TNA ACTIVITY REPORT

THE DIGITAL FRANCO-ITALIAN *ANSEÏS DE CARTHAGE*

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Introduction

Anseïs de Carthage is an early 13th-century *chanson de geste* that narrates the history of the eponymous protagonist, a young nephew of Charlemagne. After the war with the Saracens, Anseïs is proclaimed the new king of the Iberian Peninsula and entrusted with the governance of the territories conquered by his uncle, the emperor. This epic poem belongs to the Carolingian branch of medieval epics, specifically to the *Cycle du Roi*, and represents a narrative *continuum* of the *Chanson de Roland*, despite having been composed several centuries later. *Anseïs de Carthage* was originally composed in Old French and comprises decasyllabic laisses of rhymed or assonant verses, amounting to over 10,000 in total.

This epic poem is preserved in:

- four manuscripts containing the whole text
    - **A**: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 793
    - **B**: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 12548
    - **C**: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 1598
    - **D**: Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, P. A. 59

- one manuscript containing the acephalous text
    - **U**: Durham, University Library, Cosin V.II.17

- six fragmentary *codices*
    - **e**: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 368
    - **f**: lost fragment, copied in Franz Joseph Mone, *Anzeiger für kunde der teutschen Vorzeit*, Bierter Fahrgang, Karlsruhe, 1835, p. 77-80

- o **g**: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouvelles acquisitions françaises 5094
- o **h**: lost fragments, copied in Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis, *Nuovi frammenti dell'Anseïs de Carthage*, in *Atti dell'Accademia degli Arcadi*, vol. 7-8, Roma, Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1932, p. 5-37
- o **i**: Imola, Biblioteca Comunale 134.A. A2 , No. 9 (6)
- o **j**: Sées, Bibliothèque de l'Évêché, 19)

The peculiarity of *Anseïs de Carthage* manuscript tradition lies in the existence of a Franco-Italian branch, which dates approximately one century later than all the other manuscripts.

From the early 19th century onwards, *Anseïs de Carthage* attracted academic interest due to its connection with the *Chanson de Roland*. However, this interest soon turned into criticism when scholars began labelling *Anseïs de Carthage* as a minor text in medieval Old French epic literature, considering it neither fascinating nor original. Consequently, there have been only few editions of this epic poem:

1. *Anseïs von Karthago*, herausgegeben von Johann Alton, Tübingen, Litterarischer Verein in Stuttgart (Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins in Stuttgart, 194), 1892
2. *A critical edition of Anseïs de Carthage*, Thesis submitted in the Department of French Studies for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Alexander Ferguson Kerr, University of Reading, 1994
3. *Anseïs de Carthage (canzone di gesta del 13. secolo): edizione critica con saggio introduttivo, note al testo e glossario*, Roberta Mori, doctoral thesis, Università di Bologna, 1998
4. *Anseïs de Carthage. Édition critique du manuscrit BnF fr. 793*, Julien Florent, doctoral thesis, Université de Lille, 2022

Generally, scholars have based their editions on Old French witnesses (mostly **A**; **B** in Kerr's edition) and haven't fully considered the Franco-Italian branch, even if it represents an important part of manuscript tradition and attests of the rapid spread of this *chanson de geste* in the north-east of Italy. Since codex **C** remained unpublished, in my doctoral thesis (Ceresato Floriana, *L'Anseïs de Carthage nel Ms. Paris, BnF, Français 1598. Uno studio critico*, doctoral thesis, Università degli Studi Roma Tre – Université Paris Sorbonne, 2017) I carried out a preliminary study on the Franco-Italian text of this manuscript and presented a semi-diplomatic transcription of it.

The lack of a reference edition of the Franco-Italian branch of *Anseïs the Carthage* represents a significant gap in scholarly research on this epic poem, both from a literary and a linguistic perspective. Thanks to the TNA CLS INFRA fellowship I was able to further develop my analysis, working on a preliminary attempt of a digital edition.

Methodology and Outcomes

Here is a brief overview of my project path, which can be resumed in three main phases:

1. Creation and structure of the XML-TEI document: I have transferred the transcription of *codex* **C** that I did for my doctoral thesis from PDF format to XML-TEI format, using a regular expression to maintain the verse structure.
2. Enrichment and tagging of the XML-TEI document: working with Oxygen, I have encoded the document using the TEI markup language for representing the features of the text.

3. Visualization and rendering of the XML-TEI document: I have uploaded the document on EVT (http://evt.labcd.unipi.it/), an open-source interface which displays digitised images and digital editions, and I have begun to customize it for my research purposes.

Following the current TEI Guidelines (https://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/index.html), I structured the document as follows:

- <teiHeader>: this element contains the descriptive and declarative metadata associated with my XML-TEI document (the digital resource) and the information about manuscript **C** and fragment **i** (the documentary sources)
- <text>: this element contains the transcription of the Franco-Italian text of *Anseïs the Carthage*. It is organised into three main elements:
    o <front>: contains any prefatory information
    o <body>: contains the structured text of the XML-TEI document
    o <back>: contains appendixes, notes or afterword

More specifically, since I was dealing with a medieval poem preserved in handwritten sources, I have encoded the *mise en page* using the following framework:

```xml
<div>
    <lg type="laisse" n="I">
        <pb n="1r" xml:id="C_1r" facs="fileRepository/fileName.extension"/>
        <cb n="1ra"/>
        <l xml:id="C1" n="1"> verse verse verse </l>
    </lg>
</div>
```

The <pb> and <cb> elements include information regarding the two columns layout (*folio* number, *recto* or *verso*, left or right column). The <lg> element encloses every single stanza, and it is completed by the "type" and "n" attribute. Furthermore, the "xml:id" attribute has been added to identify each digitised image of the manuscript and cross-referencing it with other elements.

Regarding abbreviations, the TEI standard permits the differentiation between diplomatic and interpretative levels. I have encoded the abbreviations as follows:

```xml
Diplomatic level:
    <choice>
        <orig><abbr> gr <am> ã </am> t </abbr></orig>
    </choice>
```

```xml
Interpretative level:
    <choice>
        <reg><expan> gra <ex> n </ex> t </expan></reg>
    </choice>
```

It is imperative that the encoding of abbreviations be enclosed within the <choice> element, which indicates the textual shift from the documentary source to the digital resource.
The two levels can be encapsulated within a single element to avoid having two separate documents – one for the diplomatic edition and one for the interpretative edition.

Concerning the graphic rendering, I have used EVT2 which is designed to create digital editions from XML-encoded and TEI-based documents. Then EVT2 have interpreted the TEI tag set I used and have rendered all the elements and attributes graphically.
I have experimented two different layouts: the Reading layout, which displays the transcription of the text and the digitized image of the *codex*, and the Collation layout, which sets side by side the transcription of the same textual sample selected from two different manuscripts.
Furthermore, regarding the abbreviation system, I have experimented two levels of visualization (interpretative and diplomatic): the user can choose which level to display.

Description of the Research Visit

The research activities have been carried out as follows:

- Week 1:
  - welcome and meeting with Dr. Emily Ridge to discuss about the project, the methodology and the timeline
  - creation and structure of the XML-TEI document
- Week 2:
  - meetings with other researchers of the University of Galway (Dr. Bisagni and Dr. Moran) to discuss about the project, the methodology and the most suitable tools to use
  - structure of the XML-TEI document
- Week 3:
  - networking with other postdoctoral researchers and with TNA CLS INFRA fellow Dr. Sánchez-Migállon to share knowledge about different digital tools
  - encoding and tagging the XML-TEI document
- Week 4:
  - meeting with Mr. Kelly (DH manager) and Dr. Tonra (Academic Integrity Officer) to discuss about the improvement and the rendering of the XML-TEI document
  - meeting with Dr. Ridge to check the evolution of the project and to organize a seminar at the University of Galway
- Week 5:
  - encoding and tagging the xml-tei document
- Week 6:
  - meeting with TNA CLS INFRA fellow Prof. Marcenaro
  - rendering of the XML-TEI document
  - meeting with Dr. Ridge to discuss the organisation of the seminar
- Week 7:
  - rendering of the XML-TEI document
  - preparation of the presentation for the seminar
- Week 8:
  - seminar
  - final reflections on project improvement

Considerations over future work

This digital edition can be used in the future as an open-source reference tool for the Franco-Italian *Anseïs the Carthage*. Furthermore, a format suitable for printing can be derived from the XML-TEI document and a traditional paper edition can also be proposed.

In addition to being a consultation tool, the digital edition will represent a basis for subsequent levels of analysis (linguistic, stylistic, ecdotic, palaeographic, content-related). The XML-TEI standard will ensure the text's searchability and interoperability. A scholarly digital edition is not merely an edition of a text; it is a digital document that is simultaneously enriched on several levels. It is a comprehensive digital study of an historical source, encoded in a searchable and interoperable standard.

In the next stage of my work, I will focus on three main goals:

1. the encoding and the tagging of the entire text of *codex* **C** and the collation with fragment **i**
2. the addition of several other features, such as lexical annotation (POS and morphological tagging), lemmatisation, glossary, index of anthroponyms and toponyms
3. the rendering of the digital edition

The first point, in addition to containing the elements and attributes already used so far, will be supplemented with the coding of the writing phenomena appearing in the manuscript – such as errors or corrections made by the scribe – and of the material aspect of the source documents (such as textual gaps caused by material damage).
Regarding the second point, I suggest starting with the following basic encoding frameworks:

- lexical annotation and lemmatization

```
<w xml:id="t1" n="1" lemma="lemma" pos="part_of_speech" msd="morph_description"> word </w>
```

- glossary

```
<entry><form> form </form></entry>
```

- index of anthroponyms and toponyms

```
<index indexName="index_persons"><term> term </term></index>
```

```
<index indexName="index_places"><term> term </term></index>
```

The TEI standard permits a very fine and precise level of encoding: the possibility of delving into such detail could prove beneficial for Franco-Italian texts, which are written in a hybrid language. Indeed, such accuracy can best represent the several degrees of hybridization produced by the phonetic, morphological and semantic contact between French and Italian.