jours*, Dioscorus joins Dyogenes in order to wage war on the Christians of Alexandria, and this military operation is staged at the end of the second day. In contrast to this, Dioscorus disappears on an unspecified mission in *An Buhez*. He simply leaves (241-243) and returns some time later (281), clearing the stage for Barbara to request the third window. Rather than defining and thus portraying what he does and where he goes, this information is omitted entirely in the Breton play. The reason for this may well have been an economical one, because instead of putting a battle on stage, Dioscorus could simply disappear through an exit and reappear when needed.

Ambiguous as the staging arrangement may present itself in the case of *An Buhez*, it is rewarding to try and determine the places in between which the characters may have moved. Records of *Saint Barbara* play performances in France are abundant (Longtin 2003, 1; Julleville 1880). However, it does not become clear which Barbara play was performed and how many versions in addition to the two that have come down to us may have existed. Nevertheless, the fact that plays about Saint Barbara have been performed in the French speaking parts of France heightens the likelihood that either or both of the surviving French versions was put on stage at some point. As such evidence is lacking for Brittany, it is possible to argue that *An Buhez* was meant to be read, maybe to be read aloud, but not to be performed.

Le contenu des didascalies dépend de l’usage pour lequel la copie a été préparée: elles disparaissent dans les manuscrits destinés à la lecture méditative ou pieuse; pour une lecture récréative, elles auront plutôt un caractère narratif comparable aux têtes de chapitre d’un roman. Seuls les abrégés et les rôles contiennent de véritables indications techniquess et scénographiques, parfois d’une grande précision [...].

(Smith, Parussa and Halévy 2014, 45f)

As has been shown above, the stage directions of *An Buhez* are indeed almost entirely of a narrative function. Furthermore, Laura Weigert considers the possibility that not every edition of a play that has come down to us was the result of a previous production of the subject matter on stage:

A working assumption of scholarship on individual manuscripts is that their origin lies in the event of a performance. I argue that this was not the case. Some themes that were performed live also survive in books, others only ever existed in manuscript or printed form. [...] Written and illuminated manuscripts [...] created the opportunity for an elite clientele to enjoy an alternate experience of subject matter that also formed the theme of contemporary performances [...]. Only with
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the production of printed play scripts at the end of the fifteenth century [...] was this experience available to a broader audience.
(Weigert 2015, 11)

However, my illustrations show that An Buhez supplies considerable information with regard to the practical aspects of performance, but that such information is not necessarily to be found in the stage directions. Instead, An Buhez makes extensive use of embedded cues (or didascalies narrative) which, according to Hamblin, are a defining feature to “distinguish theatre texts from their literary cousins” (Hamblin 2012, 46). Another related argument is that while it is entirely possible to understand the story of An Buhez without seeing the play performed, it is of considerable help to know the legend from different sources and/or to visualise what is taking place on stage. Longtin lists the lack of the sacking of the idols as one of the “principaux traits distinctifs” of deux journées: “Il n’est pas question non plus de saccage d’idoles païennes dans ce Mystère” (Longtin 1996, 16). In An Buhez, this sacking takes place on the basis of embedded cues, only. There are no stage directions to support the action. When reading the play, the action is therefore easily missed and Barbara’s monologue taken for mere general vilification of idolatry. When seeing the performance, however, the action on stage clearly depicts one of the defining aspects of Barbara’s legend. Thus, the accumulation of such and similar evidence leads to my conclusion that An Buhez was indeed performed, although defining a time and place for the event requires further investigation.
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Figure 1: The Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia (Fouquet 1445)
Figure 2: Stage design for the Passion Play performed at Valenciennes in 1547 (Cailleau 1547)
Figure 3: historic map of Roman Empire during the first tetrarchy (Coppermine Photo Gallery 2008)
3. Rhyme Scheme

Middle Breton verse has a very specific rhyme scheme that involves both end rhyme as well as internal rhyme. In addition to this, the number of syllables in a verse plays an important role. As Paul Widmer puts it, “[the] intriguing system of [Middle Breton] versification has attracted much scholarly interest, and is therefore fairly well described” (Widmer 2016, 229). In *L’ancien vers Breton* Émile Ernault lists the following general rules:

1° La mesure consiste dans le nombre fixe de syllabes que comporte chaque sorte de vers;
2° Une césure ou pause coupe, à certaines places déterminées, les vers les plus longues;
3° La rime, ou conformité de son, lie ensemble les dernières syllabes des vers. Il ne s’en distingue essentiellement que par cette autre règle:
4° A la rime finale qui lie la dernière syllabe d’un vers à celle d’un autre, se joint la rime intérieure ou interne, qui lie l’avant-dernière syllabe de chaque vers à sa propre césure. (Ernault 1912, 6)

The rhyme scheme of *An Buhez* follows those general rules for the most part. Each stanza usually consists of six verses, which are octosyllabic or decasyllabic. As Ernault points out in the introduction to his edition of *An Buhez*, this play shows much less variation with regard to verse length than for example *An Buhez santez Nonn* and *An Passion*. In some cases exclamations of one to four syllables are added to a stanza of six verses (stanza 26). These exclamations do not count towards the number of verses in a stanza, or towards the syllable count, or towards the rhyme scheme. While they can rhyme, it is not required (stanza 26 & 292 "Gloat"). If they rhyme, the exclamation simply repeats a previous rhyme. In other cases, exclamations appear as part of a verse and thus as part of the required number of syllables in that verse (292 “O”, 31 “A”). However, there is one exception. In stanza 796 the exclamation “A” is part of the verse but appears not to count as a syllable (Ernault 1888, vi):

*Belzebuth a comp.

[26] Nep oun nac/
Hâ bezet sclævr vn quarter bro
Da gouern ha me en cerno
Cristen eno na credo tam
Dre nep rout en em cafout muy

19Apart from Widmer’s own article see for example Joseph Loth (Loth 1900, 203-235), Émile Ernault (Ernault 1900, 403-411; Ernault 1912), and Yves Le Berre (Le Berre 2012 81-109).
3. Rhyme Scheme

Rac me lacay plen pep heny
Em damany hac em liam.

Beelzebub speaks: / Do not falter / and let me clearly have one quarter of the
land / to govern and I will enchain it / so that there a Christian will not dare at
all / in any way to stay anymore / because I will place, indeed, everyone / in my
dominion and in my fetters. //

Beelzebuth.
[31] A lucifer ma mestr querhaff
Meray em rout ne fell doutaff
Hep arretaff nen nachaff quet
Da pep heny dre ma squient
Pechiff dez nos gant prepos lent
An despet do dent ententet.

Beelzebub: / Oh Lucifer, my dearest master / I will cause, on my way, there is no
need to doubt / without stopping, I do not deny it, / everyone through my wisdom
/ to sin day and night with slow discourse / whatever they want (lit. despite their
teeth), hear! //

An eil mecherour.
[292] O preffet meurbet ez duet huy,
Petra fo à hy na roy
Hep quet contredy dimpy gloat.

An Mefr.

Gloat.
Ha huy et oar lerch da querchat
Rac me bizhuiquen louenhat,
Neraff dre e gloat na e madou,
Pa na caffën lech da techet
Digantaff fcaff nen nachaff quet,
Em laz fe affet aguetou.

The other worker: / Oh, you’re in quite a hurry! / What’s up? Will she not give
/ us (the) money without any disagreement? /
3. Rhyme Scheme

The Master: / Money! / Go looking for (it) yourselves! / Because I will never rejoice / in his money or his goods. / If I had not found a place to hide / from him quickly – I do not deny (it) – / he would have just killed me! //

[796] A/ ret eu meruell quent pell ha lefell bro
Den a neb flir ouz pirill nem miro
Me fant an dro diff affo oz donet
[...]

Ah, soon it is necessary to die and to leave the land. / Nobody, by no effort, will protect me from peril, / I feel the time coming for me quickly / [...]. //

The usual metre of An Buhez is aabccbbddeeddggffg and so on. The internal rhyme is slightly more complicated. Again, Ernault’s introduction to his edition of An Buhez proves very informative: in each verse, the penultimate syllable rhymes with one or more of the preceding word-final syllables of the same verse. If there is a caesura, which usually occurs after the fourth syllable in octo- and decasyllabic verses, the preceding word-final syllable should carry the internal rhyme. The end rhyme of the first and second verse of a stanza usually becomes the internal rhyme of the third verse, and, accordingly, the end rhyme of the fourth and fifth verse becomes the internal rhyme of the sixth (and last) verse of each stanza. Neither vowels nor consonants have to be exactly the same in order to provide the internal rhyme, but often divergences are simply due to variations of pronunciation. A verse may also have a secondary internal rhyme, but this is not obligatory. Both primary and secondary internal rhyme can be reduplicated, and such reduplication occurs more often in verses of greater length (Ernault 1888, vi-viii). In addition to this, Widmer has convincingly argued that there appears to be a tendency towards placing polysyllabic words in verse-final position. Because the stress of a polysyllabic word falls on the penultimate syllable, a monosyllabic word in verse-final position would mean that the internal rhyme is carried by an unstressed, word-final syllable. According to Widmer’s data, “polysyllabic words, trisyllabic ones in particular, are at least to some degree numerically overrepresented in line-final position in Middle Breton verse” and thus “stressed syllables as opposed to unstressed ones are favoured in forming the main internal rhyme on the penultimate syllable of a line” (Widmer 2016, 234f).
3. Rhyme Scheme

Da Dioscorus den ruset
Rac affet a ycomoedy
Ezoa hy merch leun a guerchdet
Eff he care pep heur meuurbet
Er nen deuoa quet nemet hy.

[7] Mas songas en e fantasy
Ez galse bezaff dre affuy
Gant vn re e ty rauiet
Hac ez laquas ne dougias den
Tut a labour mecherouryen
Da ober cernen ordrenet.

[8] Vn tour fournis de guis discreet
En compas iolis duisset
De miret rac ne lamset hy
A eneb e grat digataff
Eneb guis nac he rauissaff
Na heb he rentaff dezaff muy.

This maiden, who I have named, / to Dioscorus, cunning man, / indeed of Nicomedia
/ was his daughter full of virginity. / He loved her every hour very much / because he had nothing but her, // so that he conceived in his fanciful mind / that she could be through malice / stolen by one of his house / and he made, no one doubted it, / people of profession (and) workers / to do surely (as) ordered. // A complete tower in a learned manner / arranged in beautiful compartments / for guarding her out of fear that she might be stolen / from him against his will / in some fashion and be kidnapped (lit. her kidnapping) / and without giving her back to him anymore. //

The example above illustrates the general rules listed by Ernault, as well as Widmer’s argument for a dominance of polysyllabic words in verse-final position. Each verse consists of eight syllables and contains a caesura, which does not necessarily occur after the fourth syllable, however. Thus, Ernault’s assessment that “[I]es deux sortes de rimes obéissent à peu près aux mêmes règles; on est moins rigoureux sur la rime intérieure” (Ernault 1912, 6) holds true for An Buhez, as well. However, the rhyme scheme adhered to in An Buhez is rather strict. There
3. Rhyme Scheme

appears to be some room for variation with regard to the internal rhyme and the caesura, yet the structure of the end rhyme has been applied very consistently throughout the play. The Breton rhyme scheme can be very complex as in the first verse of stanza 8. There, the end rhyme conforms to the pattern by reproducing the end rhyme of the final verse of stanza 7, while the necessary internal rhyme is tripled (-is), and a secondary internal rhyme (-our) is introduced in addition to that – all within eight syllables.

As a whole, the example clearly shows how the rhymes “move” through the stanzas in a fixed pattern that demands a lot of skill and creativity on the part of the author. In order to fulfil the demands of the doubled rhyme scheme and the syllable count, the author must have had an excellent vocabulary. Ernaul points out that “[t]oute expression bretonne qui est correcte en prose peut entrer de plein droit dans un vers breton. Les formes archaïques sont une ressource pour l’art de poète” (Ernaul 1912, 5), which suggests a coupling of old and new forms with regard to the language in Middle Breton mystery plays. It is therefore likely that the language employed in Middle Breton mystery plays can neither be considered a reproduction of the language used by speakers of Middle Breton in their daily lives, nor as a form of art entirely removed from vernacular Middle Breton. Instead, it is probably a medley of the two. In contrast to this, the fatistes of French mystery plays tried to reproduce the spoken language as much as possible: “la forme métrique de base est l’octosyllabe à rimes plates; c’est la forme qui est la plus proche de la prose, du langage quotidien” (Runnalls 1998, 23).

The demands of the Middle Breton metrical system also promote the use of chevilles, or filler words and phrases. While this feature does not figure strongly in the example above, it becomes quite obvious when reading the whole play. A great number of expressions are only used in order to supply the necessary number of syllables, or the rhyme, or both. Some examples are words such as “affet” (indeed), “espres” (truly), “glan” (bright, holy, whole, entirely), “seder” (sure/ly), “quet” (any; emphatic particle), and phrases such as “en pep manyer” (in every manner, anyway), “pep rout” (every way), “heb (quet) sy” (without (any) doubt), “heb gou” (without lie, truly), “heb muy” (without more ado), but this list is by no means exhaustive. Sometimes, entire stanzas consist mainly of such chevilles. In the following example, the first four of the six verses could be shortened to half their length and still the stanza would provide the same information, but then the metre would be incorrect:

[502] Memeux gallout pep rout ne fell doutaff
Dreis pep heny me heb muy en muyhaff
Gouuern araff ha renaaff quentaff pret
An bet man glan breman en pep manyer
Euel guir doe meffir ha roe ha croer
Mere fclaerder dan loar ha dan fteret
3. Rhyme Scheme

I have got absolute power, there is no need to doubt. / I am the greatest, above all, without any ado. / At all times I govern and rule / the whole world, here and now, in every respect, / as the true god, master and king and creator. / I give brightness to the moon and to the stars. //

Another striking feature of the Breton mystery play is that the rhyme of the final verse in a stanza is reproduced in the initial verse of the following stanza. This links stanzas, and in many cases speakers – a practice also employed in French theatrical culture and thus in French mystery plays:

Each actor [...] was given his own role, i.e. a narrow strip of paper, with just that actor’s lines written on, plus the vital cue words. Medieval plays were always written in rhyme, and usually the first line of one speech rhymed with the last of the preceding one; this was the so called mnemonic rhyme, which acted as a cue to the actors. The actors’ roles were in effect scrolls, that were gradually unwound as the play proceeded. They were mainly used during rehearsals.

(Runnalls 1998, 92)

It is unknown whether Breton actors used similar scrolls, but the rhyme scheme of the Medieval Breton plays would allow for a similar practice. “La rime du dernier vers d’une strophe est ordinairement reprise par le premier vers de la suivante, à moins que celle-ci ne commence une nouvelle scène” (Ernault 1888, vi). As there are no scenes in Medieval theatre, Ernault’s use of “scène” has to be understood as referring to a change of setting or the beginning of a new episode of Saint Barbara’s story unfolding on stage (2).

3.1. Inconsistencies

While the rhyme scheme of An Buhez appears to follow the pattern aabcb bddeed very consistently at first sight, many inconsistencies can be found, i.e. aabcb ddee. In the following example, the first two stanzas follow the usual rhyme scheme, while the third stanza departs from it:
3. Rhyme Scheme

[Dioscorus]

[33] Autrouniez han holl froez anez
So lem breman didan ma damany
Memeux enth an audui muyaff
Memeux gallout naret dout ha souten
Pan ouff hep sy a ty Maximien
Empalazr plen oar pep den ouz renaff

[34] Gouerñ en splän vn quefrän didânhaff
An bet net crën euel pën amênhaff
Net sucedaff acaff da quentaфф pae
Bout ênby dic pacific bizhuy quen
Eucl aer flour dam predecessouryen
Amênhaff plen certen euel den gae.

[35] meemeux vn merch net ha derch so guerches
A dle bout sclaer ent seder ma aeres
Successoures em deces an nessaff
Doucc ha plesant excellant hac antier
Ha cazar ha mat hegarat a stat quer
Hy ent seder en ma esper querhaff.

[Dioscorus:] / This realm and all its fruits / are now under my power / I have therein the greatest authority / I have the power, do not doubt, and support / because I am without doubt from the house of Maximian / complete emperor ruling over everybody. // I wish to govern brightly one part, under him (= Maximian), / of the pure world, indeed, as a leader. / Clearly, I succeed at the moment. / I want to be in it legitimate and peaceful forever / as a mild inheritor to my predecessors / completely surely as a happy man. // I have a pure and noble daughter, who is a maiden / who, of course, must be, surely, my heiress / successor in my death, the next (one) / soft and pleasant, excellent and complete / and beautiful and good, lovely, of dear character; / she, surely, is my dearest hope. //

Ernault provides a list of inconsistencies in the introduction to his edition of the play, i.e. a list of those stanzas whose first verse does not take up the rhyme of the last verse of the previous stanza (Ernault 1888, vi). However, I consider it more accurate to list both stanzas, because the inconsistencies actually occur between two stanzas, and do not necessarily belong to either stanza. I found several further examples, but I am not sure why Ernault disregarded them.
3. Rhyme Scheme

Many are accompanied by stage directions and it is therefore possible that Ernault omitted them on purpose in order to highlight those without stage directions. Whatever the reason behind Ernault’s choice, I attempt to list all inconsistencies in this chapter for the sake of completeness and take a closer look at the respective contexts. Most inconsistencies coincide with contextual changes of some kind. In order to give a concise overview of the results, I have listed all inconsistencies in a chart. The first column references the stanzas between which the inconsistency occurs. The second and third column mark whether the inconsistency was listed by Ernault, and whether it is accompanied by a stage direction. The fourth column provides some suggestions as to why the inconsistency may have occurred. Unless indicated otherwise in the comment section, all inconsistencies concur with a change of speaker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stanza</th>
<th>Ernault</th>
<th>stage direction</th>
<th>comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34/35</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39/40</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41/42/43</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>two inconsistencies; change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48/49</td>
<td>✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51/52</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52/53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68/69</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79/80</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82/83</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>87/88</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>103/104</td>
<td>✓✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>“aside”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108/109</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, end of “aside”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125/126</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138/139</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place/setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143/144</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145/146</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(166/167)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>difficult rhyme scheme; same speaker, change of place and of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173/174</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195/196</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place/setting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Rhyme Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line Range</th>
<th>Change Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>198/199</td>
<td>same speaker, change of addressee and possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203/204</td>
<td>✓ change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224/225</td>
<td>✓ change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226/227</td>
<td>✓ ✓ no reason apparent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230/231</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of place and of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>231/232</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, “aside”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232/233</td>
<td>✓ end of “aside”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234/235</td>
<td>✓ change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>238/239</td>
<td>✓ change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240/241</td>
<td>change of setting; beginning of day 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>243/244</td>
<td>✓ change of addressee and possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264/265</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267/268</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of subject/place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268/269</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of place and of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>269/270</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271/272</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273/274</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276/277</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of subject (prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278/279</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, possibly change of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280/281</td>
<td>✓ change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284/285</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, possibly change of place and/or addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>303/304</td>
<td>✓ change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>367/368</td>
<td>✓ change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370/371</td>
<td>✓ change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>405/406</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>416/417</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of addressee and of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>417/418</td>
<td>✓ same speaker, change of addressee and of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>424/425</td>
<td>✓ no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>437/438</td>
<td>✓ no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>460/461</td>
<td>inconsistency in sixth verse due to syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>468/469</td>
<td>change of subject and of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>469/470</td>
<td>✓ change of place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Rhyme Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line(s)</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>change of setting, change of subject (prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>497/498</td>
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<tr>
<td>500/501</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>503/504</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>505/506</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>533/534</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of setting; beginning of day 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>535/536</td>
<td></td>
<td>same speaker, change of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>553/554</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>555/556</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>569/570</td>
<td></td>
<td>possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>579/580</td>
<td></td>
<td>possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>585/586</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>same speaker, change of addressee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>587/588</td>
<td></td>
<td>possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600/601</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of subject (prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>617/618</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>possibly a pause for on-stage-action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622/623</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of subject (prayer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>624/625</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>636/637</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>possibly change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>652/653</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>654/655</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>660/661</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>same speaker, change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>683/684</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>686/687</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>688/689</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>690/691</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>703/704</td>
<td></td>
<td>inconsistency in sixth verse due to syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>721/722</td>
<td></td>
<td>inconsistency in sixth verse due to syntax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>726/727</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>768/769</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>777/778</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>no apparent reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>787/788</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>789/790</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>790/791</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>796/797</td>
<td></td>
<td>change of place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ernault suggests that the inconsistencies occur when a scene changes. As the use of the term “scene” is misleading in the case of medieval theatre, I prefer the term “setting”, which I use to indicate the beginning of a new episode of Saint Barbara’s story and which usually requires a change of place. My use of “change of place” can refer to two different actions on stage: either a character has spoken at one place and then moved to a different place, i.e. a character has changed his or her place but continues speaking; or the action moves from one place to the next and a different character begins to speak at the new place. As is discussed in 2, the stage was divided into several places and some characters are directly associated with certain places, such as Satan, who dwells in hell, or Jesus in paradise, and who do not usually move around the stage. When characters change their place on stage, this does not always indicate a new setting, but nevertheless such actions often coincide with an inconsistency. However, not all changes of place are marked by inconsistencies. Often, but not always, a stage direction provides the same or further information on a character’s movement. In many cases, episodes in the play that involve a fair amount of movement, such as for example the commissioning of the tower (39-69), show a considerable number of inconsistencies.

While these changes of place and/or setting are a fairly straightforward reason for an inconsistency to occur, there are other less obvious reasons, too. I will now take a closer look at some of these less obvious inconsistencies. In stanzas 255-280 Barbara has a long monologue which begins with her assurance to the master worker that he does not need to fear her father’s wrath upon fulfilling her request for a third window. She then goes to the fountain in order to find a drink. Although the speaker remains the same, there are eight inconsistencies here. Interestingly enough, there is no inconsistency until stanzas 264/265 despite Barbara’s change of place (255/256) and repeated changes of addressee (255/256, 256/257, 258/259). When the subject of her monologue changes from her adoration of the cross she has made to a description of the beneficial character of the water, the first inconsistency occurs (264/265). The next one coincides with movement, i.e. a change of place between 267 and 268: “Monet a hanen a mennaif / Euit vetez da an hezaff / Dan tour flour haff oar guelhaff pret” (‘I want to go / to the most tender tower first of all / in order to live there’). She must indeed have gone there, for she begins abusing and defying her father’s idols in 269: “ydol a drouc fcol dipolicc / Leun a scandal hac a malicc” (‘Idol of bad influence, without virtue, / full of scandal and of malice’). Unless the idols have suddenly appeared next to the fountain, she has apparently moved to a place where
she encounters them. But there is no stage direction indicating any such movement. That the
idols are in the tower is, in fact, not entirely clear from the Breton play, but seems likely with
regard to the setting in the other texts on Barbara (11.3). It is impossible to tell whether there
used to be a stage direction indicating Barbara’s movement at this point in an earlier version
of the play, but the inconsistency between 268 and 269 can serve as one of several hints as to
what has happened on stage at this point. However, the inconsistencies are certainly not a
foolproof way for identifying movement or missing stage directions. The next inconsistency
occurs during Barbara’s hateful speech directed at the idols. While she arguably changes her
subject in 270 from abusing the idols (269) to lamenting their bad influence over people (270),
this change is very slight. The next inconsistency between 271 and 272, however, may possibly
mark another movement or lack of a stage direction. In 272 Barbara says: “Crachet ez vifaig
heb flachaff / Araf dit ha da depitaff” (‘I spit in your motionless face and I defy you!’). The use
of the first person singular present (araff – I do) indicates that Barbara is doing this right at that
point, and while cinq journées does have a stage direction to support this indication, An Buhez
does not. Yet the text itself may well be regarded as a “didascale narrative”, as Hamblin calls
them (Hamblin 2002, 94; cf. 2), a stage direction to be found within a character’s lines. The
next inconsistency between 273 and 274 does not have any apparent reason, for the speaker
remains the same, a change of place would not fit the context, and there is no change of subject.
In contrast to this, 276/277 clearly marks a change of subject and possibly of place, which is in
this case supported by a stage direction: “Aman ez pet doe oar he doulin / en e cambr” (‘Here
she prays to God on her knees / in her chamber’). Barbara has moved from the place where she
encountered the idols to her chamber, where she now begins a different kind of speech after
her abuse of the idols and their followers, namely a prayer. The inconsistency appears to be
a marker of the transition. 278/279 is again less obvious, but may possibly mark a change of
addressee. While she has begun her prayer addressing God (277-278), she speaks directly to
Jesus in 279 and 280.

This leads to another interesting observation. When Barbara begins to pray, this often –
though not always – coincides with an inconsistency. Particularly during the episodes of tor-
ture, Barbara’s prayers are a disruption of the action taking place around her. Stanzas 622 & 623
are an especially good example of such a case. The letters in brackets provide the hypothetical
version of a consistent rhyme scheme:\n
\[30\]

\[30\] The particulars of the rhyme scheme will be discussed below.
3. Rhyme Scheme

Agrimant.
[622] Ozlou [sic!] tizmat heb debataff a
Mignon ha frifq houz diuifcaff a
Crên am ennaff heb tardaff tro. b

Glouton.
Duet en placc me hoz dilaczó b
Loupart.
Ha me prefour a fecouro. b

Claudin.
Ha me dram le a ereo. b

Sante Barba.
[623] Doe triumphant excellant roe an tron c (b)
Ma lequet huy en preferuacion c (b)
En pep fazcon rac an con difonet d (c)

[...]

Agrimant: / Now then, quickly, without debating, / I want to undress you completely and quickly / entirely without tarrying at all. / Glouton: / Come here, I will unbind you. / Loupart: / And I will diligently help. / Claudin: / And I will bind (her again), by my oath! // Barbara: / Excellent, triumphant god, king of heaven, / protect me / in every way from the dishonourable dog / [...]. //

While the torturers undress her in order to lead her through the town naked, she begins to pray to God for help in order to prevent this particular shame. This sharp contrast between the two elements of the episode is underlined by the inconsistency. Furthermore, during her prayers, which are usually lengthy monologues, changes of addressee and/or subject often coincide with inconsistencies. One such example is 585/586. The beginning of her prayer to God in 584 is not marked by an inconsistency, yet the change of addressee, i.e. when she begins to talk directly to Jesus (586), is. However, the changes of subject and of addressee are least reliable, because there are several instances which do not coincide with inconsistencies.

There are two other striking sets of inconsistencies. In both cases, the character speaking is not alone in his/her place on stage, but nevertheless the contents of his/her text do not seem to be meant for the ears of the other characters sharing the place. In the first case, Dioscorus calls for Barbara: “Deux Barba gant ioa dirac ma facc” (‘Come, Barbara, with joy before me’!, 101),
and the schoolmaster apparently accompanies her, for Dioscorus then speaks directly to him, as indicated by a stage direction: “Dioscorus a lauar da mestr e merch sante Barbara” (‘Dioscorus speaks to the master of his daughter Saint Barbara’, 102/103). When Barbara begins to speak in stanza 104, it is possible that she has moved to a different place without a stage direction indicating the movement. As she speaks to the schoolmaster again in stanza 109, it is more likely, however, that Barbara remains in the same place that is occupied by Dioscorus and the schoolmaster. The contents of Barbara’s text are highly controversial from Dioscorus’ and the schoolmaster’s point of view because Barbara reveals her intuitive knowledge of a single God-creator. Yet neither Dioscorus nor the schoolmaster refer to it in any way. I therefore suggest that Barbara speaks those five stanzas in an aside, which is mainly characterised by its brevity and by the fact that the contents of the aside are heard by the audience but not by the other characters on stage (Muzelle 1986, 93). In addition to the contextual evidence, Barbara’s speech is framed by two inconsistencies. The first occurs in stanza 104, the second in stanza 109, which underlines the idea that Barbara’s five stanzas are in a way removed from the remaining action of the episode.

A similar situation takes place on stage when the two lords approach Dioscorus about Barbara’s imprisonment in the tower. They are worried for her welfare and the survival of the dynasty. Dioscorus explains his reasons for keeping Barbara as safe as possible and agrees to ask Barbara whether she is inclined to marry at all. Upon her refusal, he becomes very angry and even threatens to kill his only daughter. When Dioscorus returns to the lords, however, he appears to have calmed down a little. He speaks two stanzas, the first of which illustrates Barbara’s refusal to take a spouse (231). In the second stanza Discors’ anger seems to return, for he threatens to “make her suffer so / that she will get moldy with anguish and hunger” and to “leave her, surely, in it [the tower] to suffer punishment / in this world, in spite of her kind affection, / she will stay there, clearly, without dinner or supper!” (‘me groay quen eno[uet] / Gant an goeidet hac coull boet maz lo […] le[s]o fcaff énhaff da gouzaff poan / An fin defpet de coudet en bet man / Heb leiff na coan eno glan ez mano’, 232). As the lords confronted Dioscorus because they were worried for Barbara’s well being and the resulting safety of the dynasty, it is unlikely that they would consider Dioscorus’ ideas of punishment an adequate reaction. Again, this contextual evidence is supported by the inconsistencies in stanzas 232 and 233, which frame a part of the text that does not entirely fit its context. As in the previous example, I suggest that stanza 232 is spoken in an aside.

It is not surprising that there is no stage direction indicating an aside, because “[s]oliloquy and aside did not come into the language as technical terms until the eighteenth century” (Styan 1996, 152) and therefore have to be regarded as additions by modern editors (Styan 1996, 209).21

21I would like to thank Prof. Sonja Fielitz for our conversation regarding editorial practices of medieval and Early
3. Rhyme Scheme

Instead, the evidence for such instructions can be found within the lines spoken by the actors, which according to Styan “are already alive with implicit asides and other hidden instructions for voice and movement” (Styan 1996, 209). However, in the case of An Buhez, it seems that the evidence from the context is supported by a striking departure from the usual rhyme scheme in the form of the inconsistencies.

3.1.1. Changes of Setting and/or Episode

Despite the fact that the inconsistencies appear to point towards a change of some sort in the context of An Buhez, they can by no means serve as conclusive proof. On the one hand, there are several inconsistencies that do not appear to serve any function at all, and on the other hand there are many instances in which there is a change of place, or of subject, but no inconsistency. The inconsistencies can support textual evidence, but this is not a universal tool. The very first change of setting happens without an inconsistency, for example. After the devils have provided the framework for Saint Barbara’s story (22-31), Dioscorus speaks and the actual action begins. As Dioscorus is most probably not in hell but in his palace, there is a change of place between Bezlebuth’s last and Dioscorus’ first verse. There, the information “Aman ez dezrou an ystoar” (‘Here begins the (hi)story’) is placed, which clearly indicates a new setting. However, the first verse of stanza 32 is consistent with the last verse of stanza 31, ending in -et.

The next change of setting takes place in stanza 80. Dioscorus has successfully ordered a tower to be built and is now sending a messenger to seek a schoolmaster for his daughter. This episode ends after stanza 125 when the schoolmaster leaves Barbara, which is again supported by an inconsistency. This is followed by a kind of intermediate episode involving Barbara and the hermit who suggests Origen as a teacher, to whom Barbara then sends a servant. The inconsistencies fit the action and occur after the intermediate episode in stanza 139 when the hermit has just left and Barbara calls for her servant to go to Origen on her behalf.

Unfortunately, the next episode/s is/are difficult to pin-point, because the delimitation is problematic. Unlike in the previous examples, the changes of episode and setting do not necessarily coincide. In stanzas 139-166 the servant is sent to Alexandria and speaks to Origen and Valentine there, then leaves with Valentine and goes back to Nicomedia. Thus, the servant changes place at least twice. There is, however, only one inconsistency between Origen’s first stanza and the previous one (145/146). Upon returning to Nicomedia, the servant speaks to Barbara, who is likely in her chamber at that point (162, 166), and thus the servant enters her place. But there is no inconsistency to mark this second change of place, for the next inconsistency occurs only when Valentine enters Barbara’s place in stanza 167. In my opinion,

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	his marks the beginning of a new episode, for while the characters are already in Nicomedia, the action continues in Barbara’s chambers. However, the rhyme scheme and delimitation of the stanzas is slightly problematic in stanzas 166 and 167, for they do not adhere to the usual pattern of six verses per stanza, nor to the usual rhyme scheme:

The servant: / Lo, here I am to see you, indeed / our matter is known. / It is truly necessary for us to be on our way / and to go secretly to her / – because nobody at all may see us – / to introduce her to your wisdom. /
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Valentine: / Then let us be on our way! /  
Valentin: / Madam true and wise /a good, bright day wholeheartedly / I wish you,  
now and always. / By Origen, expressly,/ – due to his graciousness – I am sent /  
to see you, without pausing. /  
Saint Barbara: / First of all be welcome! /

As can be seen from the original, the numbering of the stanzas is a choice of the modern editor  
rather than the author or printer. Ernault has chosen to begin a new stanza with Valentine’s  
first line. Valentine is introduced twice as a speaker. While this might be considered a simple  
mistake at first sight, there is a reason behind this doubling. Valentine’s first sentence is ad-  
dressed to the servant and it is clear from the contents of the play that both characters must be  
somewhere outside but in the vicinity of Barbara’s chambers. Valentine’s second speech, the  
full stanza of six verses, is then addressed to Barbara, which is not indicated by a stage direc-  
tion between the stanzas, but by the character’s lines (“didascale narrative”, Hamblin 2002, 94;  
s.a.). The lack of a stage direction also obscures the change of place that must have taken place  
between Valentine’s two speeches, for he must have moved into Barbara’s chambers in order  
to address her. I therefore suggest to reconsider Ernault’s stanza count and have stanza 167  
begin with Valentine’s second speech. In this case, there is an inconsistency between stanzas  
166 and 167 which marks Valentine’s change of place and possibly also the change of episode  
(3.2):

Whether or not a new episode begins at this point, the problem of delimitation repeats itself  
at the end of the following set of stanzas. The entire action ensuing between stanzas 167 and  
192 takes place in Barbara’s chambers, but when Dioscorus disrupts the action by his entrance  
in stanza 186, or when the stage direction before stanza 193 clearly implies a change of place,  
neither event is marked by an inconsistency. Instead, an inconsistency occurs between stanzas  
195 and 196, when Dioscorus answers the master worker’s request and visits the building site,  
thus changing his place:

Dioscorus […]

[192] Rac me mën gant guir houz miret a  
Na vech dre tut creff deceuet a  
Dre fe affet bezet feder b  
En ouz liquiff ne filliff tam c  
Enhaff da miret a het cam c  
Eguit tremen flam ân amfer. b

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An meftr mecherour a quemën Dioscorus da guelet ac ef fo groat mat fondamant e tour.

[193] Dícuez breman glan an manyer b
Dân autrou hep gou en dou guer b
So ret feder hep differaff d
A nendeu real hep maliczc e
Ha cazr ha creff e edeficiczc e
Coant ha propiczc hep maliczaфф. d

An eil mecherour.

[194] Mat ve e donet aeredaff d
De apetit de viîttaff d
Hênez en guelhaff quentaff pae f

An meftr mecherour.

Autrou real principal hep dalae f
Hoz tour flour net ameux dezrouet gae f

[195] [...] Coant ha iolis a deusis fouffiffant k
Cazr ha vaillant parîffant en fantaff j

Dioscorus aya da guelet an tour

[196] Mecherour mat dam grat a pep flatur l (j)
Ouz dalchaff plen fouueren ha den fur l (j)

[...]

Dioscorus: [...] For I want to guard you truly / that you would not be deceived by strong people. / Therefore, truly, be assured!, / I will put you, I will not fail, / into it (the tower) for guarding, each and every step, / in order to spend time merrily. //

The master worker sends for Dioscorus to see if / the foundation of his tower is made well. / To show now indeed the status quo / to the lord without concealment in a couple of words / is necessary, surely, without deferring, / if it is not re(g)al, without fault, / and beautiful and strong, his construction, / pretty and favourable, without using trickery. //
The other worker: It would be good of him to come, I believe, / to his taste to visit it. / This is surely the best. /
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The master worker: Royal, powerful lord! Without delay/ I have gladly begun your
pretty tower, truly, / [...] I find it nice and pretty and well-designed / beautiful and
solid, of a nice appearance. //

Dioscorus goes to see the tower. / I find you a good workman in every way to my
taste, / fully supreme, and a wise man. / [...] //

While it is true that Dioscorus’ presence at the tower marks the beginning of a new episode,
the change of setting was already initiated in stanza 193. This highlights the fact that the
inconsistencies may serve as hints but not as exclusive proof with regard to determining limits
of stanzas and/or episodes and movement of characters in An Buhez.

The action that takes place after the inconsistency in stanza 196 may well be described as
a new episode in which Barbara is put into the tower by her father. This is a short episode (stanzas
196-203), which ends with another change of place and an inconsistency (203/204). The action
then moves to the lords who are concerned because the king’s only heir has been imprisoned
instead of married, which initiates the final episode of day one. Again, it is not entirely clear
from the text where exactly the characters are when they speak. But the movements that
become obvious from the text and the stage directions are indeed marked by inconsistencies.

If the introduction is correct and the first day ends after Barbara has refused to get married,
the second day should begin in stanza 241. While there is no stage direction between stanzas
240 and 241, there is an inconsistency in stanza 241. Furthermore, there is a change of subject
at this point, as Dioscorus decides to go on an unspecified mission. It is not clear from his text
whether he is at the building site of the tower or in his palace, but he apparently gives some
instructions to the master worker before leaving (242f). The inconsistency between stanzas
243 and 244 might hint at the master worker having changed places in between, which would
suggest that the two men were speaking in the palace. On the other hand, the master worker
addresses his workers at the building site in stanza 244, and this is also where the consecutive
action ensues. Thus, I consider it more likely that the king has visited the building site on the
way to his “mission” and thus the inconsistency marks a change of addressee rather than a
change of place.

The next change of setting again occurs without an inconsistency. Barbara visits the building
site (248) and requests the third window, but when she leaves again and moves to the fountain,
there is no inconsistency (255). On the contrary, there is an additional verse between stanza
254 and 255. This is very similar to stanzas 166 and 167, in which Valentine addressed one
line to the servant and then spoke an entire stanza to Barbara. The same pattern occurs here,
for Barbara’s sentence “Nep oun an tra fe non bezet” (‘Let us have no fear from this’, 255) is
clearly an answer to the master worker’s fear of the king’s wrath upon finding out about his
doobedience with regard to the number of the windows. The next six verses appear to be
addressed to no one in particular, but Barbara clearly moves away from the craftsmen: “Meya [...] Dan feunten mat fo diadreff” (‘I go [...] to the good fountain which is (hidden) back there’, 255). What is also similar to the episode containing Valentine is the delimitation of the episode. As there is no inconsistency here, I suggest regarding stanzas 241 to 280 as one long episode and the additional single verse spoken by Barbara (255) as a link between the two parts of the action.

Dioscorus’ return from his mission in stanza 281 is marked by a stage direction as well as by an inconsistency (280/281). This is the beginning of another intermediate episode in which he discovers the third window and how it came to be. When he confronts his daughter and thus the next episode begins, there is another inconsistency (303/304). This episode (304-367) is in fact striking due to its complete lack of inconsistencies. Although it may be considered an important episode by the audience, because Barbara reveals her faith and is able to flee from her father’s ensuing wrath, it cannot be presumed whether the author shared this view. It is impossible to tell whether the author needed to make a massive effort to smooth the rhyme scheme in this episode, or whether this is the normal way of writing and the inconsistencies are truly there for a good reason and by the author’s explicit choice. But it does show that the author is certainly capable of producing long sections without inconsistencies, which discourages the view that the inconsistencies occur at random places simply because the author could not think of a fitting rhyme. In fact, it seems that in difficult cases, for example due to syntactical reasons, the author chose to introduce an inconsistency in the last verse of a stanza but continued the pattern in the next stanza if this inconsistency was not there, producing a rhyme scheme aabccbdbeff instead of the usual aabccbbdeed or aabccbddeffe with an inconsistency (stanzas 460, 703, 721):

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Agripant

[460] Breman quen cruel ez guelhet    a
He pourmenaff heb tarda[f]f quet    a
Gant bizyer calet credet diff    b
Ha nerouu têen a egennet    c
Ez vezo he quil quen pillet    c
Na alhe quet he remedaff.    d (b)
An prouoft
Bez vaillant ha ma ez contantiff.    b

Agripant

[461] Huy guelo gnou pan dezrouiff    b
Quen diguir en he martiriff    b

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Her dra illiff ne filliff quet e

[...]

Agrippant: / Now you will see her very cruelly / being dealt with without any
tarrying / with solid clubs, believe me!, / and hard bull-puzzles. / Her backside will
be beaten so badly / that it would not be possible to heal her. /
The provost: / Be brave and I will reward you. //
Agrippant: / You’ll see for sure, when I will get going! / I will torment her most
cruelly / as long as I can, I will not fail. / [...] //

The rhyme scheme would have required the last verse of stanza 460 to end in -iff, and “remediff”
would have been a valid form of the verb “remedaiff”. But the first person and future tense would
simply not have fitted the context or syntax. Thus, the author apparently accepted the need to
depart from the usual pattern, but nevertheless maintained the rhyme scheme in the following
stanza. This in turn highlights the conspicuousness of an inconsistency in a first verse and
thus lends support to the idea that those inconsistencies serve as markers or hints of changes
in the action of An Buhez. They are more likely to be regarded as stylistic features rather than
accidents or results of a lack of effort or creativity on the part of the author. However, it must
be stressed again that they cannot serve as conclusive proof.

The next episode takes place on the mountainside and begins with an inconsistency (367/368).
Barbara has escaped from her father and flees to the mountains, but a shepherd betrays her
whereabouts to the king and he is able to catch her (368-405). When the action moves from
the mountainside back to the town and the place of the provost, i.e. to a new setting, there is
another inconsistency (405/406). The episode of Barbara’s first day of torture begins. In this
episode it is not entirely clear whether the provost has his own place and does not leave it,
or whether he accompanies the torturers. This in turn makes it difficult to judge whether the
inconsistencies in this episode coincide with changes of place. In any case, the next change of
setting, when Barbara is moved into prison, again coincides with an inconsistency (492/493).

After Jesus has visited Barbara in prison and healed all her wounds, the action switches back
to the provost without any stage direction indicating any passage of time or anything else apart
from the fact that the provost sends for Barbara to be brought (‘An provost a ra digacc sante
Barba’, 533/34). The Latin sources express clearly that Barbara has a night in the prison cell
where she was visited by Jesus who healed all the wounds inflicted upon her during the first
day of torture. Likewise, cinq journées hints that Barbara passed a night in prison, where she
was then visited and healed by Jesus. Neither An Buhez nor deux journées indicate how much
time passes nor at what time of day Barbara’s imprisonment takes place. Thus, deux journées
and An Buhez appear to be less restricted with regard to the staging arrangements at this point.
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In the case of An Buhez, this lack of a reference to a night time imprisonment is particularly interesting. Ernault suggests that a third day of An Buhez begins with stanza 534, which is certainly likely with regard to the contents, as well as with regard to the amount of verses performed thus far. As I argued in 2, the second and third day of An Buhez may well have been performed during one day – the first day in the morning, the second in the afternoon with a break at midday. The inconsistency in stanza 534 together with the comparative evidence from the Latin versions and cinq journées lends support to the assumption that there was indeed a break in the play at this point and that this break did not necessarily involve the passing of a night.

On the third day of the play, there are far less changes of setting than inconsistencies. Almost the entire action of this last day – or of Barbara’s life, so to speak – takes place in the torture chamber (533-650) and in the mountains (651-813). The last significant change of setting does not coincide with an inconsistency, however (650/651). This does not mean that there are fewer inconsistencies. Instead, the number of inconsistencies without an apparent reason increases.

3.2. The Half-Stanza Rhyme Scheme

For the most part, the rhyme scheme employed in An Buhez follows the pattern illustrated above, aabccbbdeed, or aabccbddeff if an inconsistency occurs. However, not all characters converse in stanzas of six verses for the entirety of the play, sometimes triplets (aab), couplets (aa), or single verses (taking up the end rhyme of the previous verse) are used instead. In the triplets, the internal rhyme scheme remains unchanged; the end rhyme of the first two verses becomes the internal rhyme of the third verse. Furthermore, the author apparently aimed to produce dialogues whose total of verses is a multiple of six, although this does not seem to be a particularly strict rule. Therefore, the triplet, or half-stanza as Ernault calls it (Ernault 1888, vi), is most frequently employed as an alternative to the six-verse stanza. While it would be possible to maintain the six-verse rhyme scheme in a dialogue consisting of triplets, this does not happen. Instead, a different rhyme scheme is employed, which can be rendered as aab bbc ccd and so on. The longest stretch of this rhyme scheme can be found during Barbara’s torture and stretches from stanza 571 to 576. I quote a part of that conversation as an illustration of the half-stanza rhyme scheme:
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Glouton

[571] Neb aoue e buiz cez bezet  
Penaux pennat pan eu flagueuet  
Ez vezo credu auffet mate

A gripant

Cza turpion a faczon mate  
Ret eu dimp trauell da guellat  
He lacat en em diuatet.

Claudin.

[572] Gât an flambeou heb gou quet  
Grueôp he crochén quë dipeñet  
Ha na lefomp quet hon pediff

Loupart.

Ho daftum ma ho alumiiff  
Ariff flour ha max fecouriff

Glouton.

[573] Gruet diligancc hac auancet  
Peuar flambes fo alumet

Glouton: / Do not have any fear for her life / whatever, once she is tied up / she will be well prepared, believe (it)! / 
A gripant: / Well, fellows, / it is necessary for us to work in a perfect manner to castigate / and make her feel bad. // 
Claudin: / With the torches, without any trickery, / let us make her skin so ruined / and let us not be asked! / 
Loupart: / I will quickly gather them so as to light them / and to help you / I will not wait to be asked. // 
Glouton: / Make haste and go on! / Five torches are lit / hurry, there is no need to stop. /
3. Rhyme Scheme

Agripant: / Now then, quickly finish her off! / It is necessary to torment her severely / until suffering the cruellest death. //

In both versions of the rhyme scheme the end rhyme of the last verse is usually taken up by the first verse of the next stanza, which makes them easy to combine. Furthermore, the half-stanza rhyme scheme seems to allow for more flexibility in general. It is possible, for example, to add single or double verses after or before a triplet, or between two triplets. These then simply repeat the preceding end-rhyme (stanza 640f). Combining triplets with couplets seems likewise possible (370):

Loupart.
[640] Na vizet na fall na goallec a
Ny hoz groay breman buanec a
Nac eu mar huec ez prezeguet b

Glouton.
Dren doeou me fo darnoet b
Scuíz gât poan ha hogos manet b
Na ne allaff guet monet muy. c

Agripant.
Nonneux nemet tourmât ganty c

Claudin.
[641] Allas pouefomp lefomp hy. c

Loupart.
Ne ellomp en neb rout outy c

Glouton.
A huy na guel he yfily c
Ne fantech deffoull na gouly c
Nac ynt faluet net a detry c
A pep cafty chetu hy glan. d

Loupart: / Do not be either weak or careless / we will make you angry now / however sweet it might be that you talk. /
Glouton: / By the gods, I am in pieces / tired with pain and almost dead / and I cannot walk anymore. /
Agripant: / We do not have but trouble with her! //
3. Rhyme Scheme

Claudin: / Alas, let’s stop, let’s leave her. /
Loupart: / There is nothing we can do against her. /
Glouton: / Do you not see her limbs? / You wouldn’t perceive a bruise nor a wound /
that are not clearly healed well / from every punishment! Look at that! //

Gueguen.
[370] Guell eu deompny frifq diuifcaff a
Da mellat ha da ebataff a
Euit hon em tommaff a mat b

Riullen.
Heman fo taul fech a brech mat b
Aya tizmat hac a pat pell c
Horell. exclamation; rhymes in c

Gueguen.
A te teur affet guellet guell c
Heb fellell tam gant ma câmell c
Horell. exclamation; rhymes in c

Gueguen: / It is better for us to disrobe boldly; / to play Mell and to have fun /
in order to warm ourselves well. /
Riullen: / This is a heavy blow of a good arm / which rushes and goes far! / Horell!
/
Gueguen: / Have you ever seen better? / Flawless with my club! / Horell! //

It appears that triplets are more frequently spoken by characters of a lower social standing or
when the characters’ dialogue involves word-play, sometimes both. Thus, the torturers speak
mostly in triplets, as do the shepherds. The workers at the building site speak in triplets only
on occasion, e.g. in 73, 77 and 78. However, the half-stanza rhyme scheme is not reserved
for those characters. Barbara and the Hermit share a stanza (138) in which they bid farewell
to one another, each speaking one triplet. Similarly, Conscience and Beezlebub both employ
the half-stanza rhyme scheme during their dialogue with Dioscorus at the end (748-750), and
Discorusc himself also makes use of it (744). However, these are isolated instances, whereas the
shepherds and the torturers employ triplets more frequently.

Another interesting combination of the two rhyme schemes are stanzas 166 and 167. These
have been discussed with regard to the inconsistency between the two stanzas, but they are of
3. Rhyme Scheme

further interest with regard to the possibilities of combining the two different rhyme schemes. Stanza 166 begins with a triplet or half-stanza, followed by a single verse and then a six-verse stanza, which is again followed by a single verse. Similar to stanzas 640/641 the previous rhyme is simply repeated by the single-verses, while the triplet employs the usual triplet or half-stanza pattern. Thus, the rhyme scheme can be rendered as aab b bbedde e. This complicates an editor’s work of assigning numbers to the stanzas. As Ernault’s numbers do not reflect the contents of the stanzas, I tentatively suggest numbers that deviate slightly from his edition (Ernault 1888, 40f):

An feruicher.
[166] Rac se a breman gruet an claff a
Ha meya ifcuit dauitaff a
Quentaff maz gallaff neraff quen b
Sante Barba.
Quae affo mir nen guelo den. b

An feruicher.
Chetu me duet doz guelet plen b
Hon materi fo ancien b
Ret eu dimp certen trenen hent c
Ha monet secret dauetuy d
Rac non guele de den neb heny d
Da dicuez dezzy hoz quient. c

Valentin.
Rac se euelhen deomp en hent. c

Valentin.
[167] ytron guiryon ha reafonet e
Dez mat golou aglan coudet e
Dich pepret parfet apedaaff f
Gant Origenes efpret g
Ezouff dre e gracc digaczet
Douz guelet heb quet arretaaff. f

Sante Barba.
[168] Duet mat ra vihet da quentaaff f
[...]
3. Rhyme Scheme

The servant: / Therefore, now play the invalid / and I go quickly to(wards) him / as soon as I can, I do nothing else. / 
Saint Barbara: / Go right away, be careful that nobody will see him! / 
The servant: / Lo, here I am to see you, indeed / our matter is known. / It is truly necessary for us to be on our way / and to go secretly to her / – because nobody at all may see us – / to introduce her to your wisdom. / 
Valentine: / Then let us be on our way! // 
Valentine: / Madam true and wise / a good, bright day wholeheartedly / I wish you, now and always. / By Origen, expressly, / – due to his graciousness – I am sent / to see you, without pausing. // 
Saint Barbara: / First of all be welcome! / […] //

There are further examples in which Ernault assigns an additional verse to the following rather than the preceding stanza, even though the contents suggest otherwise: 161/162, 254/255, 303/304, and 377/378. In general, it appears that additional verses not only reproduce the end rhyme of the preceding stanza, but frequently also belong to it with regard to contents.

3.3. Octosyllables vs. Decasyllables

Another feature that appears to depend on the social standing of a character is the use of decasyllabic verse. Octosyllabic verses seem to be the usual form, for they are used most frequently; roughly three quarters of the play consist of stanzas of octosyllabic verses, while stanzas of decasyllabic verses make up the remaining quarter of An Buhez. There are also four stanzas of pentasyllabic verses, but these only occur in the very beginning and are spoken by the witness (An Test, 1-4). It is interesting to note that the octosyllabic verse is so dominant in An Buhez. Octosyllabic verses and pair rhymes were considered to be the ideal metre by the French fa-tistes, because it came closest to the vernacular language (Runnalls 1998, 23).

The list of the characters speaking in decasyllabic verses shows that this form of speech appears to be reserved for characters of a higher social standing and a dignified personality, or both. None of them speaks in decasyllabic verse exclusively, however. Dioscorus, the schoolmaster, the two lords, the provost, and Jesus employ decasyllabic verse rather frequently. Barbara, the angel, the messenger and the master worker use it regularly, but not as frequently as the schoolmaster or the provost, for example. Claudin, Agrippant and the Servant each speak one or two stanzas in decasyllabic verse but do not usually do so. The characters with a less significant use of decasyllabic verse employ it mostly when answering one of the characters of the first category, who has addressed them using decasyllabic verse. The master worker, for example, uses decasyllabic verse when addressing the king, but octosyllabic verse when
speaking to his workers:

[The Master worker to his crew:]  
[47] Rac touchant an paemantou  
Ne caraf quet drez guelet gnou  
Diouz hoz dellidou en louen  
Bout rebellant ouz contantaff  
Quent fe pepret on hoz tretaff  
Guelhaff maz gallaff neraf quê

Therefore, on the subject of payments / I do not like, as you obviously see / with regard to your meriting merrily, / to be the one who resists to pay / Rather, I always treat you / as best I can, I do nothing else. //

[The Master worker addresses the king:]  
[53] Dez mat golou autrou a glan coudet  
A pedaff plen dreis quement den fo en bet  
Dichuy pepret feul maz vibet feder  
Pan cleuis flam dinam houz mandamant  
E-duiz tizmat hep nep debat batant  
Espediant diligent hac antier.

A good, bright day, Lord, wholeheartedly / I truly wish, more than any man in the world / you always, as long as you will live. / Because I truly, flawlessly heard your request / I have come quickly without any debate, immediately / quick, diligently and assiduously. //

The messenger and the servant appear to use decasyllabic verse for the same reason, that is because they frequently address characters of a higher social standing.
4. The First Page

At first glance, the title page of *An Buhez* is not very special. The image depicts Saint Barbara with her tower. The text surrounding the image gives the names of those involved in the printing process. The reader is also informed that the life of Saint Barbara will be delivered “in rhyme-form like it is customarily done in a play in Brittany” (‘dre rym, euel maz custumer...
he hoary en Goelet Breiz’). A very similar phrase occurs at the beginning of the manuscript\textsuperscript{22} of An Buhez Santez Nomm: “Aman ez desraou bele san[tes] nonn hac ez map deuy dre ry[m] euel ma eo hoarueset ez go[elet] breiz” (translated as “Ici commence la Vie de sainte Nonne et de son fils Dévi, en vers, telle qu’elle est advenue[footnote 1: Ernault préfère lire hoariet et traduit “comme on la joue”] en basse Bretagne” by Le Berre 1999, 115). This is interesting, for it suggests that the plays were actually performed. Unfortunately, there is no such steadfast proof for this like there is for the French \textit{mystères}, because the highly useful list of play performances between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries gathered by Petit de Julleville (Julleville 1880) is restricted to France and does not extend to Brittany. Yet the textual evidence of An Buhez suggests that the play was indeed meant to be performed (2). The date given at the bottom of the title page is ambiguous. The actual printed date is imperfectly preserved (figure 4). Only the second part of the date (LII) is visible. Thus, the date might be read as MDLII, but also as MDXLII, for example. However, a handwritten note of unknown origin next to the image on the same page states that the book was “imprimé en 1557” (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 219).

The sentence below the image is part of a controversial discussion because of the phrase “neuez imprimet”, the meaning of which is not entirely clear. The English translation is similarly ambiguous. I quote Le Berre: “On peut en effet comprendre, comme en moyen-français, soit «imprimé depuis peu», soit «imprimé à nouveau»” (Le Berre 2011, 8). The former suggests a first print-edition, while the latter implies the existence of a previous print version. The phrase also occurs on the title page of another Breton mystery play, \textit{An Passion}\textsuperscript{23}, and on the title page of the Breton prose life of Saint Catherine (Ernault 1887a). Guyonvarc’h and Le Berre illustrate the views expressed by scholars of the subject and explain that the ambiguous phrase has been interpreted as proving the existence of older versions of the Breton prints (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 214; Le Berre 2011, 8). Hersart de la Villemarquè was an outspoken advocate of this theory, which he expressed in the introduction of his edition of \textit{An Passion} (Villemarqué 1866), but he has been heavily criticised for his views. Unfortunately, the number of prints in Middle-Breton that have come down to us is not very high. Walsby lists eight prints in Middle-Breton that were printed outside Brittany in the sixteenth century (Walsby 2011, 158) and points out that “[t]he only local imprints to be printed in Breton in the sixteenth century came off the press set up in the monastery of Cuburien” (Walsby 2011, 157). This includes, for example, the \textit{Mirouer de la Mort} (1575). Three of the printed books have come down to us in more than one version: \textit{Le Catholicon} (1499, between 1499 and 1520, and 1520; Lagadec 1975, x), \textit{An Passion} (1530, Paris; 1609, St. Malo; 1622, Morlaix; Courouau 2008, § 21), and \textit{An

\textsuperscript{22}Note that Guyonvarc’h is of the opinion that the manuscript “dont la belle écriture, régulière, reproduit sans conteste un original imprimé plus ancien” (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 212).

\textsuperscript{23}Three editions have come down to us, the oldest of which is dated 1530. It has been edited by de la Villemarqué (Villemarqué 1866) and by le Berre (Le Berre 2011).
4. The First Page

Buhez (1557, Paris; 1608, St. Malo, 1647, Morlaix; Scherschel 2014, 7f). Of the six reprints, only the 1608-version of An Buhez makes use of the phrase “neuez imprimet”. If Villemarqué was correct in his assumption that the phrase indicates the existence of a previous Breton edition, I would expect to find more of the existing reprints to be marked with it. So far, Le Berre is correct in pointing out that “l’ambiguïté de la formule a neuez imprimet ne pourra être levée” (Le Berre 2011, 8).

Prints of French mystery-plays are often accompanied by a very similar phrase, “nouvellement imprimee”, which led Runnalls to a similar conclusion as to the existence of an earlier edition:

De plus, on constate que tous les textes de mystères publiés après 1550 sont des réimpressions d’anciennes éditions. Nous le savons parce-que, ou bien une édition antérieure a été conservée (n°s 12c-12z, 18j, 21f-h, 25c, 32b), ou bien la seule édition que nous connaissons est qualiﬁée dans le colophon ou à la page de titre de “nouvellement imprimee” (n°s 7 [Le mystère de Griseldis, 1547-66], 29 [Le mystère de saint Martin, 1568-72]), ou bien l’existence d’une édition antérieure est connue, même si aucun exemplaire n’a été conservée (n° 27).
(Runnalls 1999, 38)

A closer look at the répertoire on which Runnalls bases his research reveals that the phrase occurs in most editions printed by “La Veuve Trepperel et Jean Janot” during the years 1512-1519 and in editions of mystères after that time, even in those of which no previous print-version has come down to us (Runnalls 1999, 105-171). As Runnalls illustrates, the Trepperel family and their relatives formed a dynasty of printers that operated over generations and dominated the Parisian print-market for mystery plays, having published more than three quarters of the Parisian mystery plays (Runnalls 1999, 32f; cf. 69-79). By the time “La Veuve Trepperel” was operating the business, many mystery plays had already been published at least once by her predecessors, of which she would of course have been aware and thus included the phrase “nouvellement imprimé”. This dominance of the Trepperel family and their associates continued until the middle of the century, after which the number of printed mystery plays decreased notably (Runnalls 1999, 36). However, the phrase “nouvellement imprimé” appears to have been used universally. It is conceivable that the very active “Veuve Trepperel” set up a convention by marking her work as “nouvellement imprimé”. This convention may have spread so that other printers simply began to mark their products in the same way, even without having seen a previous print-version. In this case the phrase could be regarded as a common feature of the printing business of mystery plays after 1519, particularly in Paris. The two prints of Middle-Breton plays, An Buhez (1557) and An Passion (1530), which were both printed in Paris, tie in
with this suggestion. For while there are no previous known editions of Breton versions of the plays, both titles were published in French by members of the Trepperel family. I consider it very likely that the Breton phrase “neuez imprimet” is therefore a rendition or translation of the French phrase “nouvellement imprimé”, which may possibly be regarded as a convention rather than an actuality at that point. It does, therefore, imply a previous print-edition, but this does not necessarily have to be a Breton version. Incidentally, the second and third edition of the Catholicon, which were also printed in Paris, use the phrase “correctus et reuisus” on their respective first pages (Lagadeuc 1975, x). This is a phrase that often appears in reprints of the mystères as well (e.g. deux journées by Simon Calvarin, which is “nouvellement reveue et mise en son entier et corrigee tant au sens que a la rithme” Runnalls 1999, 157). Together with the general similarity of first pages – there is usually 1) a picture, 2) the name of a printer, a bookseller, or both, 3) a place where this person can be found and 4) a couple of words on the contents of the book – this strengthens the impression of certain conventions having been established by the sixteenth century with regard to the layout and the employed phrases.

While the evidence of printed mystères in Breton is nowhere near as manifold as of those printed in French, some interesting connections between the two available prints (An Buhez and An Passion) of Middle-Breton plays can be found. Both give the same place of origin (Paris), both are “newly printed”, and both supply the name of a known bookseller and the address of the respective bookshop:

_An Buhez:_

E Paris neuez imprimet gant Benard de Leau.

“In Paris newly printed by Be[r]nard de Leau. / Printed in Paris for Bernard de Leau who stayed in Morlaix on Bridge Bourret in [the] year 1557.”

_An Passion:_

E Paris a neuez imprimet En bloaz mil pem p cant ha tregont.
E Paris ho guerzeur
e ty Eozen quilliuere:equichen an pont Bihan en assaing an .+. du en ru hanvet la Bucherie.

“Nouvellement imprimé à Paris l’an mil cinq cents et trente. / En vente à Paris / chez Yves Quilivéré, près du petit pont, à l’enseigne de la + noire, rue de la Bucherie.”

(Le Berre 2011, 63)

The Breton plays have not been sold by the same bookseller, and it is not clear from the names
on the title pages exactly who printed the respective plays. In fact, in the case of An Buhez, it is not entirely clear what is meant by “gant Bernard de Leau”. “Gant” can be translated as “with”, “by” or “through”, which implies a certain agency on the part of Bernard de Leau in the production of the book. However, the second line states that the book was printed “euit Bernard de Leaue”, which means “for Bernard de Leau”, and which in turn implies that he wanted to stock it at his shop on Bridge Bourret. Bernard de Leau was known as a bookseller and the location of his bookshop mentioned on the title page of An Buhez also appears on the title page of the Breton Life of St. Catherine: “Aman ez dezraou buhez an itron sanctes Cathell [...] en Brezonec neuez Imprimet, e Cuburien, evit Bernard de Leau, peheny a chô e Montrolles, voar pontz Bouret: en bloaz M.D.LXXVI.” (Ernault 1887a, 76). According to Le Guennec’s article on Bernard de Leau, he did not only own a shop on Bridge Bourret in Morlaix, but also one in Paris, where he had been apprenticed as a “libraire”, a bookseller (Le Guennec 1927, 12). The role of a libraire is described thus by Booton:

In this age of transient Breton presses, libraires played an important role in the book market. As the middlemen of the book trade, libraires contracted with craftsmen, arranged for printed editions, marketed titles at regional fairs, and sold volumes to local buyers. In many respects, their function encompassed publisher and bookseller.

[...]

The libraire remains a shadowy figure in the historical record, appearing occasionally though cryptically in tax rolls and financial registers. [...] But because of their activity, the publisher-bookseller was probably wealthier than the craftsmen in the trade.

(Booton 2010, 118-120)

If a libraire did not own a printing press himself, the publisher-bookseller would have to look for a printer capable of printing the desired text. Not every printer was capable of printing anything, the very luxurious editions usually came off the more prestigious presses. An Buhez, however, has been published in-octavo without much ornamentation. This was one of the standard formats of the time (Runnalls 1999, 39-44). Whether or not De Leau owned a press is difficult to determine, for while the terminology “gant Bernard de Leau” may point that way, it may also refer to his involvement as an editor, which would have been part of his job as a libraire. According to Le Guennec, the Histoire de Morlaix, which Joseph Daumesnil wrote in the 18th century and which was published in 1879 by Adolphe Allier, refers to an “imprimeur qu[e l’Histoire de Morlaix] ne nomme point, mais qu’elle dit établi en 1557 sur le Pont de Bourret” and who is credited with “l’édition de deux mystères en langue bretonne, la Vie de
4. The First Page

Sainte-Ursule et la Vie de Saint-Guénolé” (Le Guennec 1927, 11). Unfortunately, neither of the two mystères has come down to us, at least not in a print version.24 While the first part that mentions a printer on Bridge Bourret in 1557 undoubtedly refers to Bernard de Leau, it is most likely based on the title page of An Buhez, for it provides exactly the same information. Thus, it does not shed more light upon the question whether de Leau was or was not an imprimeur as well as a libraire. Whatever his precise job description, Bernard de Leau was a successful merchant and bookseller. He had considerable property to bestow on his descendants, as well as a servant who worked in his shop (Le Guennec 1927, 20f; Walsby 2011, 148), but it is not clear whether he was “wealthier than the craftsmen in the trade” (Booton 2010, 120). Walsby considers him the likeliest partner and vendor of the books which came off the “press in the Franciscan monastery of Cuburien, a few miles to the north of Morlaix”, because of his geographical proximity on the one hand and because of his good connections on the other (Walsby 2011, 147). The monastery’s printing press had been in use at least between 1575 and 1585 and two of its prints in Middle Breton have come down to us. One is the Mirouer de la Mort (1575), the other is the Life of Saint Catherine (1576) referred to above (Le Menn 2010, 324).

While de Leau was probably not born in Brittany, since “[la famille de Leau] n’apparut dans les annales de [Morlaix] que vers le milieu du XVIe siècle” and because of “son ignorance de la législation particulière de [la Bretagne]” (Le Guennec 1927, 11 & 20), he certainly had familial ties there. Bernard de Leau was married twice, first to “Plézoue Robert, dame du Petit-Kervouran en Lanmeur qui lui donna plusierus enfants”, and who died in 1561, and then to “Amice de Quélen, veuve de Guillaume Rochcongar” with whom he had another son. On March 18th 1579 he also became “le parrain d’Anne de Louarn, fille de son confrère Jean Louarn, libraire” (Le Guennec 1927, 18). Another connection is mentioned by Annie Parent: “Yves Quillivéré, né au pays de Léon, devient libraire juré à Paris; avec son beau-fils, Bernard de Leau, marchand libraire à Morlaix, il forme une «société”» (Parent 1974, 147). This last connection is particularly interesting, because it links the two prints of Breton mystery plays, for An Passion was sold at Quillivéré’s bookshop in Paris. According to Le Berre, Quillivéré is a familiar figure in the printing business: “Il avait imprimé en 1516 le Bréviaire de Léon et en 1526 le Misset de Léon, tous deux en latin. C’est encore lui qui avait composé en 1521 la troisième et dernière

24 An Buhez Sant Gwénolé has survived in a manuscript version which according to its first editor Dom Le Pelletier is based on a previous version: "Aisant deux copies de la Vie de St Gwenolé, j’ai suivi la plus ancienne qui est de l’année 1580 […] l’autre écrite en 1608, par un Prêtre de Cornwaille” (Le Pelletier 1716, 1353). It seems that Le Guennec interpreted this sentence as a reference to a print version: “imprimé à Morlaix vers 1580, comme semble le dire dom [sic!] Le Pelletier” (Le Guennec 1927, 16). Unfortunately, Le Pelletier’s comment hints at a manuscript version rather than a print and he does not mention Morlaix. In any case, the manuscript copy of Le Pelletier is the earliest version of An Buhez Sant Gwenoalé available. The play consists of several episodes associated with Saint Gwenole and his parents. It has been edited by Emile Ernault (Ernault 1932-1933) and by Paul Widmer (Widmer 2011).
édition du Catholicon, dictionnaire breton-latin-français. Son activité semble donc avoir été très liée à la Bretagne” (Le Berre 2011, 5f).

De Leau was evidently familiar with other important booksellers from Paris. Among his co-editors of a missal commissioned in 1543 from the Parisian printer Didier Maheu were Jacques Kerver and Oudin Petit (Le Guennec 1927, 12). Kerver and Petit are two very powerful Parisian bookseller families, whose considerable influence stretched as far as Rennes (Walsby 2011, 72). De Leau’s obvious connections to other booksellers and printers and their families support Walsby’s views that networking was an essential part of booktrade. Most books were printed in Paris and Lyon, the major printing centres of France, and thence distributed to smaller towns including Rennes, Nantes, and even Morlaix. This practice was made even more profitable by “[t]he low costs involved with exporting the books” (Walsby 2011, 71-73). Similarly, family ties as exemplified by Runnalls in his chapter on Jean Janot and his connections (Runnalls 1999, 69-79) seem to have played a certain role in the printing business of Brittany.

Finally, there is the question of who the intended audience of books in Breton was. Guyonvarc’h, who regards the Breton texts as translations or at least adaptations of French material, states that the purpose behind these translations/adaptations is not “pour diffuser une bienfaîsant culture, c’est uniquement par souci d’apostolat. Si les ouailles avaient bien su le français on ne serait certainement jamais donné la peine de traduire” (Guyonvarc’h 1987b, 213). He thus argues that the Breton people were ignorant of the French language and needed Breton translations in order to understand the teachings of the Church. According to Michael Jones, “Middle Breton survived essentially as a spoken rather than a written language until the late fifteenth century” (Jones 2003) when the Catholicon (s.a.) was first published. The trilingual dictionary supports Jones’ argument that in the Breton-speaking part of Brittany, “the majority of clerics needed to be verbally trilingual even if they did not write in Breton” (Jones 2003). While Latin was the language favoured by the clergy, French was acceptable for official documents, as well. The ability to speak Breton, however, was necessary to be able to speak to the people. Based on studies conducted by Alan Croix (Croix 1995, 173-186), Walsby argues that “the Church sought increasingly to integrate popular beliefs into the cult of the saints in order to draw the local population towards a more orthodox set of beliefs” (Walsby 2011, 157). He then suggests that the Church may have had an interest in having particular saints’ lives printed. Indeed, the print versions of Breton saints’ lives that have come down to us are not those of local Breton saints, but those of the popular European saints Barbara and Catherine, and of Jesus himself. Nevertheless, the question who, apart from the clerical class, might have read or even bought a copy of the Breton prints requires further investigation.
5. The Devils

Tous les mystères contiennent des diableries, des scènes où les diables – au moins deux et d’habitude six ou sept, sous la direction de Lucifer et de Satan – se rencontrent pour oindre un complot contre Jésus ou les saints ou pour fulminer contre les personnages divins ou chrétiens ou pour se disputer entre eux.
(Runnalls 1998, 27)

While the devil and/or his deputies are absent from the prose legends of saint Barbara, all three plays contain a diablerie as described by Runnalls.25 However, their aims and their significance for the course of events on stage differ. In cinq journées, the devils occupy a considerable part of the play and often appear as an intermediary action of an episode, commenting on past and future events. Thus, they provide an entertaining interlude on the one hand, but also a summary of the important points of the play on the other. When they appear for the first time, they divide the episode of Barbara’s education by the two schoolmaster (or doctores) in this way. Lucifer presents himself as the ringleader and orders the others (Sathan, Astarot(h), Leviathan, Berith, Belial, Belzebuth) to his side:

LUCIFER primo
Harau, toute la deablierie!
Venéz avant, Deables parvers!
(655f)

[...]

Venéz toust davant vousestre roy.
Traistres Serpentins despitoire[s].
(692f)

As I discussed in (2), Lucifer is often restricted to hell and does not move around himself, which is why he summons the other devils to him, when he wants to talk to them. In cinq journées, he makes a direct reference to this:

Ou es tu, Sathan le failly?
Deables seduictz ! Deables d’enfer!
Si je n’estoye ycy en fer
Enchaigned et emprisonné,

25For an extensive and detailed study on the devils and their roles in mystery plays see Dupras 2006.
5. The Devils

Le mal jour vous seroit donné!
(5849-5853)

He is the one who makes plans, while the other devils mostly act on his orders. During their first conversation on stage, he asks his deputies to account for their deeds: “Et toy, Astarot, fier et let, / Dy moy que tu as fait en somme” (754f). Lucifer is worried that Barbara will convert to Christianity on her own because her clever mind is being stimulated by her education at that point:

Car par dedans Nycomedye
Est ung roy dit Dýoscorus,
Aussi puissant que fut Porrus,
Qui est ung vaillant ydollatre.
Més il a, puis troys jours ou quatre,
Baillé sa fille a deux docteurs
Auctentiques, bons disputeurs;
[...]  
Par la scîence naturelle
Comme par [la] philozophie,
S’ellé a preynt et c’y affie,
Elle pourroit bien tantost venir
A la congnoissance et tenir
Qu’il est ung Dieu.
(804-843)

Thus, he sends his deputies to prevent Barbara’s conversion. They comply: “En Egipte nous devallons / Incontinent et sans arrest” (880f). When his plan is flaunted and Barbara discovers God due to her intuitive knowledge, he makes a new plan to prevent Barbara’s baptism:

A! deables pervers et seduiz,
De noustre perte il ne vous chault.
Elle est convertye, autant vault
Sinon qu’elle n’est pas baptisée.
Donc, par manierë advisee,
Aller en l’arc et en la corde
Et garder qu’elle ne descorde
De la loy de payennerie!
(1498-1505)

26Note that in cinq journées the location of the play appears to be consistent, cf. 2.4.1.
5. The Devils

The devils continue to act and react in this way throughout the play. They approach the people surrounding Barbara and instigate them to carry out the evil plans they contrive. The building of the tower, for example, is their idea in *cinq journées*:

**LUCIFER**

[...]

Conseille a son pere ce jour,  
Qu’i luy face faire une tour  
Ou elle sera solitaire,  
Affin qu’aucun ne la repaire  
Ne aucun cretin qui l’enorte,  
Qui l’amonnestë ou supporte  
[...].

(2282-2287)

This, of course, also serves as a way to advance the action of the play. In fact, the plot would not evolve without the actions of the devils; they are an integral part of the play beyond their function as a typical feature of the genre. In the end, they do not achieve their goal to keep Barbara away from Christianity, of course, but at least collect Dioscorus’ soul for themselves. In their last appearance on stage, after the deaths of Barbara and Dioscorus, they complain that Barbara and her fellow saints steal away the souls of sinners from the devils’ grasp:

**Oncques sainct s ne sainctes ne firent**  
A tous les dables tant de mal  
Que fait Barbe, ce vieil poitra!  
El destruit nostre previleige.

(23271-23274)

In *deux journées*, the first appearance of a devil is when Satan impersonates an idol and encourages Marcien (L’empereur) to persecute the Christians, thus providing the historical background for Barbara’s legend: “S’il y a nul cretin qui gronde, / Metz les a mort, je le commande. / Et a grant persecution” (262-264). The *diablerie* as such (Sathan, Leviathan, Astaroth, Crochart, Belial, Lucifer) appears only at a considerably later point, namely after Barbara has had the windows of the tower changed to three and has been baptised. Then they make plans to destroy Barbara and have her tortured for becoming a Christian. **As in cinq journées**, Lucifer presents himself as the ringleader, and the other devils act as his deputies whom he sends into the human world to do their infernal business:
Lucifer

Haro! dyables d’enfer comus,
Que dyable estes vous devenus?
De sostre fait chascun s’eslongne;
Point ne pensez de ma besongne.
Dioscorus, le faulx traitour,
Qui a fait faire une grant tour,
Sa fille si est chrestienne
Et ne tient plus la loy payenne,
Dont c’est pour nous tresgrant dommage.
Or sa, venez tout mon bernage;
Faictes tantest qu’elle soit destruicte,
Ou el nous fera, com je cuyde,
Ung dommaigé irreparable.
(791-803)

[...]

Lucifer
Allez tost! que fievre quartaine
Vous puisse trestous reliar!
Tous ensemble
Amen, vous tout le premier!
(852-854)

The devils’ function is similar to that of cinque journées. They, too, speak to the characters around Barbara in order to dissuade her from Christianity, but their interference is considerably less frequent. Yet, during the episode of the prostitute (“la folle femme”) who visits Barbara in her prison cell, Sat(h)an comes directly into contact with Barbara, for he had possessed the prostitute in order to influence Barbara through her. Instead, Barbara saves the prostitute by exorcising Sat(h)an, beats him (2710/1 & 2738/9), and converts the prostitute. At the end of the play, however, the devils feel generously compensated and instead of being angry with Barbara as the devils in cinque journées, Lucifer professes himself happy. He and the devils are presented with more than only Dioscorus’ soul, because in deux journées the emperor and his torturers also die and go to hell for their crimes against Barbara:
5. The Devils

Lucifer
Haro! dyables, venez tantost,
Du grant enfer trestout nostre ost.
Venez ouy're grans nouvelles
Qui pour nous sont bonnes et belles.
Car le vieil roy Dioscorus
Est tout plat mort (il ne vit plus)
Et Marcien l'imperateur
Sont mors tous plas de forte rage.
(3562-3570)

In An Buhez, the devils are even less present on stage. Instead of appearing time and again throughout the play, as they do in the French versions and particularly in cinq journées, the devils appear only twice throughout the performance. Their first appearance takes place at the very beginning. As in the French plays, Lucifer begins and calls the others to him:

Lucifer a dezrou.
[22] Alianc cc hoz em auant
Duet dirazoff nam ancoffhet
Hoz em queuluesquet dan pret man
En vn opinion da monet
Da temptaff glan holl pobl an bet
Hep fellell quet het ha ledan.

Lucifer begins: / Allies, advance! / Come before me, do not forget me / Move yourselves this minute / to go with one intention / to tempt surely all the people of the world / without failing, far and wide. //

Like in the other plays, he is not very friendly towards his deputies, which underlines his superiority. The phrase “nam ancoffhet” (‘do not forget me’) is reminiscent of deux journées “Point ne pensez de ma besongne” (794). In both An Buhez and deux journées, the deputy devils appear as willing subjects of Lucifer’s rule. In An Buhez, they even seem to vy for his praise:

Bezlebuth a comp, a
[26] Nep ou nac
Há bezet scler vn quarter bro
Da gouern ha me en cerno
Cristen eno na credo tam
5. The Devils

Dre nep rout en em cafout muy
Rac me lacay plen pep heny
Em damany hac em liam.

Astaroth
[27] Cza cza
Me aray tempest hac estlam
Emquarter brohuy enguelo flam
Na ne seiff tam vn camet
Me vezo scuemp oz ho temptaff
En ho mehancc da offanezaff
Doe da quentaff heptardaff pret

Berit.
[28] Bo bo.
Me aray maruaill debraillet
Fez lesu crist he ministret
Enn andret ma em commeter
Na bras na bihan ne mano
Dreizo enep lech na pecho
Er me goar an dro de ober.

_Beezlebub speaks:_ / Do not falter / and let me clearly have one quarter of the land / to govern and I will enchain it / so that there a Christian will not dare at all / in any way to stay anymore / because I will place, indeed, everyone / in my dominion and in my fetters. //

Astaroth: / There, there / I will make/cause storm and terror / in my quarter of land, you will truly see it, / I will not yield any one step / I will be avid at their temptation / to offend in their nastiness / God at the very first, without losing time. //

Berit: / Ho ho. / I will make horribly tainted / the faith in Jesus and his preachers. / In the place to which I am deputed / neither great nor small will stay / through them in a place who will not sin / because I know the trick. //

Such eagerness on the part of the deputy devils contrasts with the situation in _cinq journées_, where the other devils follow Lucifer’s orders with bad grace and resentment. This appears to be due to the fact that they do not merely tempt humans to be sinful, but are themselves
5. The Devils

highly prone to such sins as arrogance and sloth. The devils in *deux journées* and *An Buhez* are presented as hard-working and industrious figures, albeit for a bad cause. But the depiction of the devils in *cing journées* furthers their comic function, for it has surely been highly amusing to watch a chained Lucifer try to goad his fellows to get a move on with their business of temptation and sin. With regard to the contents, the episode in *An Buhez* differs widely from that in the other two plays. Barbara or her father are not mentioned yet. Instead, Lucifer wishes to take action against the impending dominance of the Christians:

[25] Tut Iesu so oz concluaff
Gant depit hon disheritaff
Hac hon diposidaff affo
Hoguen mar queret cleuet rez
Labourat en mat nos ha dez
En diuez ny a donezo

The people of Jesus are deciding / with resentment to disinherit us / and to dispossess us soon. / But if you wish, listen well, / work well night and day / (and) in the end we will win. //

This aspect of trying to prevent the domination of Christian ideas among humans is of course present in the other two plays, as well. But the way in which the devils try to counteract differs. While all of them generally want to tempt people to sin, this is not put on stage in *An Buhez* – the devils do not interact with any of the characters up until the very end. In *deux journées*, and much more so in *cing journées*, the devils speak to characters surrounding Barbara in order to achieve their goal. Because of this direct interference with Barbara’s life, Élyse Dupras argues that Barbara’s real enemy is not her father or Marcienn but the devil himself (Dupras 2006, 387). While her argument focuses on *deux journées*, it is also (if not even more) true for *cing journées*. However, in *An Buhez* the situation is very different. Due to the lack of interference on the part of the *diablerie* throughout the play, Barbara’s enemy is, in fact, her father. Only at the very end does Beezlebub interact directly with Dioscorus in order to convince him to kill his daughter. As will be discussed in section 13.2, Beezlebub acts as a component of a morality episode in which Dioscorus is presented with a choice, which contrasts with the devils’ secret whispers of *deux journées* and *cing journées*. In this morality episode, Beezlebub is technically not really depicted as a part of the *diablerie* but acts as an evil allegorical character instead. Thus, there is quite some variation in conduct and presentation with regard to the respective *diableries* in the three plays.

An integral part of Lucifer’s plan in *An Buhez* is the division of the world and he asks his
deputies to “choose right away / each a country where you will go / to rule them” (‘choaset / Pep acontre ha mazehet / Do gouuermn’, 24). That the devils divide the world thus amongst themselves is unique to An Buhez. But in fact, only one part of the world is mentioned in the play. Lucifer accords Asia to Beezlebub and thus singles him out. This, of course, is why Beezlebub is concerned with Barbara and her father in the end, because they live in his domain (2.4.1). Furthermore, the diablerie in An Buhez is smaller than in the French plays. It consists only of Lucifer and three other devils, Beezlebub (Belzebuth/Bezelebuth), Astaroth, and Berit. The latter two do not speak more than one stanza each and are thus very minor characters. Beezlebub is more important. He speaks two stanzas at the beginning and then appears again at the end. In between those appearances of Beezlebub, there is no further action directly associated with the devils in An Buhez and they do not enter the stage. In a way, the diablerie frames the play, for the devils first appear after the introduction and the testimony of the witness, before the plot begins. Their next appearance is longer. Satan and Beezlebub enter the stage shortly before the end of the play to make sure of Barbara’s death and to take Dioscorus’ soul to hell. This is the only episode in which a devil (Beezlebub) comes directly into contact with another character (Dioscorus) of the play. After Beezlebub informs Dioscorus that he will now take his soul to hell, there is only a kind of informal epilogue that ends the play. Claudin and another of the torturers have apparently watched the king’s demise and are shocked at his death. They flee the scenery and Valentine appears in order to bury Barbara and reminisce about her virtues and his hope of heaven. In a way, the structure is an inverted parallel to the beginning. The plot ends with the devils. Claudin and his companion function as witnesses, and Valentine provides the conclusion of the play.

The second appearance of the devils is interesting for another reason. While it was Lucifer who called the other devils to himself in the beginning, this office is suddenly filled by Satan instead. He acts in the same way and also calls the others to him in order to comment on the current situation:

_Sathan a comps._

[727] Cza mazouchuy ma alicanc
Deneflet cleuet ma fetanc
Ny fo dre mechancce offancet
Collet eu pep faczon hon guir
Dimp en eprés gouden defir
On beze hir ouz e miret.

_Satan says:_ / Well, where are you my allies? / Approach in order to hear my judgement. / We are offended due to misfortune / our right is lost in every way /

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to us, truly, after the desire / we have had long at protecting it. //

The summons is answered by Beezlebub only. In the same way that Beezlebub had asked Lucifer to give him a quarter of the world in which to tempt the people, he now asks him to grant him the power to go to Dioscorus:

[729] Ro diff an gallout heb doutaff
Da monet apret dauetaff
Ha meray dezaff [...] 

Give me the power, without doubt, / to go to him, soon, / and I will work on him [...] // 

Satan then instructs Beezlebub what to do with regard to Dioscorus:

[730] Allas ma car chede ary
Laca ênhaff heb tardaff muy
Creffhaff mahilly droguyaez.
[...] 

Alas my friend, here’s what you will do: / Put in him, without more tarrying, / the strongest animosity that you will be able to (produce). / [...] //

Thus, with regard to their function, Satan and Lucifer appear identical. It is striking nevertheless that the author should have changed the name without apparent reason. One possible reason would be that another source inspired the change, but in both French plays, at least, the ringleader is and remains Lucifer. However, in deux journées, Satan is the one who speaks to the emperor, first at the beginning when he impersonates an idol and inspires the persecution of Christians in general (261-268), and later when he impersonates an angel and suggests that Marcien puts a prostitute into Barbara’s prison cell in order to tempt the virgin into the ways of the flesh (2414-2426). In cinq journées, the devils mostly appear as a team. The one talking to Dioscorus in the end is mostly Leviathan, who does not even appear in An Buhez. With regard to the content of the conversation between Satan and Beezlebub in An Buhez there is no correspondence to be found in the French plays. In cinq journées, the last encounter between one of the devils and Dioscorus takes place earlier, when Leviathan instigates the king to try out one last torture method on his daughter in order to finally kill her (18357-18404).
5. The Devils

Thus, what Runnals says about the function of a *diablerie* is entirely true in the French plays, but only partly so in *An Buhez*. According to Runnals, the devils are the saints’ and Christ’s adversaries (Runnals 1998, 27), and this is certainly true for all three plays. That their provocative and often funny language and acting style are designed to make the audience laugh, however, is not true for *An Buhez*. For that to be the case, the devils need to appear more often, like they do in *cinq journées*. In *An Buhez*, Beezlebub is cunning and sly, and he employs threats to make Dioscorus proceed with the murder of his daughter. The devils as a group are threatening and dangerous. Instead of being funny, even inadvertently, the devils employ images of suffering and captivity. However, in contrast to the *diablerie* of *cinq journées*, the devils in *An Buhez* are not necessarily integral to the advancement of the plot. While the devils in *cinq journées* are far from being a superfluous addition and serve as a driving force behind the action of the play instead (cf. Runnals 1998, 27), the devils in *An Buhez* serve to set the stage in the beginning and then help to bring about the climax of the play. Yet neither appearance is strictly necessary. It seems that the devils in *An Buhez* are there in order to complete the picture of the mystery play, for the *diablerie* is firmly rooted in the theatrical world of the Middle Ages and therefore does not appear in the prose legends.
6. The Tower

In depictions, Saint Barbara is often accompanied by a tower with three windows, a chalice, the Host, a sword and/or a lightning bolt. These attributes are already attested in the fourteenth century and increase in popularity during the fifteenth century (Wimmer 1980, 1433). The tower is the least ambiguous attribute, as the others present more common objects with regard to their association with saints. In many versions of Barbara’s story the tower is the object around which the conflict of faith between Barbara and her father ensues. It plays, however, a particularly important role in the theatrical productions, for it is “sans contredit l’élément clef de la fiction dramatique du Mystère et il ne serait pas admissible que Dyoscorus ne puisse indiquer concrètement les fenêtres en question” (Longtin 2003, 12). Before that, however, it is a prison and a hideout respectively. All five texts that have been compared for this study make use of the tower in some manner.

What is common to all five texts is Discorus’ idea to lock Barbara away in a tower. The motif of a girl being locked away in a tower will be familiar to most people from modern times at least from the fairy tale of Rapunzel. There are more examples of this motif in even older literature such as the legend of Danaë (Wirth 1892), or the apocryphal story of Joseph and Aseneth (Philonenko 1968). Both share more than the fact that a girl is to be locked away in a tower with the legend of Barbara. As Wolf describes, the legend of Barbara has been accused to be “no more than a variant of the legend of Christina and the legend of Joseph and Assenath, Potiphar’s daughter” (Wolf 2000, 3). While an investigation of the commonalities would undoubtedly be interesting, the current study focuses on the comparison of An Buhez to such texts that may have had a more direct influence on the Breton play. I will therefore not discuss the matter of the general ancestry of Barbara’s legend here.

In An Buhez, the idea of building a tower as a way to keep Barbara safe from the rest of the world, particularly from men, is introduced by Dioscorus at the very beginning. The story of the play begins in stanza 32 with Dioscorus introducing himself. Only three stanzas later, he already explains his idea of building a tower, which he intends to be a place to keep his very beautiful daughter safe:

[35] Memeux vn merch net ha derch so guerches
A dle bout sclaer ent seder ma aeres
Successoures em deces an nessaff
Doucc ha plesant excellant hac antier
Ha cazar ha mat hegarat a stat quer
Hy ent seder en ma esper querhaff.
6. The Tower

[36] Dre se seder ober a prideraff
Un tour fournis dam guis an islishaff
Hac an creffhaff mar gallaff bezaff quet
De miret net ent secret credet plen
En lech distro eno ne guelo den
Chetu dien ameux plen ordrenet.

[37] He dimiziff credet diff neriff quet
Nemet certen da muyhaff den so en bet
Rac se nepret da monet de metou
Ne lesiffquet den en bet naret sy
Da nessat crèn dre nep tèn bet ènhy
Da comps outy membry racy me biou.

I have a pure and noble daughter, who is a maiden, / which, of course, must be, surely, my heiress, / successor in my death, the next (one), soft and pleasant, excellent and complete / and beautiful and good, lovely, of dear character; / she, surely, is my dearest hope. // Because of this, surely, I intend to have a tower built, / arranged to my taste, the most beautiful / and the strongest, if I can, (I want it) to be / in order to guard her entirely secretly, believe (it) fully, / in a deserted place; there, no man will see her. / Voilà, clearly I have plainly ruled. // Believe me, I will not marry her / except to the greatest man that is in the world / therefore I will never let anybody / go near her, make no doubt / nor approach her at all, by any means / nor speak with her, methinks, for I am her master. //

The Legenda Aurea also mentions the tower at a very early stage, namely in the second sentence. The description of Barbara’s beauty is directly connected to that, as well:

[...] Dioscorus, cui erat filia speciosissima nomine Barbara. Ipsa autem quia erat corpore pulcherrima, eam pater plurimum diligebat; quapropter reclusit eam in turri altissima, quam eidem aedificare fecerat, ne ab aliquo homine videretur.
(Graesse 1965, 898)

In the other versions, the first mentioning of the tower appears at a considerably later stage. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Barbara is educated by Origen’s servant before Dioscorus has the tower built for her. As in the other texts, it is Barbara’s exceptional beauty that makes Dioscorus decide that she needs to be safeguarded:
6. The Tower

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 17f)

It is interesting to note that the king does not, in fact, speak of a tower yet. The means by which he wants to protect his daughter from the outside world is only mentioned slightly later, when the craftsmen are being instructed (see below). In cinq journées, the tower is mentioned for the first time by Satan, who suggests the idea of building a tower for his daughter to Dioscorus during his sleep:

Une haulte tour sumptüuse,
Ferme, forté et vertüuse
Par oupvriers qui soient en ce maistres,
Et qu’i n’y ait que deux fenestres[.]  
(2390-2393)

Dioscorus in turn only introduces the idea to his courtiers 1500 lines later, after all have sacrificed to the pagan gods together. He also spends many words on praising his daughter’s beauty and virtue and then claims that a tower would be useful in order to protect her:

Ennuyt j’ay veu en mon palays
Barbe, ma fille, pourmenëz,
Ambulëz, aller, retourner
Et soy desduyre a son desir,
Mais j’ay prins si parfaict plaisir
En sa belle formosité
La quelle est sans differmité.
[...]
En aprés, si j’alloyë loings
En aulcune legacion
Ou en peregrinacion,
Mectre je la veulx en seureté
Qu’a son corps ne soit point heurté
Et qu’elle n’aït de maulvais conseil.
6. The Tower

[...] Je ne vueil que nul estrangier
A elle vienne flageoller.
[...]
J‘ay ennuyt moy mesmes advisé.
Et par mon seul san divisé
De luy faire faire une tour
Bien clouse de mur tout entour,
Haulté et de belle carreure,
De pierre qui tousjours dure,
Et qui soit de mur fort espesse.

(3850-3917)

The five texts appear to be very similar, but they differ significantly with regard to the amount of words employed to describe the situation. All five texts first point out Barbara’s great beauty, which evokes great protectiveness in Dioscorus. What is interesting is that John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the Legenda Aurea, and the Breton version at least allow for – if not imply – a reading of an incestuous relationship between Dioscorus and his daughter. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the king professes himself very grateful that Barbara does not wish to marry and flings his arms around Barbara’s neck and kisses her:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

Then the king orders some new features for the tower, and adds that the tower is to be a sign because he intends to preserve his daughter for himself for she will never want to marry:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

While there is of course some room for interpretation,
6. The Tower

Dioscorus’ obsessive attitude towards his daughter is obvious. Furthermore, the king’s bad character is explicitly underlined by calling him pernicious and perverse/depraved and depicting him as using good things for bad purposes, when he wishes to protect his daughter’s exterior beauty while failing to perceive her internal beauty entirely:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

The _Legenda Aurea_, too, offers considerable grounds for an interpretation of an incestuous father-daughter relationship by making it explicit that it is precisely because of her physical form that Dioscorus loves his daughter most (“_Ipse autem quia erat corpore pulcherrima, eam pater plurimum diligebat_”) and that it is this feature that makes him lock her up (“_quapropter reclusit eam in turri altissima_, Graesse 1965, 898) in order to keep her away from the rest of the world, particularly from other men. While the Breton play does not employ such ambiguous – or maybe explicit – wording, Dioscorus still expresses a wish to keep his daughter in a deserted and secret place away from men. He feels this to be his right because he perceives himself as her “master” (37). Dioscorus also states his unwillingness to marry his daughter to any but the greatest man that exists in the world. The latter part may well be an allusion to the plot of the legend, because marrying the greatest man in the world is precisely what Barbara intends to do. She wants to become a bride of Christ, who is undoubtedly “the greatest man that is in the world” (“_Nemet certen da muyhaff den so en bet_’, 37). Unfortunately, Jesus Christ does not appear to qualify in Dioscorus’ eyes. Apart from that the stanza is probably intended to underline Dioscorus’ great care for his daughter. Yet the statement seems contrast with his earlier description of Barbara as his one and only heir. If his inheritance was so important to him, he would likely be eager to make a fitting match for his daughter, and sooner rather than later. Building a tower and waiting for the greatest man in the world to happen by undoubtedly would have been very time-consuming and unlikely to yield satisfactory results. Therefore, Dioscorus’ wish to keep his daughter separated from the world takes on a selfish tinge. Moreover, his way of expressing his protectiveness seems to go beyond the ordinary. He appears maniacal in his wish to guard his daughter against the dangers of the world. Dioscorus’ attempt to protect Barbara from the advances of other men actually highlights her sexuality all the more, adding unattainability to the list of her desirable qualities. The idea of an incestuous relationship is strengthened further by the complete absence of Barbara’s mother (and of any other
6. The Tower

protagonists for that matter) from the play and the legend at this stage. In both An Buhez and the Legenda Aurea (apart from the introduction and the diablierie in An Buhez) we have so far encountered only one character, namely a powerful ruler who intends to lock his daughter up in a secluded tower for the explicit reason of keeping her away from other men. However, this is certainly only one way of interpreting the beginning. It is quite possible to regard Dioscorus simply as an overprotective father and king, and it is even likely that this is what was intended by the respective authors. The idea of an incestuous relationship is not particularly striking in cinq journées. Even though Dioscorus wants to have a tower built for Barbara, in which he intends her to live secluded from the world, this is not the first impression we get of him. During the scenes of educating Barbara and offering sacrifice to the pagan gods, which precede the episode of the tower in cinq journées, Dioscorus has already been shown as a doting and indulgent parent that cares greatly for the safety of his daughter. In addition to that, the absence of Barbara’s mother is explained at the very beginning, for Dioscorus has been recently widowed. While taking cinq journées into account considerably lessens the effect created by the beginnings of the Legenda Aurea, John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, and the Breton version with regard to the incestual relationship between father and daughter, it cannot obliterare it altogether.

Deux journées handles the entire scene differently. Rather than emphasising Dioscorus’ unwillingness to marry his daughter, the scene is placed directly after his attempt to convince his daughter to marry in order to preserve the dynasty. Even though this is by no means implied in the play, it is possible to interpret Barbara’s refusal to marry as the reason for Dioscorus to begin building the tower. After Barbara’s refusal, there is no stage direction or pause or any other indication of a change of setting within the play. Instead, Dioscorus sends his messenger out to look for capable masons. He does not, however, mention a tower or explain his intent or motivation at this stage. Only when the masons arrive Dioscorus tells them what he wants them to build, namely a big, high and nicely decorated tower: “Il vous faut faire une tour: / Grande, haute, de bel atour” (505f). There is no mentioning of Barbara at all, not of her beauty, her state of virginity or even whether the tower is intended for her in any way at all. The stage direction following Dioscorus’ instructions for the masons tells the reader – but not the audience – that the masons then make the tower and windows until Barbara comes to them (“Tunc faciant turrim et fenestras quo adusque Barbara veniat ad ipsos”, 533/534). Again, this does not indicate a connection between Barbara and the tower apart from the fact that she will later dispute the wisdom of building only two windows. And while Dioscorus expresses his intention to put his daughter into a cage in the following lines (“Mais je mettray tout mon pouvoir / A la tenir et mettre en caige”, 539f), he does not lock her up. Rather, he employs three maidens as her companions and protection for the duration of his absence (he and his wife go
6. The Tower

on a trip to worship their gods).

In all five texts, Dioscorus employs builders in order to build something for him: a tower in An Buhez and deux journées, a bathhouse in the Legenda Aurea, and both, a tower and a bathhouse, in cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia. While in the Legenda Aurea it is simply stated that he employs craftsmen, Dioscorus sends a messenger (or messengers in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia) to find and fetch suitable builders in the other texts.

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

Legenda Aurea:

[…] instituit multitudo artificio, qui facerent lavacrum, constitut quomodo fieri debuit, tribuen singulis mercedem in integrum […].

(899)

cinq journées:

Va moy querir ung bon maczon
Ou deux ou troys, si tu les trouves,
Voire s’il sont maistres d’esprouves,
Quar J’ay a ffaire une besongne
Ou il convient que l’on besongne
De jour en jour sans delayer.
Je les feray si bien payer
Qu’il seront contens, si leur dy.
(3948-3957)

deuux journées:

Va moy tantost, et sans delay,
Tous les massons de ce pais querre
Qui sont demourans en ma terre.


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Dy leur a tous que, sans demeure,  
Viennent a moy tout a ceste heure  
(Tous les meilleurs et plus subtilz)  
Et qu’ilz aportent leurs oustiz.  
(460-468)

_An Buhez:_

[39] Ma messager quae seder bez certen  
Da clasq diff flour presour mecherouryen  
Aray diff plen en termen ordrenet  
Un tour fournis dam guis maz deuisaff  
Iolis dispar hep mar dren lauaraff  
Acomplissaff amênaff quentaff pret.

[...]

[41] Quat piz tizmat sinchat hep nep atfer  
Do que[r]chat glan aman en pep manyer  
Affet seder dre guer deliberet  
Euit trauell clasq pell an re guelhaff  
Meneux archant presant do contantaff  
Gae ho paeaff amênaff quentaff pret.

My messenger, go surely, be true, / to find for me quite quickly workers / who shall finish in the allotted time / a complete tower to my taste how I choose / exceedingly beautiful. Without doubt as I say / I want to accomplish (it) first of all. // [...] // Go quite quickly, promptly, without delay / to fetch them all here in whatever manner / indeed surely, due to a deliberate word. / Despite distress, look for the very best! / I have cash (in order) to satisfy them; / I merrily want to pay them, first and foremost. //

The three plays are nearly identical with regard to their contents here – _deux journées_ and _cinq journées_ even use the same beginning. Even though it is a common phrase to use in such a situation, it is worth mentioning that they all employ the same construction of “go to find for me”, that is French “va moy querir (cinq journées) / querre (deux journées)” and Breton “quae da clasq diff”. Even John of Wakkerzeel’s _Historia_ has a similar construction, sending the messengers “exquirens artifices”, to find/fetch/choose craftsmen. All plays have Dioscorus
place emphasis on the shortness of time in some way. In *cinq journées* he is modest in this regard and asks the craftsmen to work day by day without delay in order to finish the building (3954f), while in *deux journées* he wants the workers to come right away (466). In *An Buhez* Dioscorus wants both; he wants his messenger to find the workers quickly (who are then to return to him with all due haste) and then the workers are supposed to finish the building within a certain period of time, that is “quentaff pret” (‘first of all, right away, at first’, 39).

Dioscorus also emphasises the craftsmen’s capabilities, wanting good masons that are experienced masters in *cinq journées* (3948ff), the best and finest in *deux journées* (467), instructing his messenger to look for the very best in *An Buhez* (41), and wanting workers that are at least skilled in the techniques of cutting and sculpting stones in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* (18). That the craftsmen would bring their tools would have been customary at the time, but only the French plays have Dioscorus ask the craftsmen to bring their tools expressly (cf. Longtin 2003, 5). In *An Buhez* it becomes clear during the building process that the workers have tools. The Latin versions do not place great importance on the workers’ tools. While the *Legenda Aurea* does not mention the workers’ tools at all, the tools are being sharpened in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*: (Wakkerzeel 1495, 18).

All texts include Dioscorus’ willingness and ability to pay the craftsmen. In the *Legenda Aurea* the information about the payment is given in the same sentence that explains Dioscorus’ intent to employ the craftsmen: “tribuens singulis mercedem in integrum” (899). Apart from the fact that there are wages, nothing further is said about this. It is clear from the context, however, that the craftsmen are already present and that they likely even laid their eyes on said wages before beginning to build. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, Dioscorus offers a daily amount (a denarius) for each craftsman, which seems to be an acceptable sum.

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

The information is given right after the messengers were sent to fetch the craftsmen, but it is clear from the context that the craftsmen have already come to see the king when they are offered their wages. Later, shortly before Dioscorus leaves on a military excursion, he pays each craftsman his respective wage:
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 12)

In *cinq journées*, Dioscorus mentions payment to his messenger before he sends him away to find the craftsmen, but he does not discuss it again with them later. In *deux journées*, he promises payment directly to the craftsmen, but he attaches a condition. If he is satisfied with the masons’ work, that is if the tower is perfect, he will pay them to their liking (“Et quant la tour sera parfaite, / Je vous payray a voz plaisirs”, 518f). *An Buhez* mentions payment more than once. Like in *cinq journées*, Dioscorus sends his messenger to find workers together with the information that he is willing and able to pay them. With regard to the payment, *An Buhez* provides more information than *cinq journées*. Dioscorus states, for example, that there is cash. The workers would thus not have to work for a theoretical payment based on some future enterprise, but for actual money. However, it becomes clear later in the play that they will receive their wages only upon successful completion of the tower. Another reason for Dioscorus to mention that there is cash would likely have been to make the building project more attractive to the craftsmen. Dioscorus successfully advertises his building project in all versions of the legend. In the plays, Dioscorus explains to the craftsmen what he has in mind with regard to the building he wants to employ them for after they have arrived at his place. In *deux journées* and in *An Buhez* Dioscorus mentions payment (again), this time speaking directly to the craftsmen. The wording in *An Buhez* is similar to *deux journées* above:

[55] [...] Moz contanto pep tro huy en guelo net 
Hep faut en bet mar queret ma crediff  
Un tour fournis flam dam guis deuifet  
[...]

[...] / I will satisfy you, always, you will clearly see it, / without any fault at all, if you are willing to obey me. / You will arrange a complete, magnificent tower, designed according to my taste / [...]. //

In *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* the craftsmen appear on stage and talk among themselves before the messenger reaches them. They are a merry lot and plan to invest their recent wages into food and drink in *An Buhez*, while exchanging witty remarks about the meagreness of their payment and lack of commissions for grand buildings in *cinq journées*. In all three plays
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the craftsmen greet the arrival of the messenger with curiosity and wish to know what kind of work the king has for them. In none of the plays the messenger tells them that they are to build a tower. The craftsmen will only learn that when talking to the king directly, which is also the case in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia (s.a.).

cinq journées:
LANCEVANT:
Cza ! Gandeloche et Murgalant,
Il vous fault venir avec moy
Parler a noesture puissant roy
Et aportéz tous voz oustilz.
MURGAULT
Que veult ilz?
LANCEVANT
Des ouvrierz subtilz, / Pour faire nouvel edifice.
(4010-4015)

dez journées:
Le messaigier du roy:
Gallans, entendés ma raison:
Il vous fault faire une maison
A nostre roy Dioscorus.
Venez a luy sans tarder plus,
Car pour certain, il le vous mande.
(479-483)

An Buhez:
An messager:
Ret eu dich don hep fingion monet
Rac en effet gourcheménet net voe
Ez refech lem hep quen quem a breman
Tut a mecher guenech flaer an kaer man
Da prezec glan pur buhan ouz an roe.

[...]

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6. The Tower

[51] Me mên membry dihuy notifähig
Ez vên ober vn mecher an querhaff
Nan propiczaфф nan cazraff neraфф mar
Auezo plen dre nep termen en bet
Na quen gentil en nep fiil compilet
Dezy nepret ne voe quet guelet par.

The messenger: Master artisan, skilled and industrious! / You need, really without
deceit, to go / – because indeed it was clearly ordered / that you would lead without
further ado now / workmen clearly with you into the city – indeed to very quickly
discourse with the king. // [...] // I want, methinks, to notify you / he wants to ac-
complish a most precious work / and the most favourite and the most beautiful,
I do not doubt, / which will indeed exist at any time in the world, / and so noble in
any fashion designed, / never ever has anyone seen its equal. //

The wording is similar in all three plays. However, *An Buhez* places considerable emphasis on
the fact that the king ordered the workers to him. Still, the French plays are explicit enough
and it would obviously be considered bad manners for the masons to refuse the king’s wishes.

Thus, all agree immediately to see the king. We do not learn whether the craftsmen are eager
to attend the king in either the *Legenda Aurea* or in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, nor what
kind of small talk is involved upon their arrival. But the king certainly introduces them to
their task, namely to make a bathroom (“facerent lavacrum”) and how to make it (“constituit
quomodo fieri debuit”) in the *Legenda Aurea* (899) and a great tower which is quadrangular,
and the strongest, and of inaccessible height in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* (18, s.a.). In
addition to that, Dioscorus wants the tower to have but two northward windows in John of
Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

Barbara is moved into the tower very soon after this, but the king receives offers for her hand
in marriage nevertheless. She refuses them due to a vow of chastity she has made and Dio-
scorus orders the craftsmen to add a bathing facility (11) to the tower in order to preserve his
daughter’s privacy:
6. The Tower

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

The king’s instructions are very similar, although much more verbose of course, in *cinq journées*. He has very specific ideas which he dictates to the craftsmen during their initial meeting:

Mon voulloir est qu’en ceste terre
Vous me faictes une tour haulte
Ou il n’y ait quelque defaulte,
Qui soit du tout en tout complette.
Et, sans que plus je le repette,
Je vuo qu’il y ait deux fenestres
Et non plus – entendez vous, Maistres ? –
L’une devers Septembrion
Et l’autre vers la region
Qui est appelle[e] Mydi.
Ne soit nul de vous estourdi
De trespasséz auncunement
Mon tres exprès commandement,
Quar je ne vuo point qu’on en face
Vers Orient, car, de prime face,
Le sollel donneroit lumiere
Au matin parmy la verriere,
Qui empescheroit le doux somme
De ma fille, que je vous nomme,
Qui la dedens se dormiroit;
Aussi pas ne repouseroint
Au point du jour souëfvement.
Le soulail coustumierement,
Quand devers Orient reconce,
Eschauffe trop, c’est ma responce
6. The Tower

Et la cause pour quoy je veulx
Que fenestres n’y ait que deulx.
Faictes une tour de duree,
Qu’elle soit tresbien compousee.
Qu’i ait cent pieds entre les carez
Et m’y plantés de bonnes barres
Par dedans, de fer de Calabre,
Pour tenir la pierre de marbre
De quoy vous la compouseréz.
(4041-4074)

The king seems to indicate a certain piece of land where the tower is supposed to be built ("en ceste terre", 4041). He wants the tower to be high and without a flaw, perfect, durable and very well designed. It is to have two windows and no more, one facing Septemtrion, i.e. north, and the other facing Mydi, i.e. south. He warns the craftsmen against disobeying his orders and explicitly forbids them to build windows facing east or west, because the former would allow the morning sun to wake his sleeping daughter and the latter would bring too much heat in the evening. Moreover, Dioscorus wishes certain proportions to be fulfilled and expensive stones to be used. Not only Dioscorus, but also his courtiers make remarks as to certain features of the tower. It is to be made of good cement, with turrets and crenels ("faict de tres bon cymment, / A tourelle et a creneaulx", 4085f), be impenetrable, mighty and strong ("Imprenable, puissante et forte.", 4096) and have but one single door ("N’y faictez aussi q’une porte", 4097). As expressed by the courtier Laomedon, the tower is supposed to be a royal safeguard ("Le roy veult qu’elle soit moult plaisant, / Quar dedans sera repousant / Le precieux tresor royal" 4090-4092), which is in fact a golden cage to all intents and purposes. In much the same way as in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Dioscorus returns to the building site at a later stage with an additional request. In 4792ff Dioscorus asks after the progress of the building and he also tells the craftsmen to add a bathing facility (11) to the tower because his daughter cannot visit a public bath due to her vow of chastity:

Quar elle a voué a tousjours
Aux dieux chasteté flourie,
Dont mon amé est resjoyé.
Je vueil que dedans ceste tour
Riche, puissant, de bel atour,
Vous luy faciéz une sisterne
De fin marbre d’assés grant cerne,
6. The Tower

Appelle ung lavouer
Ou autrement ung baignouer.
Quand elle aura affection
A prendre recréacion,
El se baignera la dedans
A son privé, sans quelles gens,
A son aisé, a ses despors.
(4802-4815)

In contrast to *cinq journées, deux journées* is very concise with regard to the description of the tower:

Gallans, sachez pour quel raison
Je vous mande ceste saison.
Il vous faut faire une tour:
Grande, haulte, de bel atour.
Qu’elle me soit tresbien muree,
Bien massonnee et bien paree.
Je vous diray, sans plus d’eslongne,
Trestut le fait de ma besongne.
Beaux seigneurs, ainsi je devise:
Qu’elle me sera icy assise.
Icy aura une fenestre,
Affin du jour appaoroistre.
Vous ferés une arbalestriere
De ceste costé pour estre clere,
Qu’elle me soit haulte et bien faicte.
(503-517)

The tower should be great, high and prettily decorated but also well bricked and masoned. The king seems to show the craftsmen a site where the tower is to be built (“Qu’elle me sera icy assise”, 512) and instructs them to make one window facing east as well as another opening, which he calls an “arbalestriere”. This describes an opening in the wall that forms part of a building’s defensive mechanism and thus is not actually a window at all. The king does not emphasise that there are to be but two windows as he does in *cinq journées*. He simply states that if the tower will be perfect, he will pay the craftsmen (“Et quant la tour sera parfaicte, / Je vous payray a voz plaisirs”, 518f).
6. The Tower

In An Buhez, Dioscorus introduces the craftsmen to his plans once they have arrived: “[...] / You will arrange a complete, magnificent tower, designed according to my taste / – if it pleases you! since you have all come – / and it is necessary that you will build it for me” (‘Un tour fournis flam dam guis deuifet / Mar plig guenoch entroch på edouch duet / A ordrenhet ha ret en gruehet diff’, 55). Dioscorus does not specify what the tower is to look like at this point. The master worker seems to have some ideas with regard to the design and shows himself to be interested in the building project. Upon his arrival, he immediately asks about “the material and the layout / the position, the place, the space and the fashion” (‘An materi hac an diuifion / An lech an placc an spacc hac an faczon’, 54). In contrast to the French plays on the one hand and to the king’s statement above on the other, it is the master worker rather than the king who gives the details of the appearance of the tower and thus suggests the king’s “taste”:

[57] Meray hoz tour cazar ha flour ha fournis
En termen bref bras ha creff doz deus
Gent heb fentis ma ampris fo en guiffe
Hep fellell tro me labouro douz grat
Hat aray felaer pep queueur mecher mat
Heruez e flat en houz grat da pat re.

I will make your beautiful and smooth and complete tower / in a short time, great and strong, to your liking / beautiful without feint. My plan is thus: / Without any failure I will work to your will / and I will clearly make a good work in every respect / according to your will with regard to its character and (I will make it) to last long. ///

While Dioscorus does not yet seem to have all too specific ideas with regard to the design of the tower, he presents himself as a good owner in the following stanzas. This will be discussed in more detail in section 6.1.1.

Unsurprisingly, cinq journées is the wordiest version, while deux journées has Dioscorus mostly stripped of civilities and lengthy speeches in order to get to the point immediately. Despite the fact that the description of the tower is provided by different characters in the respective plays (Dioscorus in the two French plays and the master worker in the Breton play), the contents of these descriptions are very similar. In cinq journées, the tower is to be “haulte”, without any “deffaulte”, “du tout en tout complete” (4042-4044) and possibly “Riche, puis sant, de bel atour”27 (4806). In deux journées, it is to be “Grande, haulte, de bel atour”, “tres bien muree”, “bien massonnee” and “bien paree” (506-508). An Buhez mirrors both plays and

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27It is not entirely clear whether this line refers to the tower or the bath, but I suppose the former.
6. The Tower

describes it as “magnificent” (‘flam’), “beautiful” (‘cazr, gent’), “smooth” (‘flour’), “complete” (‘fournis’), “great” (‘bras’), “strong” (‘creff’), “designed according to Dioscorus’ taste” (‘dam guis deuiset, doz deuis’) and made “to last long” (‘da pat re’; 55, 57). The French word for tower, “tour”, is borrowed into the Breton version as well. It frequently rhymes internally with “flour” (‘smooth’) and “fournis” (‘complete’). Even though the two French plays differ considerably, there is one detail that is strikingly similar. During the respective main scenes involving the tower and its description there is an almost identical couplet that might suggest a relation between the two plays. The rhyme is between “tour” and “atour” (embellishment):

_cinq journées:_

Je vous faiz cy faire une tour
Forte, haulte et de [be]l atour
(4106f)

deux journées:

Il vous fault fairé une tour:
Grande, haulte, de bel atour.
(505f)

The couplet appears to have been used in _An Buhez_, too, but it was adapted:

_Dioscorus:_

[55] […]
Un tour fournis flam dam guis deuifet
Mar plig guenoch entroch pà edouch duet
A ordrenhet ha ret en gruehet diff.

_Dioscorus:_ / […] / You will arrange a complete, magnificent tower, designed according to my taste / – if it pleases you! since you have all come – / and it is necessary that you will organise it for me. //

In the Breton version, the original couplet was extended by an additional verse that serves the single purpose of satisfying the Breton rhyme scheme. Disregarding this verse leaves us with basically the same content as in the French couplets. A rhyme similar to the French version is employed (Breton: tour fournis, French: tour – atour), but as an internal rhyme rather than an end rhyme. It is used in addition to the required internal rhyme between the penultimate syllable of the verse and the syllable before the caesura of the verse. It is thus not required by the rhyme scheme but is an additional feature, which serves to further the already complex Breton
6. The Tower

Although the French couplets are very similar, the Breton version appears to be slightly closer to *cinq journées*. While *deux journées* has Dioscorus state that “Il vous faut faire une tour” (505), *cinq journées* uses “Je vous faiz cy faire une tour” (4106), thus putting Dioscorus and his wishes a bit more into focus. *An Buhez* does the same by using “designed according to my taste” (‘dam guis deuiset’) and “you will organise it for me” (‘ret en gruehet diff’).

6.1. The Craftsmen and the Building Process

The *Legenda Aurea* neither offers any character traits of the craftsmen, nor does it give details of the building process. While such details are touched upon in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, the legend’s focus is clearly not on the work process or the people who perform it. Stonemasons and -sculptors are mentioned during the description in the beginning when the king sends messengers to find craftsmen.

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

Towards the end of the episode, when Dioscorus is ordered to attend the emperor and thus has to leave the building site, he leaves masters in charge.

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

In the plays, the building of the tower and the craftsmen’s appearances form an integral part of the action on stage. Nevertheless, they are treated with different degrees of detail. *An Buhez* has the largest number of characters involved in building the tower. There is one master (an mestr), who is initially accompanied by three workers (an quentaff mecherour, an eil mecherour, an trede mecherour). The group is later joined by two additional building assistants (an quentaff darbareur, an eil darbareur). The French plays each have but two masons. In *cinq journées* they are named Gandeloche “premier maczon/primus lathomus” (3492/3493 & 3977/3978) and

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28 In *deux journées*, lines 672-677 are spoken by “Le .ii. masson”, but there are only two masons listed among the “personnaiges” of the play. Furthermore, in the later edition on the right hand side (Longtin edits two versions next to each other), the same text is spoken by “Le .ii. masson” (Longtin 1996, 66).
6. The Tower

Murgault/Murgalant²⁹ “secund maczon/secundus lathomus” (3500/3501 & 3978/3979). They seem to be young, as they are addressed as “jeunes Gallans” (4792), and inexperienced, as the tower is their first project (“Ce sera noustre premier euvre” (4914)). Nevertheless they appear to be very motivated to create beautiful buildings, as Murgault remarks wistfully that beautiful and strong castles are no longer being built: “On ne fait plus nulz telz chasteaulx / Si fermes, si lors ne si beaulx / Comme on souloit faire jadis” (3993-3995). In *deux journées* the characters are simply called “le premier masson” and “le second masson”. They have hardly any text, but it becomes clear that they will not refuse a direct request of their king, not least because of the financial benefit involved:

Le premier masson
Sire, depuis qu’il le commande,
De luy obeir, c’est bien raison.
[...]
Le second masson
Faitse luy sera promptement,
Mais qu’il baillë or et argent;
Oncque ne veit plus diligent
Que je suis quant je voy monnoye.
Quant je la tiens j’ay si grant joye.
Le roy en a une grant somme.
(484-495)

What all three plays have in common is the disposition to hear the king’s request, which is combined with a preoccupation with earning money. While the workers in *An Buhez* are introduced discussing merrily how to spend their wages and praising their master for being a reliable paymaster as well (42-48), the two masons in *cinq journées* begin by describing how the masons from Flanders to Burgundy are suffering from the same problem, namely not making enough money (“Tant en Flandre comme en Bourgogne, / les massons ne gaignent plus rien”, 3982f). According to Longtin, the entrance of the masons serves a double purpose. It is surely designed to make the spectators laugh, but it also provides a link with the everyday worries of the people attending the performance (Longtin 2003, 7). In both *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* the king’s messenger arrives during the craftsmen’s conversation. The messenger’s

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²⁹Both variations of the name occur throughout the play, but there is no indication that they are different characters. When a character speaks for the first time, he/she is usually introduced either by the note “Primo” next to their name, or by a description of their function, e.g. “primus lathomus”. Neither occurs when Murgalant appears for the first time. According to Longtin 2003 (17), a line spoken by Barbara resolves the problem: “Aller querir ses deux massons” (10640).
interruption is particularly nicely integrated into the context in *cinq journées*. Murgault has just posed a general question as to where the masons might find well-paid work, when Lancevant, the messenger, enters to offer that very opportunity:

MURGAULT:

[...]
Que trouveré de la besongne
Pour y employer ma charongne
Et gaigner comme ung bon gallant?

LANCEVANT
Cza! Gandeloche et Murgalant,
Il vous fault venir avec moy
Parler a nostre puissant roy
Et aportéz tous vozoustilz.
(4007-4013)

*An Buhez* does not include such a potentially humorous transition. There, the workers have just finished praising their master as reliable, when the king’s messenger arrives:

An mecherouryen.

[42] Demp feder da ober cher mat
Rac dre hòn queux en ôn neux gloat
Hac ezeu hòn flat ebataff
[...]

[43] Ha huyray diffrae pa ho paeaff
Er memeux hoant creffda eua
Rac fe demp scaff hep tardaff quet
Dilacc faczun da duuniff
Un fouben dren pebr a dibriff
Hac ez euiff pan guiliff pret
[...]

An eil mecherour.

[44] Raefon en guer a leueret
Ny aray diffrae pan paet
Hennez fo deelit da quentaff
6. *The Tower*

Pa on eux labouret competent
En on feruig ha diligent
Ezeu feant hon contantaff.

**An trede mecherour.**

[45] Hau hau
Ret on be glat hep debataff
Rac biziquen ne louenhaff
Quen na- uezaff nê nachaff quet
Paeet net ha coutantet plen
Goude ma labour hâ fourpren
Rac hon termen fo tremenet.

**An mefr.**

[46] [...]  
Ha rac fe ezouff duet feder
Guenech aman e pep manyer
Euit reiff dich fcler dinerou.

[47] Rac touchant an paemantou
Ne caraf quet drez guelet gnou
Diouz hoz dellidou en louen
Bout rebellant ouz contantaff
Quent fe pepret on hoz tretaaff
Guelhaff maz gallaff neraf quë

**An eil mecherour.**

[48] Guir a leueret a fet ple
Houz quen iolis ne guilis den
Da derchell certen termen mat
[...]

*Aman ez arriff meffager Dioscorus
da comp ozz v'n mefr mecherour.*

The workers: / Let us go, surely, to make merry / because for our pains we have
6. The Tower

money / and now our occupation is to enjoy ourselves. / […] // And you will hurry because I pay you / for I have a strong wish to drink. / Therefore, let us go quickly without delay / soon entirely to lunch. / I will eat a peppersoup / and I drink when I see that it is time. / […] //
The other worker: / Reasonable is the word that you speak / we will do (it) quickly when you pay / this is necessary first of all / because we have worked reasonably / in our working hours and diligently; / it is seemly to satisfy us. //
The third worker: / We would necessarily have money without dispute / because I am never content/happy / before I am not – I don’t deny it – / really paid and satisfied completely / after my work and the pain / because our contract is fulfilled. //
The master: / […] / And therefore I have surely come / with you here in every way / in order to give you, clearly, money. // Therefore, on the subject of payments / I do not like, as you obviously see / with regard to your meriting merrily, / to be the one who resists to pay / Rather, I always treat you / as best I can, I do nothing else. //
The other worker: / True, you speak fully true / I never saw anyone so good as you / to keep, surely, a date well. / […] //
Now arrives the messenger of Dioscorus / in order to speak to a master worker.

The workers appear to have just finished a project. Their comments present them as reasonably hard workers who feel that they have now earned it to “make merry” and enjoy themselves (42). Coupled with their plans for lunch and “a strong wish to drink” (43), a certain light-heartedness within the scene is created. Still the question of a reliable income is addressed immediately and at some length, too. The master in particular emphasises his reliability. The topics differ slightly in cinq journées. While the workers in An Buhez are concerned with spending their latest wages and praising their master for his reliability, the masons in cinq journées complain about the general situation of masons and how difficult it is to find well-paid work on interesting buildings. However, the combination of a light tone with a certain worry as to the earning of money is employed in both An Buhez and cinq journées:

GANDELOCHE (primus lathomus.)
Comment se porte la besongne
Des massons?
MURGAULT (secundus lathomus.)
S’il ne font plus rien
En droit vous, sans quelque vergongne,
Comment se porte la besongne?

GANDELOCHE
Tant en Flandres comme en Bourgongne,
Les massons ne gaignent plus rien.

MURGAULT
Je répondrai: « Quiconque en grongne »
S’aucun me demande: «Sa, vien,
Comment se porte la besongne
Des massons? Ne font il plus rien?»

GANDELOCHE
Quant est de moy, je croy et tien
Que nos maistiers et industrie
Resemblent un ny de pye.

MURGAULT
Pour quoy?

GANDELOCHE
Il est mis au plus hault.

MURGAULT
Je ne sçay pas bien que ce vault.

(3978-3992)

The light tone is created by a combination of different stylistic features. The masons have a conversation in which the same words and phrases are combined and recombined in order to create a rhythm and puns. The form is analogous to a popular verse-form of Medieval and Renaissance France, the “rondeau”. It has its origins in dancing and singing and thus introduces a recognisable rhythm and a certain movement into the scene (Longtin 2003, 7; Dominguez-Vignaud 1996, 61; cf. Gleason 1954, 96). The pun at the end about the high quality and standard of the masons’ work serves to underline this impression. This, then, is counterbalanced by the contents of the masons’ text, which is slightly darker, for they continually complain about their problems of not finding worthwhile work that offers a good income.

With regard to the actual construction of the tower, there is again no significant information given in either the Legenda Aurea, or in deux journées. The latter provides some very basic information and places that in a stage direction without any spoken reference to the action by any of the actors involved: “Tunc faciant turrim et fenestras quo adusque Barbara veniat ad ipsos (533/534)”. No tools, materials or work processes are mentioned in either of the two versions. John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia provides a few more details, for example the information
that the craftsmen begin their work in some haste, that the stonemasons sharpen their tools before taking up their work, that a foundation is laid, and that a tower is raised:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

Certain elements of the setting, that is tools, stone workers, laying a foundation and the raising of the tower, are clearly discernible in the plays. They are, however, much more elaborate than John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia. In cinq journées, stage directions indicate the building of the tower and the presence of certain building-related props (stones, materials, and limestone) on stage: “Dicant operando; et in ludo habeant lapides et materiam et calcem et semper operantur” (4118/4119). The building appears to take some time because the fool has enough time to act during the masons’ work, again made clear by a stage direction: “Operantur semper et stultus loquitur” (4875/4876). In addition to this, the masons refer to tools, e.g. “relet” (precise meaning is unclear), “truele” (‘trowel’, 4783), marteau (‘hammer’, 4894), and materials, e.g. “cyment” (‘cement’, 4784), “pierrès” (‘stones’, 4785), “mortier” (‘mortar’, 4786), as well as work processes, e.g. “decoustre sa semelle” (‘detach this foundation plate’, 4788), “Trouvons le fons de la tourelle / Pour y assoir le fondement” (‘find the base for the tower in order to lay the foundation there’, 4790f), “noustre pierre est taillée” (‘our stone is cut’, 4795), “Tout est fait par geometrie” (‘everything has been made according to geometry’, 4892). They also complain about the hardship of the work: “Le doz me deult et la vesie, / J’ay ja les rains tous travailléz”, (4119f), but nevertheless continue to banter and pun, thus maintaining the light tone associated with them earlier:

GANDELOCHE
Je n’ay plus couraige qui plaie:
Ces pierres sont de dure roche
Et moult plus dures que une souche.
Je n’ay mais ouvrage qui plaist.
Veéz que d’esclaz!

MURGAULT
Ho! ho! qu’on se taist!
6. *The Tower*

Et qu’esse a dire, Gandeloche?
Esse voustre martel qui loche
Dedans le manche?
   GANDELOCHE
Je me poise:
Je n’ay mes ouvrage qui plaise,
Ces pierres sont de dure roche.
J’ay tant de mal en ma caboche
Du soleil que c’est grant destresse!
Hay! hay! hy! fy!
   MURGAULT
De hors, jeunesse!
Quel roussigneul en chambre a dammes!
Hay! hay! hay! quel villain infames!
Qu’il vient de maulx après enfance!
(4137-5152)

The impression of the masons being humourous characters is strengthened farther when Dioscorus comes to the building site and offers them money for a drink (“dix francs pour boire”, 4846). Then, they spend an equal amount of lines on their plans for filling their bellies with food and drink as they have earlier spent on describing their work.

In *An Buhez*, the construction of the tower begins with the master and Dioscorus discussing what kinds of material will be needed and how to make sure that the building process will not come to a standstill:

   An meftr mecherour.
   [58] An quent[a]ff pret ezeu ret credet fe
    Caffout daffar me a goar an doare
    Rac hôn dale en fe ne falhe quet
    Ha mein ha coat a pep hat en flat man
    So ret detri on be ny rac muy poan
    Guitebunan pe effemp glan manet.

   Dioscorus.
   [59] Hoz holl daffar naret mar preparet
    A pep danffuez yuez diafezet
    Breff aqueffet noz em doubtet quet tam
6. The Tower

Ha glas ha fech oar an lec na nechet
Gant calz a mis dre ampris deuijet
Ameux affet daftumet ahet cam.

The master: / First of all it is necessary, believe it!, / to find material, I know the
way / because our schedule in this may not fail. / Stones and wood of every kind,
at this point / are very necessary, that we would have (them) before further effort
/ or all of us might be truly stuck. //
Dioscorus: / All your materials prepared, do not doubt, / also compounds of all
materials / shortly you will find, do not doubt one bit, / green and dry (wood), on
the (construction-)site, do not be distressed, / with a lot of effort because of the
careful plan / I have indeed developed bit by bit. //

Both characters are here presented as competent with regard to their respective roles. The
master clearly states the requirements of a building project, while Dioscorus seems to have
anticipated the master’s needs and immediately presents him with answers to his requests.
They proceed to inspect the building site together. The discussion continues in the same vein
with Dioscorus as a well prepared and well informed owner and the master as a competent
manager. In order for the project to be successful, the master makes a last request of Dioscorus:

An mefr mecherour.
[63] […]
Hoguen heb chom dre ezom quent còmancc
Hon bezet creff heb bezaff breff cheuancc
Caffout financc pep chancc hon auanczhe.

Dioscorus
[64] Dalet archant paramant enn antre
Cza commancet moz pet labouret cre
[...]

The master: / [...] / But in order not to get stuck because of hardship before
beginning / we needs must have, in order not to be short (of money), wealth. /
Obtaining money would be in every way advantageous. //
Dioscorus: / Take the money in advance for the beginning. / Well! Begin, I ask
you, work hard! / [...] //

Afterwards, the master summons his workers to present them with the necessary incentive:
6. The Tower

An meifr.
[66] Ma tut deneffet ha gruet cher
Chetu archant contant antier
Leiz an gibicer dinerou
Roet douz paeaff n'en nachaff quet
Rac fe hep fellell traellet
Contantet vihet heb quet gou.

The master: My people, come near and be happy! / Voilà, perfect cash money.
/ The purse full of denarii / handed over to pay you, I do not deny it. / Work therefore, without failing! / You will be satisfied without any deceit. //

While this is a detail and may well be a coincidence and/or owing to the rhyme scheme, it is interesting to note the use of "dinerou", which is reminiscent of the Latin "denarius" mentioned in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia as a payment agreed upon by the workers (18, s.a.). After this distribution of cash, the master and the workers suggest different places to lay the foundation, begin to bring stones and finally start building the tower. As in cinq journées, there is a stage direction that indicates on the one hand that the action now moves to the building site, and on the other hand that there are materials for building a tower on stage: "Aman dioocorus aya da difícuez / dan meifr mecherour an lech / han dâffuez da ober an tour" (‘Here Disocorus goes to show / the master worker the place / and the material to build the tower’, 60/61). In addition to this, the characters refer to tools, e.g. in stanza 67: “binhuyou” (‘tools’), “scuezr” (‘square’), “reulen” (‘measuring rod’), “linennou” (‘plumb lines, cords’), “morzolou” (‘mallets, hammers’), “quifellou” (‘chisels’), “loaou plat” (‘trowels’), “pattrômou” (‘models’), and also to materials, e.g. “mein ha coat a pep hat” (‘stones and wood of every kind’, 58), “fram” (‘frame, framework’, 60), “raz” (‘lime’, 74), and building processes, e.g. “Euit guelet a caffet [...] an fondamant” (‘in order to see whether one might find [...] the foundation’, 70), “Dizou guet mein oar houz queniou [...] dre faezcon maczonet” (‘bring stones on yours necks [...] mason according to the rules’, 74). Again, as in cinq journées, the workers refer to the hardship of the work while the light tone employed earlier is maintained:

An quentaff darbareur.
[75] Me crog en vn men quen does,
Ma en douguy franc euit an goes
Pan dlehên gant an poes froeaff,
Nac int mar pôrher da merat
Me dhoug hep gou bechyou mat,
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Pan dlehên dan flat tizmat pladaff.

An eil darbareur.
[76] Houp hau hau,
Heman an fclaer en pônheraff
Ret eu difme piz difcuizaff,
Neb rout outaff ne allaff quet,
Hoguen arre me e[ss]aeo
Oar poes ma chouc amen dougo,
Oar vn dro pa emeux gourtoet.

An eil mecherour.
[77] Left hoz faffar ha darbaret,
Neret en certen tra en bet,
En effet nemet quaquetal.

An quentaфф darbareur.
Pe gounezet huy ouz crial,
Nac ober tourmant na scandal,
Pan dlehech farezal eualhên.

The first assistant builder: / I will hang on a stone so hard / that I will carry it freely despite pain / even if I would break down with the weight. / However heavy they may be to handle / I will carry good loads, without deceit, / even if I would be flattened immediately, right away. //
The second assistant builder: / Heave-ho! / This one is clearly the heaviest. / It is necessary for me to work hard / I stand no chance against it! / But I will try again / on my neck; and I will carry it / at once, because I have dawdled. //
The second worker: / Stop your noise and help the masons / surely you do not do anything in the world / indeed, except you cackle. /
The first assistant builder: / What do you gain from crying / and from making riot and noise / if you think you need to mess around in such a way. //

As becomes clear from the above descriptions of An Buhez and cinq journées, the building process in the two plays is designed very similarly. In both plays the building process takes place while being commented upon and explained by the craftsmen. It is them that create the humouristic tone of the scene. There is one detail that merits a closer look. The conversation
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quoted above takes place shortly before the action of *An Buhez* moves on to a different topic. The first assistant builder asks the others why they find it necessary to mess about (“farezal”, 77) like this. While the workers’ preceding remarks are undoubtedly humorous, their text alone does not necessarily indicate humour. “Farezal” might be translated as “cracking jokes” as well, but again the preceding text does not provide an example. However, there is a joke in *cinq journées* shortly before the end of the first day, entailing a change of topic. Like the workers in *An Buhez*, who are complaining about the heaviness of the stones they need to carry, Gandeloch is complaining about the hardness of the stones he needs to cut. Murgault mocks him with a pun about his hammer having gone soft on the inside of his shaft, which is of course a bawdy joke:

GANDELOCHE
Je n’ay plus couraige qui plaise:  
Ces pierres sont de dure roche  
Et moult plus dures que une souche.  
Je n’ay mais ouvraille qui plaist.  
Veéz que d’esclaz!

MURGAULT
Ho! ho! qu’on se taist!  
Et qu’esse a dire, Gandeloch?  
Esse voustre martel qui loche  
Dedans le manche?

GANDELOCHE
Je me poise:  
Je n’ay mes ouvraille qui plaist,  
Ces pierres sont de dure roche.  
J’ay tant de mal en ma cabocche  
Du solleil que c’est grant destresse!  
Hay! hay! hy! fy!

(4137-4148)

Moreover, Gandeloch ends his complaint with “Veéz que d’esclaz!” (4141), which could be translated as “Look here, what noise”. This idea of noise appears in *An Buhez* as well when the first assistant builder asks in stanza 77: “What do you gain from crying / and from making riot and noise” (“Pe gounezet huy ouz crial, / Nac ober tourmant na fscandal’). While *An Buhez* is not a direct translation of *cinq journées* in this case, it one of many strikingly similar details
pointing towards a close relationship between the two texts.

Taking a closer look at the topics discussed by the craftsmen also shows considerable similarity. Both sets of craftsmen are continuously worried about their income and glad to have found such a large project, for example. In addition to this, both plays include a situation in which the craftsmen go for a drink. Although the timing is different, the action is very similar. Moreover, the situation in An Buhez is slightly strange; if it were a translation, however, it would make much more sense.

Dioscorus [to his messenger]
[41] [...]  
Memeux archant presant do contantaff  
Gae ho paeaff aménaaff quentaff pret:

An mecherourneyen.
[42] Demp feder da ober cher mat  
Rac dre hón queux en ôn neux gloat  
Hac ezeu hón flat ebataff  
Meroy dich oar an guin financc  
Hep bezaff breff na deceuancc  
Am cheuanc en hoz auanciff.

[43] Ha huyray difrae pa ho paeaff  
Er memeux hoant creffda euà  
Rac fe demp scaff hep tardaff quet  
Dilacc faczun da duuniff  
Un fouben dren pebr a dibriff  
Hac ez euiff pan guiliff pret

An eil mecherour.  
[44] Raefon en guer a leueret  
Ny aray difrae pan paet  
[...]

Dioscorus [to his messenger]: / [...] / I have cash (in order) to satisfy them / I merrily want to pay them, first and foremost.  
The workers: / Let us go, surely, to make merry / because for our pains we have money / and our occupation is to enjoy ourselves. / I will give you money on top of
the wine / of my wealth I will advance you (money). // And you will hurry because I pay you / for I have a strong wish to drink. / Therefore, let us go quickly without delay / soon entirely to lunch. / I will eat a peppersoup / and I drink when I see that it is time. //

The other worker: / Reasonable is the word that you speak / we will do (it) quickly when you pay / [...]. //

As has been discussed above, this is where the workers appear for the first time in *An Buhez*. Within the play it seems that the workers have received payment for their recent work and are now making plans to spend their wages. Dioscorus’ instructions to his messenger ending with his plans to pay his future workers well may simply serve as a good point of transition from one action to the next. However, there is an intriguingly similar scene in *cinq journées*:

**DYOSCORUS**

[...]

Tenéz, voy cy dix francs pour boire, C’est le vin pour les compagnons!

**Pausa. Recedat Dyoscorus ad palacium suum.**

**GANDELOCHE**

Puis que deniers nous empongnons,
Nous yrons prendre le piot.

**MURGAULT**

De meilleur cueur besongnerons,
Puis que deniers nous empongnons.

**GANDELOCHE**

Fy de pain, d’aulx, aussi d’ongnons! 
Du meilleur buvons a plain pot! 
Puis que deniers nous empongnons, 
Nous yrons prendre le piot.

**MURGAULT**

Qui vieult estre de nostre escot, 
Vienne quand et nous desjeunéz. 
Je ne pouroyé plus jeunéz. 
Il nous faut garnir noz boyaux. 
Aprés noz maulx et noz travaux,
Here, Dioscorus gives his masons drinking money. After having received the money, the masons immediately begin to make plans what to do with it. In addition to drinking, they also plan to eat well with it, for they profess themselves glad to have something other than bread, water and onions. They do no longer wish to fast and plan to “garnish their guts” after their hardship and work (4859f). According to Le Berre, the masons, who have been paid in advance “décident de faire ripaille avant de se mettre au travail (alors que les «Bretons» débattent grave-ment l’organisation du chantier)” (Le Berre 2012, 157). What Le Berre fails to perceive is that the masons have at that time already been working on the tower for a while and thus are neither paid in advance and instead receive a kind of tip, nor do they need to discuss the layout of the building site, for their work has begun long since. Moreover, the introductory scene of the Breton workers in fact mirrors the French play quite closely with regard to contents as well as to the expressions employed. For example, the beginning of An Buhez “Demp feder da ober cher mat / Rac dre hón queux en ôn neux gloat / Hac ezeu hón flat ebataff” mirrors the idea of cinq journées “De meilleur cœur besongnerons / Puis que deniers nous empongnons.” The expressions “ober cher mat” and “de meilleur cœur” can both carry the meaning of “merry-making”. The French word “besogner” means “to need something” as well as “to work, to act, to accomplish a task” (cf. Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012). The Breton word “stat” is even more ambiguous and in this case is used to describe the situation of the workers. While they usually have an occupation that requires them “to accomplish a task, to work” (cf. Hemon 1979), they now have the opportunity and feel the need to spend money and enjoy themselves. The aspect of having money for their pains (“Rac dre hón queux en ôn neux gloat”) is not expressed in precisely the same way in cinq journées, but both parts are present in separate sentences. The novelty of having some money to spend is the central point of the masons’ whole conversation and is underlined by the frequent repetition of the sentence “Puis que deniers nous empongnons”. While they do not state exactly that they have money for their pains, Murgault says that it is now necessary for them to “garnish their guts” – using the money they have just received – after their troubles and their work (“Il nous fault garnir noz boyaulx. / Après noz maux et noz travaux”, 4859f). What is most striking about the Breton text, however, is the lack of clarity with regard to the speaker of the first part of the workers’ conversation (42ff). The line indicating the speaker reads “An mecherouryen” (‘the workers’) in the plural. Therefore it is unclear which of the workers is speaking the text or whether they all spoke at once, or whether each actor spoke one or two lines in turn. As the next speaker is denoted “an eil mecherour” (‘the other/second worker’, 44), and as this is the workers’ first
appearance on stage, it would be reasonable to assume that the text of stanzas 42-43 – or part of it at least – is meant to be spoken by the first worker (‘an quenaff mecherour’). This raises the question why the first worker, directly after having stated that they will now have money for their pains, is offering to give them money on top of the wine and to advance them money from his own wealth (verses 4-6, 42). If all workers have indeed just been paid, it would be unnecessary, as they would all have some money. Furthermore, wine has not been mentioned at all so far. The speaker could be buying the others drinks, but in this case the verb “avanczaff” would be a strange choice, as it carries a distinct connotation of expecting something back or in return, possibly from a different source. It is also interesting to note that there is an inconsistency of the rhyme scheme in stanza 42: “auanciff” ought to be “auancaff”. The main internal rhyme of the verse is correct, however, which suggests that the triplet does indeed belong together. The end rhymes of stanzas 41 and 43 suggest that the proper rhyme should indeed have been -aff. While it is always possible that such inconsistencies are due to a mistake by the typesetter, this explanation is unlikely in this case. Firstly because “i” and “a” are not among the letters that are very frequently mixed up (like “u” and “n” for example), and secondly because such inconsistencies are frequent and very likely deliberate deviations from the rhyme scheme. They are often employed to highlight a certain aspect of the text or the performance, such as a change of speaker (3). In this case, the inconsistency indicates that the author explicitly wanted to use the first person singular present indicative (“auanciff”) rather than find a workaround that would fit the rhyme scheme but possibly not convey the agent in the same way. This makes the question as to who is actually saying those lines all the more interesting. I suggest that only the first three lines of stanza 42 are spoken by the first worker, although a future form in the second line, i.e. “we will have money for our pains” would have been preferable in order to clarify the situation. However, this would have been more difficult to fit into the Breton rhyme scheme. Lines 4-6 suggest that the workers have only been promised wages, but have not received them yet. Still, it makes no sense for the first worker to promise the others wine on top of their wages and advance them money from his own funds. Such a distribution of wages and bonuses can be expected from the master, however, and in a later part of the conversation the master does indeed tell the workers that he will give them money (“Ha rac fe ezouff duet feder / Guenech aman e pep manyer / Euit reiff dich fclaeir dinerou // – And therefore I have surely come / with you here in every way / in order to give you, clearly, money”, 46). Thus, lines 4-6 of stanza 42 may well have been spoken by the master rather than by one of the workers. If this was indeed the case, then stanza 43 should probably be attributed to the master, as well, for it continues in much the same way: “you will hurry because I pay you” (‘huayray diffrae pa ho paaff’, 43). Theoretically, the second half of stanza 42 and stanza 43 could also be attributed to Dioscorus, for he is the one that will pay the workers eventually.
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If this were the case, he would be telling them that he gives them money on top of wine, or possibly for wine, that he will neither offer them short wages nor be deceptive, that he will give them money in advance, and that they will pay them in order to make them work faster, to make them build his tower more quickly. This is, however, problematic, because Dioscorus has not met the workers yet – the master approaches him in his palace about ten stanzas later. Moreover, the first three lines of stanza 42 would have to be spoken by one of the workers (or possibly the master) after all, as they would make no sense at all coming from Dioscorus. Thus, the action has clearly left the king’s palace for the moment. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to note that there is some room for interpretation with regard to the speaker at this point. The comparison with *cinq journées* has made it clear that the gist of the craftsmen’s conversation is the same in both plays. They emphasise their wish for a drink, discuss options for food and consider such a reward proper due to their previous efforts. The only thing that is noticeably different in *cinq journées* is that Dioscorus gives the masons drinking money, an action that is not portrayed in *An Buhez*. Hence, it is at least worth considering whether the three lines about wine being offered on top of the wages and money to be advanced from someone’s own wealth might reflect precisely that drinking money from *cinq journées*.

Even though the craftsmen in *An Buhez* are called “mecherour” (worker) rather than “lathomus” (mason), the tasks they perform in both plays are that of a mason. They work with the stones needed for the tower. In *An Buhez* the master asks the workers to carry stones and lime upon their backs (“Dizou guet mein oar houz queniou”), to mason, to make use of the yardstick and to bring everything in line (“dre faeczon maczonet, / Diouz an reulèn ha linnennet”, 74). They obey “despite pain” (“euit an goes”, 75) and as the third worker has professed in stanza 68, there is no man wiser than him with regard to making a decent wall if the materials are true (“Na da ober vn moguer plen / Mar be an matery dien / Ne caffech vn den ma quen fur”). In *cinq journées* the masons seem to cut the stones but nevertheless hurt their backs due to the hard work. When Gandelophe complains that his back hurts (“Le doz me deult”, 4125), Murgault recommends to kneel down (“Beau Frere, ou vous a genouillée, / Vous en besongneréez plus aise!”, 4127f), which in combination with Murgalant’s earlier command “Sus! Sus! tailléz!” (‘Come on cut’, 4124) and Gandelophe’s later comment “noustre pierre est taillee” (‘our stone is cut’, 4795) makes clear that they are at that point cutting stones. They are probably trimming the stones rather than cutting them from the rock, firstly because it is more likely that the former can be done while kneeling and secondly because this would be easier to act out on a stage (except if that stage was located in a quarry). Both teams of craftsmen are looking for a place to lay the tower’s foundation. In *cinq journées* this new aspect is introduced by Gandelophe when he cuts the foundation plate:
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GANDELOCHE
Plus qu’a descoustre sa semelle!
MURGAULT
Sa, des pierres!
GANDELOCHE
Sa, du mortier!
MURGAULT
Sa, mon relet et ma truelle!
Trouvons le fons de la tourelle
Pour y assoir le fondement.
(4787-4791)

An Buhez employs the same notion of finding the foundation, but the situation is more similar to a contest. This underlines the impression of the process of laying the foundation to be regarded as guesswork rather than science:

An eil mecherour.
[70] Cleuet huy ma opinion
Heruez ma estimation
Me caffe raefon confonant
Ez torret aman buhan flam
Euit guelet a caffet tam
Rac non be blaman fondamant.

An trede mecherour.
[71] Ha me preder dän atferant
Effe vn termen auenant
Dam entendamant feblantet
Ez claçcuemp aman dre manyer
An fondamant coant hac antier
Drezeu em esper prederet.

An Mestr.
[72] Ha ha,
Ret ve ez ve prim estimet,
Hac aman gentil compilet,
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Mufuret ha diuifet mat,
[...]

The second worker: / Hear my opinion! / According to my assessment / I would find good reason / that one would dig here at once / in order to see whether one might find somehow, / so that we can not be blamed, the foundation. //
The third worker: / And I think on the contrary / it would be a good thing / to my understanding, it would seem / that we search here, anyway, / the pretty and complete foundation / so it is thought in my mind. //
The master: / Ha ha, / it would be necessary that it would be quickly estimated / and arranged here carefully / measured and divided well! / [...] //

Of course, the team in both plays successfully lays a foundation in the end and builds a tower.

6.1.1. Correspondence to Reality

Despite manifold similarities, particularly between An Buhez and cinq journées, there is something unique and thus most striking about the tower scene in An Buhez in comparison to the other texts. While the Latin versions do not offer much detail with regard to the craftsmen or the building process, the two French plays respectively depict two masons building the tower. As Longtin points out, cinq journées is the only play to provide the craftsmen with names. Moreover, he explains that the craftsmen’s purpose is not merely to make the audience laugh. They provide an opportunity for the audience to relate to the characters within the play and offer “en quelques répliques un condensé de vie propre à capter l’attention du public” (Longtin 2003, 4-5). He bases this analysis on the topics the craftsmen discuss and links it to their introduction which takes place even before they are sought out by the king’s messenger. Apart from the names all this is the same in An Buhez. In a way, the Breton play heightens this impression of authenticity by introducing a crew of first three and then five workers which is led by a master. This comes even closer to a situation taken from real life, for any major building operation was usually supervised by a master-builder (Binding 2014, 29).

In contrast to cinq journées and An Buhez, deux journées does not give many details with regard to the building of the tower. It has also been demonstrated that cinq journées and An Buhez show the greatest level of overlap with regard to both contents and style. The exception is the bathhouse, which appears only in the Latin versions and in cinq journées, but even in this case the structure in An Buhez and cinq journées remains similar. Even though An Buhez is significantly shorter than cinq journées, almost every action and subject pertaining to the craftsmen appears in both plays. Therefore, the amount of space dedicated to the tower episode
in *An Buhez* clearly exceeds that of the other plays. It takes up about five percent of the entire action of the Breton play, while in *deux journées* it is only about two percent and in *cinq journées* only one and a half percent. It appears that the tower scene was considered to be of some importance to the author, the actors, and/or the audience of the play.

The staging of a play in medieval France involved an entire town. According to Runnalls, “the large-scale plays were mounted by a town, or rather by its local administrators” (Runnalls 1998, 67) and “almost all the workers and artisans of a town could be called upon to provide goods and/or service for the spectacle” (Runnalls 1998, 73). Building the theatre and stage fell to “the artisans and the working classes” of the respective town. Due to the fact that there were hardly any professional actors at all during the Middle Ages, “[a] play was acted mostly by the middle classes” and “the main roles in mystery plays were often taken by priests or other types of churchmen; it was obviously appropriate that such men should play the roles of Christ, or God the Father, or the Apostles, or a saint” (Runnalls 1998, 75; see also 2). It is only logical to assume that other roles would also have been taken by such people whose business was closest to the one portrayed on stage. There is no reason to assume that staging a play was handled differently in Brittany. It is therefore likely that the episode in which the building of the tower begins is mirroring the involvement of the town’s builders in the staging of the play. Firstly, they may well have contributed by building the stage and stage equipment needed for the play. Secondly, it is certainly possible as well as quite plausible that they would have been the ones to take the roles of the craftsmen within the play. They would have their costumes, which were customarily provided by the actors themselves (Runnalls 1998, 76), ready made and could even use their own tools as props. It becomes clear from the text that certain tools must indeed have been on stage:

An quentauff mecherour.
[67] Memeux nendeux fy binhuyou
Scuezr ha reulën ha linennou
Ha morzolou ha loaou plat
Ha hoaz emeux guell quifellou
Mar bez ezom ha patrômou
Pan eux dinerou dezrou mat.

The first worker: / I have, there is no doubt, tools, / a square and a measuring
rod and cords / and mallets and trowels / and I also have better chisels / – if needs
be – and models / because there are bonuses. //

As Runnalls points out, it was at times difficult to distinguish between actors and audience,
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because in medieval theatre they were the same. Actors would get discounts on the entrance fee, which made acting all the more attractive. They would then sit in their allotted seats and watch the play until it became time for them to appear on stage in their turn (Runnalls 1998, 81). Bearing this in mind, stanza 68 does not only sound like the description of one of the workers within the play, but may well be an advertisement for the actor’s qualities outside the play:

An trede mecherour.
[68] Eguit ober vn mecher mat
Pan vez an daffar hegarat
En pep flat dam grat ha natur
Na da ober vn moguer plen
Mar be an matery dien
Ne caffech vn den ma quen fur.

The third worker: / For making a good work / when the materials are agreeable / in any case to my will and nature (the way I like them) / and to make a decent wall / if the material would be true / you could not find a man as wise as I am. //

In addition to this, the very presence of the master is intriguing. He appears in neither of the French plays. While masters are indeed mentioned in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia towards the end of the episode of the tower building, the description of the craftsmen’s tasks and work is much less detailed. However, the Latin legend provides some information on the masters’ function. They are the ones Dioscorus relies upon in order to make sure that the work is done properly and according to his orders while he is with the emperor:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

In An Buhez, the master is a very important character with a much more extensively distin-
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guished area of expertise. He makes suggestions as to the design of the tower, is involved in all building processes by motivating his workers or helping with more complicated tasks like laying the foundation, he distributes the wages and acts as the link between the workers and the king. In other words, he does all the work associated with a medieval “magister operis”, a work master, as Binding describes them in some detail (Binding 1993, 51-70, 236-267). The Breton term used to describe the character is “An mestr mecherour” (‘the master worker’), but “An mefr an euffi” (‘the master of the oeuvre/work’), which correlates broadly with the Latin “magister operis”, occurs as well. Moreover, the strong emphasis on the master’s reliability might be interpreted as a form of advertisement. The master in the Breton play has a lot of text and would most probably have been required to be literate. This may well have been true for a medieval work master, for he was required to sign and then to fulfil written contracts (Binding 1993, 238f). The other workers and assistant builders do not have so much text. The second and third worker each have five stanzas, the first worker only three. The first and second assistant builders each speak two stanzas of text. Even if they were not literate, it would have been possible to learn such a small amount of text by heart while a literate person read it out loud.

At the end of the episode, the workers sing a stanza of the play together:

Aman e can an mecherouryên.
[79] Euelhên en gonit gloat hac ebataff,
Euelhên eu gonit gloat,
Mar da moues dan marchat
Ha caffout compagnun mat,
Hac he reo da euaff,
Euelhên eu gonit gloat hac ebataff.

Here the workers sing now. / Like this is gaining riches and amusing oneself, / like this is gaining riches. / When a woman goes to the market / and finds a good companion / who will lead her to drink / like this is gaining riches and amusing oneself. //

The metre changes from the play’s customary stanza comprised of eight or ten syllables to a stanza whose first and last verse comprise eleven syllables each, and the ones in between comprise seven syllables. Hervé le Bihan argues that this is an archaic metre which is known from other Celtic languages.30 Joseph Loth explains that verses consisting of seven syllables are “rare dans les textes, mais non dans la poésie populaire” (Jubainville and Loth 1902, 180).

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30To the best of my knowledge his work is still in progress. I would like to thank M. le Bihan for his helpful correspondence on the subject.
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As Mary-Ann Constantine points out, “there are few records of the [singing of Breton ballads] before the first decades of the nineteenth century”, but the song of the masons may well be among “the earliest candidates” (Constantine 1996, 53). It is therefore possible that the song of the masons was indeed a Breton song and the audience may have known it and possibly even sung along. In fact, it is conceivable that the craftsmen who worked on the stage and props sang the song during their working hours and thus introduced it into the play. This, in turn, would strengthen the impression of an authentic working team playing the role of the workers in An Buhez. As has been mentioned above, the masons’ introductory lines in cinq journées take the form of a French “rondeau”, which was a popular metre and has its origins in dancing and singing. As Longtin points out, there are several “rondeaux” in cinq journées and they “ponctue l’action du Mystère, introduisant un rythme, un mouvement” (Longtin 2005, 6-7). The simple “rondeau” comprises eight verses with the rhyme scheme ABaAabAB, in which the capital letters represent the refrains, i.e. verses that are (almost) identical, and the lower case letters signify simple rhymes (Gleason 1954, 96). The common rhyme scheme in An Buhez would be aabcccb plus internal rhymes a and c in the third and sixth verse respectively. In the case of the masons’ song in An Buhez the rhyme scheme does not follow the usual pattern, yielding abbbaa or ABbbaA, to be more precise. Only the first and the last verse, which are identical, have an internal rhyme as well. They consist of eleven syllables each, which is longer than the four middle verses and also longer than the usual eight or ten syllable verse of An Buhez. If we were to introduce a break after the seventh syllable in the first and last verse, we would get the following stanza:

Euelhên en gonit gloat
hac ebataff,
Euelhên eu gonit gloat,
Mar da moues dan marchat
Ha caffout campagnun mat,
Hac he reo da euaff,
Euelhên eu gonit gloat
hac ebataff.

This stanza then consists of eight verses with the rhyme scheme ABAaabAB and does not show any internal rhyme. Apart from a twist in the second couplet, the rhyme scheme would thus be identical with that of the simple “rondeau”. I therefore suggest that, if the song was not an authentic Breton song introduced by the workers, the author of An Buhez may consciously have chosen or even created a song that is similar to a French “rondeau”, while at the same
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time sticking to the rigid Breton metre as well as possible.

Such potential authenticity extends beyond the characteristics of the roles/actors. It is also true for work processes described in An Buhez and accordingly, in cinq journées. As has been discussed above, Dioscorus tells the master of his plan to have a tower built. The master then makes suggestions for the design of the tower and they both go visiting the building site together, where Dioscorus has already assembled materials he expected to be required for the building. According to Binding, the material was usually provided by the employer (Binding 1993, 152), which is in this case Dioscorus. The way in which Dioscorus and the master discuss the work process, particularly with regard to the financial aspect and the materials that are already present, suggests a contract for work and labour as opposed to an indefinite contract with payment on a daily or annual basis (Binding 1993, 154). This serves to strengthen the impression of a "real" master mason on stage, especially as neither cinq journées nor deux journées is nearly as detailed with regard to such organisational matters. However, there is also one section in cinq journées which mirrors a practice of paying labourers on a medieval building site. As discussed above, Dioscorus gives the masons "drinking money" (4846). Such a “Trinkgeld” was paid to any labourer on the site “bei erfolgrechem Abschluss von Bauabschnitten [...] oder bei besonders anstrengender Arbeit” (Binding 2014, 75).

This is slightly different in terms of the actual work performed on stage. As has been shown, both cinq journées and An Buhez have the craftsmen comment on their work while constructing the tower. In cinq journées the masons are evidently cutting stones, while in An Buhez the workers appear to be carrying the stones to the building site. Both tasks are clearly associated with stonemasons, as Binding illustrates in his chapter on masons (Binding 1993, 285-311). However, while the masons in cinq journées are evidently kneeling during their work, the images Binding includes in his study depict masons sitting on stools. The carrying of stones appears to be an accurate assessment of a mason’s task, for “[h]äufig sind die Steinmetzen mit dem Versetzen der Quader beschäftigt” (Binding 1993, 288). Both cinq journées and An Buhez have the craftsmen refer to their tools and again, although they refer to different tools, all are associated with the work of a stonemason. The masons in cinq journées mention their mallets, trowels, mortar and cement, while the workers in An Buhez refer to a trowel, square, measuring rod or ruler, (plumb) line or cord, mallet, chisels, lime and also to models (s.a.). Like the laying of a foundation, the making of models is usually a task for the master or for his assistant. Most of the tools in An Buhez appear to belong to the first worker and he is also the one mentioning the models. It is possible that he was not merely the first worker to speak but in fact a slightly superior worker. However, the list of tools may simply be the result of satisfying the requirements of the Breton rhyme scheme. Laying the foundation is also depicted in a similar way in An Buhez and cinq journées. The craftsmen look for a place to lay their foundation and in
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*An Buhez* the process becomes a kind of competition, ended by a good-humoured comment by the master. While Binding does not describe the laying of a foundation as guesswork, he makes it plain that it was a complicated task performed, if possible, by an expert (Binding 1993, 339-354). On the whole, *An Buhez* surpasses *cinq journées* with regard to the authenticity of the building process. While *cinq journées* is in general more complex and much longer than *An Buhez*, the author of the Breton play appears to have put considerable effort into staging a realistic building project. Taken together with the fact that the tower episode is also noticeably longer than in the other plays, the involvement of a real group of builders, possibly of the town’s guild, seems likely.
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia, cinq journées*, and *An Buhez* Dioscorus wishes his daughter to be educated. Any kind of education instigated by Dioscorus is entirely absent from both *deux journées* and the *Legenda Aurea*. The second chapter of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* starts with the simple statement that Barbara is going to be educated:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 7)

Thanks to this awakening of her intellect and her intuitive knowledge, she soon begins to doubt the legitimacy of the pagan gods. The rest of the second chapter of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* focuses on her arguments against worshipping these gods. Although there is no instigator in the *Legenda Aurea*, Barbara’s intellect is at one point connected to a classical education on the one hand, and to her lack of a formal Christian education on the other: “Tandem tradita studiis liberalibus alta transscendebat, sed defuit ei notitia veri Dei” (Graesse 1965, 898). In *deux journées*, the process of Barbara’s awakening intellect and her subsequent conversion to Christianity appears to have taken place before the beginning of the play. When Barbara appears for the first time, she obediently agrees to come and see her parents, like in the other two plays (s.b.). Then the episode about the marriage proposal follows, which takes place at a considerably later point in all other versions, namely after Barbara’s conversion (9). During her second appearance in *deux journées*, Barbara already speaks of only one God when she bids farewell to her parents: “Dieu le vous veuillë ennuit rendre” (564). When Barbara bids farewell to her father in *cinq journées*, her manner is similar (“A Dieu, cher Pere, j’ay desir / Que Dieu si vous face choisir / Tousjours bonne voye et adresse”, 8025-8027), but she has at that point already converted to Christianity. In both plays, the remark passes unnoticed by her pagan relatives, who presumable suppose she is referring to one of the pagan gods. Shortly after her parents have left her, Barbara prays in her chambers in *deux journées*, and she clearly addresses the Christian God:

Vray Dieu qui as sur tout puissance,
Donne moy de Toy remembrance.
Vray Pere qui formas la terre,
Envers Toy tel vertu acquerrer
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

Que je puisse avoir connoissance  
De ton sainct nom, par evidence,  
[...].  
(629-634)

As in the *Legenda Aurea*, she is apparently still lacking a deeper understanding of the Christian doctrine, the “notitia veri Dei” (s.a.), which she will receive from the hermit soon afterwards (7.1). But her initial conversion that takes place due to her inherent wisdom and intuitive knowledge appears to precede the action of *deux journées* rather than being a part of it.

In both *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*, the simple information of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* on Barbara’s formal education has been elaborated and adapted to suit a stage. In *An Buhez*, “Dioscorus sends (someone) out to search for a tutor / to instruct his daughter (at home)” (‘Diofcorus à quacc da clafq vn mefir à / fcol da difquiff e merch’, 79-80). This happens directly after the workers have begun to build the tower. When the king’s servant returns to him with a suitable schoolmaster (‘mestr a scol’), he presents his plan to Barbara. She is very positive about the idea to be educated:

[90] Ma tat mat quer antier gruet aquerhet  
Rac defiraff araffnen nachaff quet  
Bezaff affet diciplinet feder  
En pep fquient euident autentic  
Philofophy ha muy hac an Phific  
En holl pratic me mén em aplicuer.

My dear, good father, do entirely what you would like!, / because I want, I do not deny it, / to be indeed educated, surely, / in every authentic, obvious science, / in philosophy and more, also in physics. / I want to be introduced to all practices!  
//

These are, incidentally, also the very first words Barbara speaks in the play. She is thus depicted as an obedient child interested in studying. In *cinq journées*, Dioscorus is advised to have Barbara educated by one of his courtiers. The scene takes place at the very beginning, just after Dioscorus has introduced himself and part of his court. He decides to ask her opinion about her education and receives a very positive answer, as well:

BARBARA  
Trés cher Sire, vousotre parler  
M’est tresgrant joyë et plaisir
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

J’ay aprendre moult grand desir,
Mais que j’ayè qui bien me monstre.
(413-416)

Although these are not Barbara’s first words in *cinq journées*, she has not appeared much earlier. Apart from exchanging some courtesies, Barbara has hardly spoken before this. The impression of her is very similar to that in *An Buhez*. After Barbara has agreed to the plan, Dioscorus sends Lancevent, his messenger, to fetch two *doctores* whom Florimond (Dioscorus’ first soldier) had recommended earlier, namely Maistre Amphoras and Maistre Alphons.

Upon being summoned to the king, the schoolmaster and the *doctores*, respectively, immediately go/es to attend him. In *cinq journées*, Dioscorus explains to the *doctores* that he wishes his daughter to be educated in the seven liberal arts and also in “la loy des dieux” (536f). As it turns out later, these gods are those of the ancient Roman Pantheon in both plays. In *An Buhez*, Dioscorus wishes for “a good scholar, to my taste in every regard / a wise man, noble and of moderation, / of good character. […] the wisest” (“'t cloarec mat dà grat à pep flatur / Den fquientus gracios à mufur, / Aflat natur […] an furhaff’, 80), but it is Barbara who first specifies the subjects of her education in stanza 90 (s.a.). Dioscorus then adds his own ideas about the contents of her studies:

[91] Cza mazouchuy heb neb fy magifter
Disquit dezy signifi ãn lizer
En berr amfer autier na differet
Maz gallo cent heb neb fent entent plen
Philosophy/Aftrology dien
Da côps pguen ouz brahaff den fo en bet

There! Since you are, without any doubt, a master / teach to her the sense of writing / in a little while, complete! Do not delay, / so that she will be perfectly able – without feint – to understand fully / philosophy, astrology, surely, to speak pertinently to the greatest man that is in the world. //

In addition to that, the schoolmaster claims that she will be able to converse flawlessly in Latin after his lessons (92). In both plays, the king wishes the tutor/s to attend Barbara at home rather than send her away to a university. This appears to be different in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, where the place of education is not specified by Dioscorus (s.a.).

Even though the scene is much longer and more detailed in *cinq journées*, the gist of the episode is very similar in both plays. We witness Barbara being introduced to the knowledge
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

her tutor/s possess/es. She then requests to study in private for a while in *cinq journées*, while the schoolmaster advises her to do so in *An Buhez*. During this private study, both plays indicate that she reads texts on the pagan gods. Afterwards, her doubts about the pagan gods surface and she confronts her tutor/s with her newly found thoughts and ideas:

*cinq journées:*

BARBARA

Maistres, j’apersoy trop grant blasme,
Quar voz dictz sont contradictoires
Et cestes sciences notoires.
Je suys en grant suspicion
Qu’il y ait opposicion
De verité en ce que dictes.
[...]
Dictez moy, pour vous adverter,
Qui furent ces dieux, je vous prie.
[...]
Or me dictes, furent ilz gens
Au monde comme nous vivans?
(1110-1153)

*An Buhez:*

*Sante barba a lauar de meftr.*

[109] Meftr magiftr a manyer mat
Comphet diff plen dam louenhat
Oll ân holl flat na trellatet
Imagiou ân ydolou man
Peban indy compfet huy glan
Me fo dre reman fuzanet.

[...]

[112] Compfet huy pe a nation
Piu viont y heb finction
Diff ân oll fazon farmonet
[...]
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Saint Barbara speaks to her master: / Master Tutor of good manner / speak to me plainly to satisfy me / do not lose your head over the whole affair! / The images of the idols here, / where are they from, speak plainly! / I am confused by them. // [...] // Tell (me), of what birth, / who they used to be, without lie! / [...] //

This is very similar in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, where no specific tutor is mentioned, and yet the connection between her education and her enlightenment is clearly indicated. But instead of studying in private and then confronting the tutor/s about her new ideas, she speaks to the people in the temple:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 7)

This is indeed the same as in the Legenda Aurea, where she visits the temple with her parents one day and begins to question the pagan religion due to her intrinsic wisdom:

Erat autem beata Barbara ingeniosa et a tenera netate vanas cogitationes relinquens coepit divina cogitare. Cum enim semel templum intraret, videns simulacra parentibus suis ait: quid sibi volunt hae similitudines hominum? Respondent parentes: taceas, non hominum, sed Deorum sunt [...].

(Graesse 1965, 898)

The two Latin versions are very much alike in this case. They also continue in a similar way, since Barbara then asks whether the gods used to be humans once. Upon receiving a positive answer, she asks whether they are also subject to the common human weaknesses, like dying. When this question is also answered in the affirmative, she ponders this information for a while and reaches the conclusion that gods who were born and have to die cannot really be gods, but that there has to be one creator instead, who is exempt from the human weakness of death. She argues that this creator must have made all humans, but also the world they inhabit:

Legenda Aurea:
Ex hoc beata Barbara die noctuque replicabat tacita dicens: si homines fuerunt Dii nostri, ergo nati sunt ut homines, mortui sunt ut homines; si Dii essent, nec nati fuissent nec mortui, quia deitas, ut mihi videtur, nec coepit nec desinit esse.
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[…] Sed quia nec terra a se est nec coelum a se nec aër a se nec aqua a se, ex quibus quattuor elementis constat homo, sed creaturae sunt, necesse est his esse creatorem.

(Graesse 1965, 898)

In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the argument is much longer and includes other considerations, but Barbara asks the same questions and draws the same conclusions:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 7)

 […]

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 8)

Barbara’s realisation that the pagan gods are not legitimate gods is the key for her conversion, of course. Thus, it figures strongly in both cinq journées and An Buhez:
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

cinq journées:

MAISTRE ALPHONS
Ouï, et beuvans et mangeans,
Dormant et souffrant chault et froit,
Fain et soif ; chacun d’eulx souffroit
Toutes fragilles passions.

BARBARA
Avant que plus oultre passons,
Furent ilz en femmes conceupz
Et engendréz d’homme?

MAISTRE AMPHORAS
Touz sceuz
Sont ces cas, car ouï, ma Dame.

BARBARA
Ilz sont dont faiz de corps et d’ame
Et furent chacun néz de mere.

MAISTRE ALPHONS
Ouï, la chose est toute clere
Qu’ilz furent tous telz comme nous,
Excepté qu’ilz furent retouz
Deëffier : chacun divin
Fut fait, comme dit le latin.

[...]

BARBARA
Mourirent ilz?

MAISTRE ALPHONS
Touz les humains
Meurent, c’est la regle notoire.

[...]

BABARA

[...]
Puis donc que le monde estoit fait
Avant eulx [les dieux], qui l’avoit parfaict
Et figuré en sa figure?
Il faut que soit ung dieu qui dure
Sans fin et sans commencement,
Le quel soit eternellement
Ou hault ciel regnant et vivant.
(1110-1215)

An Buhez:
An mefr.
[113] Tut autentic [...] 
Dirac pep drem lem voe an remâ
Hac a buhez mat en flat man
Dren goar glan pep vnan an bro

[114] Me comps dich oll a Apollo
A Venus faczun ha luno
Mercurio Petro fo scaff
Pallas affur ha Saturnus
Jupiter Habel ha Venus
Doeou golloudus da v'aff

Sante Barba.
[115] Imposibl eu adefeuaff
Heruez quement a ententaff
Ez galhêt y scaff bezaff quet
Doeou creff na beu na feuen
No deueux gallout na foutê
A maru yên ezint tremenet

An mefr.
[116] Suppofet effent ententet
An maru yen fo plê ordrenet
Dân holl re ganet en bet mâ
[...]

[117] [...] 
Unan an crim ligitet
Dindan an fler na preferuet
Nendeux quet gouezet feder
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

Sante Barba.
[118] [...] Honnez fo feder mecher bras Bezaff ordrenet credet plen An maru da daftum tut humen Na piu voe plen en ordrenas

[119] Ret ezeux vn doe a croeas An heaul/an loar/han douar bras Hac a ordrenas an draf Dre vn pecheut groaet en bet man Maru difacun da pep vnan Na bras na bihan na manfe

The master: / The holy beings [...] / those were real to everyone / and of a good life in this situation / as everyone of the world knows very well. // I tell you all about Apollo / and everything about Venus and Juno, / Mercury, Petro – it is easy – / Pallas, surely, and Saturn, / Jupiter and Bel and Venus / mighty gods to invoke. //

Saint Barbara: / It is impossible, I think, / according to all that I understand / that they could really be / mighty gods, neither living nor strong, / they have neither ability nor help / of a cold death; they have perished. //

The master: / Supposing that they exist, listen! / The cold death is plainly ordered / to all those born into this world: / [...] // [...] / None who is exempt from the crime / nor preserved (from it) – know for sure! – / does exist under the stars. //

Saint Barbara: / [...] / This is surely a great work / to have ordered – believe it plainly! – / Death to reap the human race! / And who was it then that ordered it? // It is necessary that there is one God who created / the sun, the moon and the great earth / and who ordered this obligation / due to one sin committed in this world, / (namely) a cruel death to everyone / so that neither great nor small would escape. //

In cinq journées, Barbara considers it a necessity that a true god has to exist beyond human life. In An Buhez, Barbara expresses a similar thought in a slightly different way. According to her consideration, death had to have been imposed upon humans by someone. For this someone to be a true god, she feels that he must be exempt from this entirely earthly flaw. While the gist
of the argument is similar in both plays and also in the Latin versions, much more emphasis is placed upon the exemption from death in *An Buhez*.

The most striking difference between *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* is the structure that is used in *cinq journées*. Barbara’s arguments clearly consist of three parts. The first one has been illustrated above, the second line of argumentation deals with Barbara’s concern about the pagan gods’ deeds in the legends. She is told these legends by the *doctores* (987-1073) and they are again referred to during the beginning of their argument:

BARBARA
Si chacun est sanctifié,
Qui fut qui les sanctifié?
Qui est cil qui ediffia
Le dieu que vous nommez Pheton?

MAISTRE ALPHONS
Apollo, son pere.
BARBARA
Or monton.
 Qui ediffia Apollo?

MAISTRE AMPHORAS
Ce fut Jupiter.
BARBARA
Je le lo.
Il nous fault plus avant monter.
Qui ediffia Jupiter,
Juno, Pluto et Neptunus?

MAISTRE ALPHONS
Qui ce fut? Ce fut Saturnus
Qui estoit pere d’eulx ensemble.

BARBARA
Et qui Saturnus?

MAISTRE AMPHORAS
Il me semble
Qu’i se dèiffia luy mesme.
(1226-1239)

In *An Buhez*, only a short reference is made to the names of the pagan gods in stanza 114 (s.a.) but a longer explanation is clearly implied. This is handled in a similar way in John of
Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, where the names of several pagan deities and characters are listed as part of the discussion between Barbara and the people in the temple, but these names are not elaborated upon:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 7f)

In *cinq journées*, the lives of the pagan gods are considered sinful by Barbara and lead her to imagine a greater god, free from such flaws, of “totale perfection” (1662), whom she would worship readily (1609-1667). In *An Buhez*, Barbara begins her argument by wondering about the customs of the people around her and their reverence for what she perceives as powerless and imperfect images. Then she denounces the pagan gods as false idols:

Sante Barba.
[104] Me fo foezet oar ân bet man
Pan em fongiaff a muyhaff poan
An dra man am groa fouzanet
Ouz guelet en pep ploe doeou
Manyer errol a ydolou
Dre fantafiou dezrouet.

[105] Meda quentaff ne credaff quet
Imagiou bouzar imparfet
O defflie galloet en bet man
Na doen plet en bet do fetou
Na do templ na do exemplou

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7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

Nendint nemet gou ha fouzan.

[...]

[107] [...]  
Imagiou ân ydolou man  
Neôn pedre fet en bet man  
Ez grueont glan na pe en manyer.

[108] Fablou hac errorou gouyer  
En ho caffaff an quentaff guer  
A drouc esper ez prederet  
Ne caffaff quet en ho ferou  
Dre neb apoe effent doeou  
A drouc euffuroe ez dezrouet.

Saint Barbara: / I am amazed about this world / when I think by myself. With  
the greatest pain / this thing troubles me: / to see gods in every community, /  
the kind of erroneous misbelief, and idols / created by fantasy. // Firstly, I do not  
believe / that numb, imperfect images / would have power in this world. / and I do  
not pay attention at all to their deeds, / nor to their temple or to their paradigm; /  
they are but lie and deceit. // [...] // [...] / The images of these idols, / I do not know  
by which deed in this world / they act divinely, nor in which manner. // Fables  
and mendacious errors, / I find them in the first place. / Out of a false hope, you  
imagine things. / I do not find in their deeds / by any means that they would be  
gods. / Out of false evidence, you start telling things. //

This is very interesting, because with regard to the structure, An Buhez resembles John of  
Wakkerzeel’s Historia very closely. There, too, Barbara first expresses discontent at seeing  
people of different status worshipping the idols made of wood, stone and metal, i.e. “to see  
gods in every community” (’Ouz guelet en pep plo doeou’, 104). She then criticises the pagan  
gods’ lack of liveliness and says that she will no longer truly worship gods whom she perceives  
as false, and only pretend to do so instead:
The *Legenda Aurea* employs similar wording, but is much shorter. The part about the pagan gods’ lack of liveliness is missing, for example. Nevertheless, the idea that Barbara does no longer wish to worship the pagan gods who are made from wood and stone is clearly present:

> [...] vanos autem Deos occulte sprevit, et cum vidit Diis, silicet lignis et lapidibus, flectere genua sensibilium insensibilium mutis, animo valde correxit.

(Graesse 1965, 898)

It is also interesting to note that without knowing the Latin versions and Barbara’s attitude towards the pagan gods, it seems rather incongruous for Barbara to express those thoughts and feelings at this point in *An Buhez*. While her plan to disregard the pagan gods results from her line of argumentation in favour of a single creator in the Latin versions, the statement precedes her arguments in *An Buhez*. In *cinq journées*, it is not necessary to include such a statement at all, for the author chose to include an entire pagan ceremony in the play, during which Barbara can display her scepticism (7.1). Nevertheless, Barbara makes a similar point about the pagan gods’ lack of power in *cinq journées*. While the structure of *cinq journées* is different from that of *An Buhez*, the wording is quite similar (cf. 105f):
7. Barbara’s Education and Conversion

_cinq journées:
BARBARA
Commes me dictez vous ceulx cy
Estre dieux? C’est bien chousse inutille.
Comment? C’est oevre discutille.
Simulacres sont et ydolles.
Sont bien voz créances si folles
Croire qu’ilz sont dieux de la gent,
Qui ne sont fors or et argent?
Ce sont de voz mains les ouvraiges,
Statues sourdez et voz ymaiges.
(1724-1732)

The third line of argumentation in _cinq journées is the idea of a single creator. As I demonstrated above, Barbara’s main argument in favour of a single entity in the Latin versions is the fact that the elements, of which humans consist, must have been created by someone, too (s.a.). Similar to this, in the plays Barbara regards it as a necessity that one entity has planned and created the world and everything in and around it, and that this entity now governs it. While the idea is certainly present in _An Buhez, it is expressed in far fewer words than in _cinq journées:

_cinq journées:
La terre en este verdoyer.
Fruitz produire, multiplier
Et en celui temps employer,
Les arbres de feuilles vestir
Et en yver les desvestir.
La mer donne plusieurs poisson
Dont on usé, et en saison.
Le soleil vers Occident tourne
Et puis vers le matin retourne
D’Occident jusques en Orient
a...ient
Les planettes, la firmament
Reuyssent et aucunement
De jour ne de nuyt ne trespassent
Leurs mettes ne leur ordre passent.
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Je conclue donc evidentment
Estre ung Dieu qui tant saigement
Ces choses mondaines gouverne;
Causalité est le grant cerne,
Concluant qu’il est causeur
De toutes choses et créueur.
(1906-1925)

*An Buñez*:
Sante Barba.

[106] Ret eu faczun ezeux vnan
Aguere än bet het ha ledan
An douar/an tan/ha pep planet
An heaul/an loar/han aer certen
Glau/ hac auel/ ha buguel den
Tomder/ yenyen /ordrenet

Saint Barbara: / It is entirely necessary that there is a single one / who made the
world far and wide / the earth, the fire and every planet / the sun, the moon and
the air, surely, / rain and wind and mankind / heat (and) cold, well-planned. //

Barbara repeats this argument when confronting her teacher, as we already saw above (stanza 119f). Both *cinq journées* and *An Buñez* express the view that this one god does not only have
the power to create but also the power to undo as he pleases: "Et, quand il Luy plaist, Il nous
cree / Et de sa grace nous decree" (1928f) and “he himself is the leader / who makes to his will
and who destroys” (120). I did not discover such a sentiment in any of the other versions.

Apart from being longer, *cinq journées* places more emphasis on structure. There, Barbara
makes clear that her argumentation consists of three parts and she presents one after the other.
Splitting her argumentation into three parts is clearly deliberate and serves to underline Bar-
bara’s emerging Christianity. In *An Buñez*, Barbara at first speaks to herself and then she and
the schoolmaster exchange their views on several different topics. While all three main argu-
ments of *cinq journées* are present in *An Buñez*, the emphasis placed upon them is different.
In *An Buñez*, Barbara takes longest to explain why a true god must have placed the obligation
of death upon humankind while being exempt from it himself. She also spends considerable
time vilifying the idols and the pagan gods. What God actually created is presented in just one
stanza. Still, like in *cinq journées*, the idea of a single creator/god is expressed three times, and
each time it is connected to one of the three main arguments from *cinq journées*. It is, however,
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not laid out as a threefold line of argumentation and therefore less striking. Barbara begins with describing the necessity that there is one creator of everything:

It is entirely necessary that there is a single one / who made the world far and wide (106).

Then she explains God’s superiority due to his position as a creator:

It is necessary that there is one god who created / the sun, the moon and the great earth / and who ordered this obligation [death] (119).

At last, she draws attention to a perfect god who contrasts strongly with the powerless idols:

One alone truly made the world / and must be honoured with glory / like a perfect, powerful God (124).

Such a clear differentiation into three parts is not employed in the Latin versions, either, but as in An Buhez most of the contents of Barbara’s arguments are present, if less elaborate. However, each text appears to place a slightly different emphasis on the respective points.

In all versions, the answers and counter arguments that Barbara receives from her tutor/s are unsatisfactory and unconvincing to her. The people in the temple, the schoolmaster and the doctores try to make her see their reason in the respective versions, but she refuses that. In the plays, Barbara’s newly discovered ideas ultimately lead to an estrangement between her and her tutor/s and the end of her education. The schoolmaster in An Buhez is very angry with Barbara when he leaves her:

An meifr.
[125] An bet a error rigorus
So en hoz couraig ha fachus
Da vout confus ouz abufer
Bout reufeudic heretiques
Amennet heb nep goap apres
Rac fe moz les en hoz efper.

Aman he mefr he les hehunā hac aya
buanec digāty: [...]  

The master: / A world of severe error / is in your mind and wretchedly / you are mislead to be confused. / To be unlucky, a heretic, / is what you fervently wish,
without any joke; / I leave you to your fantasy. //
Here her master leaves her to herself and goes, irritated, / away from her [...] /}

The *doctores* in *cinq journées* are disappointed rather than angry and their greatest concern is the king’s reaction if he should find out about his daughters ideas. Upon taking their leave from her and her father, they promise to keep silent about her conversion and advise her to do the same for her own good. Dioscorus even presses some wages upon them and the *doctores* depart (2045-2165).

### 7.1. The Hermit

The same stage direction that dismisses the schoolmaster from the action of the play introduces the hermit in *An Buhez*: “Aman he mefr he les hehunâ hac aya / buanec digâty: ha neufe equeff vn er- / mit pirchirin” (‘Here her master leaves her to herself and goes, irritated, away from her and then she finds a pilgrimaging hermit’, 125/126). The term “hermit” implies a person living in a remote place in religious contemplation. According to the *Dictionnaire Étymologique du Breton Moyen* (Ernault 1888, 284) and the *Dictionnaire Historique du Breton* (Hemon 1979, t. I, 755), the Breton term “ermit” carries that same meaning. However, the hermit in *An Buhez* does not mention a remote monastery or any other sort of hermitage. He is a “pilgrimaging hermit” (ermit pirchirin), but his stage name is “An Ermit”. This hermit has set out from Alexandria and wants to visit the tomb of Jesus Christ (126). He plans to visit Barbara on his way and ask alms from her, “because she is a girl truly inspired / in the grace of the king of the world” (‘Er hy fo merch guir inpireset / En gracc roen bet men cret feder’, 129). How he knows about Barbara’s intuitive knowledge of the Christian God is not explained. She has converted to Christianity only very recently (s.a). It is likely, however, that the comment is directed at the audience rather than designed to serve the contents and chronology of the narration. When Barbara and the hermit-pilgrim meet, she asks him whether he has not heard of a religion centring on a single god and creator. He affirms this and tells her about Origen, who teaches the Christian beliefs in Alexandria. After advising Barbara to seek out Origen as a teacher, the hermit-pilgrim wants to leave again. Barbara presses alms upon him and then directly sends a messenger to Origen to ask him for help.

The contrast between the character’s name and the action surrounding him is striking, but only to a reader of the play. The character does not refer to himself as a hermit, and describes his travels and his goal instead. Thus, the audience would likely not have been confronted with this contrast at all and simply understood him to be a pilgrim. Still, the name is an interesting detail that merits closer investigation. While there is no mention of a hermit in either of the Latin versions or in *cinq journées*, there is a character named “Sainct Hermite” and an episode
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involving him in *deux journées* (730-799). This hermit lives in the mountains where Barbara specifically seeks him out in order to be baptised by him:

Aller m’en vueil parmy la terre
Pour cest saint sacrement [baptism] acquerre
Tout droit iray au sainct hermite
Qui en celle montaigne habite
Sans faire cy plus longue espace.

*(722-726)*

It is likely that the hermit’s mountains are indeed rather remote, as he has managed to live there as a Christian during a time of persecution of Christians (*deux journées*, 263-266). How Barbara knows of him is not explained. When she arrives, she greets him and tells him immediately that she wishes to be baptised by him. As in *An Buhez*, Barbara speaks of alms with which she seems to provide the hermit, possibly as a payment for her baptism:

Sire preudoms. Dieu vous parface
Les biens qu’avez emprins a faire.
Ou nom de Luy et de sa mere.
Je vous requiers treshumblement:
Baptesez moy presentement
[...]
Car j’en ay au cœur grant envie
Et pour baptesme avoir ensemble
Aulmosne ferez, se me semble;
Par ce, vous en requiers et prie.

*(727-740)*

The hermit then introduces her to the basic principles of the trinitarian belief and the original sin and then baptises her. After a short exchange of some pleasantries, the two part again. Apart from both roles being named “hermit” and both receiving alms from Barbara, the two figures do not have much in common. They seem to serve entirely different purposes. While the hermit in *deux journées* has the central task of baptising Barbara, the pilgrimaging hermit in *An Buhez* merely serves to strengthen her intuition about God and recommends a magnificent teacher to her. Nevertheless, the name and the alms remain striking commonalities of this episode in *An Buhez* and *deux journées*.

While *cinq journées* may not have a hermit, it does have a pilgrim, a character who is named “Josquin, *peregrinus cristianus*”. He set out from Alexandria and travelled to Jerusalem. On
his way back he sees Dioscorus and his people at a sacrificial pagan ceremony and becomes curious. During that ceremony, Barbara tries very hard to avoid offering any sacrifice to the pagan gods. She notices that the pilgrim is doing the same and starts a conversation with him. Initially, Josquin is very careful about what he reveals, but when Barbara assures him that she will not betray him, he explains his voyage to her:

J’ay veu les saincts lieux  
Ou Dieu fist faiz merveilleux  
Quand Il fist reparacion  
D’humaine generacion,  
Quand des enfers II nous franchit  
[...].  
(3100-3104)

Barbara is fascinated and wants to learn as much as she can from him, but he advises her to speak to Origen, whom he calls a teacher of the faith in Alexandria. Josquin considers him better at explaining the complex matters of Christianity.

The scenes in *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* are very similar. Both pilgrims are on their way between Alexandria and Jerusalem. Josquin speaks of the many places he has visited in and around Jerusalem, thus he must be on his way back to Alexandria. The pilgrimaging hermit in *An Buhez* is evidently on his way to Jerusalem, because upon setting out he expresses a desire to visit Barbara on his way in order to ask alms from her. The situations in which Barbara and the pilgrim meet are different, however. In *An Buhez* she seems to be merely standing or walking about, probably in the vicinity of the royal dwelling, while in *cinq journées* they meet at a pagan ceremony, recognising each other as outsiders. Thus, there is a more immediate element of danger in *cinq journées*, which is strengthened by Barbara’s warnings: “Tays toy! / Parle tout bas qu’on ne te escoute” (3127f) and “Ne fay a homme mencion / de ce que tu m’as sermonné / Ne que je t’aye araisonné” (3174-3176). The pagan ceremony in *cinq journées* is reminiscent of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. There, Barbara has to accompany her father to a pagan temple, too. Similarly to *cinq journées*, she refuses the pagan rituals and attends the temple in a purely physical rather than a spiritual way:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 10)
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As has been discussed above, this is also the case in the *Legenda Aurea*. In both Latin versions, a rumor of a famous Christian teacher named Origen reaches Barbara shortly after her abdication of the pagan gods. This rumor has obviously been converted into a character in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*, namely the pilgrim who tells Barbara of Origen. In both versions, Barbara salutes the (hermit-)pilgrim and asks him where he is coming from. The lines are quite similar:

*cinq journées:*

BARBARA
Dictez moy present verité
Et n’ayez paour, vous n’avez garde!
Contre tout homme je vous garde.
Dont venez vous ? De quel voiaige?
[...]
Or me compter cy, nostre Maistre,
De mainte ville et maint clocher!
Dy moy le vroy, je te requier,
Dont viens tu?
(3087-3099)

*An Buhez:*

_Aman an ermit a queff fante / barba hac he falut._
[130] Dez mat dich ytron deboner.

Sante barba.
Em requet ha na tardet
ha dichuy glan en pep manyer
Leueret diff plen ma den quer
Pe en carter ous douguer huy
Pe a contre ez dibaleet
Moz pet ent seder leueret

_Here the hermit meets Saint Barbara and greets her: / A good day to you, good Lady. / Saint Barbara: / And to you, indeed in every way. / Speak to me plainly, my dear man / to which land it carries you, / from which region you come? / I beg you surely, speak / in answer to my question and tarry no more. //

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While the wording may not be exactly the same, the gist of Barbara’s question undoubtedly is. The lines “Or me compter cy, nostre Maistre” (3096) and “Leueret diff plen ma den quer” (‘Speak to me plainly, my dear man’, 130) are nearly identical with regard to contents and structure. Both versions then employ two local references (ville, clocher in cinq journée and cattre, contre in An Buhez) that serve the purpose of depicting the pilgrim as a widely travelled person, which contrasts with Barbara’s situation as a virgin living in near isolation. The setting in the Breton play, however, is slightly different. While in cinq journée Barbara only asks where the pilgrim comes from, in An Buhez it is also relevant where the pilgrim is going. In contrast to the French version, he is not yet on his return journey and the point has not yet been addressed. The end of the passage is almost identical again, except that in Breton we do have the further instruction not to tarry, which is one of the common filling constructions employed to complete the complex Breton rhyme scheme and metre.

There is another example of a close textual resemblance between cinq journée and An Buhez:

\[\text{cinq journée:}\]

JOSQUIN

Je suys de cesar tout confus.
J’ay dedans le cuer fréeur ample
Quand je voy ces gens a leur temple
Aller tretouz ydollatréz.

(3043-3046)

\[\text{An Buhez:}\]

Sante Barba
[104] Me fo foezet oar ân bet man
Pan em fongiaff a muyhaff poan
An dra man am groa fouzanet
Ouz guelet en pep plo en doeu
Manyer errol a ydolou
Dre fantafiou dezrouet.

Saint Barbara: / I am amazed about this world / when I think by myself. With the greatest pain / this thing troubles me: / to see gods in every community, / the kind of erroneous misbelief, and idols / created by fantasy. //

This example is particularly interesting because the stanza belongs to a different passage of An Buhez, which has been discussed above as part of Barbara’s formal education. Structurally, the
passage is very similar to John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia (7). As cinq journées usually resembles John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia very strongly, it is surprising that it is Josquin who expresses such reluctance rather than Barbara as it is the case in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and also in An Buhez. Thus, it is very striking that the speaker and the timing are the same in An Buhez and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, when the contents of cinq journées and An Buhez display such obvious similarity. The wording in the plays is remarkably alike: “Je suys de cesar tout confus” mirrors the Breton “Me so soezet ân bet man” (‘I am amazed about this world’) to the point. Both sentences initiate the respective speaker’s text. The feeling expressed by Josquin “le cœur frêleur ample” corresponds to Barbara’s “a muyhaff poan / An dra man am groa souzanet” (‘with the greatest pain this thing troubles me’). Both characters then “see” what troubles/frightens them (“Quand je voy” and “Ouz guelet”). Although they are disconcerted by different issues – Josquin is frightened by the people worshipping idols at their temple and Barbara is troubled by idols and erroneous misbeliefs in every community – the concept is the same. Both express negative feeling at the idea that the people around them are worshipping anything else than the Christian God. At the end of the pagan ceremony in cinq journées, Barbara indeed utters a similar sentiment herself, but it is not as similar to An Buhez as the previous example:

BARBARA
Vray Dieu ou mon cœur est submis,
Je suis en grant perplecité
Et en telle ambiguïté
Que je ne soy que faire doye.
Ce peuple est en mauldicte voye,
Qui est en ce point ydollatre.
(3742-3747)

The similarity between cinq journées and An Buhez with regard to the wording contrasts with the similarity between John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and An Buhez with regard to the structure, but both similarities are noteworthy. Furthermore, the role of the hermit-pilgrim is equally difficult to assess. In all three versions he tells Barbara some basic facts about the Christian faith, but the contents differ. While the hermit in deux journées is Barbara’s chief educator in Christian doctrine such as the basic principles of the trinity and the original sin (751-775), the pilgrim in cinq journées talks to her mostly of the places he has just visited and then explains that he would rather not teach her much because it would be preferable for her to be introduced to the Christian faith properly and fundamentally (3135-3139). In An Buhez Barbara asks the pilgrimaging hermit directly whether he has heard “talk of one God who created / the great sky and who formed mankind” (‘Comps a vn doe nep a croeas / An eff bras hac a furmas den’,
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131). The pilgrim confirms this and then tells her about Origen. Both *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* describe Origen as a famous teacher of the Christian faith based in Alexandria, while in *deux journées* there is no mention of Origen at all; this is not necessary, since Barbara receives baptism directly from the hermit. Thus, the function of the pilgrim and the pilgrimaging hermit is quite similar in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*. In both plays the respective character serves to strengthen Barbara’s intuitive knowledge of Christianity and to introduce her to Origen. Nevertheless, the name “hermit” and the reception of the alms does not appear in *cinq journées*, but is exclusive to *deux journées* and *An Buhez*. In the case of *An Buhez*, the situation is further complicated by the geographical aspect of the hermit-pilgrim’s visit to Nicomedia, because his travel route contrasts with Nicomedia’s location within Asia, which is established during the first appearance of the devils (2.4.1, 5).
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The baptism of Saint Barbara takes place in all three plays and in both Latin versions of the legend. This fact demonstrates that the baptism is an integral part of the legend. Similar to the tower and the related conflict over the number of windows, it serves to connect Barbara to Christianity. But despite the fact that Barbara is being baptised in all texts, the manner and circumstances of her baptism differ in significant ways.

Kirsten Wolf, who has edited an Old-Norse/Icelandic version of Barbara’s legend and compared it to the Latin tradition, attributes a substantial significance to the manner of Barbara’s baptism:

The various Latin versions differ from each other in a number of details. Generally, they may be divided into two main categories, the primary difference between the two being the manner in which Saint Barbara’s baptism takes place. In one [...] Saint Barbara baptizes herself in “piscina aquae” [...] ; the other [...] tells that Saint Barbara corresponded with Origen of Alexandria [...] and was baptized by Origen’s messenger.

(Wolf 2000, 16f)

The Old-Norse/Icelandic life of Saint Barbara belongs to the second category, which is probably why Wolf did not look further into this. There is, however, a third possibility in the Latin tradition, which is represented, for example, by Wakkerzeel’s version (cf. Gaiffier 1959, 28). There, Barbara is baptised by John the Baptist, although it is difficult to judge whether he is really supposed to appear in the flesh, or whether it is a vision of him that conducts the office. Particularly if the latter is the case, this may well be closely related to the tradition of Barbara baptising herself in a “piscina aquae”, for this is precisely where Barbara is during the appearance of John the Baptist (11). Nevertheless, it is not Barbara herself who administers the sacrament and I therefore suggest that all three plays, the Legenda Aurea and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia (as well as the Old-Norse/Icelandic version) belong to a category in which a second party baptises Barbara.

In the case of deux journées, this is where the similarity to the other versions ends, for Barbara is baptised by a hermit in the mountains, whom she approaches for that very purpose:

Aller m’en veul parmy la terre  
Pour cest saïnt sacrement acquerrer.
Tout droict iray au saïnt hermite  
Qui en celle montaigne habite

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Sans faire cy plus longue espace.
(722-726)

After introducing her quickly to the basic principles of the Christian faith, he baptises her (“Il la baptise”, 774/5). No pool or fountain of any sort is mentioned and apart from Barbara’s intuitive knowledge of the Christian faith, there is nothing and nobody to explain anything about the Christian faith to her before she meets the hermit. Origen and his servant are entirely absent from deux journées (Longtin 1996, 16).

This matter is treated differently in the other four texts. There, Barbara also has an intuitive knowledge of God. In addition to this, however, she comes into contact with at least one representative of the Christian faith before being baptised. In both An Buhez and cinq journées, she meets a (hermit-)pilgrim, who recommends Origen of Alexandria to her. This figure is very likely an on-stage personification of a rumor which serves to inform Barbara of Origen’s existence in the Latin legends. In any case, Barbara has an encounter with something or someone associated with the Christian faith before she seeks education and baptism, which differs from deux journées. In deux journées, the administrator of the sacrament is also her first person of contact with the Christian faith.

In all versions, Barbara sends someone to Origen in order to ask him for instructions in the faith. In the two Latin legends and in cinq journées she sends him a letter in which she reveals her conversion, but the messenger is not privy to this, at least not at first. In cinq journées, this is exploited in a comical way, because the figure of Lancevant has appeared several times before. He is presented as a foolish drunkard, who never leaves on an errand without his bottle. Barbara suggests to him that she suffers from an illness which only a healer from Alexandria can cure and gives him a letter to pass on to Origen, which he does, and then leaves Origen to find more drink, none the wiser with regard to whom he has just been speaking to. In cinq journées, Origen has the letter read aloud during the absence of the messenger from Nicomedia, Lancevant (5110-5714). Differently, in An Buhez Barbara entrusts her secret to the servant whom she sends to ask Origen for instructive literature in the faith. There is no letter involved. Instead, Barbara impresses the need to be secretive upon the servant and assures him of her trust:

Sante Barba de ferüicher.
[139] Ret ezechet na tardet muy,
En effet en vng queffridy,
Da Alexandry euidouff,
Bede vn Criften ordrenet,
Da comps outaff gant guelhaff pret,
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En secret hac ouz bezet couff.

[...]

[141] Allas ma car huy à goar parfet,
Ema ma fizyancc auancet,
Enoch pepep [...] 

Saint Barbe to her servant: / It is necessary that you will go, do not delay!, / indeed on a mission / to Alexandria for me / to a righteous Christian / to speak to him with utmost hurry. / And keep (it) in mind, secretly! // [...] // Alas, my friend, you know very well / that my absolute confidence is / in you, [...] //

This is interesting because in cinq journées Barbara has a servant, Galathe(a) damisella (338/9), a lady’s maid. She appears to be close to her, although she does not become her confidante. This becomes clear when Barbara tells her to leave before Ysacar begins his instructions, but her manner of speaking expresses concern for her servant’s well being as the reason to send her away, rather than mistrust:

Galathee, descendéz a bas,
Je le vous commande et conseil,
Quar je veil parler en conseil
A ce bon medicin a part.
(6184-6187)

The servant in An Buhez is clearly a man, firstly because he is able to move freely from Nicomedia to Alexandria – an action for which Barbara needs to have her female servant fetch a male messenger in cinq journées– and secondly because Origen tells Valentine to “Go now, loyal chaplain / with this good man” (‘Quae prefant chapelan antier, / Gant heman’, 151). Nevertheless, the servant is clearly loyal to Barbara, for she trusts him with her secret conversion. It is possible that the servant’s implicit care for Barbara – without a certain amount of care for his mistress, the servant would very likely not knowingly fulfil such a dangerous assignment – is modelled on the figure of Galathea in cinq journées. However, the servant’s loyalty may also have been inspired by the Latin versions, of which John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia appears to be closest to An Buhez in terms of content. In both the Legenda Aurea and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the servant is not depicted as being particularly close to Barbara, yet he is not sent away when Origen reveals his religion. In fact, in both Latin versions the messenger surprises Origen while he is teaching and thus must become aware of the addressee’s religion:
8. The Baptism of Saint Barbara

*Legenda Aurea:*
nuntius Alexandriam ingreditur, Origenem reperit in palatio Mammæae matris
Caesariis Alexadriæ, ubi occupator in docendo christianam religionem [...].
(Graesse 1965, 899)

John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia:*

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 12f)

Nevertheless, the messenger always takes Valentine to Barbara without any criticism. However, John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* provides additional information about the messenger and explains that Barbara has looked for someone she trusts (“cui crederet”) in order to send him to Origen with her letter:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 12)

And while there is no letter in *An Buhez*, which makes the messenger’s trustworthiness all the more important, this aspect of the messenger’s character is expressed only in *An Buhez* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, but not in the other two versions.

Upon the arrival of the messenger in Alexandria, Origen’s reaction to Barbara’s request is very similar in all versions. He is delighted to receive news of such a high ranking convert and responds immediately by sending Barbara a teacher. In the *Legenda Aurea*, in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, and in *An Buhez* this teacher is Valentine, but in *cinqu’journées* he is called Ysacar, *presbyter cristianus* (5543/4). In all versions a certain amount of secrecy is required in order for him to be able to visit Barbara in her abode and the servant/messenger always approaches Barbara first in order to announce the Christian envoy’s arrival, thus portraying contemporary decorum. Furthermore, all versions employ an alleged illness from which Barbara is supposed to suffer and which can be “cured” by Origen’s envoy. The point at which
this “illness” is introduced varies, however. In *cinq journées*, this illness is invented by Barbara herself as a means to justify her sending someone to Alexandria in the first place. The motif is then taken up by Origen, who instructs Ysacar to pose as a physician (”Faignant que soyész medicin”, 5803), and remains until the end of the episode when it is used to explain Ysacar’s presence and function to Dioscorus. While this is not quite as elaborately pronounced as in *cinq journées*, John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* also mentions Barbara’s deliberate feigning of an illness in order to be able to send someone to Origen:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 12)

The *Legenda Aurea* does not introduce the motif until it is needed to explain Valentine’s presence in Barbara’s rooms. *An Buhez* presents itself as an amalgamation, for while Barbara does not need to invent the illness at the very beginning because she entrusts the servant with her secret, she does invent it when Valentine has arrived in order to be able to withdraw from company:

[165] Ha me aray glan an manyer  
A bezaff claff an quentaaff guer  
Dre manyer euit differaff  
Diouz ma tut a drouc stydy  
[...]  

And I will affect / to be sick, as soon as possible, / in order to retreat / from my people of bad thought, / [...] //

While the illness is mentioned before the arrival of Valentine in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, the information is repeated then, for when Valentine and Barbara’s messenger reach Nicomedia, they hear that she is lying in bed, which they use as a means to reach Barbara without Dioscorus’ knowledge. Barbara’s illness is not physical but spiritual in nature; this information is provided at a later time by the other versions of the legend:
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 16)

Despite all caution, Dioscorus discovers eventually that there is a strange man in his daughter’s chamber. In all versions the king’s reaction is – understandably – an angry demand as to the identity of the stranger. Barbara tells him that he is a healer, but what exactly he is supposed to be able to heal differs. The Latin versions are similar on that point; Origen’s envoy is supposed to be a healer from Alexandria who is able to heal souls, although such skill is not considered customary:

*Legenda Aurea:*
Alexandrinus medendi arte peritus, qui spondet magistrum se habere Alexandriam, qui contra usus medicorum etiam animas curat.
(Graesse 1965, 899)

John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia:*

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 16)

In *An Bahez*, the wording of Barbara’s explanation is artistically ambiguous and still very much to the point:

Sante Barba.
[187] [...]  
Hoguen hep fy me fo dihaet  
Rac fe ez gris don edonet  
Euit ma guelet credethën.
8. The Baptism of Saint Barbara

[188] Houz bout drouc contant pan fantfêñ
Nerañen quet lem equemêñ
Hoguen a crèn ne gouzyêñ quet
Dren pez maz dicuez bout mezec
Me en queff piz den gouizyec
Hac ez deuz hoanteck em requet.

[189] Groat eu net feder ma fperet
Yach heb vn blecc dre vn reczet
Ameux receuet em credên
Rac nendeux cleffuet en bet man
Naue freaflet curet glan
Gant heman didan poan an pên

Saint Barbe: / [...] / But without doubt I am unwell / therefore I made him come, forsooth, / in order to see me, believe this! // If I had sensed your being malcontent / I would not have summoned him, certainly! / But certainly I did not know it. / Due to the fact that he seems to be a surgeon / I find him quite an adequate man, / and he came eagerly at my request. // My spirit is made pure, for sure, / healthy, without a wound, by a formula / which I have received in my belief / because there is no illness in this world / that has not been alleviated, completely cured / by this one under pain of "head". //

It is interesting to note that Barbara plays not only the invalid, but also the obedient child. In fact, she lies to her father’s face, for she was well aware of the fact that her father would not allow a Christian to visit her, which is proven by her earlier secrecy (cf. Schnabel 2016). In cinq journées, Barbara is merely lying about being ill. She claims to be suffering from a faint heart and debility, and explains that she has kept to her bed ("Pere, j’ay le cuer ung peu fade, / Je suys ung pou debilitee. / Depuys deux jours me suys couchee, 6525-6527"). Barbara also tries to calm her irritated father by explaining who the strange man in her chambers is:

Pere, ne vous courocéz point,
Reffrenén voystre oppinion.
Je l’ay fait en intencion
De toust recouvréz ma santé.
C’est ung mire experimenté,
Ung medicin fisicien
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Et ung saige cirurgien
Qui ma maladié gouverne.
(6547-6554)

Both cinq journées and An Buhez assign Origen’s envoy with a more specific occupational title than the Latin versions and call him “Ung medicin fisicên / et ung saige cirurgien” (cinq journées) and a “mezec” (‘surgeon’, An Buhez), respectively. Nevertheless, the relation between cinq journées and An Buhez is not as obvious here as in other episodes (6, 11). Ysacar, in contrast to the other versions, where his equivalent Valentine remains silent and in the case of An Buhez even leaves the stage upon Dioscorus’ arrival, plays along with the ruse and begins to express his opinion about Barbara’s disturbed humors (6569-6622).

In addition to this it is noteworthy that Origen’s envoy has to enter the royal dwelling rather than Barbara’s tower in An Buhez. Dioscorus is then depicted as making use of this unexpected visit which lacks the king’s approval as a justification to bring his daughter into the tower. While this is not made explicit by the text, it is implicit due to the timing. After Barbara has explained Valentine’s purpose to her father, he reveals his intentions to imprison his daughter in a tower:

Sante Barba.

[...] [189] Groat eu net feder ma fperet
Yach heb vn blecc dre vn reczet
Ameux receuet em credên
Rac nendeux cleffuet en bet man
Naue frealfet curet glan
Gantz heman didan poan an pên

Dioscorus.

[190] Moz reo breman ahanên
Dan lech maz vihet miret tên
Oar poan an pên me diffenno
Nac ay neb termen den en bet
Euit neb quentel doz guelet
Ha fe miret na fellet tro.

Saint Barbara: / [...] // My spirit is made pure, for sure, / healthy, without a wound, by a formula / which I have received in my belief / because there is no
illness in this world / that has not been alleviated, completely cured / by this one under pain of “head”. //
Dioscorus: / I will take you now from here / to the place where you will be protec-
ted firmly. / On pain of death I will prohibit / that no man in the world will ever
go, / at any time, to see you / and do not fail to remember this. //

This would also explain why Valentine leaves the place on stage where Barbara is, because this
ensures a smooth transition of Dioscorus and Barbara from the royal dwelling to the tower. The
idea may have been taken from John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, where the tower is built after
the episode involving Valentine, too. However, the two events are not brought together as in
the Breton play. Instead, a new chapter is begun after Valentine’s visit, in which Dioscorus
sees his daughter go for a walk and decides that her great beauty needs to be guarded. Then he
has the idea of having a tower built for this purpose. In cinq journées and the Legenda Aurea,
Barbara has already been moved into the tower when Origen’s envoy comes to visit her. This
demonstrates once again the creativity and freedom with which the author of An Buhez has
reworked and rearranged the subject matter.31

The four versions that include Origen’s envoy, while very similar at first sight, show con-
siderable differences with regard to the details. The most striking difference between the four
versions is the change of name from Valentine to Ysacar in cinq journées, particularly because
cinq journées does not usually differ significantly from John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia. In this
case, the French play has deviated from John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia in two ways, first by
renaming Origen’s envoy, and second by placing Barbara in the tower before she is visited by
that envoy. The close relation of cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia is neverthe-
less clear due to the similar way in which both versions establish Barbara’s pretended illness.
An Buhez, on the other hand, contains details that only appear in John of Wakkerzeel’s His-
oria, but not in cinq journées or the Legenda Aurea. Both John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and
An Buhez, for example, establish that the messenger is trustworthy. In addition to this, there
is a subtle similarity between “Hac ez deuz hoantec em requet” (‘and he came eagerly at my request’, 188) and Barbara’s description of Valentine promising her exigent worth, “qui spon-
det mihi subitum valorem” (16). In both versions, a quick and adequate response on the part of
Valentine is implied, which is absent from cinq journées and the Legenda Aurea. Furthermore,
Barbara is still in her rooms in the royal dwelling when she is visited by Valentine in An Buhez
and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, but has already been moved into the tower in cinq journées

31Note the wordplay in those two stanzas: Barbara, who is well aware of the danger Valentine is in while in
her father’s palace, refers to him being under a death sentence (“didan poan an pên”, 189), but disguises that
information as a description of his skills to cure people suffering from pains in the head, which is the literal
translation of “poan an pên”. Dioscorus then takes this phrase up and employs it in its meaning of a death
sentence “Oar poan an pên me difenno” (“On pain of death I will prohibit”, 190).
and the *Legenda Aurea*. While the similarities between John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *An Buhez* are numerous, most of these are usually shared by *cinq journées* as well. In this case there appears to be a direct connection between John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *An Buhez*, which is very important to note because it suggests that the author of the Breton play was familiar with Wakkerzeele’s work or a branch of transmission that evolved from it, and did not only rework *cinq journées*.

And yet the author of *An Buhez* chose to deviate from the branch of transmission represented by John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* (and *cinq journées*) at a crucial point. Instead of having John the Baptist administer the sacrament of baptism to Barbara, it is Valentine who performs this office. In addition to this, Barbara is not in or near the pool when she is baptised in *An Buhez* and the *Legenda Aurea*, which again contrasts with John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées* (11). Thus, *An Buhez* is clearly aligned with the *Legenda Aurea*, which demonstrates yet again how freely motifs have been combined in this work of art. For while *An Buhez* is much closer to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées* during the lead-up to Barbara’s baptism, the event itself then corresponds to the *Legenda Aurea*.

8. The Baptism of Saint Barbara
9. Marrying Barbara

One of the primary ways in which the saint’s devotion to and faith in God are demonstrated is through acts of renunciation that at once distance the saint from human society and perform the function of gifts to God.
(Campbell 2008, 27f)

This clearly holds true for Barbara’s refusal of marriage. As an only child and heir it would be her role to ensure the survival of the dynasty of her father. When the two lords in An Buhez learn of Barbara’s new accommodation in the tower, they are at first outraged about her being taken into custody without any misconduct on her part. But it is precisely the question of the succession that the second lord addresses first when they approach Dioscorus in An Buhez:

An eil autrou.
[215] Dich heb neb mar clouar ny lauaro,
Bezet certen louen an termen fo,
An re ouz bro fo pep tro commouet
Douz requetiff ha douz pidiiff yuez,
Gant cals à hoant ardant ha carancez,
Effe preuez aneuez demezet.

[216] Barba hoz merch fo pep derch en guercdet,
Ret eu hep fi clafq dezy vn priet,
Pa nouz eux quet aer en bet nemet hy,
Rac fe fellet hac auifet feder
Piu aue feant fouffifant hac antier,
Maz prezequer ober an materi.

The other lord: / We will tell to you nicely without any doubt / be certain!, gladly what the matter is. / The inhabitants of your land have altogether started out / to request and also to ask you / with a very ardent desire and affection / that she would soon be advantageously married, // Barbara, your daughter, who is apparently in a state of virginity. / It is necessary without doubt to find her a spouse / because you have no heir at all except her / therefore look and consider surely / who would be decent enough and proper / so that one can argue for making the deal. //

Dioscorus then promises the lords to speak to his daughter about her thoughts on the matter. When he speaks to her in her rooms in the tower, however, she does not share the lords’ view
on the matter and refuses the request to marry brusquely in two stanzas. She thus acts precisely as a saint’s behaviour is described by Campbell, for her renunciation distances her from her human society in order to bring her closer to God. However, Dioscorus’ reaction to this refusal appears rather harsh:

_Dioscorus aya da compus ouz e merch._

[225] Ma merch clouar hucar hagar à caraff,
Nam refus quet em requet à netra,
Ma fintiff groa dreis pep tra nara quen,
Te eu hep fy ma styd hep muy quet,
Ma aer querhaff quentaff oar guehaff pret,
Ma holl fècret ma condet men cret plen.

[226] Rac fè feder compfet vn guer certen,
Diff heb neb gou diouz houz guenou louen,
Beu ha feuen dien heb vileny,
A huy neb eur dre neb feur oz deur quet,
Dre carantes bout yuez demezet,
Ha quemeret vn prier heb quet fy.

_Sant e Barba à refpont de tat._

[227] Ma tat mat net pardonet dif,
Na poaniet quet dam requetiff,
Er me dimiiff neriff quet,
Da den en bet bezet fèder
Oar an bet man en neb manier,
Chetu da efper difclairiet.

_Dioscorus._

[228] Petra fo dide hoaruezet,
Na fentez à vout demezet,
Ha quemeret vn prier mat,
Autrounez à pris puifant,
Cazr ha iolis ha fouffifant
So feuramant ouz da hoantat.

_Sante Barba._
9. Marrying Barbara

[229] Dre neb pedên ne rohên grat,
Rac nendeu ma cas na ma flat
Diouz ma poellant prietat den,
Pardonet diff her neriff quet,
Dre fe oar pep tro me ho pet
Em leffet ha na compfet quen.

Dioscorus.

[230] Me aray dit dre depit yen,
Ez mirui ûânt gant fin anquen
Men toe dit certen am guenou,
Aman quen diguir mez miro,
Den à neb fort nez conforto
Oar nep tro ha te guelo gnou.

Dioscorus goes to speak to his daughter: / My soft, sweet, lovely daughter, whom
I love, / do not refuse me, in any way, with regard to my request! / Obey me more
than anything, do nothing else! / You are, without doubt, my concern, without
much ado, / my dearest, first heir, of utmost importance, / all my happiness, my
heart, I believe it fully.
Therefore, surely, speak a clear word / to me, without deceit, from your lips eagerly
/ lively and strong, clearly without vileness: / do you not, (by) any chance, for any
price, wish / also to be married, out of love, / and to take a spouse without any
doubt? //

Saint Barbara answers her father: / My good father, truly, forgive me! / Do not
make an effort to ask me, / because I will not marry / no man – be sure! – / on this
world in any way. / Voilà, your request explained. //

Dioscorus: / What has happened to you? / Do you not obey to be married / and to
take a good spouse? / Lords of powerful esteem, / beautiful and pretty and capable,
/ are surely desiring you. //

Saint Barbara: / I would not give in because of any plea / for it is not my wish nor
my way of life / according to my conviction, to marry a man. / Pardon me because
I will not do it! / Therefore, finally, I ask you / that you leave me and speak no
more. //

Dioscorus: / Due to cold contempt for you I will cause / that you will die wretchedly
9. Marrying Barbara

with extreme agony! / I swear it to you from my lips! / Here I will guard you so
harshly / so that no man of any kind will comfort you / in any way and you will
see, for sure. //

When looked at from the angle of Dioscorus the king, this episode does not seem particularly
strange, because the king is presented as possessing a commanding but volatile personality
throughout the play. Whenever he commands, the other characters obey. The king is socially
superior to almost all characters of An Buhez and he is therefore used to his orders being
followed. The following examples will illustrate this position of the king throughout the play:

An meieer mecherour.
[53] Dez mat golol autrou a glan coudet
A pedaff plen dreis quement den fo en bet
Dichuy pepret feu1 max vihet feder
Pan cleuis flam dinam houz mandamant
E-duiz tizmat hep nep debat batant
Efpediant diligent hac antier.

The master worker: / A good, bright day, Lord, wholeheartedly / I truly wish,
more than any man in the world / you always, as long as you will live. / Because
I truly, flawlessly heard your request / I have come quickly without any debate,
immediately / quick, dilligent and assiduous. //

An meieir [a fcol].
[84] Pan gourchemën meya crën bet ênhaff
Da guelet rez hep mez pe fell dezaff
An pret quentaﬀ tardaﬀ ne mennaﬀ quet
Ha ioaus bras ouﬀ pep pas dren drafe
En e feruig me am em empliche
Dreif an holl re pan guelhe efte pret

The [school]master: / Since he orders (it), I go indeed to him / to see really
without shame what he lacks / at all. I do not want to be negligible! / and I am
greatly joyous (about) every step of this affair / in his service I would like to employ
myself / rather than in anyone else’s, if he would see ﬁt. //

Sante barba a repond de tat.
[90] Ma tat mat quer antier gruet aquerhet
9. Marrying Barbara

Rac defiraff araffnen nachaff quet
Bezaff affet diciplinet feder
[...]

Saint Barbara replies to her father: / My dear, good father, do entirely what you
would like!, / because I want, I do not deny it, / to be, indeed, educated surely /
[...]. //

An Mefr.
[292] Gloat,
Ha huy et oar lerc da querchat
Rac me bizhuiquen louenhat,
Neraff dre e gloat na e madou,
Pa na caffen lech da techet
Digantaff ccaff nen nachaff quet,
Em laz fe affet aguetou.

The Master: / Money! / Go looking for (it) yourselves! / Because I will never
rejoice / in his money or his goods. / If I had not found a place to hide / from him
quickly – I do not deny (it) – / he would have just killed me! //

Gueguen.
[374] Ne fahhe quet lauaret gou
Eff a trouche crën hon pënu
An autrou euël da dou quy
[...]

Gueguen: / It would not do to tell a lie: / he would surely cut our heads for us,
/ the lord, like (he would) for two dogs. / [...] //

An prouoft.
[410] Merey gardis doz guis he punisaff
[...]

The provost: / I will have her punished harshly to your liking / [...] //

Characters depicting peasants such as Gueguen, the shepherd who will betray Barbara to her
father when she tries to hide in the mountains, reveal the king’s power of command over life
and death of his subjects. From the earlier comments by the master worker and the schoolmaster it becomes clear that they consider being employed by the king prestigious and are happy to accept his offer/follow his orders. The master worker’s obedience, however, does not extend to having himself killed for not following the king’s orders. Instead, he runs away from the enraged king and goes into hiding, without claiming his or his employees’ wages. The king on the other hand seems to consider himself well within his rights to threaten the master worker for not following his orders precisely. The provost and Barbara herself are slightly different. While they are undoubtedly of a higher social standing than the masters and peasants, they are still clearly in the habit of obeying the king. In the case of Barbara, her obedience is tested when her father’s expectations collide with her own desire, i.e. on the question of her marriage, and at that point she abandons her obedient manner and thus provokes the ruler.

Nevertheless, it seems a bit extreme that Dioscorus threatens his only heir and daughter with death simply because she refuses a request he makes of her. His behaviour is rendered even stranger when compared to the previous parts of An Buhez and Dioscorus’ behaviour with regard to Barbara on the one hand and the other versions of the legend considered in this study on the other. When the king appears on stage for the first time in An Buhez, he begins by telling the audience about his beloved daughter. He has already devised a plan to keep her hidden away from the world and would-be-rapists or -ravishers. But he also clearly states that he does not wish to marry her to anyone:

Dioscorus.

[...]  
[35] Memeux vn merch net ha derch so guerches  
A dle bout sclaer ent seder ma aeres  
Successoures em deces an nessaff  
Doucc ha plesant excellant hac antier  
Ha cazr ha mat hegarat a stat quer  
Hy ent seder en ma esper querrhaff.

[36] Dre se seder ober a prederaff  
Un tour fournis dam guis an iolishaff  
Hac an creffhaff mar gallaff bezaff quet  
De miret net ent secret credet plen  
En lech distro eno ne guelo den  
Chetu dien ameux plen ordrenet.

[37] He dimiziff credet diff neriff quet
9. Marrying Barbara

Nemet certen da muyhaff den so en bet
Rac se nepret da monet de metou
Ne lesiffquet den en bet naret sy
Da nessat crën dre nep tén bet ênhy
Da comps outy membry rac me biou.

Dioscorus: / […] // I have a pure and noble daughter, who is a maiden / which, of course, must be, surely, my heiress / soft and pleasant, excellent and complete / and beautiful and good, lovely, of dear character; / she, surely, is my dearest hope. // Because of this, surely, I intend to built / a tower arranged to my taste, the most beautiful / and the strongest, if I can, (I want it) to be / in order to guard her entirely secretly, believe (it) fully / in a deserted place; there, she will not see a man / no man will see her. / Voilà, clearly I have plainly ruled. // Believe me, I will not marry her / except to the greatest man that is in the world / therefore I will never let anybody / go near her, make no doubt / nor approach her at all, by any means / nor speak with her, methinks, for I am her master. //

The irony of Dioscorus’ statement not to marry his daughter to any but the greatest man in the world is very likely intended, for it is precisely the greatest of men, Jesus Christ, of whom Barbara becomes a bride. Nevertheless, it serves also to illustrate Dioscorus’ true desire to keep his daughter to himself and hide her from the rest of the world. This appears to include hiding her from her duty as an heiress, which would involve getting married to an influential man and bearing him sons. This view is confirmed by the attitude of the lords, of course. In order to do so, however, she would have to be introduced to some men, but her father continuously demonstrates that this is not what he has in mind for his daughter:

Dioscorus.
[190] Moz reo breman ahanên
Dan lech maz vihet miret tên
Oar poan an pên me diffeno
Nac ay neb termen den en bet
Euit neb quentel doz guelet
Ha fe miret na fellet tro.

[…]

[199] Barba ma merch net hederc haguerch glâ

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9. Marrying Barbara

Deneffet lem dirac ma drem breman
Huy eu noman dreis pep vnan ganet
Ma holl efper singulier ha querhaff
Ham holl buhez nos dez feuil maz vezaff
A re caraff muyhaff nen nachaff quet.

[200] Rac fe feder emeux fclaer prederet
Ober fournis flam dam guis diuïfet
Un tour flour net doz miret hep quet fy
Enhaff affet secret ez vihet plen
Perguen eno na no guelo neb den
Bezet certen bizhuiquen nep heny.

[...] 

[203] Memeux deffeu her da beuiff
Ouz drouc ha pirill ouz miriff
Guelhaff maz guiliff neriff quen
Rac fe tizmat finchat batant
Et ênhaff efpres em prefant
Bezet diligant ouz antren.

Dioscorus: / I will take you now from here / to the place where you will be
protected firmly. / On pain of death I will prohibit / that no man in the world will
ever go, / at any time, to see you / and do not fail to remember this. // [...] // Barbe,
my daughter, her aspect pure and a true virgin! / Come close to me, now. / You
are, here, more than anyone alive, / all my hope, unique and most dear / and all
my life, night (and) day so long as I shall exist / I love those the most, I do not deny
it. // Therefore, surely, I have clearly thought / to make – fully splendid, to my
taste arranged – / a generous tower truly to guard you, without any doubt: / in it,
indeed, you will secretly live, completely / pure, there, and never will any man see
you / – be sure! – ever, nobody. // [...] // I have a notion: as long as I will live / I
will protect you from evil and peril / as best as I will be able to, I will do nothing
else! / Therefore quickly, evermore immediately / go into it, truly, in my presence.
/ Be swift at entering! //

Apart from recurrently repeating that no man is supposed to lay eyes on his daughter, Dio-
scoros also affirms his love for her, directly as well as indirectly. Even on a medieval stage where repetition serves to transport a message, the way in which Dioscorus expresses his feelings for his daughter seems obsessive rather than truly loving. This is perhaps part of the reason why he switches from loving father to homicidal patriarch so quickly when Barbara refuses his wish for the first time. Up to that point she has always complied, even when he asked her to move into the tower. While she states that it feels like imprisonment to her (201), she does not refuse to enter, because moving into the tower is not contrary to her own wishes – she can contemplate God wherever she is. Getting married, however, would flaunt her plan to preserve her virginity as a bride of Christ and thus she cannot accept the request. Barbara’s refusal in stanza 229 is very short and appears to be rather brusque (cf. Schnabel 2016). Nevertheless, a death threat seems very extreme in this case, particularly because Barbara’s reaction is very much in alignment with Dioscorus’ previous wish that no man should ever see her, let alone take her from him. Killing her also appears to be very much opposed to his wish to protect her from evil and peril (203). Thus, Dioscorus’ reaction to Barbara’s refusal to marry in An Buhez is highly surprising.

In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées, this reaction is very different and fits the overall situation much better. Instead of threatening her, Dioscorus flings his arms around Barbara’s neck and kisses her:

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

cinq journées:
BARBARA
Cher Pere, en brief, je vous record
Responde a mon cuer concordant.
[...]
Voustre requeste n’est honneste,
Quar j’ay de volenté louee
Au haut Dieu chasteté vouee,
Pour ce que mon humanité
9. Marrying Barbara

Est tendant a fragillité
De sa pouvre condicion:
Elle tent a sa corrupción,
A punaysie et a ordure.
Ma responce point ne vous dure,
Pere, quar, combien que je doye
Vous obeýz en toute voye
Par la loy que Nature dîte,
Aussi, selon la loy escripte
Toutesfois en ceste materie,
Je contredy pourtant, cher Pere.
Pour cestuy cas ne vous desplaise.

DYOSCORUS
Desplaire? Dea! j’en suys bien aise!
Par ceste responce moult seure
M’esjouysséz outre mesure.
Je suys de ce letifié!
Aiéz voustre propox lié
A gardéz donc virginité
Et a fuîr charnalité
Comme la d[e]esse Dýanne,
Qui n’est polluë ne prophane,
Mais pour sa belle netteté
Est déesse de chasteté.

(4622-4684)

The onset of John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées is very similar to An Buhez. Dioscorus has expressed his love and the wish to protect his daughter several times. When the lords approach him, he agrees to pass their request on to her reluctantly. The main difference is that Barbara has craftily led Dioscorus to believe that her vow of chastity is inspired by the pagan gods rather than by the Christian God and has in this way given Dioscorus a good reason for her refusal. She has not done so in An Buhez. In this regard, An Buhez is closer to the Legenda Aurea, in which Barbara also does not give any reason for her refusal of marriage, which is very curt, too. However, in the Legenda Aurea Dioscorus does not threaten to kill her, either. He simply walks away from her:

[…] ipse vero ad eam accedens in turrim persuadebat eam dicens: filia mea,
9. Marrying Barbara

quidam de potentibus commemorati sunt de te; cum ira dixit: ne cogas me hoc agere, pater. At ipse secessit ab ea descendensque instituit multitudinem artificium [...].
(Graesse 1965, 899)

In *deux journées*, Barbara also refuses to marry. The onset is very different from John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia, cinq journées* and *An Buhez*. Parental love is not given as a reason for locking her away. Instead, Dioscorus reveals his plans to marry his daughter in his very first speech:

*Icy commence le maistre Saincte Barbe vierge; et Dïoscorus parle a la royne.*

Dioscorus

[...]

Elle est belle, prudente et sage.
Nous n’avon enfant, si n’est elle,
Augmenter la fault haultement.
Elle est gente de corps et belle,
Marier la fault grandement.
Marice soit, c’est mon desir,
Dame sera de ma maison.
(286-292)

No wish to prevent Barbara from marrying is expressed, here. In fact, when two lords, like in the other plays, call on the royal couple, the king and queen are quite happy about this: “Nous sommes bien entalentez, / Ma femme et moy, par voz devis, / De marier et augmenter / Nostre fille par voz advis” (315-318). The two lords then suggest to ask Barbara’s opinion on the matter, which is what the king does, promptly:

*Le roy*

[...]

Je suis en ung grant pensement
D’ung seigneur qui vous a requise :
Moult riche, de tresbonne guise.
Plusieurs en sont a moy venus,
Lesquelz je n’ays pas soustenus.
Il me semble qu’il est ja temps,
[...]
Par voz amis et vostre mere;
Nous en sommë en grant malaise.
9. Marrying Barbara

Barbe
Mon cher seigneur, ne vous desplaise,
Car saachés bien que pour richesse,
Ne pour honneur ne pour haultesse,
possessions ne pour rente,
Ne pour homme qui s’en demante,
Ne pour vostre terre lenir,
Ne voz seigneuries maintenir;
Je ne vueil copulacion
D’homme ne habitaëion
Que je vive moys ne sepmaine;
Pource, n’en prenés ja la peine,
Car ainsi useray ma vie.
   Le roy
Barbare, ma fille et m’amye,
Vous ferés a mon ordomanee
Et grant honneur et grant puissance
Vous en viendres après ma mort.
(395-418)

Upon her refusal, Barbara’s parents attempt to convince her of the wisdom of their plan, but she is not moved. Barbara is rebuked for her attitude by her father, and even more so by her mother. However, neither of her parents threatens to kill her. Instead, the king sends his servant to fetch masons to begin building the tower immediately (462f), a course of events which is very similar to the Legenda Aurea (s.a.).

In both Latin versions and in both French plays, Dioscorus’ (and the queen’s) reaction fits the respective situation. While the king is pleased in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées, because Barbara complies with his incipient wish to not ever give her away, his (and the queen’s) reaction/s in the Legenda Aurea and deux journées is/are mild to non-existent. Admittedly, this leaves room for interpretation, but the king’s violent reaction in An Buhez is nevertheless surprising because the onset resembles cinq journées (and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia) very strongly, and thus a similar reaction would be expected. It is possible that Dioscorus’ reaction was altered by the author of An Buhez in order to underline the king’s character. As the villain in the play, he is depicted as a volatile and short-tempered person. In contrast to the Dioscorus of cinq journées, who is often directly influenced by the evil devils, the Dioscorus in An Buhez usually acts of his own accord, until the very end, when Beezlebub takes a hand in order to ensure that the king will truly commit the murder of his daughter
9. Marrying Barbara

(13.2).

However, it is also possible that the author was aware of a tradition in which the king does indeed react strongly to his daughter’s refusal of marriage. There is a French poem in which the king threatens to kill his daughter after she has refused to marry, but there Barbara reveals her conversion at this point and declares herself a bride of Jesus Christ. This is the reason for the king to threaten her with death (Denomy 1939, 172):

Quant ton père te voulîs marier
Toy qui aloye tout droit sans devyer
N’entendis point de mortel mary prandre
Aïns Dieu. “Pere, aut‌re n’auray espoux
Que Jhesucrist, c’est le Seigneur de tous,
Mon doulz sauleur auquel n’a que reprandre.”

Si tost que ton père t’oût nommer
Le nom Jhesus commença a fumer;
Moult fut troublé car les Chrestiens desdesigne.
Comme cruel forcenée de despit,
Te vouilt tuer de s’espee sans respit,
Mais tu fouys lors en une montaigne.
(25-36)

As becomes clear from the excerpt, the poem has more in common with the Breton play than the fact that Barbara’s father wants to kill her when she refuses marriage. The rhyme scheme is similar, too, and Denomy describes it thus:

The poem is written in decasyllabic verse arranged in stanzas six lines in length. The rime is aabccb. With very few exceptions, the line is divided into two staves of four and six syllables. The caesura is generally sharply defined.
(Denomy 1939, 171)

However, the poem being French, there is no internal rhyme. The end rhyme of one stanza is not taken up by the next stanza, either. With regard to the contents, there are also significant differences between the poem and the Breton play. Barbara is baptised by the Holy Spirit, rather than by Valentine (or by John the Baptist), and Origen and/or his messenger are entirely absent from the story as it is told by the poem (17-24). With regard to terminology, on the other hand, there are some further similarities to be found, but these are not exclusively used in An Buhez and the poem. The poem calls the shepherd(s) “bergier(s)” (38) rather than “pasteur/pastour”
9. Marrying Barbara

(\textit{deux journées}, 1020/1021ff), which is closer to the term “berger” used in \textit{An Buhez} (375/6). However, \textit{cinq journées} uses both terms, “pastor” (11520/11521) and “bergiers” (12539). This is similar when looking at the figure of the provost. In \textit{An Buhez} and the poem, the provost who oversees Barbara’s torture does not have a name, while he is called “Marcien/Marcian” in the French plays. Again, \textit{cinq journées} uses both the name Marcián and the description as provost to refer to the character (13918), while in \textit{deux journées} he is called “Marcien empereur” (1292/1293) and not “provost” at all. Despite the similarities, the poem is an unlikely ancestor of the Breton play. According to Denomy, it was written in Autun at the end of the fifteenth century (Denomy 1939, 171), which is quite some way from Brittany and even from Paris. Nevertheless, the poem serves to illustrate the diversity that characterises the legend of Barbara in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
10. The Windows

The number of windows in Barbara’s tower is one of the key points of her legend. Dioscorus orders the craftsmen to build two windows. When he subsequently leaves on a political errand, Barbara approaches the craftsmen and asks them to make three windows instead. These are, of course, supposed to signify the trinity and her own conversion to Christianity. When Dioscorus returns and discovers the addition, he is furious and demands an explanation. He consequently hears about his daughter’s conversion and threatens to kill her for it. Thus, the third window marks a turning point in the action of the legend and the play.

10.1. The Two Windows

In all three plays the fact that Dioscorus’ tastes and wishes are to be satisfied is noticeably emphasised. One of these wishes is the number of windows (or openings in the case of deux journées) the tower, respectively the bathhouse (Legenda Aurea), are supposed to have. Even though there is hardly any consistency with regard to the windows, it is still interesting and enlightening to take a closer look at the respective episodes.

In the Legenda Aurea the two windows are introduced shortly after Dioscorus has left. Barbara descends and looks at the work that has been accomplished so far and sees only two windows facing north: “descendensque famula Dei videri opus, quod factum est, vidit contra septentrionem duas solummodo fenestras” (Graesse 1965, 899f). In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Dioscorus gives the orders for the design of the tower during his first interview with the craftsmen. These orders include the number of windows the tower is supposed to have. He wants it to have only two northward windows, because he considers southward windows unworthy (“indignam”), and does not want the rising sun from the east to disturb his daughter’s sleep in the mornings, nor the setting sun from the west to heat her rooms too much:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 18)

The reasons Dioscorus gives against the building of east- and westward windows are the same in cinq journées. However, the unworthiness of southward windows is not reflected in cinq
jourées. There, the tower is to have one northward and one southward window;\textsuperscript{32}

Je vusei qu’il y ait deux fenestres  
Et non plus – entendéz vous, Maistres ?  
L’une devers Septemtrion  
Et l’autre vers la region  
Qui est appel[e] Mydi.  

(4046-4050)

As I indicate above, the second opening in \textit{deux journées} is not even a window, but an ar-balestriere. While the window is apparently meant to face the rising sun, i.e. east, it is not entirely clear from the text which direction the other opening should face; this must have been made apparent by the actor on stage:

Icy aura une fenestre,  
Affin du jour apparoistre.

\textsuperscript{32}Considering the closeness between \textit{cinq journées} and John of Wakkerzeel’s \textit{Historia} with regard to contents as well as to their respective date of composition (Kim 1998, 375-377), it is plausible that John of Wakkerzeel’s \textit{Historia} may have been used as a source text for \textit{cinq journées}. However, it is entirely unclear which – if indeed any – of the considerable number of versions in various languages the \textit{fatiste de cinq journées} might have used. Unfortunately, I could not consult a French translation of John of Wakkerzeel’s \textit{Historia}, but a translation into Dutch is available on-line. While I have not compared the versions in much detail, it is noticeable that the Dutch version is usually very close to the Latin version of John of Wakkerzeel’s \textit{Historia}, with some small but often rather striking exceptions. One of these exceptions is the placement of the two windows, which is the same in \textit{cinq journées} and in the Dutch version, i.e. one northward and one southward window:

(Wakkerzeel 1497, 30).
10. The Windows

Vous ferés une arbalestrie
De ceste costé pour estre clere,
Qu’elle me soit haulte et bien faict.
(513-517)

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and the two French plays include the windows in their initial description of the tower. In the Legenda Aurea time must have passed between Dioscorus employing the workers and Barbara descending and seeing the windows for the first time. Nevertheless, the second part directly follows the first – in fact, it is only one sentence that describes both actions. In An Buhez it is slightly different. The windows are only addressed at a much later stage. Before leaving on a state errand (see below), the king visits the building site and commands the workers to work hard and finish the tower as quickly as possible. Then he mentions the windows:

[242] [...]  
Ha gruet diff hep quë dou preneft  
Diouz feptemtrion ent oneft  
Da arhuet dre fet apreflet.

[...] / and for my sake, make only two windows / nicely aligned to look / away from the north, honestly! //

Both the Legenda Aurea and An Buhez are not entirely clear regarding the actual direction of the windows, as “diouz” like “contra” could be translated either “facing” or “away from”. In An Buhez, however, there is some further clarification of the direction. On the one hand, the master explains to his workers where they should build the windows. On the other hand, Dioscorus himself comments very precisely on the alignment of the windows in the tower:

[245] [...]  
An meffr mecherour.  
Diff a crën ez gourchemennas  
En e guis hac ez diuifas  
O ber hep noas ne fallas quet  
Dou preneft oneft en creis dez

[...]
10. The Windows

Dioscorus.

[...]
[305] Dou didan hac vnan dan knech
[...] pan rech plen
Ober try freneft en creis dez
[...]

[...] / The master worker: / [Dioscorus] instructed me, explicitly, / with regard to
his taste and he arranged / to make without argument – so he did – / two comely
southward windows. // [...] //
Dioscorus: / [...] / Two below and a single one at the top! / [...] when you did /
have three windows made in the south, just so / [...]. //

Dioscorus’ instructions in *An Buhez* are very similar to the description of the windows in
the *Legenda Aurea* – both mention two windows facing in the same direction and use the
term “septen[m]trion”. Even the terms used to indicate the direction – “diouz” (*An Buhez,
242) and “contra” (*Legenda Aurea, 900*) – are ambivalent to about the same degree. However,
the additional description of the windows as “en creis dez” (‘southward’, 305) points towards
the Breton play’s relation to *cinq journées*, which is the only other play that explicitly mentions
south as a direction. In addition to this, the structure of *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* is similar. In
the *Legenda Aurea* and in *deux journées* the two building – the bathhouse and tower respectively
– are commissioned and the next action involving the building is a visit from Barbara. In
both *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* Dioscorus returns to the building site before the completion
of the building and makes a further request of the craftsmen. While at this point Dioscorus
explains about the two windows in *An Buhez*, in *cinq journées* he has already done so at the
beginning and instead instructs the craftsmen to include a bathing facility in the tower. The
structure, however, is similar and moreover a bathhouse would be pointless in *An Buhez* due
to the presence of a fountain close to the tower. The connection between the bathhouse and
the fountain is discussed in 11.

10.2. The Third Window

After having commissioned the building and specified the number of windows, the king leaves
in all five versions. The reason for his absence or his destination are, however, not provided
likewise. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, the reason for his absence is quite clear. The legend
provides the information that the king leaves with his best knights on a military excursion on
the command of the emperor:
10. The Windows

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

This is similar in the Legenda Aurea, which employs the same words as John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, but shortens the information considerably: “[...] profectusque est in regionem longinquam [...]]” (899). The information about Dioscorus’ absence is provided in a subordinate clause between Dioscorus’ distribution of wages to the craftsmen and Barbara’s inspection of the building site, and there is no hint of any military matter. With regard to the plot structure, the information is provided in the same place in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia. In cinq journées, the king’s absence is explained and his military excursion is made into an entire episode of its own which takes place during the second half of the second day. It is a long episode that carries some dramatic significance, because the king leaves in order to participate in a strike against all Christians of Alexandria. Thus, Dioscorus (unknowingly) attacks Barbara’s mentors (and loses). His troops are part of an army gathered by Dyogenes in the name of emperor Maximien. He sends a messenger to Dioscorus in order to ask for his support and Dioscorus agrees to accompany him in this endeavour:

DYOGENÉS, superior in Egipto sub Maximiano.
Seigneurs, faictes tretouz silence
Et entendez tous mon propoux!
Vous estez tous des vraiz supports
De Maximïen l’empereur.
Soubz luy avéz eu maint honneur,
Juré luy avéz loyaulté
Et moy aussi la faëulté.
Je suys vicaire especial
Pour tout l’estat imperïal,
Gouverneur par discrecion.
[...]
Puys deux jours d’une grefe offence
Qui par mauvlaue inadvertance
Est venuë contre l’empire.
Nouvelles ne puis ouyr dire,
Dont mon ame soit plus naffree,
10. The Windows

Quar la cité d’Alexandrie,
Comme desloyalle et perverse,
Est a la loy Jesus converse
Et lesse la loy de Venus,
De Juno et de Neptunus
Et de noz dieux qui sont si bons.
(7440-7467)

[...]

BRACONNET [messenger of DYGENES]

[...]
Mais [DYGENES] a afaire de vous
Pour aulcune rebellïon,
Pour certaine dissencïon
Que ceulx d’Alexandrië ont
Contre l’empeure, car ilz sont
A la foy Jesus convertiz.
Dyogenës est advertiz
Du cas, si a deliberé
Sans qu’il soit jamais differé
Qu’ï les subjuguerà par force.
De tout son pouoir il s’efforce
D’assembléz gens de tous costëz.
Pourant, cher Sire redoubtéz,
Vous mande que vous ordonner
De tous points et vous en venëz
Vers luy o tout voustre estandart
Dedans quinze jours au plus tard
Et amenéz tretous voz gens.

DYOSCORUS
De ce ne serons negligens,
Quar le cas est bien parcial
Tant pour l’onneur imperial
Que pour la haygne que je tien
Contre tout homme cresten.
10. The Windows

Jë yray de tresbon couraige.
(7778-7805)

During the preparations for his absence, Discoros also approaches the masons and instructs them once more to build the tower and the bathhouse according to his specifications. As in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and the Legenda Aurea, Discoros also gives the masons some money:

DYOSCORUS
Gandolche, le cas est tel,
Je ne sçay quand je reviendrai,
Pour la cause, je vous dirai,
Si contenter, car il me haite,
De celle ouvrage qui est faict
Et de celle qui est a faire,
Et garder bien pour quelque affer
Que vous ayéz affer des ailleurs
Pour bourgeoys, princes ou seigneurs.
Vous ne partez d’icy jamais
Tant que l’ouvraige ait tous ses mês
Et qu’elle soit du tout construite.
[...]
Garder, pour eviter comptens,
Pour quelconque commandement,
Que vous ne faciez aultrement
Ne la tour ne celle pouserne
Que mon cueur vous dit et discerne.

Tradat pecuniam.
Tenéz, voyla mille flourins.
(7982-8013)

An Buhez does not provide any background information on the reason for the king’s absence. Discoros merely states his plans to leave, and instead of giving a reason, he asks the workers once again to follow his orders concerning the design and not to leave before the work is finished:

Discoros
[241] Memeux da monet heb quet fy

210
10. The Windows

Gant effet en vn queffridy
Monet énhy a fludiaff
Rac fe oar pep tro me ho pet
Oar ma tour flour ez labourhet
Tèn ha qualet pan ouz pedaff.

[242] Dich a crèn ez gourchemennaff
En pep guis hac ez diuiaff
E achiuaff heb tardaff quet
Ha gruet diff hep quë dou preneft
Diouz feptemtrion ent oneft
Da arhueft dre feft aprefet.

[243] Ha pan duyff ne filliff quet
Moz groay furamant contantet
Heb faut en bet na lequet fy
Dichuy lem memem gourchemên
Her meya breman ahanên
Coll arahên mar tarthên muy

Dioscorus: / Without any doubt I really have to go / on a mission: / I plan to concern myself with it. / Therefore, more than anything else, I beg you, / about my tender tower, that you will work / hard and persistently, because I ask you to. // I command you explicitly / and I order you unmistakably / to finish it without any tarrying / and for my sake, make only two windows / nicely aligned to look / away from the north, honestly! // And when I will come back, I will not fail, / I will surely remunerate you / without any fault, do not doubt! / I recommend myself quickly to you / because I set forth now. / I would suffer damages if I would tarry any more. //

The “mission” (‘queffridy’) is not specified any further, as it is the case in the Legenda Aurea. That Dioscorus asks the workers not to leave before their work is complete is strikingly reminiscent of cinq journées, however, where the king makes the same request of the masons before leaving. But in contrast to the other three versions, the king does not pay the craftsmen at this point in An Buhez. He merely promises that he will do so upon his return. Nevertheless, the topic is at least touched upon, thus creating a structural link to the other versions. In deux journées, the king (and queen) are likewise absent from the building site for a while, but pay-
mentation is not mentioned. There is an explanation for the absence of the royal couple, and it is linked to emperor Marcien, too. But instead of going on a military excursion, they leave in order to visit a pagan temple together with the emperor:

Le roy
Or ça, damë, il est saison
Que nous parton de ceste ville.
Il fault avoir Barbe, ma fille.
Sa voulenté ne puis sçavoir,
Ne qu’elle garde en son courage,
Mais je mettray tout mon pouvoir
A la tenir et mettre en caige.
D’elle nous convient congé prendre,
Si yron noz dieux adorer.

(534-542)

Thus, while the respective versions offer different or no information on the reason of the king’s (and queen’s) absence, the fact that all versions specifically include a part of the action that takes place without the king’s direct supervision is quite telling. The king must be gone for a while, so that Barbara can counteract his explicit orders. This disobedience of the king’s wishes is, in turn, imperative for the legend to reach its climax. Without the third window, Barbara’s conversion would not necessarily have been discovered by the king and thus her martyrdom would not have been possible. During the king’s absence, Barbara seizes her chance and asks the workers to add a third window to the tower.

In John of Wakkerzeel’s _Historia_, she approaches the craftsmen after having had a vision of Jesus as a child. Thus filled with the knowledge of the trinity, she sees that there are only two windows in the tower and decides to have a third window added so that the number corresponds to the trinity. She does not illuminate the craftsmen on this point, but merely points out that her father is building the tower for her, after all, and implies that she therefore should have a say in the design. The craftsmen judge this a valid point, apparently, and add a third window to the tower despite their intrinsic fear of the king:
In the Legenda Aurea, the information is shorter and the context is different. Barbara has just refused to get married and her father has left the area. When Barbara approaches the building site, she sees only two windows “contra septentronem” and asks the craftsmen why they have made only two windows. When they answer that it was upon the king’s command, Barbara instructs them to make a third window for her. The craftsmen express themselves fearful that the king will be indignant with them, but Barbara reassures them that she will deal with her father on that matter and so the workers make a third window:


(Graesse 1965, 900)

Similar to John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Barbara is visited by Christ in cinq journées, and after that she actively perceives the number of windows for the first time:

BARBARA

[...]

Hic appariat Jesus sanguine lentus.
Qu’est cecy benedicité?
Véz cy grant admiración!
Qu’esse cy Saincte Trinité?
J’ay de mon Dieu compassion.
Véz cy comme en la Passión
Il fut les hommes rachetant.
Je Te voy icy tout senglant,
Dont plouréz doy amerement.
(10523-10560)

[...]

BARBARA
Qu’esse je suys apercevant?
Qu’en ceste tour, sans plus, n’y a
Que deux fenestres! Comment dea!
Elle n’est point du tout parfaicte
Si la troysiesme n’y est faicte
Pour la Trinité figuréz!
[...]
Puis que j’ay le temps convenant,
Je la feray vers Oriënt,
[...]
Je feray faire la troysiesme
Avant que mon pere revienne.
Il n’y a riens qui m’en retienne.
(10609-10637)

Accordingly, she commands the masons to come to her and asks them to add a third window to the tower. The reason she provides is that she would like to be able to see the sun rise in the mornings and that the tower would be brighter. She does not tell the masons her real reason for wanting a third window, which is similar to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*.

BARBARA
Vous avéz fait que vaillans hommes
De venir a mon mandement.
Je vous diré appertemant
Pour quelle fin. Vous voier bien
Sur tout ouvrage terrîen
Que vêz cy le suppellatif,
Plus plaisant et delicat,
Myeulx fondé et édifié,
Si ne fust qu’avêz oublié
A faire une tierce fenestre:
Ce fust ung paradis terrestre
Et une doulce nouriture
S’encore y eust une ouverture
De la part ou le souleil lieve.

[...]
Si je voy le souleil lever,
Je seray le jour plus joyeuse
Et ceste tour plus lumineuse,
Dont elle sera myeulx prisee.

(10665-10688)

While the masons express themselves fearful with regard to the king’s opinion on the matter, Barbara assures them that she will arrange matters with her father. In contrast to John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, she makes a point of her influence over her father rather than her right to have a say in the design, but she succeeds with her request and the craftsmen agree to make the third window:

GANDELOCHE
Ma chere Dame, mais qu’il plaise
Au roy a son retournement,
Nous le ferons joyeusement!
Aultrement nous n’ousserions:
Son mal talant encourions
Et sa griefe indignacion.
Pourtant, sans sa monicion,
Nous n’ousserions l’entreprendre
Sans premier au roy congïé prendre.

[...]
BARBARA
Comment ousez vous contredire
A ma vouleuté raisonnable?
Si le fait estoit dommaiggeable
Pour vous, ou chousse diffamee,
Ne suy ge point assêz amee
De mon pere pour apaisser
Son ire et cesser le noiser?
J’ay assêz puissance envers luy!
[...]

GANDELOCHE
Dame excellante, vous voulez
Qu’on obeisse a voustre requeste,
Mais elle n’est trop honneste,
Ce me semble ne bien licite.

BARBARA
Faictez la, sans plus de resdite!
Je feray bien aprês la paix
En ce lieu que je vous recite.
Faictez la, sans plus de redite!

MURGALANT
Le replicuer n’y est licite.
Je le voy bien.

GANDELOCHE
C’est pour touz maytz.

BARBARA
Sçavéz quoy? N’en parléz jamais!
Chascun de vous en sera quicte.
Faictez la, sans plus de redite!
Je feray bien aprês la paix.

MURGALANT
La charge prendréz et le fais
Dessus vous.

BARBARA
Ce feré mon voir.

GANDELOCHE
Si le roy ce vieult esmouvoir
Contre nous, vous nous soutendréz?

BARBARA
C’est tout certain.
MURGAULT
Tantoust vous verréz
La fenestre sur piedz ouverte.
(10693-10749)

In *deux journées*, the conversation is similar, but shorter. The context differs from any of the other versions in so far as Barbara is not left alone when her parents are absent, but under the supervision of three virgins (‘pucelles’). These do not appear in any of the other versions. Barbara steals away from her wardens while they are playing at cards and approaches the masons. She asks them what the two windows might signify and they can give her no other answer but that the king has commanded it so. She then asks them to add a third window and they agree pretty quickly under the condition that she will take all the blame in case the king should not be agreeable:

*Elle va au masson.*
Seigneurs, par amour, je vous prye
Que me dictes que signifie
Ses deux fenestres que vous faites
Si petites et si estroites,
Car a la faire a grant Mesme.

Le . i. masson
Dame nous ne le sçavon mye.
Vostre pere nous commanda
Et quant il partit, nous manda.
Que deux fenestres y feisson.
Nous n’y sçavons autre taison,
Mais il dist qu’elles fussent estroictes.

Barbe
Seigneurs, paramour, or en faites
Une cy qui soit de tel guise
Et soit vers oïent assise.
Faitce sera a ma requeste
Et qu’elle me soint en l’heure preste;
Je vous en prye trescherement.

Le .iii. masson
<Damoiselle>, certainement.
Or, ne vous vueille pas desplaire,
Car plus n’en commanda a faire,
Mai s’il vous plait le blasme prendre,
Nous en exaulcer et defendre,
Bien le feront comme je pense.

Barbe
Et je le vous promet a fiance
Que bien vous en desblaseray
Et tout le fais en porteray,
Se blasme y a, noyse ne hayne.
A Dieu, faitte bien ma besogne,
Par amour, je vous en supplye.

Les massons ensemble
A dieu, dame, n’en doubtez mye,
Si bien la feront sans mesprendre
Que nul n’y scaura que reprendre
De ce, ne soyez point en doubte.

(654/5-687)

In An Buhez, Dioscorus has just commanded the master to make only two windows in stanza 242 and then left the stage. The master worker has just conveyed the king’s parting orders to his crew, when Barbara approaches them. Thus, there have only been six stanzas between the king’s command to make exactly two windows and Barbara’s request to add a third:

Sante Barba
[248] Perac na rechuy manifest
Quichen quichen tri freneft
A vife medeft oneftoch
Me queff houz flat arabadou
Guelet nozeux groaet heb quet gou
Nemet dou a pan dezroufoch.

[249] En tra man a pell ez fillfoch
An quentaff mis na diuiffoch.
Credet entroch ez grufoch gou
En vn tour quen flour labouret
Ezeu bihanez gouzuezet
10. The Windows

Na ell bout guelet nemet dou

An meftr mecherour.
[250] Hoz tat eu heb faut hon autrou
A archas dimp plen e guenou
Nemet dou hon oa dezrouet
Narafemp ny muy ent dien
Na ne crethemp ny bizhuiquen
Ober quen pan e hu ordrenet.

Saint Barbara: / Why should you not simply make, / three windows next to each
other? / which would, I confirm, be more agreeable? / I find your approach is a
stupidity / seeing that you have made, obviously, / only two since you began. //
In this matter you failed by far / that you did not arrange it from the first plan on.
/ Believe me that you made a mistake! / In a tower built so tenderly / it is a pity,
know (it)!, / that no more than two can be seen. //
The master worker: / It is, without fault, your father, our lord, / who instructed us
with his own words / that we should truly not make more / than the two we have
begun. / And we would never dare / to do otherwise because it is ordered. //

The fact that hardly any text has been spoken between the king’s command to make two
windows and Barbara’s request for the third is quite striking. The craftsmen cannot have made
much progress, because they have just received the king’s orders. Nevertheless, both Barbara
and the master speak of the two windows that have been begun. This carries some implications
with regard to the stage design of the tower. Either the windows can be added to the structure
very easily, possibly even only in parts, which would be indicative for a prop made of painted
cloth that can be attached to the construction depicting the tower. This could have been rolled
up in the beginning and be unfolded (partly) according to the respective orders given by the
king and Barbara. Or there are no windows at all (yet), and the characters’ speeches serve to
illustrate something that is not actually visible. In both cases, the two windows are not entirely
present before Barbara approaches the craftsmen. This contrasts with cinq journées, where the
masons apparently need to open up an existing wall in order to add a third window to an
apparently already complete tower. Their conversation directly follows Barbara’s request:

GANDELOCHE
Elle vous sera decouverte
Et si le femons de careure.
10. The Windows

MURGAULT
E Dieux, que ceste pierre est dure!
Par foy el est bien cimentee.
Elle est ycy bien fort entee!
Long temps y a qu’el ne locha.
GANDELLOCH
Frappe de la, et moy decza,
Si sera plustoust esbranlee.
On ne cymenta meulex pieca!
Frappe de la, et moy decza!
(10750-10759)

The situation in deux journées is even more interesting in this case. There, a stage direction makes it explicit that the masons build the tower and wait for Barbara to approach them. But the stage direction differs between the earlier (published between 1511 and 1517) and the later version (published between 1552 and 1585, Longtin 1996, 11). While in the earlier edition the Latin stage direction indicates that the masons build the tower and the (two) windows and then wait for Barbara (“Tunc faciant turrim et fenestras quo / adusque Barbaram veniat ad ipsos”, 533/4), the French stage direction in the later edition states that they build the tower to the point of the windows and then wait for Barbara (“Ilz font la tour jusques aux fenestres / attendant que Barbe vienne parler a eux”, 538/9). The earlier version would thus correspond to cinq journées, where the masons have already built the windows and then add a third to the structure of the tower. The later version corresponds to An Buhez, where the masons also have only begun constructing the windows and are able to include a third in the evolving design. The masons’ answer to Barbara’s request in deux journées fits either context easily, for it does not offer any further information on this point (s.a.). Furthermore, in An Buhez Barbara does not give the craftsmen a compliment on the work they have accomplished so far. Instead, she is rather rude and points out to them that she considers their design faulty, which contrasts with both cinq journées and deux journées, although in cinq journées she admittedly becomes considerably less polite when she tries to force the masons’ obedience (“Comment ouséis vous contredire / A ma voulenté raisonnable?”, 10709f; “Çavez quoy? N’en parlez jamais! / Chascun de vous en sera quicte”, 10740f). The shortness with which Barbara speaks to the craftsmen in the Legenda Aurea could be interpreted as rude, but there is no other text in which Barbara uses words like “stupidity” or “failure” to describe the work or the craftsmen at this point. The structure and contents of the conversation that ensues between Barbara and the master worker in An Buhez is similar to cinq journées, however.

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10. The Windows

Sante Barba.
[251] Nep oun ouz buhez noz bezet
Lequet try hac efpediet
Ouziff fentet na tardet muy
Ha me a pep blam ouz lammo
Diouz pep den hac hoz fouteno
Moz goaranto ne vezo fy.

An meftr mecherour.
[252] Tamallet vêp mar groahêp try
Ha pardonet diff nerriff muy
Rac dimp ny ez notiffias
Dre guiryon cruel euel hên
En dan poan an tan hac an pên
An drafe crên on diffennas.

Sante Barba.
[253] Me houz miro nouz bezo noas
Dre nep vnan euit an cas
En dan poan bras me hoz affur
Ha furamant me contanto
Ma tat nep flat noz debato
An dra fe pep tro me fo fur.

An meftr.
[254] Pan eu pep flat hoz pligiadur
Ny aray try bezet figur
Dre mufur pan hôn affuret
Hoguen yuez mar on bez blam
Debat na tempeft nac eftlam
Ez rencquet dinam ma lamet.

Sante Barba.
[255] Nep oun an tra fe non bezet.
[...]
10. The Windows

Saint Barbara: / Do not have any fear for your life! / Make it three and hurry! / Obey me, do not tarry anymore!, / and I will take every blame off of you, / from everyone, and I will support you, / I will protect you, there will be no doubt! //
The master worker: / We would be blamed if we made three! / And forgive me, I will make no more / for he notified us / with such blatant terms / under pain of fire and of death. / He prohibited this strictly. //
Saint Barbara: / I will protect you so that you will have no quarrel / with anyone because of this affair, / under threat of punishment. I assure you! / And I will surely deal with / my father, so that he will not quarrel with you in any way. / I am entirely sure of this. //
The master: / If it is really your desire / we will make three, be certain!, / according to the requirement, since you assure us. / But even if we should have blame, / quarrel, or storm or distress, / you must unconditionally bail me out. //
Saint Barbara: / Let us have no fear from this. / [...] //

Barbara more or less bullies the craftsmen into following her commands and they express themselves much more reluctant on account of their fear from her father than in either of the Latin versions. The particular point of being afraid of the king is entirely absent from deux journées, which is why the conversation is significantly shorter. However, the question why there are only two windows is not asked in cinq journées, and thus the answer that it was designed upon the king’s command is equally lacking. This is different in An Buhez, where Barbara begins the conversation with the master worker, as she likewise does in all other versions, by asking that question. Then again, An Buhez does not have Barbara insist on her position of power as the king’s daughter, as she does in cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, and there is also no context of a vision or visitation of Christ.

Eventually, king Dioscorus returns to the tower. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, there is not much information provided as to why the king returns. We only know from his departure that he went on a military excursion. He merely comes back and immediately visits his tower. There he discovers the third window, and while he is slightly angry at what he first perceives as the craftsmen’s disobedience, he is quite willing to accept their word that they acted upon his daughter’s command. He then speaks to his daughter.
The *Legenda Aurea* is similarly short on the subject but provides the additional information that the king was on a “peregrinatio”:

(Graesse 1965, 900)

While the classical meaning of “peregrinatio” was simply “journey, voyage”, the word acquired the additional meaning of “pilgrimage” in the Middle Ages (*Pons Online Wörterbuch* 2018, “peregrinatio”). This later meaning interestingly corresponds to the reason for the king and queen’s absence in *deux journées*, where they go on a trip to worship their pagan gods, i.e. on a pilgrimage. In *deux journées*, the return of the king and queen takes place at the very end of the first day. They speak shortly about the need to return home and then approach the tower:

Dioscorus
Il faut penser de retourner;
Plus n’a du temps de sejourner.
Allons nous en, je vous en prie.
La royn
Monseigneur, je vous octroye,
Allons nous en quant vous plaira.
Dioscorus
Present vueil veoir qu’elle sera
10. The Windows

La tour que j’avoys devisee,
Pour scavoir s’el est achevee.
Allons nous en quant vous plaira.
[........................ a
...............................oye]

Il dit aux massons:
[...].
(855-863/4)

In An Buhez, the king also returns from his voyage and wants to look at the work that has been conducted in his absence right away. The contents of his speech mirror those of deux journées quite closely.

Diofcorus a deu e veig
[281] Monet dan kaer a prederaff
Ha pret eu monet a credaff
Guelet araff ez tardaff re
Pell fo na viouff lem em ty
Ha ne menna arretaff muy
Rac bout enhy ma ftudy ve

An meffager.
[282] Mar daleet ententet fe
Neôn enouar pe hoarffhe
Rac lies re a bale teu
Na mar be neb ambris difpar
Groaet gant den eftren me en goar
Effe dicht glachar re dareu.

Diofcor9 a deu e ãffridy-hac aya de tour
[283] Meya da guelet rac pret eu
Ma tour labouret anen deu
Achiuet beu dren defeuaff
Euel ma emoa plen ordrenet
Pe en faczon quent ma monet
Ez vihe groaet heb arretaff.
10. The Windows

Aman pan fell ouz an tour
ha guleet groaat try freneft
ez lauar dan mecherour.

Dioscorus returns from his voyage. / I intend to go home / and it is time to go, I believe, / I see that I tarry too much. / It has yet been a while since I was in my house / and I do not want to linger anymore / because being there would be my intention. //
The messenger: / If you delay, listen to this! / I don’t know at all what might happen / because many people rove about / and if a dubious thing was / planned by someone strange – I know it – / it would all too likely cause you grief. //
Dioscorus returns from his mission and goes to his tower. / I go to see – because it is time – / whether my tower is not built, / accomplished precisely like I thought it up, / like it was plainly ordered / before I left, in which manner / it should be made without pause. //
Here, when he looks at the tower / and sees that three windows were built, / he speaks to the worker. /

Structurally, these three stanzas are quite strange because the king appears to return home twice on the one hand, and on the other because the messenger’s warning appears very incongruous. While I was not able to find an explanation for the latter peculiarity, the former is likely due to the theatrical setting. The king, who has been entirely absent from the stage, probably re-enters the stage and speaks stanza 281 somewhere in between the places depicted on stage (2), where he is approached by the messenger. Then the king moves towards the place of the palace, and continues speaking there (283). After that, Dioscorus moves on to the tower. This mirrors the situation in cinq journées. There, the king returns from the military excursion against Alexandria together with Florimond. He speaks more than once of his desire to come home, which serves to illustrate that his way home is very long and that he has to travel for some time. When he and Florimond get close to Nicomedia, they rejoice:

FLORIMOND
Resjouysséz vous, Monseigneur,
Je voy noustre cite cy prés:
Tantoust aurons passé les prés
Et foulée belle et verte.
Véz la porte toute ouverte:
Il est temps que nous y entron.
10. The Windows

DYOSCORS
Loué soit le dieu Baratron
Et Apolin, le puissant mire!
Long temps y a que je desire
De retourné en ma cité.
J’ay eu mainte neccessité
Puys le temps que nous en partismes.
(11499-11510)

Their return is followed by an intermediary episode in which the shepherds are introduced (12), and in which the devils plan to make Dioscorus aware of the third window. As the third day of the play has just begun, the *dibalerie* thus serves as a means to sum up the previous action of the play. Dioscorus then announces his plans to visit Barbara and the tower:

DYOSCORS
J’ay voulloir d’aller visiter
Barbe, ma fille de vaille.
Je ne l’ay point encore veue
De puis que je suis retourné.
J’ay asséz ycy sejourné;
Venéz avec moy Florimond!

FLORIMOND
Sire, puis que m’avéz semond.
Je y voys donc cheminer davant.

_Pausa. Vadant et cum pervenerint ad turrim aspiciat_
_Dyoscorus tertiam fenestram turris percutitur zonatim_
ture et dicat admirando._

Thus, the contents of _deux journées_ and _An Buiz_ present themselves slightly more similar. Instead of wishing to visit his daughter as in _cinq journées_, Dioscorus wants to see his tower and the progress of the work. That he does not wish to lose any more time and regrets his long absence is expressed in all three versions.

The action continues to be similar with regard to structure and contents. The king’s reaction is more elaborate in the plays than in the legends, which is most likely due to the difference of genre. However, it is noteworthy that the king immediately becomes enraged in all theatrical versions upon discovering the third window and threatens the masons:
10. The Windows

cinq journées:
DYOSCOPUS
Que suys je cy apercevant?
Ha, Jupiter, je suis desceu!
En la tour, vers soulail levant,
Que suys je cy apercevant?
[...] mais je voy
Troys fenestres tout au plus hault
De la tour. Ne soy que ce vault
Ne qui fist faire la troissieme.
Je le tien a ung tresgrant crime;
Je ne scay qui fut si hardi
Si presumptueux estourdi
Que sans mon congé et assens
A fait dont ne suys contens:
Faire une tierce fenestre.
[...]
Pourant, mes haux Dieux, si je puis
Sçavoir qui ce a fait, en brief,
Il en pourra perdre le chef.
(11813-11851)

deuux journées:
Il dit aux massons:
Seigneurs, Mahommet vous doint joye.
Avez vous fait mon commandement?
Le i. masson
Mon chier seigneur, ový vrayment,
Vous estes com vaillant et saige.
Regardez bien tout nostre ouavraige
S’el est comment la devisastes.
Dioscorus
Dictes pourquoy vous ordonnastes
Icy ceste tierce fenestre?
Icy endroit ne doit point estre!
Par tous mes dieux vous le dirés,
10. The Windows

Ou point d’icy ne partirés
Que je ne vous face détruire.
(864-875)

In general, this is the same in An Buhez. However, the king appears to dislike the disobedience of his workers more than the fact that a third window has been built. Only after the master worker has explained about Barbara’s role in the matter does the king become truly angry. He abuses the master with strong language and then threatens punishment for both, Barbara and the builders. Dioscorus’ speech is very interesting because a true build-up of emotions is detectable. While at first he merely wonders at the change, he then realises that there has been some disobedience on the part of the workers. This is what enrages him, and this initial spark of fury is nourished by the master’s attitude. His denial to accept any fault in the matter makes the king all the more angry. In the end, the master just about manages to escape the furious king and when his workers ask him for their wages, he has to deny them:

An Buhez:
Aman pan fell ous an tour
ha guelet groet try freneft
ez lauar dan mecherour.
[284] Vahont a vhel ez gualaff
Try freneft feul maz arhuefla
Hac enem foezaff quentaff pret
Oar an mecherour labouret
Perac ez aez prob da ober
Na pez en deueux fclaer prederet

[285] Deux flam aman côps diff glâ an manyer
Pe en requet ezeux te groaet feder
Em tour flour quer antier na differ quet
Plen try freneft da arhueft en creis dez
Comps an raefon difon han guiryonez
Heb digarez dicuez piu eu bezet.

[286] Memoa dit crèn ha têñ gourchemennet
Dre gueryou ipes efhores na grafoe quet
Preneft en bet dre neb fet nemet dou
[...]

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10. The Windows

An mecherour.

[287] Houz merch heb faut entêtet baut autrou
A archas plen diff per guen e guenou
Ouz än ou amoa gnou dezrouet
Ez groafên net en effet an trede
Maz repontis gant auis en guisfe,
Rac blam dram le à fe nem deurie quet.

[288] Hac emezy, gruet try e phốiediet,
Moz diblammo pep tro noz bezo quet
Carez en bet: quent fe net credet diff,
Pan duy ma tat gant cher mat ebatus,
E queffridy net de ty gracios
Heb dout doutus haetus oz efcuiff.

[289] Neufz tizmat neb fût ne trellatiiff
Eziz ma hent heb neb fent ha fentiiff
Pardonet diff neriff ne filliff muy,
Dre neb fudy ouzichuy bizhuiquen,
Na faut en bet credet en requet den,
Neriff dich plen perguen dre neb heny.

Dioscorus.

[290] Diot, fotin, babouin, maftin quy,
Mez puniffo vn tro ne vezo fy,
Ha te ha hy deffry moz cagtizo
Ne ellez tam bout diblam furamant
Sintiff outy än doas te variant
Bilen, mechant, truant, ten amanto.

An mefr mecherour.

[291] Nariff quet rac me à redo,
Guell ve diff appell lefell bro
Crouc ram dougo mar ho gourteiff,
Ahanën cren emem tenniff
Pan ouch en houz pres ouz leiff,  
Pardonet diff ne tardiff muy.

An eil mecherour.  
[292] O preffet meurbet ez duet huy,  
Petra fo à hy na roy  
Hep quet contredy dimnpy gloat.

An Mefr.  
Gloat,  
Ha huy et oar lerch da querchat  
Rac me bizhuiquen louenhat,  
Neraff dre e gloat na e madou,  
Pa na caffeñ lech da techet  
Digantaff Icaff nen nachaff quet,  
Em laz fe affet aguetou.

Here, when he looks at the tower / and sees that three windows were built; / he speaks to the worker. / There, up high, I see / three windows when I take a closer look / and first of all I am amazed / about the overseer of the worker. / Wh eyever did he do that? / And what did he think at all? / Come here now and tell me, truly, about the circumstances: / on whose request have you built, surely, / in my tender tower, so dear to me – do not delay! – / three windows to be seen in the south? / Tell the reason and the truth calmly! / Disclose without excuse who it was! / I have commanded you in no uncertain terms / using plain, explicit words, that you should not build / any window, by no means, except two. / [...] /  
The worker: / Listen, good lord! Your daughter, indeed, / expressly commanded me with her own words / in addition to the two I had visibly begun / that I should clearly make, indeed, the third, / to which I replied deliberately in the way (you commanded) / because, upon my word!, I would not have wanted the blame for this. / Make three!, so she says, hurry! / I will take your blame, for sure! You will not suffer / any reproach: rather, believe me clearly, / when my father will return in a good, joyous mood, / his mission fulfilled, to his sweet home, / I will be glad to excuse you without the slightest doubt. / Then, quickly – I will not transgress in any way – / I went ahead without any feint and obeyed. / Pardon me!, I will not – I will not fail – / for any purpose, act against you, ever, / and I will not commit
against you, believe (it)!, in answer to anyone’s request / any fault at all, indeed, on no grounds. //
Dioscorus: / Fool, sot, baboon, fiend of a dog! / I will punish you now, there will be no doubt! / Both, you and her, definitely, I will chastise you! / You cannot claim to be blameless, surely, / obeying her, were you not iniquitous? / Villain, miserable wretch, you will pay for that! //
The master worker: / I will not because I will run away! / It would be better by far for me to leave the land. / May I go to the gallows if I attend you! / I will retreat from here, indeed, / because you are in your hurry I will leave you. / Pardon me! I will tarry no more. //
The other worker: / Oh, you’re in quite a hurry! / What’s up? Will she not give / us (the) money without any disagreement? /
The master: / Money! / Go looking for (it) yourselves! / Because I will never rejoice / in his money or his goods. / If I had not found a place to hide / from him quickly – I do not deny (it) – / he would have just killed me! //

The conversation creates a very dynamic impression. There must have been some movement on stage, for the master worker apparently moves away fast, as is indicated by the other worker’s words upon the master’s return. With regard to the contents, the conversation is similar in all three plays. Dioscorus approaches the craftsmen and they explain that Barbara has made them add the third window. In deux journées, both masons are present but only the second mason makes the excuse in one short paragraph and Dioscorus immediately transfers his anger to his daughter:

Le .ii.masson
Or entendés, mon treschier sire,
La verité vous en diray,
Ne ja ne vous en mentiray,
Par faveur ne par aultre stille.
Barbe vint a nous, vostre fille,
Qui la nous commanda a faire
Et si nous dist que vers son pere
Mout fort nous en excuseroit
Et que la peine en porteroit
Vous avez toute la maniere.
Dioscorus
Mout luy sera la folie chiere,
Par Venus, se dis verité.
La garce plaine de vilité!
Messaigier, va la tost querir.
De malle mort puisse mourir!
(876-890)

This is similar in cinq journées, where both masons approach the king but only Murgalant explains about the circumstances of the third window. However, with regard to the dynamics and the details, cinq journées resembles An Buhez widely. The king’s answer to Murgalant’s explanation, for example, is more similar to An Buhez. Dioscorus is still angry at the masons despite their explanation and abuses them, too:

DYOSCORUS
Ha, Villain paillart mal parant,
Je vous en feray mal sentir!
Com ousastez vous consentir
De ce faire faulx consentans,
Puis que vous estiéz sentans
Que ja ne m’y consentiraye!
(11977-11982)

But in contrast to An Buhez, it takes a third party to redirect his anger:

PALAMIDES, secundus miles Dyoscori
Monseigneur, il dit justement
Sans prendre aultre correction:
Vous feréz inquisicîon
Pour savoir mon si se que dist
Est veritable. Ou s’il mesdit,
Vous le pouréz alors pugnir.
(12007-12012)

Dioscorus then sends for Barbara and during this moment of distraction, the masons make their exit:

MURGAULT
Il nous a blasmé
Et vituperé laidement.
10. The Windows

J’ay eu paours au commencement
D’avoir ung coup de son espee.

GANDELOCHE
Mais d’avoir la teste_coupee,
S’eust esté du pis du pennier.
Ailleurs m’envoy’s esbaloyer:
Plus je ne veil demouréz cy,
Que je puisse.

MURGAULT (finit)
Ne moy aussi,
Je m’en revoys a ma maison.
Et se jeusse la raison
Pour quoy nous mandoit par exprès
Il ne m’eust huy veu de si prés
Ne pour puissance qu’il eust eue.

GANDELOCHE (finit)
Ho, nous avons fait une veue
Sur le lieu: il nous doibt suffire.

(12033-12048)

Thus, in both An Buhez and cinq journées the masons perceive themselves to be under a serious threat from the king and Barbara has not at all fulfilled her promise to see that they are not blamed for the deed. And in both An Buhez and cinq journées the craftsmen take up the topic they were discussing when they first entered the stage. In cinq journées, they were speaking about the lack of profitable and prestigious work and their desire to build beautiful buildings, while in An Buhez they were discussing their wages and praising the master for his reliability (s.a.). Now, Murgalant and Gandeloche will have to content themselves with having at least partly been able to fulfil their original desire. Unfortunately for them, they did not profit financially from the work, which is made clear by Gandeloche’s final sentence. In An Buhez, the master returns to the workers and explains the situation to them, again showing a close relation to reality, for it is the master of the work that deals with the owner (the king) and then relates the information to his crew (6). But when the other workers ask the master for the money on which they had been counting, he has to deny them their wages, as he was not paid by the king. Like the masons in cinq journées, he expresses himself grateful that he has not suffered worse at the hands of the king. His workers are understandably outraged at this sudden and unexpected unreliability, but there is not much any of them can do:
10. The Windows

An eil mecherour.
[293] A re fin eu ho Latinou,
Alas me entent houz fentou
Me pet drouc darñou dezrou mat,
Rac furamant huy on contanto,
Gruet affo ma on bezo gloat.
[...]

[295] Na pe dre follaez eu dezaff,
Nara diffrae ha hôn paeaff
Drouc creff eu dezaff tardaff quet,
[...]

[298] Pez digarez fo hoaruezet
Pe dre fy ezompny priuet
Non contante quet affet preft
[...]

An meitr.
[299] Palamour plen da vn preneft
Pan voe laequaet try manifeft
A faeczon oneft en creis dez
[...]
Dren difemper a quemeras.

[301] Terriff ma pên crên a mennas
Pa naue tut guir a miras
Hac en arretas an drafe
Neufe mar cruel en guelis
Dioar an lech ez didechis
Hac ez achapis en guiffe.

The other worker: / Hah! Your talk is all too subtle! / I wish that ugly things, for
gratification, / may descend upon your neck! / Because you will surely pay us! / Go
on!, so that we will have money! / [...] // And due to which folly of [the king] /
does he not make haste and pay us? / And his failure is outrageous! / [...] // What
10. The Windows

kind of problem has occurred? / On what grounds are we deprived (of money), / and (on what grounds) did he not meet our claim, readily enough? [...] //
The master: / Just because of a window, / because three were made, / perfectly visible, in the south. / [...] / Due to the distress that he had, // he wanted to cave my head in, surely, / if righteous people had not been there who protected me / and prevented him from doing it. / Then I saw him so enraged / that I fled from there / and I escaped thus. //

What is particularly interesting about the master’s statement is stanza 301. He says that the king wanted to kill him but that there were righteous people that prevented him. There is no indication of any people being present in An Buhez during the conversation between the king and the master, let alone of anyone getting involved in the fight. While it is indeed likely that the king did not travel alone but was accompanied by an entourage, these characters do not speak. They may nevertheless have interfered at some point without this being indicated by a stage direction. It is, however, very striking that the situation described by the master of An Buhez fits the action of cinq journées to a point. Because in the French play, the king is indeed very angry at the masons and only the intervention of one of his soldiers changes his mind and allows the masons to escape punishment. This further strengthens the impression of similarity between cinq journées and An Buhez.

Eventually, Dioscorus speaks to his daughter in all versions and asks her for an explanation of the third window. In the Legenda Aurea, Barbara says that three windows illuminate humanity. In answer to Dioscorus’ question for clarification she explains that the number three represents the father, the son and the holy ghost, thus invoking the trinity as a reason for the third window:

(Graesse 1965, 900)

This is very similar in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, where Barbara gives the same answer in a slightly more extensive form:
The two French plays omit the part that three windows let in more light than two. Instead, Barbara explains about the trinity right away:

\textit{cinq journées:}
\begin{quote}
DYOSCORUS

[...]
Tu as fait faire la troysiesme
>Penestre< pour quelque fin? Dis me,
Ou je te te trancheray la teste!

BARBARA
Mon tres cher Pere, je proteste
Que je ne l’ay point fait pour mal!
Cest labeur est espicíal,
Car il est tout figuratif
D’un mistere suppellatif
En quoy je pence nuyt et jour.
Troys fenestres en une tour
Nous figurent la Trinité
Qui est seule divinité.
Il est ung Dieu en troys personnes,
Toutes divines, toutes bonnes.
\end{quote}

\textit{(12119-12132)}

\textit{deux journées:}
\begin{quote}
Dioscorus

[...]
\end{quote}

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 24f)
Dy moy pourquoi a tu fait faire
Ceste fenestre sans mon sceu?
Barbe
Ja plus il ne vous sera teu,
Mon trescher seigneur, par ma loy.
[........................oy]
Par diverse signification
De la catholique creance:
Les deux que vous avez fait faire
Signifient le Filz et le Pere
Et la tierce, le Sainet Esperitz
Qui confortez tous bons esperitz.
Ensemble sont en trinite.
En une essencialite;
Trois personnes, comme il me semble.
Les trois sont une chose ensemble.
(948-961)

This is different in An Buhez. There, Barbara claims that three windows let in more light than two and explains about the trinity afterwards:

_Diofcor[us] a côps ouz e merch._

[304] Orcza
Leueret eprés demefell
Pez ouzoa huy hèm doz èmell
An tourell na pez afellech
Mazrech ober plen try freneft
[...]

Sante Barba
[306] Muy ara try afclaerien
Euit nara dou en louen
[...]

_Diofcorus._
[307] Les diff da riot haz fotis
Lauar ent flam pe dre ampris
10. The Windows

Voe dit nep guis ho deiiff.

Sante Barba
Memën dich ifcuit recitaff
Try freneft en re oneflaff
Da fclaer hat muyhaff neraff fy

Dioscorus.
[308] Comps diff breff pez a signiffy
Na pe en tra ez fclaerha muy
Lauar da fludi manifeft

Sante Barba
Oar vn dro moz reponto preft
Rac tri perfor fo en tron oneft
En vn teft en vn maietfe
A vn coudet a vn edit
Un fier vn efper vn merfit
Un apetit vn deite

Dioscorus
[309] Pebez quaquet a compfet te
[...]

Sante Barba
Men lauar hac en goar parfet
En gallout dium an dreindet
Ez eu vnyet heb quet fy
An tat han map nendeu goapquet
Didan vn fier han glan speret
A vn effect hep contredy.

_Dioscorus speaks to his daughter._ / Well well! / Speak truely, damsel: / what did you have to involve yourself for / with the tower and what were you thinking / as to have three windows made, just so? / [...] //
Saint Barbara: / Three make more clarity / than do two, obviously. / [...] //
10. The Windows

Dioscorus: / Spare me your malicious talk and your follies! / Tell me truly for what reason / you had the idea to arrange them?!! /

Saint Barbara: / I am going to tell you right away: / Three windows are best suited / to enlighten most, I have no doubt. //

Dioscorus: / Tell me in short what it means / and in what way it enlightens more! / Make your thoughts comprehensible! /

Saint Barbara: / At once, I will answer you quickly: / Because three persons are in the beautiful heaven / in one witness, in one majesty / of one heart, of one power, / one import, one hope, one grace, / one will, one deity. //

[...]

Dioscorus: / What quacking do you speak? / [...] /

Saint Barbara: / I say it and I know it for sure: / In the divine power of the trinity / are united, without any doubt, / the father and the son – it is no joke, / of one nature – and the holy spirit, / of one force without contradiction. //

After Barbara’s revelation of her belief in the trinity, both the *Legenda Aurea* and *deux journées* have Dioscorus attempt to attack Barbara with his sword rather directly. In contrast, John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* include further explanations about different ecclesiastical topics on Barbara’s part. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, Barbara unfolds her belief that one of the three persons of the trinity has become human and that he has taken her as his bride. She reveals to her father that she has devoted her virginity to him. The king then actually loses consciousness, probably from the shock, and realises that his daughter has converted to a different religion. Only then does he attempt to kill her. Both *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* include a rather lengthy monologue of Barbara’s at this point, but of different content. In *cinq journées*, Barbara adds another reference to the meaning of the three windows connecting them to three “notables estatz”. Then, she speaks about the meaning of the directions of the windows:

La tierce fenestre feis faire  
Pour sçavoir qu’en ce monde bas  
Y a troys notables estatz,  
Clergé, labeur et gentillesse,  
Qui figurent par leur noblesse  
Ceste trinité de vaillance.  
Labour, en qui reluit puissance  
Et force, denote le Pere.  
Et par similitude clere
10. The Windows

Clergé, en qui gist sapience,
Monstre le Filz de saige essence.
Le Sainct Esprit est denoté
Par noblesse en qui est bonté,
Doulceur, clemence et courtaisie
Et urbanité moulent chérie.

[...]
La fenestre en Oriënt mise
Dieu le pere nous signiffie,

[...]
Cestuy Dieu le Filz je figure
Par la fenestre et ouverture
Qui est assise vers Mydy.

[...]
La fenestre en Septemtrion
Nous fait significacion
Du Sainct Esprit qui proceder
Veult des autres sans proceder

[...]
En ma tour je n’ay point descript
Occident, la cause est telle:
Deitée n’est occidentelle
Ny desfaillent, point n’y reconse.

(12238-12290)

In *An Buhez*, Barbara apparently attempts to convert her father and expounds the Christian basics and beginnings drawing on apocryphal as well as biblical material. Instead of a monologue as in *cinq journées*, there is a fairly long conversation between Dioscorus and Barbara (314-358), in which the king poses critical questions. Barbara does not manage to convince her father, of course, and at the end of the discussion, the king attempts to murder his daughter as in all other versions.

The discussion between Barbara and Discorus appears to be unique to *An Buhez*, since there is no similar passage in the other versions at this point. However, the passage is somewhat reminiscent of that in which Ysacar educates Barbara on the finer points of Christianity in *cinq journées*. There, Ysacar expatiates on Christian doctrine and Barbara interrupts him with questions from time to time. But not all topics discussed by Barbara and Dioscorus feature in Ysacar’s teachings, and Barbara’s questions are much less critical than those of Dioscorus,
of course. Unfortunately, the contents of the respective conversations are of such a universal nature with regard to Christian doctrine that it is very difficult to pinpoint any connections. Yet, only An Buhez and cinq journées depict such an educational conversation with regard to Christian doctrine at all. Furthermore, there is another parallel between the two conversations, which could again be coincidental due to the universal Christian statements of faith it conveys. It is nevertheless a striking detail. Both, (Origen through) Ysacar in cinq journées and Barbara in An Buhez illustrate the unity of God at some length, and I did not encounter this in the other three versions:

\textit{cinq journées:}

Ce ne sont pas troys pourtant,  
Mais ung, troys personnes portant.  
Ilz ont une mesme substance,  
Une essance, une concordance  
D’une mesme operacion,  
D’une alliance et union,  
Et d’une mesme eternite,  
D’une eternelle qualite,  
Et d’une esgalle equalite,  
D’un valloir, d’une immensite,  
D’une nature indivisible,  
Et d’un estre incomprehensible.  
(6312-6323)

\textit{An Buhez:}

[308] [...]  
Rac tri perfon fo en tron oneft  
En vn teft en vn maietie  
A vn coudet a vn edit  
Un fier vn efper vn merit  
Un apetit vn deite  

[...]

[310] Leal egal hep contraly  
Un faczun cômun hac vny
10. The Windows

Un matery vn aliancc
Unan vn van a vn manyer
Un opinion deboner
Un guer vn cher heb differancc.

[311] A vn fpes hac a vn effancc
Un moean hac vn conuenancc
Un fapiancc vn liancc net
Un mat vn flat a vn natur
Un grat vn poellat vn flatur
Un mufur pur vn cur furmet.

[...] / Because three persons are in the beautiful heaven / in one witness, in one majesty / of one heart, of one power, / one import, one hope, one grace, / one will, one deity. // [...] // Entirely equal, without dispute / one solid group and unified / one matter, one single entity, / together of one kind, / one good deliberation / one word, one countenance, without difference. // Of one nature, of one essence / one form and one reason / one wisdom, one true union / one asset, one condition, of one being / one understanding, one disposition, one attitude, / one true measure, one certain providence. //

Thus, An Buhez and cinq journées demonstrate a certain similarity with regard to structure and contents, but there are also some obvious differences. For example, An Buhez is simply longer and uses more phrases to describe God’s unity. Nevertheless, the mere fact that this particular way to describe God has been employed only in An Buhez and cinq journées, adds weight to the argument in favour of a relationship between the two texts.

In all versions, the conflict over the number of windows marks the turning point in the legend of Barbara. The estrangement between father and daughter is complete and thus the foundation for Barbara’s martyrdom is laid. Barbara attempts to flee from her father, but she does not succeed. This will be discussed in 12. In the next chapter, I will revisit Dioscorus’ absence from the stage and discuss the events that take place between Barbara’s request for the third window and Dioscorus’ discovery of the addition. The deviation from the chronological order of events was necessary for a coherent discussion of the windows and their significance.
11. The Fountain

Of the five versions of Barbara’s legend that are being compared in this study, the motif of the fountain is unique to An Buhez. However, in the Legenda Aurea, John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées, Dioscorus has a bathhouse built for his daughter’s use. Moreover, the term used to refer to the bathing facility varies. Interestingly enough, Barbara visits the fountain/bathhouse in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, An Buhez and cinq journées directly after ordering the craftsmen to build a third window. In the Legenda Aurea she descends from her tower and visits the bathhouse in order to make the request for the third window, as the windows in the Latin legend are to be built into the bathhouse rather than the tower itself. In contrast to this, deux journées mentions neither a fountain nor a bathhouse but the structure of the action is still similar. In both French plays Barbara leaves the place of the tower in order to be baptised after having made the request for the third window.

11.1. The Cross in the Stone

One event occurs in all five versions of the legend and is always taking place after Barbara leaves the craftsmen. After having requested the third window (i.e. during the absence of Dioscorus), Barbara draws a cross into solid rock with nothing but her finger (and some water from the fountain in the case of An Buhez). In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Barbara ascends her tower, looks at the work in progress, requests the third window and then enters her bathhouse and draws a cross into a marble column facing east:

![Image of a cross drawn in a marble column]

[...]
11. The Fountain

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 20-21)

In the *Legenda Aurea*, Barbara goes to see the building site, presumably to the bathhouse her father has ordered to be made, and then goes for a walk while the craftsmen fulfil her request and make a third window. Facing east, she draws a cross into a block of marble with her finger:

 [...] descendesque famula Dei videri opus, quod factum est, [...] Ipsi vero fecerunt aliam fenestram. Perambulans vero Barbara in natatorio contra orientem instituit in marmoribus ejus digito pretiosam crucem.[]

(Graesse 1965, 900)

With regard to the transit area, the French *cinquées* is very similar to the Latin versions. Barbara goes for a walk and mentions the direction “east” in this context. Moreover, she expresses her wish to look at the work in progress. During that walk, Barbara draws a cross with her finger on a column that appears to be part of her tower or its immediate surroundings:

*cinquées*:

Je veuei ung petit ambuler  
En mon manoir vers Orient,

---

33 Usually, *cinquées* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* present themselves as very similar versions of the legend with regard to structure and mirror one another closely. In this instance, however, the structure of *cinquées* is slightly different. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* the general building site houses both the tower and the bathhouse and it appears to be the same in *cinquées*. When Barbara expresses her wish to take a walk and look at the “ouvrage expedient / Qui est des aultres l’outrepasse” (10794f) in *cinquées*, she is not setting out to look at both the tower and the bathhouse, however, she has just been to the tower and talked to the masons there and has thus already seen the “ouvrage expedient”. While she may arguably walk around the famous tower and take another good look from a different perspective, it is also possible that the *fatiste* modelled his lines on the beginning of chapter seven of John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* as quoted above. There, the problem does not exist because Barbara is just setting out from her place of residence in the palace rather than from the site of the tower. When Barbara leaves her place of residence in order to visit the building site in general in *cinquées* she says: “Je veil descendre ignelemel / La bas, car Jay en ma pencee / De voirs l’ouvrage commenceee, / Pour scavior s’el est acmplie,”(10036-10039). It is interesting to note that those lines resemble the *Legenda Aurea* rather strongly, in which only one building is to be built. There, too, Barbara descends in order to look at the work accomplished so far (s.a.).
11. The Fountain

Pour voir l’ouvrage expedient
Qui est des aultres l’oultrepasse.
[…]
Faciat signum crucis cum pulce et appareat in co-
lumpna.
(10792-10804)

Whether the word “pulce” in the Latin stage direction of cinq journées is a Latinised version of the French word “pouce” or a strange declension of the Latin word “pollex”, it most likely means “thumb”. Barbara is astonished at her own powers and exclaims: “Vroy Dieu, mon doy y est escript / Ainsi que s’eust esté en boe!” (10806f). This exclamation makes it clear that she has used nothing but her finger to imprint a cross into stone as if it were mud. She then prays to the newly created cross and praises God, using the word “merveille” (10810), which underlines the fact that she has just performed her first miracle.

In deux journées Barbara “returns to her place” (‘Elle retourne en son lieu’, 687/8) after having made the request for the third window of the masons. “Her place” is not specified more precisely. There, she prays to God for a sign and is then inspired to bow and imprint the sign of a cross into a stone of marble, out of which then rises a cross (“Tunc inclinet se et faciat impressionem crucis in lapide mormoreo et ex illo lapide surgat crux”, 708/9). As in cinq journées Barbara praises God and underlines the miraculous event with her speech: “Mon doy a entré sans nul peine / En la pierre dure et saine” (714f). Although she does not use the term “mer-
veille” as in cinq journées, Barbara still calls the event a “demonstrance” (717) of God’s powers.

In both cinq journées and deux journées Barbara expresses her adoration for the cross and interprets it as a clear sign of God’s existence and his favour. She then begs for the opportunity to be baptised. God grants her desire in both plays, albeit in very different ways (8). The impression of structural similarity between the two French plays is, however, significantly allayed by the absence of any kind of water from the episode in deux journées.

Structurally, An Buhez differs slightly from the other plays. While Barbara draws the cross directly after leaving the craftsmen in the French plays as well as in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and the Legenda Aurea, in An Buhez she first wants to find something to drink and approaches “the good fountain which is (hidden) back there” (‘[an] feunten mat fo diadreff’, 255). In contrast to the other texts, the drawing of the cross is not Barbara’s first miracle. Before she draws the cross, she revives the fountain and she then uses the water from the revived fountain to draw a cross into a stone:

Aman fante Barba ara gât he bes gli
byet en feunten vn croas en men/pe=

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*heny fo hoaz ênhaff: hac ez lauar.*

[263] Feunten fo leun mat ha natur
Equichen an tour a dour pur
Guenez en mur me figuro
Un croas bras glan en creis an men
En heuleb euit pep den
Ez chommo bizhuiquen eno.

[264] Dezy hep abaff me affo
Ha neb pep quentel he guelo
Ne hazeulo goa vezo ef
Pan finuezlo ne caffo fplan
Queueer hanter na trederän
Na queffran na nep rân ân neff.

_Here Saint Barbara makes with her finger / – moistened in the fountain – a cross in a stone / which is still on it and she says:_ / The fountain is well and properly full / of pure water next to the tower / I will draw with you [the water] onto the wall / a great, holy cross in the middle of a stone / in such a way that / it will stay there forever for everyone. // I will kiss it without shyness / and whoever will see it at any point in time / and will not adore it – woe betide him! // When he will die he will surely not find / the measure of a half nor of a third / nor of a part nor any morsel of heaven. //

Rather than emphasising Barbara’s own saintly powers, _An Buhez_ chooses to underline the powers of the water from the fountain. In the context of the Breton play this makes sense, since the water has already been established as a form of divine benevolence (see below). As well as in the French plays, Barbara expresses adoration for the cross after drawing it, but this adoration is very short in _An Buhez_. Four lines of text are spent on the creation of the cross and then no more than one line is spent on Barbara adoring the cross: “I will kiss you without shyness” (‘Dezy hep abaff me affo’, 264). However, this line closely mirrors the penultimate line of the adoration of the cross in _cinq journées_: “Je te baise en compassion / De Jesus, le Filz de Marie.” (10850f). The idea of kissing the cross does not occur in any of the other texts.

The next five lines of _An Buhez_ outline the dire consequences of seeing the cross without proper devotion. Barbara’s surprise and wonder at her own hands creating such a marvel are absent from _An Buhez_. The focus is shifted to the fact that the cross will remain in the stone
for everyone to see and it is clearly employed as a permanent reproach to non-Christians. This malignant feature of the cross is not present in any of the other texts compared in this study. The Legenda Aurea gives no further information with regard to the cross; it only describes Barbara drawing it into the stone. John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia is the only other source that describes the cross as a lasting sign. The way in which the cross affects its surroundings and the people who see it differs significantly from An Buhez, however. Instead of reproaching non-Christians, the cross serves as an inspiration to those of an aware mind:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 21)

The respective effects of the cross do not technically oppose one another, but the tone employed to describe these effects certainly does. Neither of the French plays provides the cross with an effect on future onlookers. Deux journées employs the cross as a sign from God and a focal point for Barbara’s contemplation:

De t’amour me monstre aucun signe
Parquoy puisse ta luy tenir
Et vraye crestienne devenir.
(690-692)

Cinq journées adds a protective aspect of the cross and then depicts Barbara worshipping it as a sign of divine benevolence and an image for Jesus Christ:

Que l’ennemy ne me succombe!
[...]
Croix precieuse et venerée
Du sang divin par charité,
Tu seras de moy decorée
En tredoucle benignité,
Pour l’onneur de la déité
Que tu sostins sans fiction
Quand en toy par fraternité
Fut faicte la redempción.
Je te baise en compassion
11. The Fountain

De Jesus, le Filz de Marie.
(10799-10851)

The location of the cross differs in the texts (the respective terminology employed will be discussed in more detail below). In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* the cross is located in the bathhouse, which Barbara has just entered and where she will perform her next miracle. In the *Legenda Aurea* Barbara is moving but has already entered a specific place, namely the natatorium, when she draws the cross. In *An Buhez* Barbara is clearly outside her tower where she had just requested the third window. The fountain is next to the tower (“Equichen an tour”, 263) and likely out of doors. The cross is drawn “onto the wall [...] in the middle of a stone” (‘Guenez en mur [...] en creis an men’, 263), which must be close enough for Barbara to reach with a finger moistened water of the fountain. Therefore, the wall on which she draws the cross could be the tower’s wall, or it could be another wall that forms part of the fountain’s immediate surroundings. This is very similar in *cinq journées*. When Barbara takes a walk “en [sa] manoir” (190793), she draws the cross into a column. However, what building the column is part of remains unclear. It must be somewhere between the tower, where Barbara has just requested the third window, and the bathhouse, where the action continues. *Deux journées* stands slightly apart from the other texts, for the cross is neither close to any kind of water nor in direct proximity to the tower. But, similar to *cinq journées*, Barbara “retourne en son lieu” (687/8) after requesting the third window and before drawing the cross. Since Barbara has not been moved into the tower by Dioscorus yet, “her place” is likely in her father’s residence.

11.2. Fountain – Bathhouse – Swimming Pool

As indicated above, there is no body of water present in *deux journées*, whereas in the other four texts there are different places that have to do with water. In *An Buhez* Barbara expresses the wish for a drink and goes “Dan feunten mat fo diadreff” (255), to a good fountain, well, or source that is not immediately visible, in order to quench her thirst. When she finds the fountain to be dry Barbara’s exclamation “A feunten huy oa an leunaff” (‘Oh, fountain, you were the fullest’, 254) indicates that the fountain has been there before. However, no information is given with regard to the appearance or design of the fountain within the play. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, the *Legenda Aurea* and *cinq journées* Dioscorus asks his craftsmen to build a bathhouse for his daughter’s exclusive use, but the term used to describe the building changes. In John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* the order to build a bathhouse appears as an after-thought of the instructions concerning the tower, but the importance of this second building is emphasised by the term “precipue” (‘especially’):
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 19)

The term “balneandi” refers to the act of bathing (Glare 1968, 224) and the term “lavacrum” can be translated as “bathhouse”, but had acquired the additional meaning of “baptism” or “baptismal font” by the Middle Ages (Niemeyer and Kieft 2002; Blaise 1954, 489). Similarly, Dioscorus instructs the craftsmen to build a “lavacrum” in the *Legenda Aurea* (899). When Barbara later descends her tower to view the work that has been accomplished so far, she walks around “in natatorio” (900), which is also where she draws the cross into the stone. It is not clear from the text whether the “natatorius” is the same building as the “lavacrum” or whether there are two separate buildings. The term “natatorius” indicates a (swimming-)pool or “piscine” (Blaise 1954, 549). Dioscorus’ instructions in *cinq journées* are clear with regard to the use he intends the building in question to be put to. But even then he uses three different terms to name the building:

Vous luy faciéz une sisterne  
De fin marbre d’assés grant cerne,  
Appelleé ung lavouer  
Ou aultrement ung baignouer.  
Quand elle aura affection  
A prendre recreacion,  
El se baignera la dedans  
A son prive, sans queles gens,  
A son aisé, a ses despors.  
La dedans lavera son corps  
Toutes les foiz qu’il luy plaira.  
(4807-4817)

A “sisterne” is simply a basin or reservoir in which to collect (rain)water and a “baignouer” would be a basin or tub with a connotation of washing or bathing. A “lavouer” also refers to a basin or bowl, or a container used for washing oneself or something else. Similar to the
11. The Fountain

Latin “lavacrum”, the French verb “laver” also carries the additional meaning of “washing away sins” (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012, “laver”). The idea of baptism and of the washing away of sins is later made explicit in both cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia when Barbara is baptised in that very place. This lends the heathen king Dioscorus’ request for a “lavacrum” a certain irony because he certainly did not intend to provide his daughter with a baptismal font. The irony was likely intentional on the part of the author of the legend, for a more neutral term like “balneum” would have served to indicate a mere bathhouse. In accordance with this, the fatiste of cinq journées might simply have dispensed with the term “lavouer” and its connotation, but did not. The similar term “lavacr” also appears in An Buhez (257), where Barbara uses it as an alternative for “feunten”. According to Ernault the term means “fontaine, lavacrum” (Ernault 1888, 324). Both Ernault and the Middle Breton dictionary (Hemon 1979, 1734) list this passage as the only occurrence of the term “lavacr” in Middle Breton. Thus, the use of the term at this point serves to heighten the perception of the “feunten” as a regional development of the “lavacrum” or “lavouer” of the Latin and French versions of the legend. However, a physical act of washing as implied by the term “lavacr” would hardly have been performed with the “dour sacr dihacr” (‘pure [and] holy water’, 257) for which Barbara asks.

Instead, principal physical use of the fountain in An Buhez is to quench Barbara’s thirst, which she had expressed just before finding the fountain. Unfortunately, she finds the fountain dry. However, she is able to revive it through her prayers:

Sante Barba
[...]

[255] Meya heb fellell da fellet
Oar vn tro a me caffo quet
Un bânhech dour net da quêtaff
Dan feunten mat fo diadreff
Ma hunan ha heb den gueneff
Er hoant fo em eneff da euaff.

Aman ez queff an feun— / ten fech.
[256] Alas.
A feunten huy oa an leunaff
Ayoa quet enbet a credaff
Ha pa ouz fellaff ouz guelaf fech
na maz guell bout aet an pret mä
11. The Fountain

Euelse na pe dre moean
An dour glan breman ahanech.

_Aman ez flouff oar he douglin_
[257] Autrou a croeas glas ha fech
Dileuzret plé mar plig guenech
Aman oar an lech na nechet
Dour facr dihaer en lauacr man
Maz euiff faczun ma huan
An draman ma difouzanet

[258] Huy goar heb mar dre hoz caret
Emeux ent efpres dilefet
An bet/ receuet ma pedên
Ha reit diff dour mat en flat mà
Euit euaff anezaff glan
Quent monet breman ahanên

_Aman ez queff an feunten leun_
[259] Breman feunten ezout leun tên
A dour facret ha me cret crên
Pa nen caffêen ez marufen mic
Bezcoaz en bet man den ganet
Ne tañhas dour guell faouret
Da neb a ve quet fechedic.

[260] A vn hat dan dour probatic
Maz voe groaet an paralytic
Saluet dic eholl piftigou
Eno heb neb goab gant map doe
Dan pret ha da eur ma en deurfoe
Euel guir roe an holl ploeu.

[...]

[263] Feunten fo leun mat ha natur
Equichen an tour a dour pur

[...]

[265] Heman fo dour flour amourabl
Da guelchiff pɛn dɛn conuenabl
Net hac etabl nen deu fabl quet
Gant Iefu chrifiant an miniffr pur
Ezeu biniguet bezet fur
Dre e pligadur affuret.

Saint Barbara: / [...] // I go straightaway to see, / on the spot, if I will find / a drop of clear water first of all, / to the good fountain which is (hidden) back there / on my own and without anyone with me / because there is a wish in my mind to drink. // Here she finds the fountain dry. / Alas! / Oh, fountain, you were the fullest / that was in the world, I believe, / and when I look at you, I see you dry. / And where can it be gone at this time / so, and by which means, / the clear water now away from you? // Here she kneels. / Lord who created green and dry, / kindly send, if it pleases you / here, soon – do not refuse! – / pure, holy water into this pool / so that I myself will drink gladly. / May this lift me up. // You know, without doubt, that due to loving you / I have truly given up / the world; hear (receive) my prayer / and give me good water now / so I can drink it, gladly, / before going away now. // Here she finds the fountain full. / Now, fountain, you are entirely full / of sacred water; and I believe, truly, / if I had not found it, I would simply have died. / Nobody in this world ever / tasted water which was more delicious / to anyone who would be thirsty, // akin to the probatic water / where the paralytic was / healed completely from all his pains, / therein – without any fraud – by the son of God / as the true king of all peoples / at the time and at the hour that he wished. // [...] // The fountain is well and properly full / of pure water next to the tower. [...] // This here is tender, pleasant water / to wash the head of every decent person / pure and righteous; it is no fable. / By Jesus Christ the holy priest / it is blessed, be sure, / truly, due to his favour. //

In An Buhez, this revival of a dried fountain is the first miracle Barbara works. While she performs a similar miracle in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées, it is not her first. There, her first miracle is the cross in the stone, which she repeats in the “lavacrum” with her right foot. In both versions, this second cross is the place from which the water gushes forth, while in An Buhez the water simply appears. Moreover, Barbara’s motivation for conjuring

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the water is different. In An Buhez Barbara has already received baptism at the hands of Saint Valentine, which is why the author of the Breton play must have felt the need to provide Barbara with another motive to perform the miracle. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées Barbara is still waiting for her baptism to occur and for that she needs water as well as someone to perform the rite. Thus, she issues rather lengthy prayers:

_cinq journées:
Hic dictis descendat ad piscinam in qua nondum fit aqua et [BARBARA] dicat.

S’il y eust icy de l’eau mise
En ce lavouer grandement,
Et j’eusse aucun presentement
Qui me baptizast par amour,
[...]
Helas! plus de cent foiz helas!
Or n’ai ge ame qui me baptize
Pour me mettre soubz la franchisse
De Jesus Crist et de sa route!
Or n’ai ge pas d’eau une goute,
Dont venir ne puis a mon esme.
[...]
Glorieux Dieu, clere fontaine,
[...]
Qui quatre fleuves habundans
En paradis terrestre feistes,
Yceulx alors vous produiseistes
Pour le lieu plaisant arousier,
Veillez moy cy par vos merites
Donner eau pour moy baptiser!
[...]
Voustre pouoir treshabundant
Produisit piecza ou desert,
La vie de la pierre en appert,
Aux enfans d’Israël pusier,
Dont par plaisir tresrecouvert
Ilz furent tous resazier.
[...]
Et en tresferme seureté,
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En ma cisterne j’entreré
Esperant que le hault Dieu vroy,
Le principal souverain Roy,
De eau nette et clere me pourvoye.

[...]

Fiat signum crucis cum pede. Et veniat aqua in lavatorum et dicat admirando.

O vray Dieu, Sanctus sanctorum,
Véz cy divine demonstrance,
Véz cy de eau tresgrant habundance,
Véz cy liqueur bon entre mil,
Qui m’ataint ja juc’au nombril;
Car des quartiers tresbeaulx
De la croix sont quatre russeaulx
De eau clere souris et sailliz,
Qui jamais ne sauroint faillir.
Se sont fontaines impuisibles
Qui seront indiminuibles,
Plus parfaicte que l’eau champestre.
Comme de paradis terrestre,
Courans quatre fleuves plaisans,
Quatre sources tressustans
Sourdent du fons du lavouer.
Autre eau je ne veil avoir!

(10852 - 10934)
(Wakkerzeel 1495, 21f)

The two texts resemble one another strongly. They are similar with regard to the manner in which Barbara conjures the water or with regard to the description of the water which is like the four rivers of the earthly paradise. However, there are some further references to the bible in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia that have not found their way into cinq journées. After comparing the water to the four rivers, John of Wakkerzeel compares the water from the “lavacrum” to that of the river Jordan in which Jesus was baptised and claims that both these waters have touched holy creatures. This idea might be detectable in the way in which Barbara repeats her wish to be baptised in the “lavacrum”. John of Wakkerzeel makes it more explicit when he refers to three biblical stories concerned with water, namely John 4 “Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman” (aqua viva, famaritana), John 5 “The healing at the Pool” (probatice piscine), and John 9 “Jesus heals a man born blind” (natatorie filoe), which do not occur at all in cinq journées. In the two latter stories Jesus heals a person afflicted by a physical ailment and pools play a role – the Pool of Bethesda, which is also called the Probatic Pool in John 5, and the Pool of Siloam in John 9. John 4 is about the juxtaposition of Jesus’ physical need to drink with a Samaritan woman’s need for spiritual nourishment. When Jesus comes through Samaria during his travels, he asks a Samaritan woman for a drink. The author of An Buhez takes up this idea and uses it as the
pretext for Barbara to approach the fountain. She has “a wish in [her] mind to drink” (255). However, Barbara plays neither the role of the Samaritan woman nor the role of Jesus. Her attitude might best be described as mirroring the Samaritan woman’s after having found out who she is talking to.

Jesus: “si scires donum Dei et quis est qui dicit tibi da mihi bibere tu forsitan petisses ab eo et dedisset tibi aquam vivam [...] aqua quam dabo ei fiet in eo fons aquae salientes in vitam aeternam.”

The Samaritan woman answers: “da mihi hanc aquam ut non sitiam neque veniam huc haurire”

(Vulgata 2017, John 5)

These aspects have been worked into Barbara’s prayer in An Buhez: “Lord who created green and dry, kindly send here, [...] soon pure, holy water into this pool so that I myself will drink gladly. [...]” (257). In asking God to send her “pure, holy water” (257) with which she wishes to quench her thirst, Barbara in a way follows the instructions Jesus gives to the Samaritan woman. And as Jesus promised to the Samaritan woman, Barbara is rewarded with the return of the water. Barbara then voices her devotion to Jesus, again taking up the idea of the supernatural water provided by God: “Nobody in this world ever tasted water which was more delicious to anyone who would be thirsty, akin to the probatic water [...] I render [the son of God] the utmost gratitude for sending his benevolence, his goods, to me down here” (259-261). The term “living water” (‘dour beu’), however, does not appear in An Buhez. Instead, Barbara describes the water as “clear” (net, 255), “bright” (glan, 256), “good” (mat, 258), “sacred” and “delicious” (facret, faouret, 259), “pure” (pur, 263), “tender” and “pleasant” (flour, amourabl, 265). The adjectives in question always carry either an internal or an end-rhyme. In two of these cases, the internal rhyme could have been supplied by another word in the verse, but in both cases the adjective in question repeats the internal rhyme and is thus preferable to another adjective of the same length but with a different sound pattern. Due to the rigorous metrical requirements, the adjective “beu” (‘alive, living’) could not easily have replaced any of the above adjectives in order to include the phrase “living water” familiar from the bible. An alternative form such as “dour a vuhez” (water of life) would have been even harder to include in the complex metre. Instead, the author of the Breton play seems to have chosen a different way to allude to the biblical phrase. “Pa nen caffên ez marufen mic” (‘if I had not found it, I would simply have died’, 259) can be interpreted as an inversion of the “living water”, since the context requires Barbara’s statement to be understood in a spiritual rather than a literal way.

Despite the lack of direct biblical references in cinq journées, there are some similarities of
terminology between *cinq journées* and the other texts. As in *An Buhez*, the term “living water” does not appear in *cinq journées*. Instead, Barbara calls God “clere fontaine” (10878), praises the water as “eau clere” (10925), “fontaines impuisible / qui seront diminuibles” (10927f), and claims that “Autre eau je ne veill avoir” (10934) and “Ce n’est pas cy eau naturelle” (10944). While there is no mention of drinking the water in any way, the terminology and metaphors are strongly reminiscent of John 4. The two biblical stories about Jesus’ power to heal (John 5 and 9) are worked into the play in a corresponding way. Between the appearance of the water and Barbara’s baptism, God, Mary, John the Baptist and Gabriel talk about Barbara’s virtue in heaven. During this conversation the water is described first by God:

L’eau aura telle force en soy
Et telle vertu donneray
Qu’elle pourra donner santé,
Voyre de toute enfermeté,
A chascun malade quelconques.

(11058-11062)

and then by Gabriel:

Que l’eau qui est cy en presence
Aura sus toutes prééminence,
Vertu, force et virilité,
Et ouste toute infirmité.
Par son touchement garira,
Car puissance de garir a
Doulceur et mal debilité.

(11068-11074)

The idea that the water has healing abilities is thus clearly present in *cinq journées*, but without any direct reference to a specific biblical story.

This is different in *An Buhez*. There, the biblical reference is made explicit by calling the water “probatic” (259), and summarising John 5:1-9, “The Healing at the Pool”. In this story, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem where “est autem Hierosolymis super Probatica piscina quae cognominatur hebraice Bethsaida quinque porticus habens” (*Vulgata* 2017). This “Probatic Pool”, also known as the “Pool of Bethesda”, is famous for its healing powers. There, Jesus heals a paralytic, who was unable to reach the Pool of Bethesda by himself at the proper time. The question is how this reference has found its way into *An Buhez*. There are many striking similarities between *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* as well as between *An Buhez* and the *Legenda*
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Aurea, respectively. In this case, neither cinq journées nor the Legenda Aurea include either of the key terms “Bethesda” or “probatic”. However, cinq journées does use the term “piscina” in two stage directions: “Hic dictis descendat ad piscinam in qua nondum fit aqua” (10851/2) and “Descendat in piscinam” (10909/10). In classic Latin the word “piscina” means “(fish-)pond”, “(swimming-)pool”, or “vat” (Glare 1968, 1383). According to the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012, “piscine”) the term “piscine” carries the general meaning of “bassin dans lequel on se purifie” or simply “bassin”, but it also refers specifically to the “bassin proche du temple de Jérusalem, destiné aux rites purificatoires”. The latter entry is based on two passages from *Le Mystère de la Passion*,34 dated to the middle of the 15th c. (Marcadé 1893) and thus preceding cinq journées. The passages in turn are clearly based on John 5, which underlines the popularity of this particular biblical story. The simple term “piscina” used in the stage direction may therefore have caused all kinds of associations in the mind of a reader who is familiar with other mystery plays in general, and with *Le Mystère de la Passion* in particular, or with its point of reference, John 5. The effect on a spectator, however, is highly dependant on the way this scene is staged as well as on the level of his/her education. The word “piscine” is not used at any point in the speech of a character, it appears only in two stage directions and would therefore not have been heard during the performance. A spectator of the play would thus not necessarily recognise any connection to John 5 in this scene. The fatiste of cinq journées, however, probably had the Pool of Bethesda in mind when choosing the term “piscina” in the stage directions, because the many similarities between cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* in general point to a close connection of the two plays. Still, the fatiste chose not to mention the Pool of Bethesda – or any of the other Pools from the bible – directly. Thus, it is unlikely that the author of *An Buhez* took the idea to include the Probatic Pool from cinq journées. As the pool is absent from the Legenda Aurea as well, the author of *An Buhez* must either have worked from another source such as John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*,

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34En passant devant la piscine
La a fait de miracle ung signe,
Car ung qui la estoit gisans
Il y avoit XXXVIII ans
A donné sainte et gary
(8242-8246).

De puis en ce lieu on a fait
Une yaue qu’on nomme de fait
La probatica piscina,
Qui maint beau miracle fait a,
C’est la piscine ou sont lavées
Les bestes qui sont presentées
Au temple pour faire offertoire
(15434-15440).
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or have fashioned the connection between the fountain and the well-known story of John 5 himself.35

The question remains why the author of An Buhez has transformed the “lavacrum” into a “feunten”. While it is impossible to answer this question, I would like to make a suggestion with regard to a possible reason for the author’s decision. As Cathy Marzin points out in her essay on fountains in the Basse-Bretagne, “il n’est pas de région en France où le culte des sources soit aussi important qu’en Bretagne” (Marzin 1998, 15). According to Brigitte Caulier, who has conducted a useful study of wells and their respective cults in France, “toutefois des régions où l’eau abonde, la Bretagne ou le Limousin, détiennent le record des fontaines à dévotions” (Caulier 1990, 20). Francis Jones has provided us with a similar study from the other side of the channel in “the holy wells of Wales” (Jones 1954), while “Celtic Christianity and Nature” (Low 1996) or the “Archaeological Survey of the Dingle Peninsula” (Cuppage 1986) show that holy wells are a very common feature of Early Irish Christianity, too. In light of such regional preference, it is tempting to assume a “Celtic” heritage as the driving force behind the author’s choice, but “well-worship was a feature of the religious life of the Ancients” (Jones 1954, 20) rather than only of the Celts. Furthermore, “the sacramentality of water is a feature of primal religions in many parts of the world” (Low 1996). It is thus much more likely that regional factors played a role in the author’s choice rather than Brittany’s “Celtic” heritage. Nevertheless, the above studies exemplify that the cult around wells was (and often still is) very commonplace in Wales, Ireland and Brittany and they also show that practices associated with wells were very similar. Wells that are dedicated to or associated with a certain saint are called saints’ pools. According to Sylvette Denêle a Breton fountain is always natural and never the result of water being channelled to the fore. Most fountains are marked by some kind of stone construction, which is often set directly into the soil and usually measures between 50 cm and 8-9 m. The water flows into a square or oblong stone basin, which is often covered by a small oratory. The water basin usually remains accessible from one side and the whole structure is often surrounded by a stone wall in order to keep out animals, with benches for pilgrims on the inside (Denêle 1994, 32f). Marzin describes four different categories of fountains common in Brittany: 1) A “Trou d’eau empierré” is a simple hole, dressed with stones, which sprouts

35The third pool that is mentioned by John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia does not appear in any of the four texts compared in this study. It is mentioned in an Old-Norse/Icelandic version of the life of Saint Barbara, in Barbare Saga (Wolf 2000). According to Wolf, “Barbare Saga must be considered a close rendering of the Latin source text as represented by BHL Suppl. 913a” and differs “significantly from its Latin source [on only two occasions]” (Wolf 2000, 106). While this may be true on the whole, there are some minor details that have changed on the way from Latin to Old-Norse/Icelandic. One example is the loss of the Pool of Bethesda in Barbare Saga, another is the transformation of the Latin “lavacrum” into a “brunni”, which Wolf translates as “spring”. It may well be a coincidence that both the Old-Norse/Icelandic and the Breton version of the saint’s life use a fountain or spring rather than a bathhouse. Although a direct relation between the Breton and the Old-Norse/Icelandic text does not seem very likely, it cannot be ruled out entirely.
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water. 2) “La fontaine bassin” is a construction made up of four stones, one of which is lowered to channel the water. It is usually rectangular or square measuring between 40cm and 1m in length. 3) “La fontaine couverte” is similar to 2) but adds a (roofed) construction or a stone plate on top of the basin to cover the water and keep it pure and to keep animals away. 4) “La fontaine ornementale, monumentale” is an ornamented, professionally built construction, which is subject to a certain style that usually goes with the surrounding buildings. It is more of a piece of art and almost always dedicated to a saint (Marzin 1998, 17f).

Pools of all kinds abound in Brittany and one very prominent pool dedicated to Saint Barbara is located in Le Faouët. Of course, this is by far not the only one. In Plouharnel, there is a whole village dedicated to Saint Barbara, with at least a chapel and a fountain carrying her name, as well as a lavoir.

[La chapelle] que l’on peut voir actuellement dans le hameau éponyme date de la fin du XVie siècle […] A cent mètres de la chapelle Sainte-Barbe, se trouve la fontaine éponyme datant du XVIe siècle. Il s’agit d’un édicule avec pignon deux pentes et voûte profonde. L’enclos est de petite dimension.
(Fontaines de France 2005)

With regard to the lavoir we cannot be sure whether this is in fact dedicated to Saint Barbara or whether it is merely situated in the vicinity of the chapel and the fountain and is thus associated with Barbara indirectly. In any case it is interesting to note that there is an abundance of objects associated with or dedicated to Saint Barbara in, for example, Plouharnel. This raises an important consideration with regard to the author’s choice of a fountain over a “lavacrum” in An Buhez. There is a distinct possibility that a saint’s pool – possibly dedicated to Barbara – is located in the vicinity of the stage, or even included in the performance. As medieval theatre was performed not in buildings housing a stage but instead in the open on a stage constructed to serve for one play only (2), it is likely that the organisers of a play would have taken the local conditions into account. It is thus conceivable that a stage for the Breton play would have been built in proximity to a saint’s pool, so that the pool could be revealed at the necessary moment and Barbara could go to a real “good fountain which is (hidden) back there” (‘feunten mat fo diadreff’, 255). Even the fact that the fountain is dry when Barbara encounters it in the play could have been exploited. As Mireille Andro points out, there is a rarity of fountains in coastal regions and “beaucoup de fontaines manquent d’eau en été normal” (Andro 1998, 50). Incidentally, Plouharnel is a coastal town, although it has to be mentioned that Andro’s study referred to fountains further east. If we take Plouharnel as an example for a possible place of performance, the author of An Buhez could have chosen to include either a saint’s pool or a lavoir in the play. The latter would very likely have been closer to the ideas of the “lavacrum"
in *cinq journées* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. But according to Denèle, the terminology is not interchangeable and “Eau vive”, “fontaines”, “sources”, and “lavoirs” are to be regarded as distinct concepts (Denèle 1994, 25). This point of view is supported by Giraudon when he explains that lavoirs are usually separated from a source or fountain, but can nevertheless be fed by its waters: “[des lavoirs] sont installés au bas d’une prairie, en contrebas d’une source ou d’une fontaine, en bordure d’un ruisseau ou d’une rivière” (Giraudon 1998, 93). If, indeed, a lavoir carries a strong profane connotation and is associated with doing the laundry and other daily chores, it might have felt anti-climactic to the audience to see Barbara praying for water to come back into their wash basin, particularly since there is no need for her to step into it completely as is the case in *cinq journées*. A saint’s pool, however, would already carry a certain mystical or sacred aspect and thus underline the holiness of the act. Gaël Milin has explored this mystical and supernatural air associated with fountains in the Middle Ages in her article “L’imaginaire médiéval de la fontaine: esquisse d’inventaire” (Milin 1998, 131-177). There, she also claims that the oriental heritage often associates a fountain with life, and thus with “l’eau vive” (Milin 1998, 158f), a motif which, as has been argued above, is present in the bible and has indirectly found its way into *An Buhez*. Milin also quotes the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*, in which the Irish local saint Brendan meets Paul the hermit, who is living on a mountainous island and claims to have lived for sixty years “on [a] well without nourishment or any other food” (O’Meara 1994, 84). The *Navigatio Brendani* in turn apparently has been inspired by the *Vita Pauli*, in which a hermit named Paul lives in a cave for sixty years, where the water from a spring and a regularly forthcoming loaf of bread are his only nourishment (Strijbosch 2000, 145). This particular anchoretic image of fasting and self-denial is not particularly strong in *An Buhez*, but Barbara expresses the wish to fast and to use the fountain as a sanctuary for her prayers:

[266] Ma refectio da donet
A quemeriff ne filliff quet
En placc man affet credet diff
Da dibriff del ha mel quyelen
Euit pitancc da fuittance plen
Nem bezo quen dan souteniff.

[267] Aman pep hent emem rentiff
A quement an hez maz veziff
Da dibriff ha da pidiff doe
Ne flachiff quet en requet den
Nemet en nos da repos plen
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Eguit tremen plen diouz enoe

[268] Monet a hanên amênaff  
Euit vetez da ân hezaff  
Dan tour flour haff oar guelhaffer pret  
Eno pep nos ez reponif.  
Hac aman en dez ez beziff  
Hennuz ariff ne filliff quet.

My future refreshment / will I take, I will not fail, / here in this place indeed, believe me!, / and eat foliage and honey of insects /as the only nourishment for sustenance; / I will not have anything else for alimentation. // I will repair to this place anyway / from any residences where I will be / to eat and to pray to God. / I will not move in answer to anyone’s plea / except to rest at night indeed / in order to get past all sorrow. // I want to go away from here / to move, from today on, / into the most tender tower first of all. // There I will rest every night / and here I will be by day. // I will do this, I will not fail. //

However, her plans do not include living on the water from the fountain alone, as the hermits in the legends mentioned above do. Yet the aspect of removing herself from society is present insofar as Barbara refuses to fulfil her office as heiress, i.e. marry and have children in order to secure the succession (cf. Campbell 2008). While there is a certain aspect of withdrawal in her lines, she mostly wishes for a place to worship. We do not find a direct parallel for this in cinq journées, but the idea of withdrawal is certainly given there as well. In cinq journées, Barbara puts on “vestimenta humilitatis” after her baptism and declares her intentions to leave behind all worldly embellishments:

Fy d’atours et de queuvrechefs  
Dont on queuvre les nobles chefs!  
Fy du monde tant qu’il est grant,  
Fy de drap d’or fin et luysant!  
(11332-11335)

The nutritional restrictions Barbara wishes to place upon herself in An Buhez are very famous, of course. They are familiar from Matthew 3, in which John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus. He is described as wearing clothes made from camel’s hair with a belt and eating locusts and wild honey: “ipse autem Iohannes habebat vestimentum de pilis camelorum et zonam
pelliciam circa lumbos suos esca autem eius erat lucustae et mel silvestre” (Vulgata 2017 Mt 3:4). Both *cinq journées* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* include this particular aspect, as well:

*cinq journées:*
Jehan Baptiste, homs d’abstinence
[11185a . . ence]
D’excés et de gulosité,
Tu as mangé par rarité
Saultereaux et miel sauvage.
Si conclud qu’en toute mon aage
Je t’ensuyve en qualité,
Pour vivre par voustre retente.
(11184-11191)
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John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 23)

While John the Baptist plays the very important role of baptising Barbara in both cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, this role is filled by saint Valentine in An Buhez and the Legenda Aurea. Apparently, the author of the Breton play wanted to find a way of including John the Baptist in his play despite the fact that he was not required to perform the baptism of Barbara. As a result, the author of An Buhez combined John’s famous nutritional restrictions with the holiness and spiritual nourishment provided by the water of the fountain, rather than leave John the Baptist out of the story entirely as in the Legenda Aurea. This serves two purposes. On the one hand, it creates a link between Barbara and one of the most famous and respected saints in the Christian world. On the other hand, it elevates Barbara’s own status as a saint. The author of An Buhez may have felt that this was necessary since Barbara is not baptised by the same hand that baptised Jesus as in cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia.36

Furthermore, there is another interesting detail that merits a closer look. In An Buhez Barbara wishes “to repair to/return here” (’aman [...] emem rentiff’) to eat and pray and wants to “spend [her nights in the tower and] her days here” (’aman en dez ez beziff’, 267/8). In this case “aman’ (’here’) very likely refers to the fountain that she has just been visiting. Such a juxtaposition of her daily and nightly activities does not occur in cinq journées or in the Legenda Aurea. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, however, there is a sentence towards the end of the episode giving the information that Barbara practices singing hymns day and night:

36The differences between cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia with regard to the scene in the “lavacrum” are slight. Apart from the lack of the references to the biblical pools, the fatiste of cinq journées also did not make it explicit that Barbara has a vision of Jesus as a child before her baptism. While she is indeed visited by Jesus, there is no mention of his being a child or of him transforming somehow. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the Christ child has the stigmata that make him recognisable, but in cinq journées this is replaced by a rather strange stage direction indicating that Jesus appears with slow-running blood: “Hic appariat Jesus sanguine lentus” (10552/3). Barbara’s following lines indicate that Jesus seems to be covered in blood. It remains unclear, however, whether he is a child or an adult at this point. This event does not occur in either An Buhez or the Legenda Aurea.
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 24)

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia does not establish a difference between Barbara’s daily and nightly activities and the singing of hymns is not made explicit in An Buhez. Yet, it is noteworthy that both versions depict Barbara in some form of day- and nighttime contemplation while the other texts do not mention anything along those lines at all.

11.3. The Idols

In most versions of the legend, Barbara encounters and defies idols after the episode in the lavacrum/next to the fountain. Again, deux journées is the one that does not concur. There, the devils enter the stage expressing their discontent at Barbara’s conversion and plan to bring as many souls to hell as possible. Longtin lists this among the principal distinct traits of deux journées: “Il n’est pas question non plus de saccage d’idoles païennes dans ce Mystère. Barbe ne fait que verbaliser succinctement son mépris pour ces représentations du démon” (Longtin 1996, 16). However, at that stage Barbara does not even attack the idols verbally in any way, she merely returns to her place after her baptism. This is very different in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and the Legenda Aurea, where she attacks the idols verbally, spits in their faces and/or tears them from their sockets, rips off their valuable decorations and gives them as alms.

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 23-24)

[...] deposit ascendens in turrim vidit simulacra, quae colebat pater ejus, sus-
cipiens spiritum sanctum inspuit in faciem eorum et dixit: similes vestri fiunt, qui
faciunt vos, et omnes, qui confidunt in vobis.
(Graesse 1965, 900)

The interesting thing with regard to An Buhez is that the scene is very difficult to under-
stand if one is only reading the Breton play without either watching the play or having the
background knowledge of Barbara’s legend in its other versions. There is no stage direction
that indicates what Barbara is actually doing at this point. In 268 she appears to be still next
to the fountain, planning her future contemplation. Then, in 269, she suddenly speaks about
idols, which have not been introduced in any way:

[268] Monet a hanên amênaff
Euit vetez da ân hezaff
Dan tour flour haff oar guelhaff pret
Eno pep nos ez repoiliff.
Hac aman en dez ez beziff
Hennez ariff ne filliff quet.

[269] ydol a drouc fcol dipollicc
Leun a scandal hac a malicc
Hac a pep drouc vicc difficil
Bezcoaz ne guelat en oat den
Tra oar douar me en goar plen
Da quen bility na da quen vil.

I want to go away from here / to move, from today on, / into the most tender
tower first of all. / There I will rest every night / and here I will be by day. / I will
do this, I will not fail. // Idol of bad influence, without virtue, / full of scandal and
of malice / and of every bad, hard vice! / Never was seen in the history of mankind
/ anything on earth, I know it full-well, / as despicable and as evil as you! //

While she expresses her wish to move into the tower from that day on, it does not become
entirely clear from her lines that she is actually going there now rather than merely expressing
a future plan. However, as is discussed in 3, there is an inconsistency in stanza 269 which
suggests that Barbara has moved from one place to another at this point. In the other versions of the legend it is clear that Barbara is at this point speaking to the idols and has likely moved in the direction of the tower, or entered it, and encountered the idols on the way. In the *Legenda Aurea* Barbara enters her tower and there encounters the idols her father has ordered (“depop ascendens in turrim vidit simulacra, quae colebat pater ejus”, Graesse 1965, 90). In *cinq journées* we learn that Barbara “gradiatur turrim” (11208/11309) and “sint ydola in turi cum Barbara” (11355/11356) from the stage directions. In *An Buhez*, however, the stage direction indicating her whereabouts – praying on her knees in her chamber – is given only after her abusive speech to or about the idols: “Aman ez pet doe oar he doulin / en e cambre” (276/7).

The banishment of the idols seems to be an integral part of the legend, for it happens in all versions of the legend except in *deux journées*. In both *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* the sacking of the idols consists of a lengthy monologue by Barbara:

*An Buhez:*

[269] ydol a drouc fcol dipolicc  
Leun a scandal hac a malicc  
Hac a pep drouc vicc difficil  
Bezcoaz ne guelat en oat den  
Tra oar douar me en goar plen  
Da quen bilen na da quen vil.

[270] A/ fy a quement nacion  
So en fantafy abufion  
Dre da faczon inraefonabl  
Ha quement den acret enot  
A quarhên heuel eueldot  
Rac te fo fot ha dinotabl

*cinq journées:*

Ha saincte Trinité celeste,  
Que font cy ses faulces ydolles?  
Tiennent elles cy leur escoles?  
Pendu soit il qui les forgea!  
Deception on leur forgea.  
Mauldit soit il qui les revere,  
Qui les honneure et les prefere

A Dieu des dieux et les adoure!  
>Que l’ennemy tue et devore<  
Cil qui premier s’en advisa  
Et aussi les auctorisa,  
Car le monde en est abusé!  
Mon pere a de vous trop usé,  
Qui vous adoure comme dieux.

Comment dieux divins sont ilz tyeulx?  
Sont il d’or ne d’argent doré?  
Mal ait qui vous a estoré  
Et prent plaisir quand il vous voit!  
Si mon pere present me deboit  
Mectre au retour par mainte piece,  
Si fault il que je vous depiece,  
Car mon cuer ne peult endurer
11. The Fountain

[272] Crachet ez viðaig heb flachaff  
Araff dit ha da depitaff  
Da diþríaff en muy haff ment  
Ariff dit depret heb quet fy  
Na nez dougiaff quet muy eguet quy  
Nezeux teaut na fry nañquient.

Que vous puissiez cy demouréz  
En despit de vous, faulx Ymaiges.  
Co[ns]puat in facies ydolorum.  
Je cracheray en vos visaiges.  
Fy de vous, fy, fy tout a plain!  
Et de ceux qui vous prient en vain  
Plustoust vous frouesseroyz aux dens

[273] Ne cleuze na ne guelz hent  
Quent fe a pep rout ozout lent  
Groaet dre fent instrumant pentet  
Te nez eux buhez na bezaff  
Bec na dant na pegant fantaff  
Bras ez quaaff nê nachaff quet

Que je vous lessasse dedans  
Ceste tour jamais habiter.  
Venéz Venus et Jupiter,  
Apolin et vous, Saturnus,  
Voustre darain jour est venus:  
Je vous derompré piéz et bras  
Et testes. Tenéz cy Palas!

[274] An dyaouyll glout dre art foutil  
Eguitt deceff breff heb reuul  
Partabl ha gentil ha bilen  
A vn hat vil az compilas  
A coat pe men ez quemenas  
Sot ez nodas na allas quen

Je vous foulleray soubez miéz.  
Et les aultres deux touz sur piéz  
Si estez dieux si vous venger,  
Si tort faiz et vous revenger  
Par voustre dominaçion!  
Vengéz vous de l’extorcion

[275] Te nen dout na beu na feuen  
Nemet vn tra ort difordren  
Un mé maruyen heb qué en bet  
Ne alhes fifual na bale  
Euit neb eres aleffe  
Nemet vn re az douque quet.

Que je vous faiz, faulx tristes Chiens!  
Voustre puissance ne vault riens.  
Quoy dea, vous n’estez dieux, més deables!  
On vous deust gecter sur les fiens,  
Voustre puissance ne vault riens.  
Je conclu par tous vos maintiens:  
Qui sont fresles et miserables

[276] Fy ahanot tra affotet  
Maledicion fo ouz doneat  
Oar queuent az cret heb quet fy  
Eñ ifferrï yen certen men goar  
Ez vezint dannep heb quet mar  
En glachar ha mil amloary.

Vous estez faulces et dampnables,  
[11450a . . iens]  
[11450b Voustre puissance ne vault riens.]  
[11450c Quoy dea, vous n’estez dieux, més de-  
ables!]  
Ydolles faulces et statues.  
Toutes voz piecez seront rompues,  
Lesquelles sont d’or et d’argent,  
Seront par moy a pouvre gent  
Donnees et sans quelque distance.  
(11402-11455)
11. The Fountain

Idol of bad influence, without virtue, / full of scandal and of malice / and of every bad, hard vice! / Never was seen in the history of mankind / anything on earth, I know it full-well, / as despicable and as evil as you! // Oh, woe to all peoples / that are in a confusion of trickery / due to your deceitful manner! / And whoever believes in you / I would want him to be like you / because you are stupid and contemptible. // You are misleading to everyone, / disgusting and damnable to look upon, / improper, bad, obnoxious! / Whoever adores you will follow you / to the cold hell to stay there. // And they will have no way back. // I spit in your motionless face / and I defy you! / I will despise you exceedingly, // always, without any doubt / and I do not respect you any more than a dog! / You do not have a tongue or a nose or reason! // You do not hear and you do not see; / rather you are dumb in every way, / a painted object made through deceit / you have neither life nor being, / no mouth and no tooth nor something to smell with. / I hate you greatly, I do not deny it. // The gluttonous devil through subtle artifice / in order to deceive soon without regard / commoner, noble and villain alike / he devised you out of an evil intention: / he cut you out of wood or stone; / he made you stupid, and he was not able to do anything else. // You are neither alive nor strong, / nothing but a nasty and vile thing, / a cold, dead stone and nothing more. / You could neither move nor travel / – despite all wickedness – from this place / unless someone would carry you. // (I) defy you, foolish thing! / Malediction is coming / upon all who believe you, without any doubt! / Into cold hell, I know it for sure, / they will be damned, without any doubt, / in sickness and a thousand sorrows. //

It is interesting to note that the monologue is about the same length in both versions, despite the fact that *cinq journées* is about seven times longer than *An Buhez*. With regard to contents, the respective monologues may not be identical, but share some significant features. While Barbara is explicit and addresses the heathen (ancient Roman) gods by name in *cinq journées*, she only calls them “ydl a drouc scol” (‘idol of bad influence’, 269) in *An Buhez*. Barbara tears them apart and gives the valuable pieces to the poor in *cinq journées* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, but not in *An Buhez*. There, the idols are called “a painted object” (’intrment pentet’, 273) made “of wood or stone” (‘A coat pe men’, 274), but there is no mention of gemstones or gold and thus the idea of giving their valuable pieces as alms is absent.

There are several verses in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* that appear to be closely related. Moreover, the sequence of the pieces of Barbara’s attack is similar. She begins by addressing the idols:
11. The Fountain

An Buhez:

ydol a drouc scol
(269)

(cinq journées:

Que font cy ses faules ydolles?
Tienent elles cy leur escolles?
(11403f)

The Breton word “scol” means “école” (Hemon 1979, 2879), which is the modern orthography of “escolles” and has the same meaning (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012, “école”). Moreover, both terms rhyme with ydol(les) in the respective texts, albeit as an internal rhyme in the case of An Buhez. After this initial similarity, the Breton and the French play differ with regard to the contents of Barbara’s monologue, but not with regard to the overt tone. In both versions she begins to describe the idols and the effect they have on the people that worship them, which is clearly negative:

An Buhez:

[276] […]
Maledicion fo ous donef
Oar quement az cret heb quet fy
Eñ iferñ yen certen men goar
Ez vezint damneb heb quet mar
En glachar ha mil amloary.

(cinq journées:

Maudit soit il qui les revere,
Qui les honneure et les prefere
A Dieu des dieux et les adoure!
>Que l’ennemy tue et devore<
Cil qui premier s’en advisa
Et aussi les auctorisa,
Car le monde en est abusé!
(11405-11413)

[…] / Malediction is coming / upon all who believe you, without any doubt! / Into cold hell, I know it for sure, / they will be damned, without any doubt, / in sickness and a thousand sorrows. //

Interestingly enough it is the last stanza of Barbara’s monologue in An Buhez that comes closest to the beginning of her monologue in cinq journées. However, the idea that damnation will be the fate of all those who adore the idols is an integral part of the monologue in both plays and is also voiced in the beginning of An Buhez. In the Latin versions of the legend it is even more important, because it is the only comment Barbara directs at the idols:

Legenda Aurea:

[…] inspuit in faciem eorum et dixit: similes vestri fiant, qui faciunt vos, et omnes, qui confidunt in vobis
(Graesse 1965, 900)
11. The Fountain

John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 23)

That Barbara spits in the idols’ faces and directs her anger at those that adore them is common to all versions of the legend, except *deux journées*. In the plays the respective verses are very similar, the only difference being an additional explanatory stage direction in *cinq journées* which *An Buhez* lacks:

*An Buhez*:  
[272] Crachet ez vifaig heb flachaff  
Araff dit ha da depitaff  
[...]

*cinq journées*:  
Co[ns]puat in facies ydolorum.  
Je cracheray en vos visages.  
Fy de vous, fy, fy tout a plain!  
(11425/6-11427)

I spit in your motionless face / and I defy you! / [...] //

However, the information that those who have made the idols and/or revere them shall suffer a negative effect precedes Barbara’s spitting in the idols’ faces in both plays, which contrasts with the order of events in the Latin versions. It is also interesting to note that the wording in the Latin versions is almost identical, except that the middle part “qui faciunt vos” (Graesse 1965, 900) is missing from John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. This middle part does appear in *cinq journées*: “Pendu soit il qui les forgea! / Decepçon on leur forgea” (11405f). In *An Buhez* it is the devil that has made the idols and while this part is removed from their damning effect, the idea of the idols’ “decepcion” is also there:

[274] An dyauull glout dre art fautil  
Eguit deceff breff heb reuil  
Partabl ha gentil ha bilen  
A vn hat vil az compilas  
A coat pe men ez quemenas

37Due to the popularity of the legend in general and Wakkerzeel’s work in particular, it is plausible that there are other versions attributed to Wakkerzeel that include “qui faciunt vos”.

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11. The Fountain

Sot ez nodas naallas quen

The gluttonous devil through subtle artifice / in order to deceive soon without regard / commoner, noble and villain alike / he devised you out of an evil intention: / he cut you out of wood or stone; / he made you stupid, and he was not able to do anything else. //

Furthermore, Barbara compares the idols to dogs in both plays:

*An Buhez*:  
[272] [...]  
Da difriaff en muy haff ment  
Ariff dit depret heb quet fy  
Na nez dougiass quet muy eguet quy  
Nezeux teaut na fry naquient.

*cinq journées*:

Je vous foulleray soubz mes piéz.  
Et les aultres deuz touz sur piéz  
Si estez dieux si vous venger,  
Si tort faiz et vous revenger  
Par voustre dominacion!  
Vengéz vous de l'extorcion

[273] Ne cleuez na ne guelez hent  
Quent fe a pep rout ozout lent  
Groaet dre fent instrument pentet  
Te nez eux buhez na bezaff  
Bec na mant na pegant fantaff  
Bras ez quaaff nē nachaff quet

[...] I will despise you exceedingly, / always, without any doubt / and I do not respect you any more than a dog! / You do not have a tongue or a nose or reason!

// You do not hear and you do not see; / rather you are dumb in every way, / a painted object made through deceit / you have neither life nor being, / no mouth and no tooth nor something to smell with. / I hate you greatly, I do not deny it. //

However, the context of the comment is very different in the respective plays. While the fact that Barbara despises the idols and does not respect them as she voices it in *An Buhez* is true for *cinq journées* as well, she does not say so in the French play. Instead, she informs the idols that she will crush them beneath her feet and challenges them to do something about it, which in turn does not appear in *An Buhez*. There Barbara stresses the idols’ worthlessness and employs phrases familiar from Psalm 135 in order to clarify her view of the idols:

simulacra gentium argentum et aurum opera manuum hominum os habent et non loquentur oculos habent et non videbunt aures habent et non audient neque
11. The Fountain

enim est spiritus in ore eorum similes illis fiant qui faciunt ea et omnes qui sperant
in eis.[1]

(Vulgata 2017 Psalm 135: 15-18)

In fact, Psalm 135: 15-18 had likely inspired the passage in the Latin versions as well as in the
plays, but each version seems to have placed a slightly different emphasis. The *Legenda Aurea*
only mirrors verse 18 when Barbara sacks the idols, but takes up part of the psalm again when
Barbara is presented to the *praeses* (the provost in *An Buhez*). Similarly, John of Wakkerzeel’s
*Historia* seems to have reworked lines 15 and 18 into the legend at this point, but has Barbara
quote the psalm again when she is about to be tortured (Wakkerzeel 1495, 29). This is the same
in *cinq journées*, but the *fatiste* has placed considerably more emphasis on the idols being made
of valuable material and being of human creation than did John of Wakkerzeel. *An Buhez* has
extended the topic of the monologue and made use of lines 16 and 17 as well. But instead of
having mouths but being unable to speak, having eyes but being unable to see etc., the idols
are simply informed that they do not even have a tongue or a nose or life. Nevertheless, the
reference is clearly recognisable.38

The single sentence Barbara speaks to the idols in the Latin legends has become an extensive
monologue in both plays. Barbara abuses the idols and curses at them employing a variety of
adjectives. She declaims their falsity and deception. Barbara’s abuse of the idols is stronger in
*An Buhez*, while more emphasis is put on the idols’ falsity and deception in *cinq journées*. Both
plays stress the idols’ futility and powerlessness:

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38 This is particularly interesting because Kjersti Bruvoll claims that in Ungers edition of the Old Icelandic legend
of Barbara (Unger 1877, 155 l. 17-23) “[Psalm 135: 15-18] is rendered in its entirety” (Bruvoll 2009, 138), which
presents another similarity between the Old Icelandic transmission of the legend and the Breton play. While it
is true that the psalm appears in Unger’s edition, Wolf’s edition of the same text does not have the psalm.
11. The Fountain

An Buhez:

[273] [...] Quent fe a pep rout ozout lent Groaet dre fent infrnment pentet Te nez eux buhez na bezaff

[274] An dyauoll [...] A vn hat vil az compilas A coat pe men ez quemenas Sot ez nodas na allas quen

[275] Te nen dout na beu na feuen Nemet vn tra ort difordren Un mé maruyen heb qué en bet Ne alhes fifual na bale Euit neb eres aleffe Nemet vn re az douque quet.

cinq journées:

Voustre puissance ne vault rien.
Quoy dea, vous n’estez dieux, més deables!
On vous deust gecter sur les fiens,
Voustre puissance ne vault rien.
Je conclu par tous vos maintiens:
Qui sont fresles et misérables

Vouste faulces et damnables,
[11450a . . . iens]
[11450b Voustre puissance ne vault rien.]
[11450c Quoy dea, vous n’estez dieux, més deables!]

Ydolles faulces et statues.
(11444-11451)

[…]/ rather you are dumb in every way, / a painted object made through deceit / you have neither life nor being, / [...]. // The devil […] devised you out of an evil intention: / he cut you out of wood or stone; / he made you stupid, and he was not able to do anything else. // You are neither alive nor strong, / nothing but a nasty and vile thing, / a cold, dead stone and nothing more. / You could neither move nor travel / – despite all wickedness – from this place / unless someone would carry you. //

Bruvoll classifies “the futility of worshipping the idols”, and the emphasis on “the fact that the idols are made by human hands” and “that anyone who worships the idols will suffer the same fate as them” as typical features of hagiographic literature in general and virgin martyr legends in particular (Bruvoll 2009, 137). While she has focused upon Old Icelandic virgin martyr legends in her article, many of her findings apply to the French and Breton plays, as well.

The Christian condemnation of idols is a central point in early Christian theology and missionary activity, and thus also in several of the early Saints’ Legends. Idols are presented as an example of the many traps the Devil has devised to lure
11. The Fountain

humankind away from God, and to worship them therefore leads to damnation. [...] One of the most important dichotomies in the Virgin Martyr Legends is therefore the fight between Good and Evil, represented on the one side by the Holy Trinity and on the other by the Devil and his servants and idols. However, the presentations of opposed groups differ between the extant Old Icelandic versions of the legends, and the Latin versions that they have been shown to be based on, and at times quite substantially. (Bruvoll 2009, 136)

All those characteristics feature strongly in either or both of the plays while not necessarily in the Latin versions. This emphasises both plays’ affiliation with contemporary hagiography and suggests a certain knowledge of and familiarity with contemporary hagiography on the part of the respective author.
12. The Shepherds

After Dioscorus has discovered the third window and the reason behind its existence, he threatens to kill his convert daughter. Perceiving the depth of her father’s wrath, Barbara begs God to rescue her. In most versions of the legend the divine intervention involves her passing through a stone of some kind and being transported to a mountainside, which is why she became the patron saint of miners. In the mountains her flight is noticed by two shepherds, one of whom betrays Barbara to her pursuing father.

In the Legenda Aurea, Barbara is transported through a stone to the mountainside upon her prayer: “ipsa autem orabat ad dominum et abscissa est petra et suscepit eam intus et ejicit eam super montem, in quo duo pastores erant pascentes oves suas” (Graesse 1965, 900). This is similar in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:

![Image](image-url)

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 26)

This is very similar in An Buhez, where a stage direction indicates that “Saint Barbara begs God to defend her and then a great stone opened (itself) and covered her against her father, who then intended to kill her” (‘Sante barba a pet doe de diffên: ha neufe vn men bras en em digoras hac he cuzas ouz he tat a predere neufe he lazaff’, 358/9). The information that Barbara has been swallowed by a stone is then repeated by an astonished Dioscorus in order to convey to the spectators what has just happened on stage: “can it be, and with what kind of support, / that the stone swallowed her now” (‘Ez guell bout na pe dre fouten / En he loncas breman an men’, 360). The French plays handle Barbara’s means of escape slightly differently. In cinq journées, Barbara does not beg God to rescue her. When her father draws his sword against her, a stage direction indicates that an angel descends and takes Barbara away from the tower: “Hic sumit angelus crucem faciat et Dyo
coros percutere fingat et Barbara de turri exceat et recedat” (12299/12300). Dioscorus is very surprised and begins looking for her, but there is no mention of a stone involved in Babara’s rescue. In deux journées, the tower itself rescues Barbara from her father. As indicated by a stage direction after her prayer, she is able to pass through the tower’s walls: “Tunc sindatur paries <turris> et virgo transeat per medium et postea recludat
se” (995/6). As in An Buhez, Dioscorus speech supports what has just happened on stage: “que ceste Garcê a fendu / Tout present ceste tour paree / Et vistentem y est passee” (998-1000).
In all versions, Dioscorus eventually goes to the mountains and meets two shepherds. He asks them whether they saw Barbara pass, which one of them denies. The other, however, points her hiding place out to her father. In all versions except *deux journées* the evil shepherd and his flock are punished for his betrayal – the shepherd is turned into a stone (of marble) and his flock into locusts. In the Latin versions, the shepherds are simply there in the mountains, tending their sheep (s.a.), and *deux journées* presents them in much the same way. It is interesting to note, however, that in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* the shepherds’ respective characters – one is compassionate and worried about Barbara, while the other is either simply evil or at least sides with the angry father in pursuit of his daughter – are depicted before one of the shepherds betrays Barbara. This is different in *deux journées*, where the first thing the shepherd does is to betray Barbara’s hiding place to Dioscorus. Only when the other shepherd asks him why he has revealed Barbara to her father the two positions are laid out. This, together with the explanation he gives for his behaviour, depicts a rather slow-witted and careless personality:

*[Dioscorus] va <aux> pastoreux.*

Compains, a tu veu une fille
Plaine de barad et de guillle?
L’as tu point veuê ne ouyê?

Le premier pastour
Pour vraye, elle s’en est fouyê
Par ce mur qui est si devers.

[...]

Le ii. pastour
Aquoy lui as tu dit nouvelles?
Certes Barbe le te rendra!
Des que son pere la tiendra
Il la fera, se croy, mourir.

[...]

Le i. pastour
Mes bestes si vont sagement.
Ilz n’yront pas trop mallement,
Car ilz ont bon gouvernement.
Jé puis dormir tout a mon aise.

(1007-1025)

The fact that Barbara here, in contrast to the other versions of the legend, spares the betraying shepherd has a considerable impact. Because of this, Barbara’s personality in *deux journées*
differs considerably from that portrayed by the other versions.

The shepherds in *deux journées* do not have names. As in the episode about the masons, they are simply numbered. In *An Buhez* the shepherds are called Riuallen and Gueguen, which is interesting because the members of the building crew were also simply numbered, as in *deux journées*. In *cinq journées*, where all characters have names, the shepherds are called Gourlant and Bourle. When they are first introduced in their roles as shepherds, they describe their life:

GOURLANT, *primus pastor*

Il n’est vié que de pastours,
Quand ilz sont justes et loyaulx.
Mais s’ilz sont faulx et desloyaulx,
Si sont meurtriers devorateurs

BOURLE, *secundus pastor*

Fy d’amb[i]cieux, de flateurs,
De chaignes d’or et de joyaulx!
Il n’est vié que [de] pasteurs,
Mais qu’ilz soient justes et loyaulx!

GOURLANT

Je ne vouldroye point les seigneurs
Servir pour lesser les aigneaulx.
Vivent, vivent les pastoureaulx
Qui de brebiz sont curieux!
Il n’est vié que de pasteurs,
Quand ilz sont justes et loyaulx.

BOURLE

Mais s’ilz sont faulx et desloyaux,
Se sont tirans devorateurs.

(11521-11536)

In the verses above, two of a shepherd’s defining traits are justness and loyalty. This is clearly a foreshadowing in order to make the betrayal one of them is about to commit all the more heinous. According to Longtin, their initial lines are a rondeau which is reminiscent of “la chanson de Marote dans Le Mystère de la Pacience de Job: Mesdieu, il n’est aultre vie / Que de pastureaulx, / Quant y tenent leur amye / Au champt des oyseaulx” (“Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, BN fr. 976’, 539f). Similar to the “chanson de Marote”, the shepherds in

39They both appear earlier during the pagan sacrificial ceremony depicted in *cinq journées*. 
12. The Shepherds

cinq journées go on explaining about the responsibility they bear for their flock, which is likely intended as an allusion to the spiritual responsibility of a pastor (11537-11548) and may well have served to create some laughs among the spectators. They then profess themselves happy about their lifestyle, conveying light-heartedness and also a certain romanticism:

**BOURLE**
Il n’est viande tant soit chere
Qui suffise en quelque maniere
A plussieurs, j’en ay grant despit.

**GOURLANT**
J’ayme myeulx vivre en pouvrete
En franchise et en liberté
Que d’estre riche en servitude.

**BOURLE**
Et les aultres d’aultre costé
Veuulent honneur, joyeuseté,
Et dignité par grant estude.

(11558-11566)

This light-hearted attitude is supported by their names. “Bourle” alludes to ball games played with a club, for the word can either refer to a “massue”, i.e. a baton or club, or be read as a variant of “boule”, i.e. a ball (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012). “Gourlant” can be interpreted as a version of “golant”, which refers to a cheap wine (Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012).

The episode about the shepherds in *An Buhez* conveys a very similar attitude of light-heartedness, but not so much romanticism. Ruallen and Gueguen do not elaborate on the well-being of their flock, they simply explain that they will go to the mountain in order to tend their sheep:

*Aman gueguen ha ruallen aya,
 dan menez da miret hoz deauet.*

Ruallen

[368] Ha gueguen gueguen
Gueguen
Petra fo a mall ruallen
Ruallen
A ny ya gueguen dan menez
Da miret hon defuet vetez
Hac eno dram fez on bezo
Amfer euit ober cher mat
Memeux a crên filliguën plat
Ha boutaillat a guin mat fo.

Gueguen
[369] Ya, dempny ha me bennyo
Daz hem auancc a te danczo
Cza comp affo non guelo den
Riuallen
Pebez hoary on be ny quen
Mar bez anezy yenien
Deomp gueguen, don em pourmenaff

Gueguen.
[370] Guell eu deompny frisq diuïcaff
Da mellat ha da ebataff
Euit hon em tommaff a mat
Riuallen.
Heman fo taul fech a brech mat
Aya tizmat hac a pat pell
Horell.
   Gueguen.
A te teur affet guelet guell
Heb fellel tam gant ma câmell
Horell.

   Here, Gueguen and Riuallen go / to the mountain to tend their sheep. / Riuallen: /
Hey, Gueguen, Gueguen! /
Gueguen: / What is so urgent, Riuallen? /
Riuallen: / Do we go, Gueguen, to the mountain / to tend our sheep today? / And there by my faith we will have / time to make merry. / I have, certainly, a whole sausage / and there is a bottle of good wine! //
Gueguen: / Yes! Let’s go and I will play music / come on! And you will dance! /
Great, let’s go at once so that nobody will see us! /
Riuallen: / What other distraction could we have / if it is cold? / Let’s go for a
12. The Shepherds

walk, Gueguen! //

Gueguen: / It is better for us to disrobe boldly, / to play Mell and to have fun / in order to warm ourselves well. / Riuallen: / This is a heavy blow of a good arm / which rushes and goes far! / Horell! /

Gueguen: / Have you ever seen better? / Flawless with my club! / Horell! //

In contrast to cinq journées and the “chanson de Marotes”, there is not so much romanticism here. Instead of discussing their responsibility for their flock and the beauty of the birds in the fields, Riuallen and Gueguen are worried about keeping themselves warm. But, similar to cinq journées, their attitude of bringing food and drink, playing music and a game expresses a certain levity. Thus, An Buhez combines the existential worries of shepherds with an impression of freedom, which results in a more prosaic effect in comparison to cinq journées. This may provide a hint with regard to the audience. A rural audience may have been more familiar with the daily routine of a shepherd than a city-dwelling audience and might thus have found the romanticised version of the shepherds strange. What is more interesting about the shepherd’s dialogue, however, is that playing music, games or bringing food and drink is absent from the Latin versions and from deux journées, as well. In cinq journées, however, the names of the shepherds are reminiscent of precisely the activities discussed by the shepherds in An Buhez. When they first appear, Riuallen states that he has brought a bottle of good wine, which is an interesting parallel to the name “Gourlant” as explained above. The shepherds then discuss how to spend their time and want to dance and play music. According to Le Menn, Riuallen and Gueguen’s dialogue is “le seul example ancien du verbe “biniaouaâ” jouer du biniou” (Le Menn 1983, 34), which appears to be a kind of (bag)piping (cf. Hemon 1979, 261). While the shepherds in cinq journées do not explicitly mention the playing of music, their entrance is designed as a rondeau (‘Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, BN fr. 976, 539), i.e. embedded in a musical setting. Afterwards, Riuallen and Gueguen play “Mell” in An Buhez, which Le Menn interprets as “jouer à la crosse” (Le Menn 1983, 34). It is clear from the contents of the play that the shepherds use a club and require some strength in their arm(s) in order to play (370), which is an interesting parallel to the name “Bourle” as explained above. Thus, significant similarities between cinq journées and An Buhez can be found in the details.
13. Barbara’s End

After the king has recaptured Barbara, he accuses her in front of the provost. The provost in turn attempts to make Barbara renounce her faith and when she refuses to do so, he has her tortured extensively. Nevertheless, Barbara does not comply, nor can she be killed. Therefore, she is eventually returned to her father so that Dioscorus can commit the murder of his daughter himself. The atrocity of the crime in which a father destroys his own flesh and blood is stressed particularly in the theatrical versions of the legend, but is also present in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*:

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 34)

The *Legenda Aurea* is considerably shorter at this point and merely describes the king as “furore repletus pater” (Graesse 1965, 901). The plays, on the other hand, dramatise the situation further. Barbara questions her father’s reason, sanity and his ability to judge, but also the validity of their familial ties. In *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* Barbara even renounces kinship with her father. In all three plays she reviles him with strong language and calls him a tyrant and/or torturer. In order to illustrate the similarities between the plays, I quote the respective passages almost in their entirety:

*cinq journées:*

BARBARA

[...]

Je ne t’apelle plus mon pere,
Car vroy pere tu ne m’es pas,
Mais boureau en ce present pas.
Homme cruel! Homme imparfait!
Fais tu le fait et le deffaict?
Naturé, en toy trop deffault
Bon sang et amour quand il fault
Que par toy je perde mon estre.
13. *Barbara’s End*

Par toy, je commencé a estre,
Tu m’as faict de ta semence,
Et, a non estre, je commence
Au monde, telle que je suis,
Nourie et eslevee, et puis,
Par ton crime, tu me depieces;
Tu me mectras en plusieurs pieces.
M’as tu nourié jusques cy
Pour mè octire sans mercy,
Sans trouver cause ne acheson,
Comme ung pourceau ou ung oyson
Qu’on nourist pour tuer après?
Helas, si tu fusses discretz,
Saige et prudens selon ta sorte,
Pour l’amour de ma mere morte
De qui ton honneur tu recouvre,
Tu ne commisse pas telle euvre
Toy mesme, en la propre personne.
(18770-18795)

déux journées:
Barbe
<Haa!> pere, ta loy te surmonte.
*Barbe en muant le metre.*
Pitié deussez avoir de moy
Qui suis yssue de ta nature.
Tirant, respons tantost: Pourquoy
N’as tu en toy sens et mesure?
Pas ne deusses la chose faire.
Tu m’engendras dedans ma mere,
Or, me veulx tu le corps deffaire?
Pourant, se je ne te vueil plaire,
Tu me deusses de mal garder,
De dehonneur et de grant bruit.
Las! bonnes gens, or regardez
13. Barbara’s End

Quel père j’ay qui me destruct!
_Elle dit a sa mere._
Las! mere, as tu point de pitié
De ta fille qui mourir doye?
Je te supply, par amytié,
S’once m’aymes que je le voye.
_Adonc, le roy descend au champ._
Pour quel raison m’avez vous faict?
Pour me faire icy mourir?
[…]
A une chienne pren toy garde
Qui a ung grant tas de chéauxx
Naturellemet et les garde
Et les preserve de tous maulx;
[…]
Faulx chien, tirant qui est mon pere,
Fay tout tant que tu pourras faire.
(3222-3260)

_An Buhez:_
_Sante Barba._
[697] yuez ne dalchaff quet cret pur
Effes diff tat dre neb fiatur
Rac pan ves fur ha mufuret
Ne ves quet hoantec a te cleu
Da ober officc gour vn bourreue
A eneb bleu ezeux cleuet

[698] Dre da moean ez viouff ganet
Ha penaux pennac ha maguet
Ouff guenet affet ha cret plen
Eff e an tra fe tra neant
Ouziff heb guir mar bes tirant
Ha teig mechant en prefant den.
13. Barbara’s End

[...]
[700] A te na macfes quet ez ty
March ha cafec heb dieguy
Caz ha qui ha muy mar bihent
Propicc dit eguit meritaff
Hac ho emplig daz fereiuchaff
Heb ho lazaff an quentaff poent.

[701] Rac fe fotony difquient
Eu dit bout quen yen na quen lent
Hac a drouc hent ez pretendez
Ma lacat dan maru mic dicar
Dre ampris dicoantis difpar
Heb memoar ne neb digarez

[...]
[703] A te na dleffes quet quentaff
Tremen amfer ha differaff
Da vihanaff ha bezaff yen
Palamour dam mam en draman
Ez dleffes flam auifaff glan
Ma prefeuaff breman an poan

Saint Barbara [speaking to Dioscorus]: / Also, I do not uphold, believe (it) completely, / that you would be my father in any manner / because if you were indeed / you would not be keen – do you hear? – / to assume the services of an executioner’s assistant / against the hair that you have nourished. // Because of you I was born / anyhow and I was raised / by you, indeed. And be aware / that it would be an evil act / if you were a torturer, without any doubt, / and a nastiness against mankind. // [...] // Would you not have nourished in your house / a horse and a mare without regret / a cat and a dog and other (animals), if they had been / useful to you for making a profit / and to use them to serve you / without killing them first of all? // Therefore insane stupidity / is on you to be so cold and so insensitive / and based on wrong assumptions you intend / to put me cruelly to the silent death / due to a uniquely cruel scheme / without reason nor any excuse. // [...] // Would you not first of all have to / let pass some time and wait / at least an cool down? / For the love of my mother / you should, in this matter, truly consider / to
save me, now, from pain. //

While the gist of Barbara’s speech is the same in *deux journées* and in the other two plays, *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* are strikingly similar with regard to contents and structure. Barbara first renounces kinship with her father and then calls attention to his deficiencies as a human being. The manner in which she speaks is also quite similar. She broaches the subject of his responsibility for her existence in order to underline the magnitude of the crime he is about to commit. Barbara then compares her own situation to that of certain animals. The order of the images Barbara employs in her speech remains the same in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*, but there is a difference with regard to the way in which the images of the animals are employed. In *cinq journées*, Barbara compares herself to a pig or a goose raised for slaughter. This is turned around in *An Buhez* and Barbara states that her father would certainly not even kill useful (farm)animals like horses, a cat or a dog, but still wants to murder her, who should be of much more value to him. A similar comparison is also drawn in *deux journées*, and in fact the tone of this comparison is more similar to that in *An Buhez*. In both *deux journées* and *An Buhez*, Barbara compares herself to a dog, but Barbara speaks of one rather than of several useful animals in *deux journées*. Towards the end of the respective passages in *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*, Barbara refers to her mother employing the same words: “Palamour dam mam” (‘For the love of my mother’, 703) and “Pour l’amour de ma mere” (18792). In *deux journées*, Barbara’s mother comes up at an earlier point during the passage. As she is not dead, Barbara speaks to her mother directly rather than bringing her up while talking to her father (“Tu m’engendras dedans ma mere”, 3228). Apart from the imagery with regard to the animal comparison, there is another detail that is very similar in *An Buhez* and *deux journées*. At the beginning of the passage in *deux journées*, Barbara asks her father “Pourqouy n’as tu en toy sens et mesure” (3225f). This is closely mirrored by *An Buhez*, where Barbara says “pan ves sur ha musuret” (‘if you were sure and measured’, 697). This proximity of expression between *deux journées* and *An Buhez* is very striking, but the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* lists "Par sens et par mesure" as a phrase and translates it as “Avec discernement” (*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500) 2012, “mesure"), which indeed suggests that the phrase may be an expression of some general customariness. Nevertheless, the similarity between *An Buhez* and *deux journées* is noteworthy. On the whole, however, the general impression of a close resemblance between *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* remains and is strengthened further by the following passage:
13. Barbara’s End

An Buhez:  cinq journées:
Sante Barba.  BARBARA [...]
[713] An moch hän con hän leonet  Helas, ung loup, ung elephant,
Hän chattal hën aneulalet  Une sigoigne ou une agnese,
Auez pepret nendex quet fy  Ung pourceau, une lëonnesse
Cuff hac vfuel ouz ho quelin  Qui n’a point de sens en la teste
Hac ho mac quer hac anterin  Et toute iraissonnable beste
Han yar he poucin han briny  S’efforce fort de preserver
Leurs fruietz et de mal les garder

Dren cas mâ out hoaz ezout muy  Tu es en ce cas appostat
Goaz euit quy heb confciancc  En lessant nature et amour.
(18802-18811)

Saint Barbara: / The pigs, the dogs, the lions, / the cattle, and (all) animals / are always, there is no doubt, / mild and soft towards their young / and they provide for them lovingly and diligently, / and (also) hen and her chicks, and the ravens. //
You are an apostate because of idolatry / given this behaviour. Moreover, you are / worse than a dog without conscience / [...]. //

Although the animals that serve as a comparison to Dioscorus’ character are again partly different in the two plays, the structure, the contents of the comparison and Barbara’s aim are obviously the same. Generally, the Breton version makes use of much more common animals than cinq journées. This makes the inclusion of the lions in the parable all the more remarkable, particularly because it enhances the resemblance between the two plays even further. In addition to this, the phrases “Apostat [...] / Dren cas mâ out” (“You are an apostate in this case”, 714) and “Tu es en ce cas apostat” (18810) are virtually identical.

13.1. Prayer

In all five versions of the legend, Barbara says a prayer shortly before her father beheads her. She praises God and then makes a request to him. This request is one of the focal points of the legend, because it is largely responsible for “the prestige of Saint Barbara as a patroness of a good death” (Wolf 2000, 27). She asks God to treat all devoted Christians and all those who honour her feast day and memory as if they had been shriven and received the Eucharist, and to treat them with mercy on Judgement Day. According to Wolf, John of Wakkerzeel “attributes
13. Barbara’s End

to the intervention of Saint Barbara a much more precise efficacy” (Wolf 2000, 28) than his predecessors:

John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia:40

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 35)

Indeed, the *Legenda Aurea* is similar, but considerably more concise. As can be expected, the opposite is true for the stage productions, in which Barbara issues a wordy version of the prayer in *cinq journées*. In *deux journées*, the prayer is shorter than in *cinq journées*, but the content is similar. All versions clearly contain her plea for the souls of her followers to be rescued:

*Legenda Aurea:*

[Barbara] orabat ad dominum dicens: domine Jesu Christe, cu iomnia obediunt, praesta mihi hanc petitionem, ut, si quis memor fuerit nomines tui et famulae tuae faciens memoriam passionis meae, domine, ne memineris peccatorum ejus in die judicii, sed propitius esto ei, tu enim scis, quia caro sumus.

(901)

*cinq journées:*

BARBARA:

[...]

Dont je te rens, o grant Devocion, Graces et merciz icy treshumblement. Vroy Dieu, mon cueur sans nulle fiction

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40For a transcribed version of the passage see Wolf 2000.
Te supplyë voire devotement
En te requerant que tout premierement
Tu deffendes mon ame de la flamme
Infernalle, de grief et de tourment,
De deshonneur et de toute diffamme.
[...]
Ton saïnct secours j’actens en ceste place:
A ton resgne fay mon ame venir!
Je Te supply que Tu veilles ouýr
Presentement ma devote priere,
Car je ne puis sans Toy de bien jouir.
Mon oraison ne gitce point erriere,
Enlumine par ta saïncte lumiere
Et fay venir a ta joyeuse gloire
Cë[ux] qui feront de moy ta chamberiere
De cœur devot en ce monde memoire.
Et ne souffre jamais que la mort noire
Les pourface mourir subitement,
Mais seuffre les par confession faire
O toy leur paix et leur appointement.
Et quand viendra ton final jugement,
Je Te requier, oublïe leurs pechéz,
Desquelz ilz ont esté villainement
Es temps passèz maculéz et tachéz.
Ne seuffre [de] mes serviteurs pechéz,
Pour eulx Te faiz presentement requeste.
Et oultre plus ne souffre trespucher
Surs eulx danger, ne fouldre ne tempeste.
Ta pitié soit a mon serviteur preste
Et ta doulceur. Avec misericorde
Preserve les de chascune molesté:
A tes vouloirs les resjouys et accorde.
[...]
_Nunc in manus commando Domine._
(19108-19145)
13. Barbara’s End

d eux j ourn é es:
Barbe
Je te supply tant que suis saine,
Laisse moy prier Dieu mon Pere.
– Jesus, mon Pere Createur,
Qui de mon ame es servateur,
Veuillez recevoir mon esperit.
Tu as esté mon Createur
Et de mon corps ministrateur.
Je me commande au Sainct Esperit.
Je te requiers, douix Roy de gloire,
Que ceulx qui m’auront en memoire,
Qui de moy feront remembrance,
Qu’ilz ayent de leurs maulx a legance.
Garde de fouldre et de tempeste.
Tous ceulx qui de moy feront feste.
Je Te supply, tresvaillant Sire,
Ou se soit homme, femme ou beste,
Donne leur sante de leur teste,
Car Tu es le principal Myre.
[...]
In manus tuas Domine...
(3269-32888/9)

In An Buhez her last prayer is introduced by a stage direction: “Amā fante barba ara he oraefon” (‘Here Saint Barbara makes her prayer’, 723/4). The prayer consists of only three stanzas and is thus rather short:

[724] Autrou doe roen fier ma fperet
Pa duy diff glan tremen an bet
Ozich parfet a erbedaff
Gruet en dez hiziu en diuez
Ma mefr clouar dre trugarez
Entren aelez e ânhezaaff

[725] Em heur maruel em em guelaaff
Na nem deur muy contraliaff
13. **Barbara’s End**

Na refiûaff ne mennaff quet
Rac raefon guiryon deboner
Eu diff quemeret ent feder
An amfer euel maz querher

[726] A pebez fôlacc fo placet
Na pebez iaoû fo em coudet
Pan fônchaff affet heb quet fy
Bezaaff en deduy reliet
Compaignunes dan guerchefet
Ach doe roen bet pez meledy

*Amâ an diaulou a incit diofcorus da haftaff lazaff e merch*

Lord God, king of the stars, / when it will come to me to finally leave the world behind, / I recommend my soul entirely to you. / In the end, today, / – my kind master out of mercy – let it rest among the angels. // I see myself in my hour of death / and I do not wish to oppose anymore / and I do not want to resist / because it is truly reasonable / for me to accept, surely, / the time according to your wishes. // What solace is placed / and what joys are in my heart / when I consider indeed without any doubt / to be received in happiness / a companion to the virgins! / Oh God, king of the world, what glory! // *Here the devils incite Dios / corus to hurry and kill his daughter.* /

Those three stanzas are also the last lines Barbara speaks in the Breton play. The part that contains the plea for the souls of Barbara’s devotees, i.e. one of the focal points of the legend of Saint Barbara, is not part of this prayer. Instead, it precedes her last prayer by almost seventy stanzas. The passage that contains this plea is likewise introduced by a stage direction which is strikingly similar to the one that introduces Barbara’s last prayer: “Sante Barba ara he pedên” (‘Saint Barbara makes her prayer’, 652/3). Her first prayer is considerably longer (653-672), and generally much more reminiscent of the prayer in *cinq journées*:

[653] Iefus ma aotrû ma coudet
Ma eßper douczer ma fperet
Parfet muerbet oz requetaff
Ez ententet oz ma pedên

[...]

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13. Barbara’s End

[654] Quentaff affet en oz pedaff
Pan duy dam buhez finuezaff
Gruet diff coezaff en guelhaff fin
Maziff efpres gant guir efper
Dan ioa triumphant hac antier
En tron deboner anterin.

[655] Iuez dichuy ez supliaff
Pliget guenech net permetaff
Hac aflataff da quentaff placc
Da quement den em fouteno
A guir coudet hac am pedo
Ez vezo pep tro en ho gracc.

[656] Dre guir amour me auën pourchac
Dam querent parfet credet acc
Ez rohech fpacc en pep faczon
Na maruhynq quet en contredy
Heb caffynt corpus domini
A deffry ha confeccion.

[657] Quement heny dre vnion
A couffhay ma paffion
Gant deuocion deboner
Ha dez ma martyr en miro
Han nos quent faczun a yuno
Dan reman pep tro ez roher.

[658] Spacc ha repit da doen vitoer
En pep bataill [...]  

Jesus my lord, my heart / my hope, gentleness, my spirit, / altogether mighty, I ask / that you listen to my prayer / [...] // First of all, truly, I ask you / when he will come to finish my life / let me face a good end / so that I will surely go with true hope / to the triumphant and total delight / into heaven, entirely blissful. // Also, I
As in *cinq journées* and *deux journées*, Barbara begins by praising the lord and asking him to grant her a request. While in *deux journées* there is merely one line in which she asks God to receive her spirit (3273), her request is considerably longer in both *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*. The construction of her request is quite similar in the two plays: “En te requerant que tout premierement / Tu defendes mon ame [...] / Ton sainct secours j’actens en ceste place: / A ton resgne fay mon ame venir!” (19088-19107) and “First of all, truly, I ask you [...] / make the best end happen for me / so that I will surely go [...] / into heaven, completely pious” (654). Only then she makes her famous request for the souls of her followers. It is interesting to note that Barbara calls her followers her “kin” in *An Buhez* and thus replaces her family by blood with her Christian family. In a way, she decides against her worldly familial ties in stanza 690 when she says to her father: “I am an orphan anyway” (‘Me fo pep flat emiuades’). Furthermore, the Breton version has Barbara make another special request for women:

[661] Han groaguez efpres brafefou
An re fo nes ma carefou
Gruet y gät gnou mâmou louen
Maz duy leal ho bugalez
Da quempret an flat a badez
Dre trugarez ma ne vez quen.

And in especially the pregnant women, / which are my particular friends, / make them truly happy mothers, / so that their children will come loyally / to receive baptism / due to grace so that it is not otherwise. //

I did not encounter a similar request in any of the other texts and it thus appears to be an addition made by the author of the Breton play. After the prayer, the similarity between *cinq journées* and *An Buhez* continues. In both plays Barbara’s prayer is followed by an appearance
13. Barbara’s End

of Jesus in paradise who grants his approval. However, while he sends an angel to Barbara in order to assure her of this in *An Buhez* (673-679), he is only speaking to Barbara from his place in paradise in *cinq journées* (19148-19191). In *deux journées*, there is no time for anyone to assure Barbara of anything, because she is killed directly after her prayer. An angel does come to collect her soul, however (3291-3293). It seems that in *An Buhez*, Barbara is saying her first prayer on the way to the mountain. This is indicated by Dioscorus who says to her in stanza 651 “come to the mountain where you will end” (‘Dueux dan menez yuez maz finuezy’), and then noting in stanza 684: “Well then truly, since you have come, entirely I believe, / now with me quickly to the square here” (‘Orcza affet pan out duet ma cret acc / Gueneff breman aman buhan dan placc’). In between, Barbara says her prayer.

13.2. Consciancc

Barbara’s prayer is followed by her death in the Latin and French versions pretty directly. *An Buhez*, however, features a surprise. In the Breton version there is an intermediary episode involving Beezlebub and a new character called “Consciancc”, ‘conscience’. This character is evidently allegorical41 and does not appear in either of the other two plays. The inspiration seems to spring from the genre of the morality plays:

> The morality play was one of the major dramatic genres in France during the late Middle Ages. [...] A morality play may be generally defined as an allegorical drama in which the protagonist is required to make a moral choice between good and evil. [...] [Some morality plays] bear a superficial resemblance to the Passion plays in that they are quite lengthy, probably requiring several days to perform, and their staging includes both Heaven and Hell with the usual complement of angels and devils. They are essentially different from the Passion plays, however, because their plots are allegorical fictions rather than historical representations. [...] Virtually all morality plays are personification allegories in which ideas and psychological traits are represented as characters on the stage. Their names [often designate] common virtues and vices like Charity and Pride [...].

(Knight 1995, 1206f)

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41 According to Vince, and Allegory is “[a] form of extended metaphor in which objects and characters denote meanings beyond the confines of the fiction, usually by representing an abstraction in terms of a concrete image. Allegory was employed in order to explain the liturgy and the Bible. [...] But the most common allegory in the medieval theatre was that of the "morality plays of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. [...] The Tegernsee ‘Antichrist (c. 1160), for example, features characters such as Heresy, Hypocrisy, Mercy, and Justice [...] A common theme was a battle between the "Virtues and the Vices for the souls of humankind” (Vince 1989, 6).
13. Barbara’s End

The morality play is often associated with the farce for while “at their extreme limits the two types of plays are obviously different, […] there seems to be a significant area of overlap” (Knight 1983, 42). From the late fifteenth century on, “the generic terms farce and moralité are more and more frequently linked in order to designate the whole body of non-historical or fictional drama” and by the middle of the sixteenth century, the terms “are frequently encountered in combination” (Knight 1983, 44f). In contrast to the fictional drama stood the historical drama, whose subject matter dealt with biblical history (e.g. Le Mystère de la Passion), profane history (e.g. La Destruction de Troye), and saints’ lives (Knight 1983, 91). When discussing aspects of the genre of farce and morality play, Knight argues that there is a distinct difference with regard to the characters, or to be more precise, with regard to their motivation. While farce characters “act in order to deceive” and are usually motivated by personal gain, “morality characters act always in relation to a future goal […] imposed on them by an external and supernatural power” (Knight 1983, 51). In addition to this goal, there is also an “external moral standard” in the morality world, which is absent from the farce world (Knight 1983, 51f). The consequences of the choices a morality character makes are based on this external moral standard, but the choices a farce character makes thus remain without consequence – “[m]orality characters are either moral or immoral; farce characters are amoral” (Knight 1983, 52). According to Knight, “the morality world is dominated by reason” and “it is reason that enables [the morality character] to make the right choice. […] Thus, contrary to the farce, reason is the primary characteristic of the morality world in terms of its constant availability as a sure guide to the good” (Knight 1983, 54). He explains further that there were two kinds of meaning associated with the term ratio in the Middle Ages, the first of which could be rendered as “deductive reasoning” and the second of which as “conscience” in modern understanding. The “function [of reason in the second meaning] was to perceive the good and to lead man to choose good over evil.” While such reason is usually portrayed by a character named “Raison” on stage, characters by the name of “Conscience” also appear. In Knight’s example, Conscience is the daughter of Raison (Knight 1983, 54-55). The author of An Buhez has evidently chosen Conscience instead of Raison in order to persuade Dioscorus to choose good over evil, to the end that he would not behead his daughter. The connection between conscience and reason described by Knight is also evident in An Buhez, for the king’s reason is questioned repeatedly; first by Barbara: “Puniflion in-raefonabl” (‘an unreasonable punishment’, 687), “Peguen diraefton fellony / […] / Dre da exces heb quet raefon” (‘how much unreasonable treachery / […] / due to your unworthiness without any reason’, 707), “Nendout quet parfet nac etabl / Nac e nep faczon raefonabl” (‘You are not strong nor fair / nor in any way reasonable’, 710), then by Consciancc: “Aue dipherem hac eres / Hac exces a enep raefon” (‘[To kill Barbara] would be desperation and malice / and an excess against reason’, 744), “Te goar efpres dre da raefon / Ezeu dit meurbet pechet/ don” (‘You know,
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surely, due to your reason / that is is truly a great sin for you [to kill your daughter]’, 757), and finally by the king himself (after he has committed the crime): "Peguen diraefon fellony / Dirac pep den eu ma heny / Diabry ha diconfiancc” (‘How much unreasonable treachery / have I committed in front of everyone? / Inexcusable and conscienceless’, 783).

This shows that the king’s reason (and conscience) is broadly contemplated during the Breton play’s final episode on the mountain. Interestingly, it is the king himself who combines the concepts of reason and conscience even before the above example. In a way, the king’s reason, which has lain dormant since he discovered the third window, is (re)awakened in stanza 740, and it is this (re)opening of his mind to reason that opens the door for its personification in the form of Conscienc to enter the stage.

[740] Neôn en naur pez araff
Coll ma fquient mar ez fentaff
Heb mar araff nen nachaff quit
Rac vn fludy fo em confcianncc
Ha mar bëñ ruff ouz ma fuflancc
Alianc aue offancet.

I don’t know what on earth to do / if I obey, I lose my reason / without doubt, I do not deny it, / because a thought is in my conscience / and if I were harsh against my scion / the allies would be offended. //

As Cohen explains, Conscienc is a manifestation of the king’s own doubts: “Voici maintenant que les doutes, et c’est encore une originalité, vont se matérialiser devant lui. La Conscience et Beelzebut apparaîtront [...]” (Cohen 1956, 399). Indeed, the phrase “Rac vn fludy fo em confcianncc” could be rendered less literally as “there is some doubt in my mind”. However, this would not convey the foreshadowing the phrase contains, for three stanzas later Conscienc appears on stage in order to contemplate (“study”) the king’s situation and choices. She acts as a counterpart to Beelzebub, who appeals to Dioscorus’ baser urges.

First, Beelzebub and Satan plot to make Dioscorus kill his daughter in order to condemn his soul to hell:

Sathan.
[730] Allas ma car chede ary
Laca ênhaff heb tardaff muy
Creffhaff mahilly droguayaez.
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Bezlebut.
Men lacay en diuez gant mez
Maz arrago oll gant follaez
Na caffo den rez anezaff

Satan: / Alas my friend, here’s what you will do: / Put in him, without more
tarrying, / the strongest animosity that you will be able to (produce). /
Beezlebub: / In the end I will put him to shame / so that he will be altogether
furious with madness / so that no one will get justice from him. //

When Consciancc appears, she speaks to Dioscorus and also directly to Beezlebub in order
to achieve the opposite and keep Dioscorus from committing the heinous crime and thus save his
soul from hell:

Dioscorus.
[743] Piu onchuy na pe aliancc

Consciancc.
Me eu a defurry concfiancc
So duet quêtaff doz diauancce
A vn drouc fetancc offauczabl
[...]

Bezlebut a çôps a eneb çôfiancc.
[745] Pe a lech ez duet huy ytron
Gant hoz contenancce brabançô
Et da farmon hoz fotony
En vn lech arall ha brallet
Ahanên crën hoz em tennet
Left hoz quaquet na compzet muy

Dioscorus.
[746] Petra a hoarffe na compfe hy
Ha lauaret he quefridy
Pan roaff me dezy odiancc
Compfou mat a cleuaff ganty
Ha douccder fo en he matery
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A nen deu hy eu confciance

Bezlebut
[747] Mar lequez ënhy da fiziancc
Ez taulo breff en deceffnanc
Gant he loquanc ez offanczo
Aenep an doeou louen
E farmon dit gant depit yen
Na quen termen ne fouteno

Confciance
[748] Deux aman pront mez responto
Oar poan am pën men quelenno
Hac en cfuflyo de proffit

Bezlebut
ya da maliczc inlicit
Hac abufion heb gonit
Ha nep merit ne acquitted

Dioscorus: / Who are you and of what alliance? /
Conscience: / I am conscience, truly, / that is come in order to dissuade you/ from
a bad, blameworthy judgement [...]. //
Beezlebub speaks against Conscience. / Where have you come from, lady / with
your boastful attitude? / Go preach your balderdash / elsewhere and get lost, /withdraw yourself from there entirely! / Stop your cackling and speak no more!
//
Dioscorus: / Why should she not speak, / and raise her matter / when I give an
audience to her? / I hear good words by her / and gentleness is in her subject. / Is
it not her that is conscience? //
Beezlebub: / If you put your trust in her / she will shortly deceive you / with
her eloquence. Her words directed at you will offend / the dear gods / with cold
contempt / and she will bring about no other end. //
Conscience: / Come here, I will reply to you promptly! / On pain of death I will
teach him / and I will counsel him to his advantage. /
Beezlebub: / Yes, to illicit malice / and deception without gain / and no merit would

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This passage is in accordance with Styan’s description of morality plays. He says that they are about “the contest for [man’s] soul between the forces of good and evil” and that they are “essentially a form of ‘debate’” (Styan 1996, 40f). This is precisely what takes place on stage in this episode of An Buhez.

What is most intriguing about the episode is the fact that it does not appear in any of the other texts compared in this study, nor does a character named Conscience. There is, however, an episode in cinq journées that is categorised as a farce by Longtin and which he has termed Farce des quatre Miraculés (Longtin 2005, 341). It is included among the miracles that take place at Barbara’s burial site and therefore obviously happens after her death and entombment. Such miracles are not portrayed in the Breton play. Thus, the timing is bound to differ, but the fact remains that both cinq journées and An Buhez contain an episode that has its origin not in the saint plays but in the fictional genre of farce and morality. As Knight illustrates, farce and morality were considered cognate despite some significant differences (s.a.; Knight 1983, 44f), which makes the fact that both cinq journées and An Buhez contain such an episode all the more intriguing. With regard to content, the episodes are very different, though. In cinq journées, there are four characters suffering from various disabilities, who are miraculously healed by the end of the episode. The farcical and comic effect is created by the names and disabilities and the respective connotations of the characters on the one hand – Longtin describes them as “un aveugle (Maliverné), un sourd (Linart), un «infirmé» (Malnoury) et un fou furieux (Briffault)” (Longtin 2005, 343) – and by their conversation involving “allusions de toutes sortes, de[s] références à d’autres farces ou même a d’autres genres, comme la sottie ou à la moralité” (Longtin 2005, 348) on the other hand. In contrast to this, the morality episode in An Buhez questions the king’s reason and judgement. While this is a commonality in all three plays, there is no additional character to convey the point in either of the French plays. There, the king’s soul has been condemned from the beginning without any chance of its rescue. The morality play setting employed by the author of An Buhez, however, opens the possibility for a choice and provides the character Dioscorus with a free will, which, according to Knight, “is always part of the morality world” (Knight 1983, 60). That Dioscorus chooses to murder his daughter of his own free will makes his decision all the more grievous, in fact. But the episode is also very instructive with regard to the author of An Buhez. His knowledge was evidently not restricted to one or two French mystery plays and prose legends. Instead, he appears to have been familiar also with the genre of what is now called fictional plays (i.e. farce and morality), or at least with the allegorical characters employed in that genre.

One French example of a morality play in which a character named Conscience also appears, is L’Homme Pecheur, and it is “one of the longest moralities” (Knight 1983, 96). It was printed
13. Barbara’s End

in France in the beginning of the sixteenth century (Eustace 1496). The play is not called a moralité on the title page, simply L’Ommé Pecheur par personnage joué en la ville de Tours, which leads Knight to think that the printer thought of the buyers of books rather than buyers from the theatrical world when designing the title page (Knight 1983, 96). The text’s purpose as a theatrical work, however, is made plain by the reference “par personnage”. The prologue underlines the double use to which the text may be put when it

informs the reader that ‘en lisant ce livre et mistere trouverés a plain declaree la matiere par personnages et motz expres’. The word mistere seems to be used here in a very broad sense that encompasses any significant matter presented the reader or spectator ‘par personnages’. [...] Thus while the term mistere was usually associated with the historical genres, it was occasionally applied to morality plays, where it designated a serious subject matter presented in dramatic dialogue. (Knight 1983, 100)

The designation of an obvious moralité with the term mistere also suggests that the distinction between the genres allowed for some flexibility, at least, which makes the appearance of a morality episode in a mystery play less striking. In fact, it is not uncommon for mystery plays to include allegorical characters, as is the case in the Latin mystery play Catharinae Martyrium, Sive Historica narratio, printed in Germany in the sixteenth century (‘Catharinae Martyrium’). Longtin makes plain that he considers the presence of an episode foreign to the genre of saint plays equally unproblematic when he introduces the reader to his analysis of the farce episode in cinq journées: “Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées contient, comme bon nombre de textes du genre, une pièce enchassée relevant de la farce” (Longtin 2005, 341; cf. Muir 2001, 330). Nevertheless, it remains noteworthy that the Breton play contains a morality episode when both French plays do not, which is also pointed out by Cohen when he refers to the episode as an “originalité” (Cohen 1956, 399).

13.3. Dioscorus’ End

Despite or perhaps because of all the contemplation on reason and conscience, Dioscorus in the end beheads his daughter ("Diofcorus a dipên e merch", 782). He bows to the fear of the pagan gods, placed in him by Beezlebub:

Bezlebut
[777] Ret eu dit e ober certen

[42] I am very grateful to Prof. Dr. Cora Dietl and Prof. Dr. Estelle Doudet for their personal correspondence regarding German and French mystery and morality plays including a character named "Conscience".
13. Barbara’s End

Pe an doeou quer fouuueren
En berr termen az fourpreno
Da bout heretic bizhuyquen
Effes dalchet ne ve quet quen
Gant quemento den aue en bro

Beezlebub: / It is certainly necessary to do this, / or the dear sovereign gods / will punish you in a short while! / You would be considered / a heretic forever – it would be no different! – / by every man who would be in the country. //

The king feels that he has no choice, because his status as a subordinate to Maximian does not allow for a Christian heretic to thrive in his household:

Beezlebut:
[773] Orcza oar fe pez aue gruet
Penaulx ez vezo goloet
Na diffimulet da quentaff
Diouz Maximian pep manyer
So vn den cazr empalazr quer
Pe dre ez galher differaff

Beezlebub: / Now then, what should be done about this? / How will (this) be hidden / and concealed, first of all, / (in) any way from Maximian, / who is a powerful man, a beloved emperor; / how will it be possible to buy some time? //

This is particularly interesting, because the information that Maximian is a persecutor of Christians is presupposed. The audience of An Buhez is not presented with this information prior to Beezlebub’s statement. The only other instance Maximian is mentioned in An Buhez is at the very beginning, when Dioscorus explains his own role: “I am without doubt from the house of Maximian / complete emperor ruling over everybody. // I wish to govern brightly one part, under him” (‘ouff hep sy a ty Maximien / Empalazr plen oar pep den ouz renaff // Gouerri en splån vn queffrān didānhaff’, 33f). That he persecutes Christians is not mentioned at all in An Buhez. While it may have been common knowledge that an ancient Roman emperor was also a persecutor of Christians, it is noteworthy that Maximian is very familiar from cinq journées. There, he has another subordinate, Dyogenes, who wages war against the Christians of Alexandria, and Dioscorus supports him in this endeavor (cf. cinq journées, 7778-7810). In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Maximian is depicted as a strict persecutor of Christians, and his actions
are responsible for the Christian faith to have fallen into obscurity even after Alexander and his mother have promoted it and converted many of the Roman nobility.

(Wakkerzeel 1495, 5)

Unfortunately, it remains impossible to tell whether the author on An Buhez took the information from either cinq journées or John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, or whether Maximian’s hatred of Christians was indeed common knowledge. But it is interesting to note that the information explicitly provided by cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia but not by An Buhez is simply being assumed at this point in the Breton play.

In the end, Dioscorus chooses evil over good, and rules against his conscience because he fears the loss of favour with the pagan gods more than he fears his subjects’ and kin’s negative reactions:

[782] […]

Dioscorus a dipên e merch
Stou da pêñ me mên da crênañ
Aman gant añòaaz haz lazaff
Euit reuiraff ma auffy.

Dioscorus a difemper
[783] Peguen diraefon fellony
Dirac pep den eu ma heny
Diabry ha diconfciannc
Monet daz lacat en flat man
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Difaczun am dorn ma hunan
Andeu homan drouc conenanc

[784] Gant crueldet a drouc fetancc
Ha drouc cher ha difemperancc
Ha perfeuerancc offanczabl
Da bezaff mut perfeçutet
Gueneff aman dirac an bet
Ne caffaff quet ma fet etabl

[...] Dioscorus beheads his daughter. / Bow your head, I want to behead you / here with sorrow and to kill you / in order to satisfy my desires. //
Dioscorus despairs. / How much unreasonable treachery / is mine, in front of everyone? / Inexcusable and conscienceless / to go and put you into this state / cruelly, by my own hand! / Is this one not a bad action? // With cruelty and bad judgement, / bad treatment and violence / and shameful hardness / to be blindly persecuted / by me, here, in public! / I do not find my deed right at all. //

Dioscorus’ reaction upon having beheaded his daughter fits the previous encounter with (the personification of) his own conscience very well. The doubts he had about beheading Barbara and which he had suppressed in order to be able to commit the crime resurface directly after he has wielded the blow. Once again, the author of An Buhez demonstrates his ability to lend an existing subject matter a certain originality. It is precisely the morality episode that enabled the king to react in this remorseful way. In the other versions of the legend, he is depicted as the evil instrument of the devil(s) that kills the saintly maiden Barbara. His role as a father is exploited in order to vilify the crime further, but he never issues any doubts as to the righteousness of his actions. In cinq journées, Dioscorus is a relentless persecutor of Christians, similar to Maximian, and does not make an exception for his daughter:


cinq journées:

DYOJSCORUS
J’en ay fait sans compassion
Presentement et queue et teste!
Chevalliers, sans dillacion,
Allons nous en a ma requeste!
(19212-19215)
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[...]

DÝOSCORUS (finit)
Puis que j’ay fait un exploit de justice,
Et pour l’onneur de noz trespuissans dieux,
Et ay pugny de ma fille le vice,
El est morte, dont je suys tresjoyeux!
Dorrenavant, mes Chevalliers, je veulx
Touz crestie[n]z pugniz cruellement
Ou sont moyens, ou sont jeunes et vieulx,
Et en despit de Jesus seulement.
Il appartient a ung roy de pugnir
Touz forfaiteurs, ce despent de noblesse.
La loy des dieux aussi doit soustener,
Car en ce fait apparest sa prouësse.
Pource, je vueil par grande hardiesse
Touz crestiens pugniz villainement
Par tourmens faiz en fureur, en destresse,
Et en despit de Jesus seulement.
Helas! helas, j’ay ma fille perdue
Et si n’ay plus enfant de mon lignaige!
Les crestiens l’ont a leur loy rendue
Dont je me deulz treffort en mon couraige.
Par tous mes dieux je leur feray dommaige
Si je ne meurs voire bien brefvement,
Je leur feray pire quë une raige
Et en despit de Jesus seulement.
Ha Crestiens! Vous charéz soubz ma main!
(19459-19483)

While there seems to be a certain displeasure at having had to kill his daughter, the king feels that he has done the right thing. His feelings of regret are on the one hand very much restricted to the fact that he now has no more living offspring. On the other hand they are quite overshadowed by his continual hatred for Christianity. Furthermore, he blames the faith for having taken his daughter away from him. But there is no remorse there, at all, not even after he has been killed. He merely wallows in self-pity for having been damned to hell: “Que ferai ge, maleureuse damnee, / Puis qu’il me fault present tumber es las / D’enfer?” (19656-19658).
In *deux journées*, the king does not speak at all directly after having killed his daughter, only after her soul has been taken to heaven. Then, he accepts his own fate as being bound to Lucifer and hell and does not betray any feelings of remorse or regret:

Dioscorus
Haro! quel foudre et quel tempeste
Il est venu soubdainement;
Il m’a fendu toute la teste.
Oucques mais ne vy tel tourment,
Je <ne> sçay quel part me tourner,
Ne quel pan ne en quel terre;
Le temps se veult tout bestourner.
Les dyables sont esmeuz par terre,
Oucques mais je ne vy tel erre,
Qui vont en vent et en tourment.
Or, voy je bien que j’auray guerre
Ou eulx, se croy, prochainement.
Lucifer tout le principal,
A toy me rens comme mon sire.
Pour te obeir, j’ay fait maint mal;
<Mon> amê en aura du pire,
Du feu d’enfer, je suis brouy.
Oucques ne vy telle tempeste!
Lucifer, m’as tu point ouy?
Faire me devez belle feste.
(3330-3350)

In the Latin versions, the king dies very shortly after having killed his daughter: “A proprio enim patre decollata est. Patre ejus de monte descendente ignis de coelo descendit et combussit enm, ita ut nec pulvis ejus inveniretur” (Graesse 1965, 901) and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*:
Thus, the “originalité” attributed to the morality episode by Cohen (s.a. Cohen 1956, 399) does not end after Consciancc has exited the stage. Instead, the author chose to deviate from the simple image of an evil heathen king depicted in the French plays or Latin legends and supplied him with a conscience. And it is this conscience that makes it possible for the king to feel the remorse he does and which renders his, and his daughter’s, end all the more dramatic, for the crime was committed by choice rather than as the result of a predestined fate.

13.4. The End

In all versions, Dioscorus suffers death by divine fire/lightning and is burned to ash. In the plays, his soul is escorted to hell by the devils. In John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, Barbara’s body is buried by a Christian priest in order to preserve it from violation by wild animals. This priest did apparently not know her, but nevertheless performs this service for her and creates a “mausoleum” for her:
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(Wakkerzeel 1495, 36)

In the plays Barbara’s body is buried by Saint Valentine (An Buhez), by Saints Valentine and Valerian (cinq journées), and by the hermit (deux journées), respectively. The Legenda Aurea does not provide any information with regard to Barbara’s burial. The resemblance between John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées is generally close and it is interesting to note that the priest in the above quotation is referred to as “valentius presbiter”, which may easily have been interpreted as referring to Saint Valentine. Saint Valentine does not perform Barbara’s baptism in either cinq journées or John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, and the information that “valentius presbiter” does not know Barbara would therefore fit both cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia. In cinq journées, Valentine appears again and according to Longtin plays “le rôle dévolu ordinairement à un personnage qu’on appelle le Prologue dans les mystères, c’est-à-dire qu’il offre une réflexion sur la matière donnée à voir” (Longtin 2005, 355). While this description of Valentine’s function at the end of the play would also be in accordance with the role of Valentine in An Buhez, the content of the respective characters’ speeches is very different. In An Buhez, Valentine very briefly sums up the recent action of the play and refers to the date of Barbara’s martyrdom (December the fourth) and her function as an intercessor at the hour of death. He thus provides the essential information about the saint before the audience departs. Furthermore, he speaks of a chapel which he will build: “Meray vn chapel da guelet / Diuoar da bez hac ânhez net” (“I will make a chapel to see / clearly from your tomb and residence’, 812). There, he plans to spend his time in contemplation and wishes to be buried eventually. Such a chapel is not spoken of in the Latin legends, nor in cinq journées, but the last stage direction in deux journées indicates that “[the hermit, a lame and a blind person who have been miraculously healed] portent le corps de Saincte Barbe / en sa chapelle en chantant: / Libera me Domine vel Subvenite” (3667-3668). Afterwards, the hermit speaks again and concludes the play:
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Or, est mone la vraye martire,
Dont je requier Dieu nostre sire
Qui luy face pardon a l’ame.
Helas! c’estoit tant bonne dame
Je luy donné crestïenté
Et la mis dehors d’orphanté,
Dont en paradis est saulvee.
Elle fut en bonne heure nee,
En loïant le Dieu de lassus,
Chanton: Te Deum laudamus.
Finis
(3668-3678)

While the hermit’s statement differs from that of Valentine in either cinq journées and An Buhez, it is noteworthy that the hermit refers to himself as having baptised Barbara. The same offices (introduction to Christianity, baptism, burial) were fulfilled by Valentine in An Buhez, but were apportioned among different characters in cinq journées. The lame and the blind person, of whom Longtin states that they are a “topos” of the genre and “sert à établir la sainteté du personnage central” (Longtin 1996, 38), mirror the characters of the farce episode in cinq journées. There, they provide a humorous interlude, but essentially serve to support the same purpose, i.e. to establish Barbara’s sanctity. This is the same in he Latin legends, where the legend proper is also followed by accounts of miracles associated with Barbara. These are entirely absent from An Buhez, which ends with Valentine’s burial of Barbara.
14. Conclusion

[M]edieval authors of such dramatic works do not necessarily copy from one another, since each writer or fatiste is separated from the next in space and time; also, these works quickly become public property and are changed in the hands of producers to suit local requirements and possibilities of staging; thus, a dramatist writing fifty years after his predecessor may have a livret version in front of him which had changed considerably since its genesis.[1]

(DuBruck 2004, 75f)

It would appear that An Buhez is a model example of DuBruck’s assessment. In this study, I have compared An Buhez, which was first printed in 1557, to four contemporaneous sources about Saint Barbara in order to determine possible ancestors of the Breton play. Saint Barbara was highly venerated throughout Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is an abundance of sources about her, and her legend was worked into two French plays, among others. Because of the commonality of genre and geographical proximity, these two French plays were the logical starting point for my comparison. The older of the French plays, Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, is a five day production dated to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century (Longtin 1996, 5; Kim 1998, 365). The younger of the French plays, Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en deux journées, is a two day production, whose oldest print version was published between 1511 and 1517 (Jullive 1880, 486; Longtin 1996, 10f). In addition to the two French plays, I have looked at two Latin prose versions of Barbara’s life, the Legenda Aurea, which has most likely come into existence some time after the end of the fourteenth century (Wolf 2000, 22), and John of Wakkerzeel’s version of the legend, which was composed in the second half of the fourteenth century (Derolez 1991, 202). In order to determine whether An Buhez was influenced by any of these four versions, I have subdivided the Breton play into episodes around certain motifs (1). I have then compared these episodes and motifs to the corresponding passages of the other four versions of Barbara’s legend. Although there are clearly commonalities between the Breton play and all of the four other versions, An Buhez is definitely not a translation of any single one of them. Instead, the author of the play appears to have drawn from a European pool of floating traditions with the figure of Saint Barbara at its centre and created an individual piece of theatrical art.

With regard to the order of events in each of the texts under consideration, it appears that An Buhez corresponds to the Legenda Aurea for the most part. Kim’s assumption that cinq journées and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia are closely related (Kim 1998, 375-377) is supported by the similarity of the order of events in those two texts. Although there is a discrepancy in the middle of the two versions, the overall impression is fairly homogeneous. The younger French
play, *deux journées*, is not close to any of the other four versions in this regard. Although it depicts many of the common topoi of the legend of Barbara, others are missing. Barbara’s intuitive knowledge of the Christian God, for example, appears to have surfaced before the play begins and the episode about Origen was left out. I have attempted to illustrate the order of events in the following table. This table provides only the key points of Barbara’s legend, which are basically similar in the different versions. However, they are, respectively, adapted with regard to staging on the one hand, and with regard to content on the other. The table is only supposed to give an overview and does not provide any details about how the different events are depicted in the respective versions or convey the diversity with which the respective authors have treated the subject matter of the legend of Barbara. Nevertheless, it serves to illustrate the connections between John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées*, between *An Buhez* and the *Legenda Aurea* and *cinq journées*, respectively, and the independence of *deux journées*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historia 2nd half of 14th c</th>
<th><em>cinq journées</em> early 16th c</th>
<th><em>Legenda Aurea</em> end of 14th c</th>
<th><em>An Buhez</em> 1557</th>
<th><em>deux journées</em> 1511-1517</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>intro</td>
<td>intro</td>
<td>intro + devils</td>
<td>intro + folle femme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schooling</td>
<td>schooling, intuitive knowledge</td>
<td>tower</td>
<td>temple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple, intuitive knowledge</td>
<td>temple</td>
<td>temple, intuitive knowledge</td>
<td>school, intuitive knowledge</td>
<td>marriage proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rumor</td>
<td>pilgrim</td>
<td>rumor</td>
<td>hermit-pilgrim</td>
<td>tower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>letter to Origen</td>
<td>tower</td>
<td>letter to Origen</td>
<td>message to Origen</td>
<td>windows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nameless envoy</td>
<td>marriage proposal</td>
<td>Valentine + baptism</td>
<td>Valentine + baptism</td>
<td>cross in stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tower</td>
<td>letter to Origen</td>
<td>marriage proposal</td>
<td>marriage proposal</td>
<td>hermit + baptism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marriage proposal</td>
<td>envoys Ysacr</td>
<td>windows</td>
<td>windows</td>
<td>shepherds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>windows</td>
<td>windows</td>
<td>bathhouse + cross in stone</td>
<td>fountain + cross in stone</td>
<td>torture</td>
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<tr>
<td>bathhouse + cross in stone</td>
<td>bathhouse + cross in stone</td>
<td>idols</td>
<td>idols</td>
<td>deaths</td>
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<tr>
<td>baptism</td>
<td>baptism</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>idols</th>
<th>idols</th>
<th>shepherds</th>
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<td>shepherds</td>
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<td>torture</td>
<td>deaths</td>
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</table>

The contents of the episodes in *An Buhez* are clearly not dependant on the *Legenda Aurea* alone. There are certain motifs that both versions of the legend share. The tower, for example, is mentioned at a particularly early stage in both *An Buhez* and the *Legenda Aurea*. The most striking commonality between *An Buhez* and the *Legenda Aurea* is of course the baptism. This office is performed by Origen’s envoy Valentine in both versions, which contrasts with John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées*. Although Origen’s envoy appears in all four versions, he does not baptise Barbara in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées*. There, she is baptised by John the Baptist instead. This is particularly striking because the events that frame Barbara’s in both John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia* and *cinq journées* (i.e. the episode in the bathhouse) are also present in *An Buhez* and the *Legenda Aurea*. However, they are not connected to the baptism. Furthermore, they were adapted to suit the local requirements in the case of the Breton play (11).

The commonalities between *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* are much more numerous and much more striking. Both plays depict Barbara as being educated by (a) pagan tutor(s) and connect this education to the awakening of her intellect and the resulting intuitive knowledge of God. Barbara gives voice to her intuitive knowledge during a visit to the temple in both the *Legenda Aurea* and John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. However, it arose at an earlier point in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, namely during her studies of the liberal arts. This education is merely referred to in a short statement in John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*, which was transformed into an entire episode in the stage productions. As a result, the characters of the tutors were added in the plays (7). A similar mechanism of conveying certain pieces of information through a character rather than by narration was employed when Barbara learns of the existence of Origen of Alexandria. In both Latin legends, Barbara hears a rumour of the famous Origen. In *cinq journées* and *An Buhez*, this rumour was worked into a character, the pilgrim. The text of this pilgrim, or hermit-pilgrim in *An Buhez*, corresponds in a notable way in the two plays. Furthermore, the route he takes to/from Jerusalem is the same in the two plays, but in *An Buhez* this route contrasts with the geographical location of Nicomedia as proposed by the first diablerie, which makes this feature particularly noteworthy (7.1). Despite the fact that the building process of the tower occurs at two different points in time during the action of the respective play, this episode is another excellent example of a close correspondence between *cinq journées* and
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An Buhez (6). Both plays depict the craftsmen as industrious people and their appearance has a striking ring of authenticity, which is, in fact, more pronounced in An Buhez (6.1, 6.1.1). This is similar in the episode of the shepherds. The actions of the shepherds in An Buhez, playing music and a ball game, appear to be reminiscent of the names of the shepherds in cinq journées. Yet, An Buhez seems to draw a slightly more authentic image of the shepherds’ lives (12) than cinq journées. The tower and the shepherd episode share another commonality. In both episodes, music plays an important role. The French play employs several “rondeaux” as a musical setting for the respective characters’ texts in order to liven up the action. This is similar in An Buhez, where the workers sing a Breton song and the shepherds play a Breton instrument in order to create a similar effect. The latter example serves to clarify that the Breton play is not merely a translation of the older French version. Yet, the scope of correspondence between the respective episodes is quite suggestive of an existing relationship between the Breton and the older French play.

With regard to a relationship between An Buhez and John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the situation is much more complex. Large parts of the content and structure of John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia are also present in cinq journées. One example for an exclusive correspondence between John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and An Buhez can be found in the passage involving the messenger Barbara sends to Origen. Only those two versions establish the messenger’s trustworthiness and depict Barbara as being visited by Origen’s envoy in her rooms at the royal dwelling rather than in the tower (8). Another example is the use of the term “probatic”, which refers to the waters of the Biblical “Pool of Bethesda”. During the episode in the bathhouse in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia, the water of the bathhouse is compared to the “Pool of Bethesda”. In the corresponding episode at the fountain in An Buhez, the term “probatic” is used to describe the water of the fountain. However, the fountain as such is an example for an individualised motif that has very likely been adapted “to suit local requirements and possibilities of staging” (s.a. DuBruck 2004, 75). In all other versions, the action that surrounds the fountain centres on a bathhouse, but the author of An Buhez has evidently chosen to employ a fountain instead (11). Another example of a significant deviation of An Buhez from the other versions is Dioscorus’ reaction when Barbara refuses to be married. During the episodes preceding the marriage proposal, Dioscorus is depicted as unwilling to give his daughter in marriage to anyone in the Latin versions, in An Buhez and in cinq journées. At some point, the king is pressured by the nobility of his country to wed Barbara after all. She refuses this request and he embraces her gladly in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées, while simply leaving her in the Legenda Aurea. In An Buhez, however, he utters his first death threat against her at this point. The king’s reaction in John of Wakkerzeel’s Historia and cinq journées is much more logical with regard to the fact that he had refused to let anyone marry his daugh-
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ter before. Nevertheless, the author of the Breton play changed the king’s reaction despite the
fact that the onset is the same in the three versions (9). It is possible that this change is related
to another motif that is unique to An Buhez. Shortly before the king beheads his daughter, a
character named “Conscience” appears. As an allegorical character, Conscience is part of an
episode reminiscent of the morality plays of the Middle Ages (13.2). Such an episode exists
in neither French play and has no equivalent in the prose versions, either. Both the marriage
proposal and the Conscience episode, serve to extend the picture of the king’s character in the
Breton play. The result is an entirely unique version of the antagonist of the saintly maiden.
These changes to the king’s character merit further investigation.

Examples of correspondence between deux journées and An Buhez are mostly limited to
structural similarities, such as the fact that both plays feature an introduction, which is made
by more than one person. While the contents of the respective introductions differ, the second
part in deux journées involving a “folle femme” making amorous gestures and singing might be
considered somewhat similar to the devils who plan how to best lead humankind into tempta-
tion in An Buhez. Furthermore, both plays consist of one short first day (24 percent of the play
in deux journées and 30 percent of the play in An Buhez). This is followed by a second day in
duex journées, which features a second introduction. In the case of An Buhez, only the action
of the first day is described in the introduction. There is neither a second introduction nor
a clearly defined number of consecutive days provided by the Breton play. Based on studies
Runnalls has conducted on French mystery plays, I suggest that the second part of An Buhez
has been performed in two sessions on one (Sun)day, namely in a morning and an afternoon
session (Runnalls 2004, 8–9; 2). In the case of deux journées, the second day is equally lengthy in
comparison to the first, and the performance practice may thus have been the same. In addition
to these structural similarities, there is the name of the character “the hermit”, which appears
in both plays but nowhere else. However, the function of the figure differs considerably in
the two plays. Although the name of the character in An Buhez corresponds to deux journées,
his actions and speech are quite similar to the pilgrim’s in cinq journées (7.1). In general, deux
journées apparently follows a very different approach to the legend of Barbara than the other
versions. The play leaves out several of the motifs that lead up to Barbara’s conversion, for
example her education/visit to the temple and her contact with Origen and his envoy. Barbara
appears to have already secretly converted to Christianity before the action of the play begins,
because her refusal to be married happens at a very early stage (Barbara’s second appearance,
405-414, 9). When she bids farewell to her parents, she wishes them that “Dieu le vous vueilli
ennuit rendre” (564) and during her subsequent prayer addresses God as “Vray Dieu” (633).
Furthermore, deux journées includes motifs that are not present in the other versions of the
legend, such as the visit of the “folle femme” during Barbara’s imprisonment and the exorcism
Barbara performs on her (2462-2796). Thus, *deux journées* is a highly individual version of the legend, which was nevertheless quite popular, as is attested by its numerous reprints (Longtin 1996, 10f).

The number and the level of detail of the corresponding passages of *An Buhez* and *cinq journées* suggests that the author of *An Buhez* was familiar with a version of *cinq journées*. Le Braz considers *An Buhez* and the other Breton plays to suffer from a “maigre souffreteuse”. One reason for his judgement is that in his opinion the Breton versions are necessarily abbreviations of their often lengthy French ancestors and are therefore bound to fall short of the original in certain aspects (Le Braz 1905, 250). It is true that *An Buhez* is considerably shorter than *cinq journées*. However, I have shown in this study that the author did by no means simply copy and shorten *cinq journées* into a Breton version of the French play. Instead, the author was evidently versed in many fields of literature and theatre and drew on a diversity of sources for the creation of *An Buhez*. In addition to his familiarity with *cinq journées*, he has made use of prose legends. The influence of the *Legenda Aurea* shows very clearly and the author probably knew at least one other branch of the Barbara tradition related to John of Wakkerzeel’s *Historia*. Moreover, the author was aware and able to make use of theatrical conventions from more than one genre. As a saint’s play, *An Buhez* belongs to the genre of mystery plays and displays many of the conventions associated with it. The protagonist is a saint, her antagonist is a heathen in league with the devil(s). These appear in the form of a *diablerie*, which is another typical feature of the mystery plays. The fact that one of the devils is paired with an allegorical character and these two begin to vy for the soul of a human is clearly an influence from the theatrical genre of the morality plays (13.2). Although such morality episodes can be included in mystery plays, this is not the case in either of the French Barbara plays. The author of *An Buhez* has thus likely found inspiration in a different mystery play, or even in a different genre. Either case proves that the author was capable of more than merely copying, translating and adapting one French play to a Breton audience. Nevertheless, it is true what Le Braz says, that in order to adapt a French play for a Breton audience, many rules and restrictions need to be observed, not least of which is the rigorous Breton versification. “Les exigences de la rime intérieure comdamaient le poète à un perpétuel tour de force dont il ne se tirait le plus souvent qu’en prodiguant cheville sur cheville, et qui, même avec cette lamentable ressource, avait tôt fait de fatiguer sa verve” (Le Braz 1905, 248-249). It is true that the rhyme scheme is complex, because strict rules for both end rhyme and internal rhyme need to be observed. The usual metre of *An Buhez* employs stanzas consisting of six octo- or decasyllabic verses and end rhymes that are passed on through the stanzas. In addition to this, there is an internal rhyme scheme in which the penultimate syllable rhymes with at least one of the preceding word-final syllables of the same verse, ideally with the one before the caesura. The end rhyme (upper case
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letters) of the first and second verse of a stanza usually becomes the internal rhyme (lower case letters) of the third verse and so on:

s s A
t t A
a a B
u u C
v v C
c c B
w w B
x x B
b b D
y y E
z z E
e e D

This necessitates the extensive use of chevilles. However, I would like to stress that the author has successfully managed to adhere to the rigorous demands of the Breton rhyme scheme for almost the entirety of the play. Most of the inconsistencies of the rhyme scheme appear to have a function. Many support the action that takes place on stage, such as the movements of actors or changes of subject (3). The French theatrical conventions require a much simpler metre, i.e. octosyllabic verses and pair rhymes (Runnalls 1998, 23). Despite the complex demands of the Breton versification, the author of An Buhez has managed to convey the most important contents of the legend of Barbara, adapt the play to a Breton stage and audience (6, 6.1.1, 11), and make significant changes to the character of Dioscorus by including an episode inspired by a different genre (13.2). The result of such creativity is a unique piece of Breton art.
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A. Summary

The Breton saint’s play *An buhez sante Barba* – The life of saint Barbara – has come down to us in three print versions, one of which has survived in two redactions. The oldest version is dated to 1557, followed by two redactions dated to 1608 and a third version dated to 1647. All versions are virtually identical with regard to contents (Scherschel 2014). My thesis is based on the oldest version of 1557, which is associated with a printer by the name of Bernard de Leau(e). He was active both in Brittany and Paris (Le Guennec 1927; Walsby 2011, 146-149), which attests to a certain exchange with regard to literature and culture between France and Brittany. The fact that a play about one of the most popular saints in Europe in the late Middle Ages has come down to us in both French and Breton adds to this impression, as well.

In order to shed some light on possible origins of the Breton play, I have compared *An Buhez* with four contemporaneous sources about Saint Barbara. The two French plays were an obvious choice, because they correspond to the Breton play with regard to genre as well as with regard to the subject matter. The older French play, *Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées*, is dated to the second half of the fifteenth century and has survived in one manuscript version. Parts of it were edited by Jun-Han Kim in 1998 (Kim 1998), and Mario Longtin is currently working on a new edition of the entire play with his colleagues Laurent Brun and Jacques Lemaire. He has very kindly permitted me to use his work in progress (*Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en cinq journées, BN fr. 976*). The younger French play, *Le Mystère de sainte Barbe en deux journées*, survives in several print versions, the oldest of which is dated to between 1511 and 1517. This play was edited by Longtin, as well, and by Paul Seefeldt before him (Seefeldt 1908). In addition to the two French plays, I have also looked at two Latin prose legends of Saint Barbara. The most popular collection of saints’ lives of the Middle Ages, the *Legenda Aurea*, includes a life of Saint Barbara, as well (Graesse 1965). However, Barbara was not part of the original version of the collection (Voragine 1995) and her legend was added probably after the fourteenth century (Wolf 2000, 22). Another Latin version of Saint Barbara’s legend was assembled by a Belgian monk, John of Wakkerzeel (Wakkerzeel 1495). He was an admirer of saint Barbara’s and compiled a grand encomium based on diverse sources at the end of the fourteenth century. This version was very popular in the late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period (Gaiffier 1959, Derolez 1991).

Although there are some differences with regard to contents, the basic plot is similar in all the legends of Saint Barbara. A pagan lord or king by the name of Dioscorus has a lovely and beautiful daughter called Barbara. He does not wish to see her married and confines her to a secluded tower instead in order to hide her from the eyes of men. Depending on the version he has a tower and/or a bathhouse built exclusively for Barbara’s use. The respective
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building is to have exactly two windows. Barbara has an intuitive knowledge of the Christian faith and secretly converts to Christianity. At some point she meets another Christian who introduces her to the basics of the faith. She is then baptised either by this other Christian figure or by a vision of John the Baptist. After her conversion, she makes the builders of the tower/bathhouse add a third window to the original plans, against the explicit wishes of her father. When Dioscorus discovers the addition, he is furious and attempts to kill her. She can flee through a stone or wall and is miraculously transported to the mountains. There, she is seen by two shepherds. When Dioscorus comes looking for her, one of the shepherds betrays her whereabouts to him. Thus, Dioscorus recaptures her and brings Barbara to trial. Even though she is tortured extensively for her religion, she neither renounces her new found faith nor dies. The judge therefore returns Barbara to her father eventually and the king decides to kill her in the mountains. There, he beheads her with his sword and creates Saint Barbara, the martyr. As a result, Dioscorus suffers death by lighting or divine fire and is burnt to ashes on the spot.

Barbara’s historical existence is in dispute, but her veneration endures nonetheless. Saint Barbara’s feast day is the fourth of December and although it was no longer part of the Roman calendar after the second Vatican Council in 1969 (Wolf 2000, 22), folk beliefs and customs still abound, for example the cutting of Barbara-twigs on her feast day, which will then blossom on Christmas day. The oldest testimonies of the veneration of Saint Barbara can be found in northern Africa and in the Middle East. The oldest testimony in Europe is a fresco of the saint in Santa Maria Antiqua in Rome (Wimmer 1980, 1432f). During the later Middle Ages veneration of Saint Barbara grew into a cult, which was particularly strong in Germany, France, Belgium and the Netherlands (Wolf 2000, 34-37). The fact that her legend was put on stage sixteen times between 1450 and 1550 in France alone testifies to the great popularity of the saint. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell which Barbara-play was put on stage and it is most likely that more plays about the saint existed but have not survived. Of the two French versions that do survive, the younger one was particularly popular. It has come down to us in seven print-editions all of which were published within a time span of a hundred years. Thus, Saint Barbara’s popularity was and still is well attested in Europe.

While saints’ plays or mystery plays in French abound, only four plays in Breton have come down to us. In addition to the life of Saint Barbara, one passion play (An Passion, Villemarqué 1866; Le Berre 2011) and two mystery plays about local saints of Brittany (An Buhez santez Nonn, Ernault 1887b; Le Berre 1999 and An Buhez sant Gwenole, Ernault 1932-1933; Widmer 2011) have survived. Similarly to the life of Saint Barbara, the Breton passion play was printed in Paris and is based on European material that may have served as a model. The other two plays have been preserved as manuscripts and their protagonists are the Breton local Saints
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Nonn and Gwenole, respectively. In addition to contents, the structure of the Breton and the French Medieval plays corresponds, as well. The plays are subdivided into “days” (French: “journées”) rather than into “acts” and “scenes”. A “day” reflects the amount of text that could be spoken within one performance session. The term originates in the practice of performing the plays on several consecutive Sundays and/or feast days, for example in front of the church or at some other suitable space outdoors. Short plays took only a few days to perform, but lengthy productions could last up to 35 days (Runnalls 1998, 35-49, 61-82, 98f; Runnalls 2004, 7).

Both French Barbara-plays indicate clearly when a day begins and/or ends. The older play has five days, the younger play has two. The Breton play is considerably less clear with regard to the number and duration of its days. The only hint given by the play is in the introduction, which provides a summary of the plot and names a certain point at which the action of the first day is supposed to be over. However, this is not reflected at that point in the play. Nevertheless, based on the assumption that the first day did indeed end at the point indicated in the introduction, the play would consist of at least two days. Based on comparisons with French mystery plays and the works of Graham Runnalls on the length of Medieval theatrical “days” (Runnalls 2002; Runnalls 2004), I agree with Ernault’s suggestion (Ernault 1888, vi) that the play was in fact subdivided into three parts. The last two may well have been performed in one single day, namely a morning- and an afternoon-session, but it is also possible that the performance took place on three consecutive (Sun)days. With regard to this asymmetric structure, i.e. a short first day and a considerably longer second part, the Breton play corresponds to the younger French play.

Medieval plays were customarily written in verse form, usually in pair rhymes. This convention holds true for both French plays, as well. The Breton version employs a considerably more complex rhyme scheme, namely aabcb bbdeed and so on. In addition to the end rhymes, Breton makes use of internal rhymes as well, which means that two syllables within a verse need to rhyme, too. The internal rhyme is usually determined by the penultimate syllable of a verse. This leads to another significant difference between Breton and French, because like other Celtic languages, Breton has a metric system based on a syllable count rather than on poetic feet. An Buhez sante Barba employs eight-syllabic verses for the most part, but verses of ten syllables are also common, particularly when characters of a higher social standing speak or are addressed. Furthermore, five-syllabic verses are used in the introduction. The fact that the author of the Breton play maintained such a complicated rhyme scheme throughout the play and still constructed a coherent plot demonstrates artistry and considerable skill.

In order to be able to compare the five versions of the legend of Saint Barbara, I have determined different motifs that appear in at least one other version apart from the Breton play. The following motifs are analysed in this thesis: the devils, the tower, Barbara’s education and
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her meeting with a pilgrim/hermit, her baptism, marrying Barbara, the windows, the fountain, the shepherds and the end, which also involves the character “Consciancc”. The order in which the motifs are treated in this thesis corresponds to the order of events in the Breton play.

Due to the fact that the Breton play and the younger French play are very similar with regard to formality – both have been preserved in more than one print version, the oldest of which is dated to the sixteenth century, both consist of (at least) two days and are similar in length – it was expected that further similarities could be determined. However, apart from a few details, this is not the case. The younger French play has several episodes that do not appear anywhere else, such as the visit of a prostitute Barbara receives during her incarceration and whom she promptly converts. Yet, the younger French play does not include other episodes that are very common, such as Barbara’s exchange of letters with Origen of Alexandria (cf. Longtin 1996). The Breton version turned out to be much more similar to the older French play, which in turn is based largely on John of Wakkerzel’s grand encomium of Saint Barbara (Kim 1998, 375-377). However, the Breton play and the older French play display some important differences, for example with regard to Barbara’s baptism. In those cases, the Breton play often corresponds to the Legenda Aurea, instead. Furthermore, there are some motifs that were adapted, probably in order to fit the local situation better. An example for this is the episode around the dried-up fountain which is revived by Barbara in the Breton version. The other versions have corresponding episodes, but Barbara visits a bathhouse instead and makes the water gush forth, there. It is possible that a fountain was preferable because it reflects an actual fountain or spring in the place where the play was performed. Other aspects are unique to the Breton version, such as the appearance of a character named “Consciancc” (“conscience”) shortly before Dioscorus beheads his daughter. The character attempts to convince the king that his plan is evil and will lead to his damnation, while Beelzebub, one of the devils, attempts to convince him to go through with his plan for the sake of his heathen gods. The episode mirrors another Medieval theatrical genre, namely that of the morality plays, in which good and evil allegorical characters vy for the soul of a human protagonist. Such a character or episode does not appear in the other versions of the legend. The detailed analysis and comparison of those motifs and episodes form the nucleus of my thesis.

The results of those comparisons lead to the assumption that it is impossible to determine a single ancestor of the Breton play, which in turn rules out the idea that the Breton play might merely be a translation of a French model. While there are episodes that correspond largely to one or more of the other texts, it is not always the same text to which a striking correspondence can be found. Some episodes and motifs are unique to one or another version of the legend. Thus, it is very likely that there was a common European pool of motifs, or floating traditions, around the figure of Saint Barbara from which the respective authors worked and
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created individual pieces of art.
B. Zusammenfassung


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B. Zusammenfassung


Mysterienspielen, finden sich auch einige Ähnlichkeiten hinsichtlich der Struktur. So wurden
mittelalterliche Theaterstücke nicht in „Szenen“ und „Akte“ unterteilt, sondern in „Tage“, französisch „journées“. Ein Tag entspricht dabei der Menge an Text, die an einem Tag von den
SchauspielerInnen auf der Bühne gesprochen und dargestellt werden konnte, wobei es Anzei-
chen dafür gibt, dass bei früheren Stücken mehr und bei späteren Stücken weniger Text inner-
halb eines Tages verarbeitet wurde. Aufgeführt wurden die Stücke an aufeinanderfolgenden
Sonn- und Feiertagen. Kurze Stücke konnten innerhalb eines Tages aufgeführt werden, lan-
ge und aufwändige Produktionen umfassten bis zu 35 Tagen (Runnalls 1998, 35-49, 61-82, 98f;
Runnalls 2004, 7). Die beiden französischen Barbarastücke enthalten klare Angaben hinsicht-
llich der Unterteilung in Tage. Das ältere Stück wurde an fünf Tagen aufgeführt, das jüngere
an zwei. Für das bretonische Stück wird keine genaue Angabe gemacht, aus der Einleitung
gilt aber hervor, dass es mehr als einen Tag gegeben haben muss. Aufgrund des Vergleichs
mit französischen Mysterienspielen und der Arbeiten von Graham Runnalls (Runnalls 1998,
das bretonische Leben der heiligen Barbara in drei Teile unterteilt war. Die letzten beiden Teile
können an einem einzigen Tag, vormittags und nachmittags, aufgeführt worden sein, woraus
sich ein zweitägiges Stück ergäbe, oder alle Teile wurden an separaten Tagen aufgeführt, wor-
aus sich ein dreitägiges Stück ergäbe. In dieser Beziehung ähnelt das bretonische Stück dem
jüngeren französischen Stück, denn auch dieses besteht aus einem kurzen ersten Teil/Tag und
einem deutlich längeren zweiten Teil/Tag.

trifft auch auf die beiden französischen und das bretonische Stück zu. Im Französischen wird
meist ein Paarreim angewendet, als Reimschema ergibt sich also aabbcc usw., während beim
bretonischen Theaterstück ein etwas komplexeres Reimschema vorliegt, nämlich aabccbb-
deed. Als keltische Sprache hat das Bretonische allerdings zwei weitere Besonderheiten im
Verhältnis zum Französischen. Erstens werden Silben statt Hebungen gezählt; An buhez sante
Barba besteht zum größten Teil aus achtzähligen Versen, wobei es auch einige Abschnitte gibt,
die aus zehnzeligen Versen bestehen. Zehnzelige Verse scheinen vor allem dann gebraucht zu
werden, wenn sozial höhergestellte Figuren an der Interaktion beteiligt sind. Darüber hinaus
finden sich auch kurze Verse bestehend aus fünf Silben, die ausschließlich in der Einleitung
vorkommen. Zweitens gibt es im Bretonischen einen internen Reim, wobei zusätzlich zum
Endreim innerhalb eines Verses mindestens zwei Silben miteinander reimen. Der interne Reim
wird dabei von der vorletzten Silbe des Verses bestimmt und eine zweite Silbe, die diesen Reim
trägt, findet sich idealerweise in der Silbe direkt vor der Zusatze deselben Verses (Ernault 1888,
vi-viii; Ernault 1912).

Um nun die verschiedenen Versionen der Legende miteinander vergleichen zu können, habe

B. Zusammenfassung


Abschließend bleibt zu sagen, dass das bretonische Stück zwar merkliche Verbindungen zu mehreren anderen Versionen der Legende der heiligen Barbara aufweist, es sich aber keinesfalls um eine bloße Übersetzung eines der Texte handelt. Stattdessen ist das Stücks eine kreative Bearbeitung des Barbarastoffs, der unter Einbeziehung verschiedener hagiographischer und dramaturgischer Quellen zu einem individuellen und erkennbar bretonisch geprägten Kunstwerk geformt wurde.