The Quick and the Dead in the Communal Feast of Aschura and Carnival

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The 1580 Carnival of Romans began on Candlemas (February 2nd) and on the 3rd, St. Blasius' day, groups of dancers roamed the town streets. They were sword dancers with bells attached to their feet, threshers carrying rakes and flails and a group dressed in mortuary garb. The agricultural implements connoted the end of a cycle, when grain is threshed before the spring sowing period. Ladurie, who made an exhaustive study of the Romans Carnival, defines them as dancers of death mimicking the cycle of grain that is sown, germinated, harvested and finally beaten to death.1

The wearers of mortuary robes were accompanied by people announcing that "before three days Christian flesh would be sold for six deniers a pound," a fearful threat of cannibalism and a shocking inversion, since human flesh, should, according to societal and canonical norms, be the most valued. The mortuary robe is the dress of the Fraternity of the Holy Spirit, in charge of alms to the poor, and which includes the dead among the living. In this association, the dead who paid their contribution during their lifetime continue to be members and are invited to the feast of the group, bodily represented by paupers. Thus, on St-Blasius' day, patron saint of the Fraternity, artisans, paupers and dead souls gather for the celebration of Carnival. Ladurie comments: "These three primitive (agrarian, warlike and sacred) manners of treating the initial theme of carnivalesque death are essential."2

The Romans Carnival is indeed essential because it allows us to envision, in a specific, datable and documented context, the workings of a popular carnival where the dead and the living coexist within a complex symbolic and gestural framework. Here Carnival revelers include in their semiotic apparatus and in their rituals the memory of the community's dead and the remembrance of death.

It is believed that the dead can actually wander among the living at certain times, in particular on their feast of November 2nd. The repast given in their honor acquires a linking function with the community of the living: in Montaillou, from the XIIIth to the XIXth centuries, the
living consume the meal prepared for the dead on All Saints day. In XIXth century Languedoc, the night between November 1st and 2nd, people leave a light on when they go to bed: a little lamp made with a piece of candle is lit for the dead who come back and visit the places they used to love. On All Saints night the dead souls return in a procession around the village and in the Montségur region one finds again the ritual meal and the candles: one for every place set.

Ginzburg mentions that throughout Italy on November 2nd the souls also carry candles in a procession; they enter their former houses where the living have prepared food, drink and fresh beds for them. One of the XVIth century peasants accused of being a Benandanti claims that on Fridays and Saturdays one must make the beds early in the morning because the dead return home tired and needing a rest. The population of late medieval Montaillou also believes that the dead visit their houses on Saturday and that the rooms must be kept clean in their honor: on those visits, the dead protect the sleep of their loved ones.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, the people of Tlemcen hold twelve nestfas a year (2 at 'Ashūra) in honor of the recent deceased: on that day, the souls of the deceased come home, a common funerary meal is served to which everyone contributes as "alms for the soul of X." The communal meals of the feasts of the dead remind us of the Romans Fraternity of the Holy Spirit's banquets, as do the alms of Tlemcen. The candles of November 1st-2nd remind us of Candlemas which, as in Romans' case, may be the first day of the Carnival celebration. In the liturgical year, Candlemas is the feast of the Presentation and of the Purification of the Virgin: the procession with lit candles which traditionally occurs that day is actually a ritual of penitence, of atonement taking place during the old Roman month of purifications and, at the same time, connotes a joyous moment. The liturgical Candlemas is at the outset under the double sway of mortality and eternal life, a meaning which underlies Honorius of Autun's explanation of the candles whose wax would represent the humanity of Christ (the transitory and perishable) and whose light represent his divinity (resurrection and life after death).

All Saints is a set date, while the Carnival celebration (Mardi Gras-Fastnacht) is a variable moment within a fluctuating period. However, through the incorporation of Candlemas to the Carnival period, the seemingly impossible paradox of Carnival's relationship with All Saints is made possible. That relationship is expressed in the Catalan proverb "Candlemas wedding, the fruit of it at All Saints." In pre-modern carnivalesque literature allusions to All Saints are far from infrequent.
Paradox? Maybe not, for All Saints is the atonement period preceding the "mini-Carnival" of St-Martin's day, ushering in pre-Christmas Lent, the prelude to the full swing of the crucial, Easter-oriented, Winter Carnival.13

Because Carnival is not a single day and, for that matter is not actually always known by that name, even in France,14 saying "goodbye" to meat before the onset of Lent is merely one aspect of the celebration and cannot serve to define it. The period may begin at a number of dates, including January 1st, Epiphany, January 14th, Candlemas or even Christmas. It does not even end abruptly with Lent, since the revels often include Ash Wednesday itself, the first Sunday of Lent and Mid-Lent (Mi-Carême).15 The fundamentally polysemous nature of Carnival cannot be understood unless it is integrated into the seasonal, calendary and mythical space in which it belongs.

The Roman Carnival stresses an aspect which is generally overlooked because of the many overt manifestations of joy and amusement. Romans brings out the structural importance of the theme of death and the wandering of souls, with attendant rituals aimed at propitiating and protecting them. Finally, Romans links the funerary aspect with specific agrarian activities, establishing a much more solid agrarian connection than those suggested by vague Frazerian vegetation or corn-spirit schemes.

There is no question that Carnival, and in particular its Occitan variety which will be the focus of this discussion's European component, can be characterized as a boisterous, raucous, rowdy celebration with outlandish food consumption. It is also true that the importance of foodstuffs and eating at Carnival has much to do with the proximity of Lent, especially since pre-modern Lent was quite a bit stricter than today, requiring the removal of even traces of animal fat from cooking utensiles.16 Because of these elements, the founder of scientific French folklore, Van Gennep, completely rejected the presence of atonement and sadness aspects of Carnival, underlining that with even Ash Wednesday as a day of joy rather than penance, the entire period was one of joyous license.17 However, parallel traditions point to the funerary aspect of Ash Wednesday, as XVIth and XVIIth century Languedoc wills indicate that the "feasts of souls" take place on Easter Monday, Pentecost Monday, Ash Wednesday and Good Thursday; they include religious ceremonies and collective visits to the dead.18 Furthermore, Van Gennep confused the presence of funerary themes and myths with actual mourning; the two are very different expressions of human emotion and the former is not in the least antithetic to joyous motifs as well.

The fact that Carnival can combine the comical and the funerary is
quite apparent from studying facetious carnivalesque literature of the XVth, XVIth and XVIIth centuries. A series published in 1610, for instance, contains several pseudo-wills and legal declarations. The “author”, Bredin le Cocu (the horned cuckhold of Carnival) announces that these documents were conceived at the occasion of Mardi Gras and that the folly he embodies is highly contagious.

In a farcical “attestation” appears a group of old belles whose names belie the apparent timidity and fearfulness they display in a fake incident whereby a dangerous spirit invaded their house during the night. The fact that the “spirit” is none other than the lodger’s paramour disguised as a woman provides a comic scenario of transparent misunderstanding. However, the theme of the wandering spirit at Carnival time is nonetheless rendered with details which are noteworthy to the folklorist. Seeing this “visible and tangible spirit” the old women decide to stay together, reciting prayers and orisons, one conjuring the “spirits that wander at night”, and the others singing the litanies of Saint Brigid, a Carnival period Saint whose protective functions link her to winds and swelling.

In the “Transaction entre la Mort et l’Amour, la Jeunesse et la Vieillesse” appears the rivalry between age groups and the predominance claimed by youth which is characteristic of the medieval Carnival. In this context, Death herself is contending with Cupido as each one has usurped the other’s functions. Death cruelly attacks the young, while old men are subject to the “follastre” Cupido’s arrows. Agreement is finally reached between the parties, to be ratified at the upcoming “feast of the Dead”.

Carnivalesque wills include a “Donation a cause de mort” where Jean Cocquesigrue, whose bird name again connotes the various “reinages” of youth, is giving away his vineyards in the parish of Nowhere (Nul Lieu) in the territory of “Sniff-Wind” (Hume-Vesse, a scatological play on a type of legume and the “wind” caused by its excessive ingestion), located at the intersection of four completely inverted cardinal points.

Jean Goguelu’s “Testament nuncupatif” made in front of Hylaire le Joyeux takes the joke a step further, as he prescribes the minutest details of his funeral and beseeches the Creator to receive his soul in heaven until the day of general resurrection. He then proceeds with a list of useless, scatological, insulting or insufficient donations in the style made famous by Villon. Comparisons are drawn between the butchering of meat (an essential Carnival component) and untimely death which hits all ages. His witnesses include familiar figures from Rabelais’ Underworld such as the “crieur de saulce verte” and assorted bums.

The Underworld, the Carnival period and Rabelais turn up again in
another XVIIth century piece in which Tabarin, actor of farces, harrows Hell, where he cures the demons’ health problems, in particular, burns and venereal disease, and meets Rabelais, the president of the “farceurs”, during Lent.

Two XVIth century Carnivalesque works reinforce the link between outright farce and the remembrance of the dead. Very important in that respect is the “Conference des servantes de la ville de Paris sous les charmiers Saint Innocent avec Prestation de bien ferrer la mule ce Caresme.” Dame Lubine, the oldest of the fishmongers, gives a speech to her followers on the art of getting rich. The meeting takes place at the entrance of Lent and in the sacred space of the cemetery, in the section where the bodies of the poor are piled together. Significantly, Lubine is the female fool, the name Lubin (c.f. the French “lubie”, an absurd, unreasonable idea) designating a silly, foolish and ignorant person. According to Menage, the name may also refer to Louvel-Lupus and hold a somewhat ominous, threatening value. Lubin is also definitely erotic, as Frere Lubin portrays an obscene and inveterate lecher, adding a further dimension to this composite Carnival figure, as did the afflicted demons aided by Tabarin.

In “Les de Relais ou le Purgatoire des Bouchers, Charcutiers etc...” the satirical mode is used to heap abuse on a variety of trades which are incompatible with the gravity of Lent. The malevolent tradespeople are sent to Purgatory, the zone of the in-between, rather than straight to Hell. For them Lent will be a period of figurative sojourn among the shadows until they can reintegrate the earthly Paradise of the Easter period which prolongs Carnival.

These themes of carnivalesque literature translate the interpretation of Carnival and Lent. Carnival and Lent exert reciprocal influence on each other: Carnival carries with it some of the mortuary aspects of Lent and Lent is not as thoroughly somber as one might imagine. It would also be overly simplistic—and incorrect—to assume that, since Carnival is a period of joy, its representatives embody the positive connotations of spring while Lent is equivalent to death and winter. Actually, it is quite the opposite. It is the rotund, jovial Carnival which represents winter and will be short-lived, hence the many versions of his public trial and destruction. Lent, on the other hand, will be alive and well for 40 days. Facetious poems relating the battle of Carnival and Lent can show Carnival winning, but that conclusion defies all the rules of the calendar and touches on another series of problems: the world upside down, utopia and the land of plenty. In the course of the battle, the nature of the antagonists’ troops confirms that it is truly the lean, austere Lent that
personifies spring. While Carnival leads cohorts of edible beasts into the fray, Lent is followed by many varieties of fish and vegetables. Thus Lent symbolizes both life and death through the fresh green of the new vegetables and the dessicated foods such as salted herrings.

This connection between the French Carnival and mortuary themes, including funerary rituals and the myths of the souls, already apparent from the above data, has been accepted by a number of French ethnologists and folklorists. The question, which they generally do not address, is just how the concept of the return of souls is conveyed from actual belief to a language of gestures and metaphors which also partakes of its own carnivalesque thematics. Another problem is the degree of literality which must be ascribed to the carnivalesque renditions of belief complexes centered around the dead.

In his groundbreaking analysis of Carnival, Claude Gaignebet responded to the first question by bringing together a number of specific components. Human souls, kept in hiding inside the hibernating bear are freed by him at that time. The winds of bagpipes, bladders and bellows contain and transmit the souls as pneuma, controlled by the Carnival fools who thus conserve and bring to a new life the souls which are welded into the universe. Carnival costumes not only represent human but animal souls: these souls appear at a very specific time, guided by the phases of the moon, the “door” through which exchanges can be made between earth and heaven. The most propitious moment for that transfer is when the sun finds itself in the Milky Way, and the moon at a new phase. That is precisely the moment of Carnival, concludes Gaignebet.

Once that theory is accepted, one will not be surprised to find that the foolish companions of Dame Lubine have names pertaining to wind and swelling: Marion Soufflée, Alizon Gros Pet, Ianneton Bousouflée. Neither is it surprising that the carnivalesque legal texts include a “Testament solonnel” of Cochon le Groignard, 999½ years of age, who bequeaths parts of his body to his relatives and various humans: his tongue to lawyers, bladder to children, tail to the girls and testicles to the women.

In order to further understand how remembrance of the dead and concern over the wandering of souls can be incorporated into a feast hallmarked by public expression of joy and raucous behavior, it is extremely helpful to attempt a comparative analysis of a similar celebration in a different cultural context. To that end, the treatment of funerary themes and myths of the dead in the Berber celebration of the Moslem feast of Āshūrā, will be examined.

In both cultural zones—Southern France (Occitanie) and Berber
North Africa—beliefs pertaining to the reintegration of the souls into the human plane of experience, outside of any particular festive time, are well attested to even into the modern period. They afford us some measure of perception as to how traditionalist societies envision the permeability of one world to the next, and through their regular praxis ascribe to the dead another way of being, rather than simple disappearance.

In XIVth century Montaillou, the dead souls are thought to wander freely among the living. They are corporeal, appearing as ghosts, phantoms or “doubles” who mostly hide out in the mountain. A member of the community called the armier (person of the souls) establishes contact between the dead and the living. An armier can give elaborate descriptions of what occurs in the land of the dead, which includes an apparent rivalry between age groups, strangely reminiscent of carnivalesque societal parameters.

The dead souls of Montaillou are far from all-powerful. They are constantly cold and deprived of all earthly pleasures except for drinking. They indulge in that pastime in the cellars full of barrels, in the company of ghosts. It is interesting to note that the Benandanti claimed to repair from their nocturnal voyages to the village cellars in the company of the witches whom they had just fought. Also curious is the apparent relationship between the dead and the ingestion of wine. A very important aspect of the Montaillou souls is that they need protection. That is because there are two deaths. The first is the visible, corporeal death. The second is the entrance to the eternal “place of rest”. Thus, the living must act in a certain manner during the crucial transitional period between the two deaths. One of the actions demanded from the living by the dead of their community is the giving of alms to the poor. Here we encounter again the role of the poor as intermediaries in the protected passage of the souls to their final destination, which was manifest in the Romans Carnaval and with the bums/witnesses of Goguelu’s carnivalesque will.

As late as the end of the XIXth century, Languedoc peasants believed in such communication—beneficial or noxious—with the dead. For instance, a Carcasses farmer, born in 1885, gave the ethnologists Fabre and Lacroix a thorough account of such traditions. According to him, illness was sent by either the dead or the witches. If the dead were felt to be causing some harm, one had to have recourse to the witch. His father used to go to someone who could reveal the dead to the living. If something would go wrong in the house, it was felt that one of the dead was thus manifesting a request for more prayers.

Throughout the Languedoc, it was felt that, with the exception of the
dead of Good Friday, the souls could maintain their contact with the living during their sojourn—of variable length—in Purgatory, which plays a crucial part in the myths of the Carnival and Easter period. In Ariège, legends concerning the “car de las armas” (chariot of the souls) flying through the airs and of youth dancing with ghosts on the road and disappearing are well known. The dead who feel that they have been improperly honored manifest themselves with various signs and may, if sufficiently irritated, attack the living.48

Before 1900, every village in the Causse du Blandas had its armier, marked by birth for his task (another reminder of the Benandanti beliefs that they were destined by birth for their activities). Actual attempts to get messages to a recent departed are documented in the XIXth century Vallespir.49 Even in the XXth century, the Languedoc is full of stories of the dead feeling insufficiently propitiated and seeking revenge.50

Indeed, it has been found that far from declining in the XIXth century, the belief in the ongoing communication with the dead gained renewed importance under the influence of an exogenous movement, imported with great success into rural areas: spiritism. Thus the tendency to attribute a myriad of phenomena, many of which would have previously been explained diversely, to the influence of the dead increased. As a result they became the sole source of the supernatural and began to breed more fear.51

Medieval Islamic eschatological writings speak of the soul sharing a common experience with the dead during sleep. God is said to take both the living and the dead to himself at that time. Al Tabari says that the spirits of the living and the dead meet in sleep. According to other writers, the zone of meeting is the barzakh, the barrier between the living and the dead. In a hadith there is mention that the dead circle around their house for a month and around their grave for a year before being raised to the place in which the spirits of the living and the dead meet.52

The city dwellers of Tlemcen express beliefs which are not that dissimilar from those encountered in southern France.53 During forty days, the soul of the dead comes back to visit its house just before sunrise and also visits the grave. But after the fortieth day, it only visits the grave once in a while. As in the rest of North Africa, many legends and rituals center around the elusive spirits called the djennun who can either be inoffensive or extremely malevolent. There are certain places which these spirits particularly like to reside in and one must avoid walking in them for fear of hurting and angering a djennun. These places, which connote decay and funerary rituals, are pools of blood, latrines, garbage and manure piles, humid places such as wells, fountains, cisterns and
caves and places where fires are built. The djennun also receive invitations to a special meal in their honor.53

‘Ashūrā and Carnival: Calendar Parameters

The feast of ‘Ashūrā warrants comparative approaches to the French Carnival because of a number of similarities in the structural apparatus of both celebrations, a connection made some time ago by Van Gennep and others.54 However, although ‘Ashūrā is, among other things, a feast of the dead, comparative work has not yet centered on a cross-reading of that fundamental component. Superficially, the calendar framework seems to be so different in both cases that a comparative analysis might seem surprising.

Since the Moslem calendar is lunar, a feast is ascribed to a set month, while the place of that month in the year, relatively to Christian calendars, is always variable.55 Thus, for the Berber farmers of Algeria, the month is actually identified by the name of its particular feast.56 ‘Ashūrā is to fall on the 10th day of the month of Muharram, a word which contains the notion of sacred, forbidden, but the month’s seasonal place will always vary. It has been said that agrarian and seasonal rituals, displaced by the lunar calendar, have been absorbed by ‘Ashūrā.57 Whatever the case may be, Muharram marks the beginning of the religious year and ‘Ashūrā is a particularly sacred form of New Year, nevertheless linked in some aspects to En Nair, the first of the year in the old Julian calendar brought by the Roman conquest, and still observed by Berbers with respect to agricultural dates.58

‘Ashūrā is not just a sacred beginning, but, according to one author, a feast of passage, absorbing all the rituals pertaining to women, children, to fecundity and to the dead. There is a contract between Man and the Invisible, stipulating that the dead and the living have an equal responsibility in insuring continuity between death and life.59 This connection becomes quite obvious in a ritual which is particular to Marrakech, the daqqa, performed on the eve of ‘Ashūrā. At sundown, in every neighborhood, the men gather and form a square, each holding the small drum called t’arija. Inside the square two musicians and two coryphees move in circles. The drum players are divided in two: the east, the side of the mat and of life, and the west, the side of the shroud and of death. Two key-moments, the opening and the entrance which takes place at dawn, mark the transition to the new year. They play and sing throughout the night, the rhythm intensifies, and a white-bearded old man appears in the circle: he is ba‘ ashur of whom more will be said later.
The sky begins to fade, and the solemn, profoundly sacred moment of the entrance has come: both sides of the choir must combine their voices in one single call to life. It is crucial that the two sides succeed in meeting exactly, otherwise, it is a very bad omen. Men have been known to cry for missing that coming together.

The feast of 'Ashûrâ is supposed to have been a day of fasting and almsgiving set by the Prophet in emulation of a fast held by the Jews of Medina on the tenth day of the first month in honor of Moses' parting the Red Sea, an explanation unknown to Jewish tradition. In Sunnite Islam, on the whole, 'Ashûrâ became an optional fast day since the institution of Ramadan, and a rather bleak feast. With the development of Shī'â, however, the 10th of Muharram became inseparable associated with the death of Al-Husayn commemorated by the Shi'ites as a divinely appointed martyr with processions, ecstatic gatherings and passion plays, giving the day a character of solemn mourning.

Not only does this value of atonement appear to be extremely variable among the Berber population, depending on the extent of the influence of Shī'â, but medieval Moslem writers had already described the apparent shift to a day of feasting, with enormous consumption of food, ostentatious almsgiving, and in the XVIIth century, it was known for its spirit of largesse, overspending and feasting.

More recent accounts of the celebration of 'Ashûrâ among the Berbers show it to be a complex of values and meanings, much in the way the French Carnival is, but maybe in a somewhat more "readable" version. Thus, a look at the 1909 'Ashûrâ celebration in Kairouan from January 30th to February 2nd, tells us how the seemingly dissimilar components were integrated in a week of celebrations: On the first day, Tessoua, special foods were prepared. On the second, 'Ashûrâ proper, only non-leavened bread was eaten and visits to the dead took place. On the third day appeared the first bonfires and calvalcades, and on the fourth, the cemeteries were empty and Carnival manifestations began. The fifth was devoted to mascarades and bonfires and the remaining days to bonfires, games and parades.

In a way, Carnival can also be conceived of as a beginning. Carnival not only is a necessary step in the ushering in of spring, but, as a period, it falls close after or right before the various dates which have been used to mark the New Year: besides January 1st, these are Christmas, March 1st, March 25th and Easter.

Within the Carnival period, however, certain moments are of privileged importance. Ash Wednesday is a focus because it begins lenten fasting. Thus, the preceding "days of meat" are completely depen-
dent on the variable paschal computations. Ash Wednesday must be forty days before Easter, or the first spring full moon. That interval corresponds to one and a half moons and starts at the onset of the new moon. As a result, the day preceding Ash Wednesday, "Fat Tuesday" is not only—theoretically—the last day of meat but a crucial point in the satisfactory unfurling of the calendar and the seasons. It is also a lunar festival, anchored by the disappearance of the old moon and the coming of the new one, and projected towards the full moon of Easter. In that context, Candlemas, a frequent first day of Carnival proper, as it was in the Romans Carnival, acquires a special meaning in the myths of Carnival.

In a tradition well represented throughout Europe, the bear has a meteorological function on Candlemas. On that night, he is to leave his den after a winter of hibernation, and look at the sky. If the sky is dark, the new moon is on its way and the bear can come out of hibernation, heralding the arrival of spring. On the other hand, if the sky is light, that indicates that the old moon still rules the skies, the bear then returns to his den for another forty days, thus delaying spring.

The bear's presence at the Carnival revels therefore comes as no surprise. Numerous were the villages in the Pyrenees region which included bear hunts, with the catching and shaving of the animal, as did Céret, whose bear was gone in 1951. In Vallespir, after Candlemas, there was the ceremony of the bear and the "maiden" Rosetta, made famous in Arles-sur-Tech. The animal kidnaps Rosetta and tries to run away with her; sometimes he is shut up in a cage with his prey. This episode can be traced to a corpus of stories well attested to in Europe since at least the XVIth century. A Spanish confessor's manual, apparently a Xth century translation from a French text, forbids the representations of "Orcus and Maia", in whom, without stretching the imagination too far, one can recognize the bear and Rosetta. Despite variations, most of these tales agree on the following scenario: a bear captures a young woman, keeps her in his cave and sires a son by her, a child of extraordinary strength who is half-bear, half-man. In its recent version, the tale, known as "Jean de l'Ours", has gained immense popularity throughout Occitanie, where many versions of it can be found.

In the story type, another significant aspect of the bear appears, beyond his somewhat forbidding sexuality. The bear's son visits the underworld, from which he frees three captive maidens. Abandoned underground by his treacherous friends, he wanders in the underworld until he can get an eagle to bring him back to the earth. In the process, however, he must sacrifice a piece of his body, thus acquiring a physical diformity...
or insufficiency (usually of the leg) which, in folklore, is the mark of an Underworld nature.

The bear's human side has created considerable ambiguity about a prototype of anti-civilization depicted in the medieval romances *Valentin et Ourson* or the German *Valentin und Nameles*, where the protagonist kidnaps Rosemonde and does her violence in the forest. This character is a human of bear-like fierceness, thus classifiable as a form of wild man. As mentioned before, (*supra*) the bear can be seen as a soul-carrier. The bear's son, a man of inhuman strength, in a manner of speaking, harrows Hell. Wild men and bears are actors of Carnival. Through the bear, there is a distinct link between Carnival and the Underworld, the displacements of souls.

Marking the juncture between two calendars, the solar (seasonal) and the lunar (variable feasts), the bear must discontinue or further his hibernation. His prolonged sleep is what allows him to enter in contact with the souls, his underworld character designates him as their guardian and his calendar role in the Easter cycle, as the one who will let them loose. His ritual activities are a natural extension of beliefs concerning sleep and the souls which also apply to ordinary humans. The concept of the spirit escaping from the body and wandering on its own, incurring the threat of death if body and soul are not reunited, is found in medieval Montaillou as well as among the Benandanti of Italy.

In XIXth century Languedoc, people continued to believe that body and soul separated during sleep. Even without the presence of the bear, the analogous concept can be found in the other cultural zone of this discussion. Women and children of the Mettidja say that when one sleeps, the soul wanders away, that when a person sleeps well, that means that his soul is in Paradise or in the realm of the angels. Also, the soul of a sleeping person leaves through his mouth as a butterfly and if the insect does not return, the person dies.

In its signs, regardless of the particular content given to them by a given population of Carnival celebrants, the Occitan Carnival is connected to the myths of wandering souls, crystallizing around the figure of the bear. In view of the particularities of the Christian calendar, which is a composite amalgamation of variable feasts and rigid seasonal dates, it will be interesting to consider whether any funerary themes, protection or propitiation of souls or connections to the latter's "second degree" manifestations, can be gleaned from the seasonal calendar.

This task is made possible because the variability of the Easter cycle is only relative (enclosed within a certain time period) and not infinite, as in the Moslem calendar. Thus, although the dates of Mardi Gras, Ash
Wednesday and Easter move, the probabilities roughly cover mid-January to April, with a marked tendency to associate February with Carnival proper, Lent with March and April with Easter. Thus, if one examines the calendar of the saints in the later Middle Ages and early modern period extending over the Carnival time zone, one encounters a number of significant saints.

January 3rd is the feast of Saint Genevieve whose association with Carnival is underscored by iconography representing her followed by a little devil trying to put out her candle with a pair of bellows, dear to the Occitan bufoli. Her Latin name, Genofeva, reminds us that she belongs to the realm of the fava, or bean sacred to the ancients, and still laden with ominous significations many centuries later. The XVIth century writer Guillaume Bouchet comments that the bean is baneful and pertains to the dead. Thus, he adds, people used to and, in some places, still do eat beans at funerals. For it was believed that the souls of the dead sought refuge among the beans, thus the popular belief that eating beans could be as grave a matter as “eating one’s father’s head”. Nevertheless, they also connote life for they are “prolific and genital”. Their female aspect is also sacrus: left out under moonlight, they turn to blood.

The 6th is Epiphany, when some form of cake with the famous bean is eaten (Northern galette, Southern fougasse). The three kinks, intercessors against sudden death, are feasted on that day. Together they represent life and death at once: Melchior, the old man, Gaspar, the beardless youth, and Balthazar, the black king who carries myrrh as a sign that the Son of Man must die. Rituals of blackening, essential to the Occitan Carnival, may also take place: at their banquet, the “follin follet’ might exercise punitive smearing of the guests’ faces.

On the 9th, St-Paul the Hermit’s day. He fled to the desert to escape persecution. There, St-Anthony finds him, fed by a crow. His visit ended, Anthony has a vision that the hermit has died and finds him kneeling, as if alive and praying, but already dead. His grave is dug by two lions. St-Anthony exclaims: “Oh, Holy Soul, thou hast shown in thy death what thou wast in life.” On May 1st, there is a “Feast of the Blacks” (Feste des Noircis) of St. Paul in the town of Vienne.

St-Hilary, The Joyous, is honored either on the 13th or the 14th. He forces the corrupt Pope to render his soul in the latrine, disemboweled. Through his prayers, he obtains the death of his daughter and his wife.

In many areas, the 17th is the day of a major saint, St-Anthony the Anchorite. In the desert, he withstands the repeated assaults of the Satan’s troops, so it can be said that he has “seen” the Otherworld. The very extensive iconography of St-Anthony’s temptations, abundant be-
tween the XVth and XVIIth centuries, often represents him in the characteristic pose of the melancholic, the child of Saturn. The children of Saturn include those who dig in the deepest secrets of the earth: gravediggers, miners and seekers of treasures, and those who die by hanging.  

On the 20th is the feast of another important saint, Sebastian. His body is pierced by a shower of arrows but he comes back to life. He is killed a second time and his body thrown in a sewer: however his spirit reappears to announce where the body should be buried.

On the 22nd, St-Vincent, protector of wine and winegrowers. After repeatedly torturing him, the executioners expose his corpse in the fields, to be devoured by the wild beasts. However, he is spared that burial desecration by the intervention of a crow who chases away birds of prey and a wolf. Finally consigned to the waters, with a millstone attached to it, St-Vincent’s body is rejected by the waves and given proper burial.

On the 25th, the Conversio Pauli is celebrated, commemorating the conversion of Saul, a former persecutor of Christians, an event marked by signs of reversal: Saul riding on horseback and suddenly thrown to the ground, his sudden blindness and return to sight. St-Paul thus becomes the patron saint of ropemakers, “who work backwards.” Their profession also has connotations of death, for their work produces the hangman’s rope. Death itself is a form of reversal: a return to the earth, or the dust, whence we came.

The 26th or the 27th, depending on the calendar used, are under the name of “St-Julian”. Several saints and characters of the Golden Legend have that name. The most famous, St-Julian l’Hospitalier, murdered his parents by mistake, and made penance by ferrying travelers across a dangerous river. In this ferryman, we can easily recognize a soul-carrier, a Christian parallel to the boatman of Hell, the object of much farcical comment in the voyages of Tabarin and other actors to the Underworld (supra, p.5). A XIIIth century English legend establishes that aspect of St-Julian in a very interesting way. It tells of the vision of the peasant Thurcill, guided by Julian in a voyage to the temporary sojourn of the souls, where he also meets St-Paul. Thurell gives the appearance of being dead on earth, for St-Michael tells his guide to bring him back quickly, as those who surround his deathbed may smother him by throwing cold water on his face.

The month of February is marked by similar complexes of legends surrounding certain saints but the first 5 days, which are so central to the celebration of Carnival, overshadow by far the rest of the month by their importance, and the second, third and fifth are the most significant.
The first is the day of St-Brigid whose connection with winds and swelling makes her a likely soul-bearer.\textsuperscript{91}

The second is Candlemas, a day of joy and atonement. In Languedoc tradition, on "Nòstra Dama dels Candelous", small candles are brought to Church to be blessed and will be used in the room of a dying person to facilitate the soaring of the soul.\textsuperscript{92}

The third is the crucial day of St-Blasius, the patron saint of the Romans Fraternity of the Holy Spirit. By giving the poor widow back the pig which a wolf had stolen from her, Blasius becomes a protector of animal as well as human souls. Candles, whose importance in rituals of the souls have been already discussed (\textit{supra} p.2), are henceforth consecrated to him every year. He also is thrown back alive by the waters.\textsuperscript{93}

The 5th, is the feast day of St. Agatha, in many places celebrated by women. Her name signifies "the good", but in folk tradition, she acquires an ambiguous nature and becomes a kind of witch. To those who spin on her feast day, she appears as a very fast spinner who terrifies the woman at fault. To chase her away, one has to shout: "le fuòc es al cementèri" ("the cemetery is on fire"), otherwise, according to one legend, the woman would have ended up spinning her own shroud. Washing is also forbidden or she appears as a black cat ("gata"). Agatha "frightens the woman who might perturb time by winding it in her thread or by troubling the water in which the sky is reflected."\textsuperscript{94}

\textit{\'Ashūrā, Feast of the Dead}

At the outset, \textit{\'Ashūrā} has a somewhat ominous value. Misfortune would attach itself to a child born on that day. The boy would grow up to be a good for nothing. The girl would never be considered a true virgin and would bring no luck to her husband. Marriages are also forbidden during the month of \textit{\'Ashūrā}\textsuperscript{95}.

In Tunisia, a feeling of uneasiness pervades the entire month, considered as nefarious in the Kef area and even in the cities. There also, people are unhappy about births and marriages at the time.\textsuperscript{96}

A number of Catalan proverbs suggest that February, the most frequent Carnival month, might have negative or threatening characteristics.\textsuperscript{97}

Both celebrations have elaborate fire rituals which combine purification with elements of fertilization for human beings and crops. Their purification aspect may well have a funerary content.

In France the "feux des brandons" extend over a very large area. Activities include carrying torches, throwing blazing objects, building
bonfires and leaping over them for protection against disease and to help the crops. The many names given these bonfires can be directly related to popular revels such as the "charivari". 

During 'Ashūrā, bonfires are built by women and children. Children who jump three times over the burning embers of the 'Ashūrā bonfire are made strong. At night, a chaala is ablaze in every courtyard, surrounded with lit candles. The women and children dance around it and leap through the smoke. The sacred ashes are kept to preserve from illness.

In parts of Morocco, the celebration was still active some fifteen years ago. Among the Ait Seddrat, at Tamkasselt, the feast begins with the appearance of the thin crescent moon and lasts until the day after the full moon. Everywhere there is the glowing light of blazing torches and sparklers. Here, the little girls jump over the bonfires.

It would seem odd to attribute these activities to the expression of "solar cults", as most authors on the subject do, since they take place at a lunar festival. There is, however, the possibility of a ritual "connecting" of the two calendars on a purely symbolic plane.

On the other hand, the linking of the blazes, the moonlight and remembrance of ancestors does appear in the 'Ashūrā Carnival of several tribes. For instance, among the Hanatia of the High Dra, at Tamelaltes, the boys greet the 'Ashūrā moon's appearance with processions. They carry long burning palm fibers which they twirl around, as they sing: "O Baba Ali batchebat, he beats the drum and thinks he's still young".

Among the Ait Ben Naceur (of the Imejjat), the character known as Boulefdam is entirely dressed in palm fibers and wears cow horns, presenting the appearance of a wild man and a "lunatic." His costume is set on fire at the end of the ceremony.

In other versions, the ogre of 'Ashūrā wears animal skins and holds a long burning torch. Among the Mezguita of the Dra, he wears rags and a hollowed pumpkin on his head with a dangerously blazing crown perched on it.

Even in the pageants which accompany the collection of materials for the bonfires, a task assigned to the children, a mortuary aspect can be included. In the Atlas, groups of children tour the villages. To get what they need, one will fall down and pretend to be dead until he receives the desired gifts.

The bonfires are not the only component of 'Ashūrā festivities to be polyvalent, pivoting on the axes of life and death. Although 'Ashūrā is a feast of honoring the dead, when they are questioned on the origin of the day, Kabyls say that the 10th of Muharram commemorates the crea-
tion of earth, the healing of Job, Jonas coming out of the whale, the birth and death of Jesus (Isa). In other words, they give it a value of birth, resurrection and regeneration.

In Tlemcen, there is no Carnival; on the IVth, mourning is prescribed to all the sherifs but not really observed. Generally in Algeria, 'Ashūrā is a day of mourning; women do not wear make-up and visit the graves. The ban is lifted on the third day.

In Merrakech, which on the other hand has a very raucous Carnival, cemeteries are visited by crowds of people on 'Ashūrā, tombs are doused with water and planted with myrtle, also used in Mazouña. In parts of Morocco, sterile women steal that myrtle from the graves of unknown deceased, whose forgiveness and protection they first invoke. At home, they grind the leaves and eat them with their husbands before intercourse.

If a child's fortieth day falls on 'Ashūrā, his mother will douse him with the rose water of funerary rites so that Death will be satisfied and leave him alone.

Elaborate rituals of inundating graves with water take place throughout the Maghrib. Children are given little jugs to perform the lustrations: it is said that their souls will refresh the burning lips of the donor on the Day of the Last Judgment.

In Tunisia, on 'Ashūrā day, the women tend to the graves. They spend the whole night in the cemetery where they invoke the female spirit Lalla Kerraba (Morocco).

In Rabat, the mourning rites are observed until the 20th of the month with all the trades ceasing work, a ban on dying one's body, whitewashing houses, washing oneself and one's clothes thoroughly.

Legends of the 'Ashūrā period confirm that dead souls are felt to be surrounding the community of the living. The Beni Hawa believe that 'Ashūrā is preceded by a meat market where the djennun, with their fire-red faces, hissing voices and fear of salt and iron, come to buy enormous quantities of meat.

In other areas, Carnival includes the procession of Lalla Mançoura who must not be unveiled. Whoever dares to lift the veil covering her palanquin would be blinded. She is the ghost-fiancée who disappeared from a closed carriage, in the middle of a crowd, as she was being carried to her husband's home.

Although the direct relationship to the dead, which is part of 'Ashūrā, is not present in the Occitan Carnival, certain mock elements do play on funerary allusions that are quite explicit.

The numerous existing versions of Carnival's funeral, with the judg-
ment and sentencing of the Carnival representative (actor of dummy) and his subsequent destruction are, on the whole, tangential to the issue at hand. However, in some versions, allusions to actual burial rites are so present as to be noteworthy. In a XVIIth century Carnival text, Caremeprenant’s funeral is extremely detailed and follows all the necessary prescriptions. In Vallespir, Grégoire, the Carnival mannequin is tried, burned and buried. Nuts may be thrown in the grave, to give him something to eat, some say. At Amélie, such a burning included participants in the dress of the old burying fraternities. In Spain also, Carnival features “Cofradías de la Animas”, the other side of the “Comparsas de locos”. Spanish illustrations of Carnival’s funeral have included skeletons bearing scythes.

Lunar Masks

Moon rituals involving magic can be part of the sacred time of Āshūrā. On the night of Āshūrā, the Moroccan witch goes to the cemetery to gather the “moon water” needed for her concoctions. She digs up a corpse, holds its hands in her own and makes it knead the semolina grains wet with moon water. This same ritual has been noted among the Beni Snous at En Nair, which, in Tlemcen, has mourning rites very similar to those of Āshūrā. The witches bring the moon down from the sky into a dish of water, paint a rooster’s eyes with kohl, knead semolina in the hands of a corpse.

Locks made on Āshūrā night cause sexual impotence. In the morning, before sunrise, the smith, alone in his shop, naked and standing on his left foot, forges amulets, moving from left to right.

As mentioned previously, stages of the moon are basic to the rituals of the French Carnival. Gaignebet pointed out that such rituals involving forced blackening and smearing of participants and observers are an initiative process designed to encourage the transition to a new moon, announced by a temporarily dark sky. Eating flapjacks, a food associated with Carnival in many zones of France, is a way of swallowing the moon. Conversely, dousing or covering with white substances, which also occurs frequently and is known as “farinage”, is a mimetic reference to the upcoming full moon of Easter. Thus, an “Easter Fool”, his face as white as chalk, occupies the center of Bruegels’ “Battle of Carnival and Lent”. This white fool’s connection to spring is visible in the costume of one of the bear’s companions in Gédre (Pyrénées): his face smeared with white, he wears a white shirt and a bunch of green leaves on his back.
"Black and white" symbolism is very important in the carnivalesque code: in the Pyrénées, there is a scene with a miller covered with an oxskin, who pretends to grind flour while men dressed as women sprinkle him with ashes. In the Andorran bear hunt at Encamp, the agrarian and funerary content of that chromatism is manifest with two mowers, one in white and one in black, who accompany the hunstmen.

Lunar disguises, in both Ashura and Carnival, are not only reflections of the calendar but may partake of magical operations, favoured by the elusive presence of the dead souls.

The magic of the Berbers underlines again that the moon is the mirror of Hecate, the witch goddess of classical times, the bitch of Hell, all-giver and fearful taker. Black magic, necromancy and apparitions from the Otherworld take place at the crossroads where she reigns. In medieval iconography, crossroads are often the locus of memento mori compositions such as the "Dit des trois morts et des trois vifs". In the system of the Four Temperaments, black is the color of the melancholic, related to the children of Saturn (supra). Conversely, melancholia is related to lunacy. The fact that black is also the color of Carnival lunar masks brings out the complex system which links the witches to the moon and to the spirits.

The main Carnival actors in Prats-de-Mollo (Pyrénées) disguise themselves as bears. They wear furry costumes and cover themselves with soot which they proceed to smear on everyone, especially women and the opposing group, barbers in white chemises and floured faces who eventually shave the bears.

This activity is called "blackening", "maschurage", the covering of semi-willing victims with substances such as soot, wine sediment, mud or ashes. Several authors point out that it is equivalent to wearing a mask. In the XVIth century, Guillaume Bouchet commented: "those who invented masks smeared themselves with wine sediment out of which came maschurez, in Italian masquarati". XVIth century Protestants also applied the term "masquerade" to the Black Virgin of Le Puy.

If one examines Claude Noirot's treatise on the origin of masks, one finds that the distinction was then made between these improvised masks made of natural substances and the more elegant, ornate and artificially made ones worn by the aristocratic youth who used masks to cavort with the ladies. In his discussion, Noirot expresses his profound disapproval at the "arrests d'amour" which claim to regulate the wearing of masks. These texts, earlier than 1609, the date of publication of Noirot's work, acknowledge the existence of distinctive disguises of the lower classes.
such as clothes turned inside out, faces covered with flour or coal dust and humble paper masks.\textsuperscript{137}

There is another dimension to the word "mask" in pre-modern and traditional societies. "Masque" in French, "mase, masca" in Provencal and Occitan, designate a witch.\textsuperscript{138} Noirot again confirms that conception of the term "in certain regions of France". It is very interesting that he should quote Olaus Magnus' famous work on the witches of the North. The terms he uses in his own translation of the text are very reflective of some of the beliefs and practices concerning the wearing of masks which we have encountered so far. The witches "draw out the subtle and tenuous substance of the air" to create horrific masks, "full of a lead-color filth", from which they could remove "the dark and gloomy substances" which they had employed.\textsuperscript{139} The air as vector for substances which are not of this world, the word "ténébreux" designating complete, intense darkness, the "outland" region of civilization and human experience, and the notion of filth containing something more than the socially unacceptable, something ominous (and here one must recall the role of lead in magic, such as the making of \textit{defixiones} or tablets to cause harm), all of these construct a complex of ideas which parallels Carnival smeared masks, but on the plane of the invisible, the hidden and the sacred.

Wearing a mask can signify passing into the zone of the dead. In Bas-Languedoc, there is a belief that if two youths wear masks, they would see themselves as "three", given the right circumstances, which suggest the appearance of a soul or "double" among them.\textsuperscript{140}

When Violet Alford gathered her material on Carnival in the Pyrenees, a story was circulating about a young man who dressed up in a calfskin on Carnival and, said the storyteller, "This was so impious that it stuck to him and prayers had to be said before he could take it off."\textsuperscript{141}

A legend from the \textit{Barzaz Breizh}, which might be medieval, is based on a type of \textit{exemplum}, presented as a Carnival sermon aimed at warning the population against the evils of wearing masks. The young men of the village had defied the priest's ban and paraded around in disguise. One youth borrowed a skull from the cemetery to use as a Carnival mask. When he returned it to the corpse, he jokingly invited it to dine with him. In the middle of the night, he heard knocking at his door and there was the grinning corpse, honoring his invitation. Terrified, the young man fell dead right through the floor.\textsuperscript{142} Thus, he had become one of the dead souls by donning their appearance. It is quite interesting to note that although this legend belongs to a cultural context which is not connected at all to Southern France, Carnival masks are treated in a similar manner.
Another Breton text, the “Gwerz of Skolan” establishes more cross-cultural links between returning souls and wild men who are central to Carnival mythology, both in their relation to the bear and the leader of souls, Harlequin (see infra). The song tells of the return from Purgatory of a furious sinner, Skolan, who appears with a black face on a black skeleton, mounted on a black horse. Using comparative analysis, D. Laurent was able to show that he is a form of the Welsh Yscolan, whose tale is in the *Black Book of Camarthen*. These sinners are, in turn, avatars of the wild man Myrddin-Merlin who must endure the icy cold and of the Irish Suibhne, who lives in the wild, perched at the top of the trees, in freezing weather; eventually he grows feathers.\(^{143}\) Wild men perched in trees and bushes are known to medieval and XVIth century iconography\(^{144}\) and in the Hérault region of Southern France, the wild man is sometimes known as the “plumeux” ("the feathery one").\(^{145}\) As we shall see, the costume of the Cournonterral wild men includes feathers.

Thus, having returned to our point of departure, we can admit the probability that Carnival masks connote contact with the dead, and that a Carnival disguise, the wild man, also has something to do with the symbolization of the souls’ return.

Blackening for purposes of disguise or ritual practice is known in North Africa. The substance called *khol* is not only used for make-up purposes but also has a purification and preservation value. In many parts of the Berber area, ʿĀshūrā is the day for the preparation of *kohl* for the rest of the year. Men and women alike put it on their eyes for yearly protection in the Souss of Tunisia.\(^{146}\) In parts of Morocco, the year’s supply is prepared at ʿĀshūrā with magical as well as darkening substances.\(^{147}\) In spite of orthodox disapproval, *kohl* and *henna* are commonly applied for purification. On ʿĀshūrā, Moroccan children were sometimes taken to the dyer’s shop to have their right arm and leg immersed in black dye.\(^{149}\)

The ʿĀshūrā Carnival celebrations usually involve some form of black mask, hairy or not. In Tunisia, costumes varied but many would blacken their face and hands.\(^{150}\) Among the Beni Yenni Berbers the youth would dress up one of the group as Bou Afif; wearing a black mask, armed with a big stick, he was sent through the village to enter houses and demand flapjacks. The Kabyls also say that he is Azrael, the Angel of Death.\(^{151}\)

In much of the area, Bou Afif is the name of the ʿĀshūrā old man whose violent, undecorous and unpredictable behavior is paralleled in Europe by the destructive antics of Carnival fools, wild men and Harlequins armed with bats.
Blackness and the protection of souls are linked in beliefs of Algerian Berbers: among the Beni Snous, a black woman protects the sacred pigeons whose cooing is the moaning of the souls and a black man guards the partridge fields of the At-Yenni.152

Shakh ba-Mennan, the Carnival old man of the Beni Snous, wears black rags which are to symbolize the sky before a storm and a mask which is a black fleece.153

Throughout the area, the Carnival actors include groups of "blacks." Sometimes entirely naked and smeared with darkening substances from head to toe, the Carnival "blacks" chase the women with a long stick held like a phallus. They sing: "We want to fornicate". Another of their disguises is a coat full of holes and an enormous fake phallus. When they turn around to pray, their bare rear is exposed, a lunar metaphor. Entering houses, they break everything in sight. They attack the women and even defile them with urine.154

The wild men of ʿAshūrā are often old men, ancestor types, who combine age and fertility. Herema, "the decrepitate", has an animal skin costume and a long burning torch, his face is blackened, he wears horns, branches of greenery and a necklace of snail shells. He hits all those he can reach with a long stick and receives gifts from the villagers. His blows are supposed to protect from disease. In fact, in spite of his name, he sports enormous fake genitals.155

This figure, often known as Boujloud, is universal in the Maghrib Carnival: he is called "the King of years". His retinue consists of actors disguised as old men and women in rags, their faces covered with hairy masks. They all throw ashes in passers-by. In Rabat, he is Baba Ali and, on ʿĀshūrā, the children sing him a ditty replete with allusions to the decaying, diseased and scatological:156

O Lalla Mannana—Khaddouj the poppy's daughter—the rivulet gives me water to drink—And the river will not carry us away—Baba Ali with your head like a jar—His hat is full of holes—The crow flies by and says—Where are you going?—To see my sons—Where are they?—In Hell—May God send you there!—So be it!—You will eat the excrements of lepers—Praise be to God, master of the world.

This type of symbolic network is very important also in a Carnival like the French Cournonterral. The aggressive flaunting of putrefaction plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between life and death, since as a process, it partakes of both. This may be why in some parts of the Maghrib one can see a Carnival dancer carrying a rotting donkey's carcass with which he hits and offends all bystanders.157

All these ʿĀshūrā Carnival figures are polyvalent and polysemous:
they are decrepite but highly sexualized, threatening but beneficial. Thus, in the Dra, Akho, the Āshūrā ogre is greatness like a saint and called “Father Āshūrā.” In the Khemis village of the Beni Snous, the connection between ancestors and local saints is very clear: the masks spring out of the sanctuary of Sidi Salah, the protective ancestor, shouting “lion”, an animal often represented in mascarades.

In a sense, the illusion that the masks have actually returned from the world of the dead is reinforced by the silence usually observed by the ancestor-mask as he roams the village street, performing his part. This silence is also found in parts of France: in Gascony, on Fat Tuesday, young men in black masks toured the farms, announcing themselves with songs, but not speaking a word once they had entered the house. They would point at what they wanted in complete silence. A similar custom was observed on the night of the Nuremberg Schembart.

The interference of soiling, putrefying materials in Carnival, alluded to in the Rabat children’s song, takes a somewhat more violent turn in several Carnivals of Southern France. In the Hérault, masks used to be made of soot and wine sediment as indicated by the late XVIth century authors discussed above. In the village of Courmonterral, near Montpellier, Ash Wednesday is the day of the Pailhasses, a sort of local wild man. Their costume consists of white clothes covered with a large sack packed with straw, a hat with turkey feathers and branches of box-tree coming from their shoulders. At the signal, the Pailhasses dunk themselves in a slimy pool of wine sediment which also fills the rags they will use as weapons. Then they cover all those they can lay their hands on with the thick, purplish mud. Their victims are the “whites” dressed in nightshirts and the young girls, whom the wild men stuff in the barrels of sediment, insuring that all bodily orifices are filled with the stuff. In a 1979 performance, a Pailhasse was seen brandishing the viscera of an ox instead of the traditional rag. Indeed, just a few years earlier, putrefying, rotten and smelly materials (organic metaphors of the grave) were used besides the wine sediment: manure, compost heaps, blood, tripe, decomposed animal corpses and the content of stables and lavatories.

Local tradition has it that this ritual goes back to the Middle Ages, and gives it a historicist explanation. It is quite apparent that the Pailhasses’ prerogatives have been respected year after year for a very long time, regardless of their incongruous character in our contemporary system of values. Courmonterral has a song for the occasion: “We are of blood and wine/The more it rains, the thicker the mud—We are happy in our filth”. Although filth is the element stressed here, the gestures, the symbols and connotations of the Courmonterral revels construct a signifying network
which is directly related to the discussion of the "quick and the dead". In the 1979 interview of some of the villagers, a member of the celebration committee commented that he felt a mutation operating in all of them. At first, he felt revulsion at the contact of the sticky substance, but, on the appointed day, he was rolling in it in a frenzy. "One has to be an animal", he added. However, such heavily ritualized behavior is not typical of animals at all, but of humans. The word "animal" in the young man's statement thus has to be a metaphor for something else, something which may well not be clear at all any more. What it does indicate, however, is a passage to "another state", both mental and physical, a sort of dissociation of the person. This animal smacks very much of the wild man, whose role as a leader of souls has lost its meaning to varying degrees in different microcultures. In using the word "mutation", underlined by the comment "We aren't the same any more! And alcohol doesn't explain everything!", the committee member was acknowledging, on a psychological plane, the somewhat awesome takeover of the real body by an alien mind. It may well be that this split is the closest that a contemporary Carnival celebration can come to allowing the resurgence of the dead in its midst.\textsuperscript{164}

*Carrier of Souls*

Anthropomorphic disguises are not alone in enacting a symbolic presence of souls in both ʿAshūrā and Carnival. Both feature a type of hoofed animal used as a means of conveyance (horse, mule, donkey or even camel) in their mascarades, and both cultural zones surround this type of animal with legends related to the movements of souls.

In Morocco, the mule is present at just about every carnival and it is the most important character among the Zemmon Berbers. In several Berber tribes (Aith Mjild, Aith Nahir and Iguerrouan), that mule is Byila, the mule of cemeteries, a ghost in mule guise. It chases solitary straggling travelers and drags them into the grave or devours them. It gives out loud screeches and fiery sparks.\textsuperscript{165} According to holy legend, the Prophet made his ascent to heaven on his mule, Bouraq, which clearly acts as a soul-bearer\textsuperscript{166}

In that context, the camel and mule are almost interchangeable. At the En Nair Carnival of the Beni Snous, a camel mask wearing a snail shell necklace and an equidae head is brought out.\textsuperscript{167} In a Moroccan legend, the camel carried a pilgrim alive to Mecca, by its covenant with the holy Sidi Mhammed Sherqi, and brought him back dead.\textsuperscript{168}

There is an ʿĀshūrā play in the Ouargla region of Tunisia which
combines the camel mask and a legend of wandering souls. The *sokhar*, a pauper condemned to ceaseless voyages across the earth, has a right to enter the blissful realm of Sidna Mohammed, after his death, which is directly related to the length of his travels. His story is acted out at Carnival with an uncooperative camel on which he tries to cross the bridge which leads to Paradise.\(^{169}\)

The horse, "‘chibalet’" is a major presence in the Carnivals of Southern France, in particular in the Pyrenees. At Arles-sur-Tech, on Candlemas, appears a skirted horse with a monstrous head at each end, possibly a Janus figure connoting the nearby New Year.\(^{170}\) At Ripoll, a wild mule-man with a mule mask and bells, prances around, kicking and pursuing the girls.\(^{171}\)

It would be too long a task to relate all the tales and legends featuring horses connected to the Otherworld. Propp’s morphology, although based on the corpus of Russian tales, gives a succinct account of the horse’s soul-bearing nature which can apply to the French corpus. Three vectors predominate in carrying the hero through the air: the steed, bird and boat.\(^{172}\)

In a XIVth century *exemplum* of the Dominican Jean Gobi, the horse acts as an Underworld vector. It tells of young men who liked to wear masks and ride hobbyhorses. One feast day, as they were dancing, a group of demons mingled with them, the earth opened up and they fell into Hell. In another version, they dance in the cemetery and church in similar array and fire consumes one of the impious youths. In analysing these texts, J.-C. Schmitt points out that this punishment is a moralized reading of an initiation myth where the youths are actually led to the Otherworld by the horse mask. In another *exemplum*, by Etienne of Bourbon, a horse carried the body of a pilgrim, dead on the road to Compostella, to the sanctuary with incredible speed.\(^{173}\)

*Harlequin “lord of the spirits of the infernal horde”* . . .

In the modern renditions of Carnival in Southeastern France, Harlequin acts as a focal point, a locus of convergence for myths of the returning souls, of the wild men and for a complex of joyous themes, drawing on sex and scatology.

Medieval legend, related by the monk Ordericus Vitalis, has it that a character named "‘Hellekin’" leads an army of souls back to earth from the Purgatory where they were consigned. This cohort of distressed spirits have become known as the "‘Wild Horde’" ("‘Wilde Jagd’", "‘Chasse Sauvage’.")\(^{174}\) Medieval authors diverge to some degree on the
nature of this Hellequin but all agree on the Otherworld connection. For some, they are devils, or evil spirits (Guillaume d'Auvergne) and even the army of the dead (Hélindand de Froidmont). Chrétien suggests that this group might consist of a type of fairy, of flighty, spark-like goblins. Another interpretation is that Hellequin leads souls which glide by with music as flashes of light in the wind.

A facetious text of the end of the XVIth century establishes that Hellequin-Harlequin had become known as a masked figure with a black, hair-covered, dog-face. In this text, the clownesque aspect of the actor Harlequin seems to be dominant: coming to the aid of the superprostitute Cardine, the facetious embodiment of all vices, Harlequin succeeds in charming the lords of the Underworld with his acrobatics. Nevertheless, his function in the text is to harrow Hell.

In a second text of the same period, Harlequin indignantly answers the allegations of the first and sets out for Hell to find and punish the puny third rate poet ("le poetrillon") who dared represent him in such a light. The guilty poet acts frightened and begs forgiveness. Harlequin sets a peculiar condition: the poet is not to eat cooked meat for a while. This suggests that the poet has been recruited to the Wild Horde, since eating raw meat is a feature of wild men's behavior. In his abject apology, the poet combines scatological self-depreciation with praise for Harlequin which unequivocally refers to his medieval identity, couched in classical terminology: "But King Harlequin commands the Acheron. He climbs to the heavens, slips by their gate/ He is lord of the spirits of the infernal horde. . . ."

Thus, by the end of the XVIth century, the Harlequin costume was clearly identified as a wild, dark, animal mask, with a cloak of rags and a large wooden bat. The cloak or tunic could be streaked with red, as evidenced by a very early XVIIIth century text where the Carnival lord of Swallow-Wind is fiercely whipped by a band of masks, so that his skin resembles Harlequin's habit. The costume which is today associated with the Harlequin stage figure, tightfitting leotards decorated with diamonds, a sleek black mask and an XVIIIth century hat is the product of a series of transformations. It can be said that Marivaux "civilizes" Harlequin with his Arlequin poli par l'amour (1720). Nevertheless, in the XVIIIth-XIXth century carnivals of Occitanie, Harlequin retained his former wildness and violent fights between the Arlequins and the dominos (the whites, or lunatics) were quite frequent.

Harlequin plays his part in many modern Carnivals, not only in France, but also in Spain. The Carnival Harlequin of St-Didier-la-Seauve (Hte-Loire) wears a striped costume, a foxtail, and carries a bat.
He acts as Carnival’s lawyer and is a thief like his client. Interestingly, the protector god of thieves in classical tradition, Hermes, is also a habitual traveler to Hell. Finally, throughout Provence, Harlequin is seen leading horses in the horse-dances.

In the small southern town of Trèves, there is a figure called the Petassou who wears snatches of variegated cloth, has a face painted like a clown’s and carries a pork bladder. He remains anonymous during the celebration and must never speak. He runs about the village, provoking people, hitting them with a large, dusty broom or dousing them with water. As he appears on St-Blasius’ day, it seems that his bladder must also be a soul-container. That function is even clearer in the play of the Candlemas bear at Encamp (Andorra): the bear carries a bladder filled with wine around his neck and falls down dead as soon as it is pierced.

That the Trèves Petassou is really Harlequin is not merely suggested by his costume but confirmed by philology. Mistral acknowledges a form “Pedassou” as a synonym of Harlequin. Also, Harlequin used to participate in a “spinners’ dance”, which was performed at Carnival before it became a tourist attraction. The dancers, carrying distaffs decorated with lanterns, would sing “soun abit de pedassa” and “es abiba en Caramentran”, in Harlequin’s honor.

All these elements concur to establish close ties between a Harlequin leader of souls and visitor from the Otherworld with the variegated Harlequin costume, and finally, with Carnival itself.

**Conclusions**

The integration of the dead into the Carnival rituals of the living on ʿAshūrā takes place in two direct forms: by honoring the dead at their graves and keeping mourning rites, and by symbolizing ancestral presence in Carnival masks, around which are crystallized a certain number of legends pertaining to the movement of souls between this world and another.

The Carnivals of Southern France—of Languedoc, Provence, Ariège, Gascony, Bearn—do not make such a direct connection. However, many funerary themes are incorporated in the “joyous license” of the period, and figures of Carnival mascarades embody psychic dimensions through a corpus of legends and beliefs which are attached to them.

In more general terms, both cultural zones accept the possibility, or have done so explicitly, well into the XXth century, of the return of dead souls among the living.

The validity of this analysis has a very fluctuating timespan. Much of
the material concerning 'Ashūrā was gathered at the beginning of the century and it is difficult to know to what extent these customs still prevail. The most recent material used here dates from 1976 and although the Carnival practices were maintained in a very recognizable form (aspersions, games, bonfires, presence of the ogre mask), adult villagers explained them all as children’s games. Thus there was a noticeable distanciation, as compared to the myths offered as explanations for various aspects of 'Ashūrā in earlier reports. The most complex model of 'Ashūrā Carnival could be safely, at one time, defined as a collective endeavour of the "quick and the dead", but it would be unwise to draw conclusions with respect to the contemporary period.

The case of the Southern French celebrations is even more complex. From the data examined, it seems that the "quick and the dead" framework applies fully to the late medieval-XVIth century Carnivals and that the XVIIth century perpetuated this tradition, in its facetious literature at least, with the addition of its own distinctive elements. In a discussion of the feasts of Provence between the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, M. Vovelle says that the "traditional, unanimist and patriarchal" feast ended after the Revolution. Although conflicts had always been a part of these feasts, they emerged in a more aggressive form by the XVIIIth century and tensions became obvious in the apparently peaceful ritual of seasonal gestures. He gives two examples which fit interestingly in one of the older Carnival symbolic schemes: the mascarade of the poor in Valensole on the day of St. Anthony the hermit or the derisive begging of bands of paupers.

In spite of these changes, we know that for instance the Harlequin figure kept many of his former connotations fairly late. However, most detailed reports of Carnival celebrations in Southern France remain XXth century—and some XIXth century—documents. We dispose of no data concerning the perception of the participants with respect to the apparatus of gestures which, presented to the folklorist or ethnologist, conjures an amazingly clear and cohesive picture of a Carnival of "the quick and the dead"... which may be mostly medieval.

In the present state of the art, one has to go outside of the Southern region to find a Carnival celebration which is absolutely contemporary and reconstructs its own symbolism with elements explicitly related to our model. In Strasbourg, between 1973 and 1977, dialectophonic, unemployed youth planned to revive their own Carnival, in opposition to the official "touristic" one, and to the cultural dominance of France or Germany. Organized by young skilled workers, it nevertheless appealed to the poor, the jobless, the unhappy. On one of the early posters, a pallid monkey's head, similar to a skull, was wearing an Alsatian head-dress,
bright red, with the inscription “made in Hong Kong”. Thus, from the outset, this was to be a regionalist and somewhat political Carnival. Later, masks included people dressed in black, with grimacing faces and blazing torches: the fight between "whites" and "blacks"—with soot and flour—was to end with a victory of "life over death". Again, death was reintroduced, but in a highly politicized version. Death, according to a leaflet, was "order, civilian and military injustice, atomic danger". Some carried pallid dolls representing victims of the nearby Fessenheim nuclear plant. One of the later versions may be the most relevant to this discussion: the plan was to have a "macabre ball" on the Saturday following the Mardi Gras gathering of victuals. It was announced that "darkness, old ideas, those who smell of death will wake up the city with torches, drums and pans."

The fact that these endeavours were not greeted kindly at all by the authorities, and that attempts at rediscovering the old, somewhat destructive, Carnivals were met with physical repression, suggests that Carnival itself may be, in spite of the recent revival spawned by regionalist movements throughout France, a thing of the past. Then, it is no longer the perception of coexistence of the living and the dead which is at stake, but the entire Carnival phenomenon.

It is also true that even in its earlier forms, Carnival met with disapproval and incomprehension from the authorities. In the XVIth century, Jeanne d'Albret wanted to ban Carnival in Bearn: she objected to the "insolent, dissolute, immodest and lascivious" nature of songs and dances—and to the wearing of masks—. In 1609 the inquisitor De Lancre expressed his indignation at the presence of an Abbe de Maugouverne, a Lord of Misrule, who was considered quite ordinary fare in the late Middle Ages and XVIth century.

At the level of gesture, of myth, of representation, even recent Carnivals such as Cournonterral, allow, at the very least, a metaphoric presence of the dead among the living. To what extent this "second degree" reading corresponds to actual beliefs of the local Carnival actors, not even today, but, let us say, during the XIXth century and the first half of the XXth century, cannot be ascertained without considerable additional work and the intervention of other disciplines. Nevertheless, on the basis of the mental and ritual complexes presented here, it can be said that through derision, verbal and physical offense and mythicization, a cross-cultural Carnival model has functioned—to different degrees in different contexts—as a partial answer to one of mankind's insoluble problems: if it cannot conquer death, it can at least conquer the dead by annexing them to living practices.

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NOTES

2. Ibid., p. 203. All translations from the French in the text are my own.
5. Ibid., p. 325.
12. See infra note 23, “Transaction entre la Mort et L’Amour . . .”, and 29 “La Conferance des Servantes . . .”. The latter takes place in the Cemetery des Innocents, an important gathering place in Paris (there is a mid-XVIth century representation of the cemetery with a funeral going on as other groups of people play and gossip, including children, in; “Musée Carnavalet, “Paris au XVIe siècle et sous le règne d’Henri IV”, Bulletin du Musée Carnavalet 32, 1979, p. 9). In a facetious calendar ca. 1500, “L’Advocat des Dames de Paris”, the ladies will visit the Innocents cemetery on the day of the Dead. In: Montaiglon, Recueil de poésies françaises des XVe et XVIe siècles, vol. XII, pp. 6–36).

On further relations between All Saints and Carnival, compare the following customs:

In the Southern half of France, including Bourbonnais, Hte-Vienne, Hérault and the Pyrénées, one must not do the wash on All Saints day because of a connection with shrouds. In the Puisaye region, a farm occupied for the first time on All Saints is purified, “brandonnée” on the following Fat Sunday with torches, fires and gun shots. A. Van Gennep, Manuel de folklore français contemporain (Paris: A. et J. Picard, 1953), 1.6, pp. 2814–17.

In parts of Languedoc, on Ash Wednesday, one must not spin, bake bread (also attested in the North, for All Saints day, supra, Van Gennep) or wet laundry to wash it. Weddings are also banned during the Carnival-Lent period. R. Nelli, “Carnaval-Carême en Languedoc”, Folklore 58, 1950, p. 1–12.
13. Van Gennep, 1.6, pp. 2818–35. St-Martins' day's festive nature is indicated, for instance, by these verse from Montaiglon's Recueil... vol. VII, "Débat de l’Hyver et de L’Esté": "On a grant joye quant je hyver suis en chemin/ Chacun si se gogoye la veille St-Martin".


15. Ibid., pp.870–71.


18. Fabre and Lacroix, Vie quotidienne, p.326.


21. Ibid., pp. 64–66.


Le Roy Ladurie, Le Carnaval de Romans, pp.226–241, on the social and political recuperation of Carnival realm animals.


Although the facetious testament is a very common form of para-literature of the XVth and XVIth centuries, actual wills are quite serious and show profound concern with the mode of burial, the proximity to the most sacred parts of the Church, the number of masses and prayers said for the protection of the soul, etc.

27. Ibid., X, pp.172–190.

By the late XVIth century and early XVIIth, the culture of the urban "llum-
pen” (the “cagots” and “Belistres”) has become incorporated into facetious and carnivalesque discourse. See ibid, vol. VIII.

28. Joyeusetés, XVII, “La Descente de Tabarin aux Enfers avec les opérations qu’il y fit de son médicament pour la bruslure, durant ce carême dernier, et l’heureuse rencontre de Fritelin à son retour”, s.e, s.l., 1621.


32. Ibid., vol. IV, pp.8–20.

33. Fabre and Lacroix, Vie quotidienne, pp.221–222.


35. Montaignon, Recueil..., vol. X, “La Description du merveilleux conflit et tres cruelle bataille faicte entre les deux plus grands Princes de la Région Bufatique, appellez Carsme et Charmaige”.

36. A. Varagnac, Civilisation traditionnelle et genre de vie (Paris: Albin Michel, 1948) says (pp.84–85) that Carnival masks signify “the visit on earth of the fertilizing army of the dead” and “the masks represent the ghosts. Whoever wears a mask, enters among the ghosts”. He adds that the pageants with charlatans selling “water of eternal youth” are a satirical version of that interpretation (p.87).

Earlier, Saintyves, “Le Mercredi des Cendres”, Revue Anthropologique 34, 1929, pp.178–196, expressed the view that “the period when specters, larvae, phantoms can return to earth was limited in ancient times to the midnight of the year, that is, the somber period which separates Christmas from Ash Wednesday and corresponds exactly to Carnival.” (p.178). He recognizes the pivotal nature of the period, between the old and new year, but gives the presence of souls and spirits an unduly sinister content.

D. Fabre comments that in Carnival, there is “an unsettling invasion of the Otherworld”: D. Fabre et C. Camberoque, La Fête en Languedoc: regards sur le Carnaval aujourd’hui (Toulouse: Privat 1977), p.79. On page 74, the authors make a serious mistake when they state “Lent is truly death which brings the feast into time (Carnâle est bien la mort qui fait entrer la fête dans le temps”).

As was mentioned previously, Lent is far from being completely somber, and does not personify death. For instance, C. Gaignebet, “Le Combat de Carnaval …”, p.317, points out that X-rays have made it possible to notice corrections made by Bruegel to his painting: he eliminated from the Lent section of the painting the motifs of a drowned man with swollen stomach, a hungry, skeleton-like character, and two sick men.


38. Ibid., pp.31–32.

39. A rough translation of these names would be: “Swollen (or Sourleed) Marion,” “Alice Big-Fart” and “Bloated (or Swollen) Jeanneton”.

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The connection between body winds and the exit of the soul is made on the basis of a pun in *Joyeusetés*, XVIII, "La Prognostication des prognostications composée par Caresme Prenant, 1612", p.12: "Aristote dit que quant de vieillard repete si souvent, est signe que le cul sonne la retraite et qu’il faut qu’il desloge puisque le mord arrive au son de ceste trompette".

In a very different register, a story told to Fabre and Lacroix near Carcassonne attests to the belief that spirits travel as winds. Their informant states that the more dead there are, more there are ghosts and the wind becomes stronger, because the wind from the sea is made of ghosts. He tells of a haunted house where the winds were locked up. The winds were the children and the father was a ghost who would open the door for one of the winds when he wanted to cause some harm. The dead, he adds, provoke the winds because they are often dissatisfied and malevolent (*Vie Quotidienne* . . ., p. 290).

44. In Christian eschatology, not only the wine of mass which is a representation of the blood of Christ, but the grapevine and its fruit, as well as the entire process of harvesting the grapes, are linked to resurrection and martyrdom. It is not possible to examine this question in detail here and I will be discussing it elsewhere (see note 90). The following texts contain allusions to the theme: "Le Martyre de St-Baccus" and "Le Dit des trois chanoines" in A. Jubinal, *Nouveau Recueil de contes, dits, fabliaux et autre pieces inedites des XII, XIVe et XVe siecles*, (Paris: Edourrd Pannier, 1839, vol.1).

Of interest also is the "Extaze propinatoire de Maistre Guillaume en l’honneur de Caresme Prenant" a Paris: Aux Trois Chappelets, 17th century) in *Joyeusetés*, XVIII, which combines the themes of wine with Carnival, life and death. Here, wine is associated with love, it doesn’t like the cold "image of death". "Wine is blood" and acts as protection against death ("Que le Ciel face donc qu’en mourant nous humions/ De ce sacré Piot [wine] affin que ne sentions/ le redoutable traict de la parque bourelle . . . Qui t’obeiras toujours il ne moura jamais" (pp.12–13/)

46. The poor, in various connections with the dead, appear in a number of carnivalesque contexts. In Romans, they actually represented the dead at the banquet of the Fraternity of the Holy Spirit. The "bums" are part of carnivalesque testament literature. Rags are also a form of Carnival costume: such are the costumes of the *goudils* of Limous: they were the ones who threw ashes at passers-by.(R. Nelli, "Carnaval-Carême en Languedoc" *Folklore* 58, p.6). In the "Sottie nouvelle à six personnages du Roy des Sotz" (E. Picot, *Recueil général des sotties*, Paris: Firmin Didot, 1902, T.III), the fools Sottinet and Coquibus mention the poor starving to death, in the midst of their satirical and "nonsense" comments. An interesting perspective on the carnivalesque poor and the souls is given in the "Conferance des servantes . . ." (note 29), where the
underpaid servant women gather in a cemetery to connive ways of extracting wealth from their masters.

47. Fabre and Lacroix, *Vie Quotidienne*, pp. 297-98.

48. Ibid., pp.324-29.


53. A. Bel, II, pp.221-223.


59. L. Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l’Afrique du Nord* (Alger: Adolphe Jourdan, 1909), pp. 540-46. En Nair is a feast of the hearth and home. Everything is renewed, the old hearth is dismantled and rebuilt with new stones and washed earth. Mourning rites are also observed. (p.551)

60. Ibid, pp. 258-59.


62. Ibid., p.62.


64. Ibid, p.282.
65. Variations according to region and historical period have to be taken into consideration. For instance, in Limousin, March 25 was set after 1301, while the previous dates were March 1 and Christmas. See:
66. C. Gaignebet, Le Carnival, p.29.
70. Fabre and Lacroix, Vie quotidienne, p.275.
73. Le Roy La durie, Montaillou, p.608.
74. Fabre and Lacroix, Vie Quotidienne, p.304.
77. Perdrizet, p. 72.
Musée Carnavalet, p.32.
78. On Ash Wednesday, in a number of areas of France, from the Ardennes to the Hérault, a curious procession takes place: dressed in white nightshirts and wearing white bonnets, the young men of the town follow each other in a single line, blowing ashes or flour at each other’s rears with enormous bellows. Sometimes, they hold candles and each one tries to light up a little paper tail attached at the back of the shirt of the man preceding him. It seems that this procession takes place in lieu of bonfires, which cover the remaining area of the country (torches may also replace bonfires).
“Tertius, fuscus, integre barbatus, Balthasar nomine, habens tunicam rubeam, albo variò, calceamentis milenicis amictus: per myrrham Filium hominis mortiturum”.

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82. A French edition of the *Golden Legend* is used here.
90. The medieval folk calendar is discussed more fully in my forthcoming *Midi à Quatorze Heures: le temps de la culture populaire*, in which I bring together elements of the lives of the saints with myths, legends and rituals centered around various calendar cycles. Thus the calendar is conceived of as a conglomerate of traditions: cycles (seasonal and ecclesiastical), Christian legends, a-Christian and popular myths, beliefs and practices. This allows, for instance, a more cohesive approach to the relations between the All Saints, Carnival and May 1st-Pentecost complexes, or to the problem of the wild man in his various guises and his kinship with the fool. All these questions would take us too far astray from the topic of this article to be presented here.
92. Fabre et Lacroix, *Vie quotidienne*, p. 207.
93. *Légende Dorée*, “Saint Blaise”.
96. Monchicourt, p. 286.
97. Amades: “Pel mes des febrer, un dia dolent, i l’altre també. De febrers, poc n’hi ha hagut de bons. Val més un Hop dintre un ramat que un febrer entriallat. Casament de Carnaval, casament que res val.”.
100. Legey, pp. 105-106.
103. Laoust, p. 281.
107. Ibid., pp. 279–81.
108. Bel, p. 207.
110. Doutté, Magie . . ., p. 532.
111. Legey, pp. 72–73.
113. Ibid, pp. 179–71 and Castells, p. 239.
114. Monchicourt, 287.
115. Castells, 243.
116. Ibid, 236.
117. Servier, p. 325.
122. Legey, pp. 126–7. The witch paints her face before beginning the operation: only on the right side, the mouth with souak, the cheek with red make-up, the eye with Khohl. On these practices see also:
M.W. Hilton-Simpson, “Some notes on the Folklore of the Algerian in Hills and Desert”, Folk-Lore, 33, June 1922, no.2, pp.170–99: p.197. Although Ashura is not mentioned, the ceremony is similar enough to warrant description: at moonlight a witch kindles a fire in the cemetery, burns the old bones she dug up and invokes God. She colors her left eyelid with antimony, lower lip with walnut dye, right and left hand with henna: the moon then describes into a large dish full of water.
123. E. Destaing, “L’Ennayer . . .”, pp.67–69 and:
J. Desparmet, pp.280–81: love philters made with “moon water”.
125. Castells, p. 234.
130. Ibid., p. 63.
131. See the fresco of La Ferté Loupière (XVth century) or Ms. Bodl. Rawl. lit. e.20, Hours, Evreux usage, fol.90, among other possible examples.
132. Montaiglon, Recueil, VI, no. 130, “La Grand et Vraye Pronostication . . .”: les Saturniens sont trop près du firmament. Ils sont “sotz, terrestres,
envieux, faux et pensifs, malheureux mercuriaux qui ont subtil engin." They include: "lunatiques, comme gens sans repos, et ceux qui ont etheroclit cerveau" ..."

133. Alford, pp. 22-23. The author states that the earliest reference to a Carnival bear is in 1444 in Catalogna and the earliest reference to the Arles-sur-Tech ceremony in 1835. However other data quoted here shows that it may go back quite a bit further.


137. C. Noirot, L'Origine des masques, mommerie, bernez et revernez es iours gras de Caresme Prenant, menez sur l'asne a rebours et charivary (Lengres: Jehan Chauveau, 1609), p. 129. Born in 1570, Noirot must have been alluding to traditions of the end of the XVIth century since his work comes out in 1609. His writings are therefore close in time to Bouchet's. It is curious to note that both ascribe the origin of masks to the application of natural substances to the face: Noirot gives a long history of the herbs and leaves used to that effect, such as burdock, which, according to him, the Romans called personata (Ppp. 7-27).

138. Huguet, p. 169:

"Nous honnorons et avons en reverence tous je ne say quelles masques et fantosmes" (Bullinger, La Source d'erreur).

"Dieu a voulu armer ses fideles de constance, qu'ils ne soient point espouvan- tez par quelque belle masque (Calvin. Sermon sur le Deut.)"

"C'est une grande masque, lousche et horrible d'yeux qu'elle mouve sans cesse" (Le Loyer. Histoire des Spectres).

These examples suggest a possible confusion between the meaning of "witch" and "spirit, ghost, specter".

See also: Montaiglon, Recueil, VII, no. 151, “Letanie des Bons Compagnons”: “d'estre de masque empoisonné . . . Libera nos Domine”.


Fabre and Lacroix, Vie Quotidienne, p. 294 (form "masc").

139. Noirot, pp. 48-49.


141. Alford, p. 25.


145. Nelli, "Carnaval . . .".
The nomadic Moors of the Sahara use a mask of soot and butter to protect the face of a woman who just gave birth: it is used to frighten demons who prey on newborns the first forty days of their life: O. du Puigaudeau, "Arts et coutumes des Maures", IV, Hespéris Tamuda, XIII, 1972, pp. 188-234: pp. 204-5.

For the Beni Yenni’s neighbors, the Beni-Wassif, Bou Afif is a saint, a kind of spirit, a bearded giant invoked for marriages and motherhood.

See also: Doutté, Magie, p. 506: in Morocco, near Mogador, Herema Guerga'a ("dried up nut") or Herema Boujloul ("the little old man"), wears ram's skins, a pumpkin with holes for the eyes, crowned with quills, and a snail shell necklace.

The etymology of Schembart may be connected to the old German word Schemen, which means "shadow, phantom, delusion" (Schatten, Larva) in: J. und W. Grimm, Deutsches Wörterbuch, achter Band, (Leipzig: S. Horrel, 1893).

In Carcassonne, at the beginning of the century, the Carnival mascarade included a man carrying a box of what looked like confetti, but actually contained excrements. The joke was to get passers-by to reach in, soiling their entire arm.

Fabre and Camberoque, pp. 80-110, for a full description of the celebration.

Laoust, pp. 279-81.


Rabaté, p. 249.

Servier, p. 361.

Alford, p. 113.

Noteworthy also is the failure of a mayor who was not a native and tried to have
the custom banned by force: the gendarmes he had called in had to retreat covered with excrements.

166. A. Bel, III, p. 436.
171. Alford, p. 25.

Aveuglé du bandeau d’ignorance execrable
Contre Arlequin le Grand j’ai bavé mon caquet
Minos m’a condamné en l’infern parquet
De faire à ce seigneur une amende honorable.
Je me confesse donc poetrillon embrenable
Gadouar des privez du Plutonin laquet
Du tripot merdelin ie suis puant naquet
Qui pour carme aï des vers pourris au trou merdable
Mais Arlequin le Grand commande a l’Acheron
Il eschelle les cieux, il fausse leur perron
Il est duc des esprits de la bande infernale
Je le maintien pour tel, aiant la torche au poin
Et pour montrer comment de son honneur i'ay soin
Pour lui c'est estron chaud sous vostre nez i'avale.

179. Pandolfi quoted in Fabre et Camberoque, pp.102–103.
180. Joyeusetés, XII, pp. 1–9. “La Surprise et fustigation d’Angoulevent,
poème héroïque adressé au comte de permission par l’Archipoète des Pois Pilez”,
Paris, 1603.
181. Driesen, p.6.
182. Fabre et Camberoque, p. 166.
186. Louis, p. 12.
188. M. Vovelle, “Unanimité et tensions dans la fête provençale, XVIIe-
105–106.
189. E. Cerf, “Le ‘Carnaval des voyous’ à Strasbourg”, Ethnologie fran-
çaise, 12, no. 2, 1982, pp. 177–84.
190. Alford, p.106.
191. Folk tales are a potential area of investigation which could not be treated
here because it would require an extensive discussion. A fairly considerable
number of French folk tales have been gathered, in the XIXth and XXth cen-
turies, with notes concerning the teller. Although some of these contexts may
seem artificial, they do, at times, give us insights about how the teller perceived
the supernatural elements in his tales. Thus the lengthy discussions between
believers and non-believers in the return of the un-propitiated dead, in F.-M.
citanie, an interesting example would be “Le Trésor”—featuring a return of the
unquiet dead requesting masses, situated around World War I—told by Vincent
Mulet, who was born in 1902 and worked in the Narbonnais vineyards. See: C. et
However, the link between such surviving beliefs,—which might be relatively
easy to track down—and Carnival remains just as difficult for the Modern period.