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Literary Intertextualities in 14th-Century French Song

1. General Reflections on Intertextuality as a Concept

The term «intertextuality» is now used very broadly, and it seems to me that the initial Kristevan and Barthesian[1] use of the term in conjunction with the «death of the author» and «free play of signifiers» is no longer a determining (or limiting) factor. In terms of recent literary critical history, I would date (very approximately) the expansion of the term from the mid to late 1970s, as a result of the progressive intersection of several different trends: literary semiotics[2]; reception criticism[3]; mimesis theory and practice[4]; and cultural studies with its emphasis on context and materiality.[5] Particularly important have been new notions of how literary models (i.e., model texts) are transformed and rewritten.

At the heart of the contemporary notion of intertextuality as I see it is the process of *reading against a model*, in a way which makes the reader's awareness both of the model text as such and of its transformations by the target text essential to the interpretation of the latter (to the «production of meaning»). In terms of literary critical history, the key distinction would thus be between the «source study» in which the presence of text 1 in text 2 is simply described; and intertextual analysis in which the *function* of this presence is the primary concern.[6] Needless to say, this concern with function, with dynamic interrelation, has also expanded our notions of how text 1 can be present in text 2.

Thus in the mid-1990s, it is now a question of a gamut of (at times overlapping) types of intertextuality. I will give two extreme examples by way of illustration. At one end of the spectrum would be the intertextuality most highly marked by a visible authorial or textual intentionality, coupled with an extreme specificity with regard to the model text or texts. When Dante rewrites Virgil in *Inf.*20.88-93, the reader is meant (even instructed) to have clearly in mind the Virgilian subtext from *Aen.*10.198-200 in order for the Dantean transformation of that subtext to function. At the same time, Dante's appropriation of the authoritative pagan text into his Christian poetic universe involves a deliberate and violent act of misreading: Virgilio the character in Dante's poem explicitly corrects the text of the *Aeneid* (*Inf.*20.97-99) in order to free Virgil the author from the taint of magic and divination, thus making the *Aeneid* a legitimately prophetic text from Dante's point of view.[7]

At the other end of the spectrum would be those kinds of intertextuality in which the model is not a textually specific one. In these cases the model (or the subtext) could be a *topos* (with one or more «standard» versions), a rhetorical figure or procedure, a character, a genre (ranging from a *forme fixe* to something as multi-faceted as the *dit*), etc. In these cases, intentionality is much less clearly visible. Variations on a given *topos* or figure could be effected, let's say, in different poems which would all be in some sense intertextually derived from the same model (or master trope) without there necessarily being clear links among them. The functional status of a particular prestigious author becomes interestingly open (even vague) in this connection. The question becomes: to what degree is a particular textual locus at issue vs. to what degree is a canonical author or text simply evoked as such, or to lend prestige to the reworking of shared material? Two brief examples. First, in 14th-century French lyric love poetry, the personification character Bel Accueil is derived from the *Roman de la Rose*, but often does not specifically rewrite the Bel Accueil of Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun by taking as textual point of departure specific loci in the *Rose*.[8] Rather, what is evoked is something more general, on the order

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1 See Roland Barthes, *Le Plaisir du texte*, Paris 1973; *S/Z*, Paris 1970; *Essais critiques*, Paris 1964; and Julia Kristeva, *Séméiotikè. Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, Paris 1969 (pp. 191-95; 255-58); *La Révolution du langage poétique*, Paris 1974 (pp. 60-74).

2 See Laurent Jenny, «La Stratégie de la forme», in: *Poétique* 27 (1976), pp. 257-81; and Michael Riffaterre, *Semiotics of Poetry*, Bloomington 1978.

3 See Hans Robert Jauß, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, Minneapolis 1982; Wolfgang Iser, *Der Akt des Lesens — Theorie ästhetischer Wirkung*, München 1976; *Rezeptionsästhetik. Theorie und Praxis*, hrsg. von Rainer Warning, München 1975; Karlheinz Stierle, «Réception et fiction», *Poétique* 39 (1979), pp. 299-320.

4 See René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory, Baltimore 1977; Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy. Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry*, New Haven 1982; John D. Lyons and Stephen G. Nichols, eds., *Mimesis. From Mirror to Method: Augustine to Descartes*, Hanover NH 1982.

5 See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca 1986.

6 Cf. the telling remarks in Wulf Arlt's «Einführung», pp. 287-290.

7 For a detailed analysis of this key instance of Dantean intertextuality, see Robert Hollander, «The Tragedy of Divination in *Inferno* XX», in: *Studies in Dante*, Ravenna 1980, pp. 131-218. For the complex version of this ‹extreme› of intertextuality found in Machaut's motets, see Kevin Brownlee, «Machaut's Motet 15 and the *Roman de la Rose*. The Literary Context of *Amours qui a le pouoir/Faus Semblant m'a deceü/Vidi Dominum*», in: *Early Music History* 10 (1991), 1-14; and «Textual Polyphony in Machaut's Motets 4 and 8», in: *L'hôtellerie de pensée. Mélanges offerts à Daniel Poirion*, ed. Eric Hicks and Michel Zink, Paris 1995, pp. 97-104.

8 For the character of Bel Accueil in the *Rose*, see Michel Zink, «Bel-Accueil le travesti», in: *Littérature* 47 (1982), pp. 31-40.

of the «discursive world of the *Rose*», which at once contextualizes the lyric poem and invests it with the prestige of the master text, without necessarily recalling or rereading the *Rose*'s verbally particular treatment of Bel Accueil. The very opposite is the case in the character Bellacoglienza in the late 13th-cent. Italian rewriting of the *Rose* known as *Il Fiore*.[9] Also interesting in this connection is the contrast between the «general» allusions to the *Roman de la Rose* in Thomas de Saluces's *Chevalier errant* and François Villon's intertextually specific (and purposefully distorting) recall of the *Rose* in his *Testament*, vv. 113-20.

A second example would be the construct of Esperance vs. Desir in late 14th- and early 15th-century French courtly poetry (lyric and narrative). The dominant author associated with this construct is, of course, Machaut, and the dominant text is his *Remède de Fortune*.[10] The basic construct here involves a radical detachment of Hope as an affective state (which thus becomes solipsistically self-sufficient) from the literal fulfillment of erotic Desire (which becomes if not impossible then at least insignificant). When this construct is employed by other poets, however, a great degree of latitude is possible with regard to the specific intertextual presence of either the *Remède* or any other particular text by Machaut.

2. Intertextualities in the *Phyton* Ballades of Machaut and Franciscus

Machaut's Ballade 38

1	Phyton, le mervilleus serpent
2	Que Phebus de sa flesche occit,
3	Avoit la longueur d'un erpent,
4	Si com Ovides le descrit.
5	Mais onques homs serpent ne vit
6	Si fel, si crueus ne si fier
7	Com le serpent qui m'escondit,
8	Quant à ma dame merci quier.
9	Il ha sept chiés, et vraiement,
10	Chascuns à son tour contredit
11	La grace, où mon vray desir tent,
12	Dont mes cuers an doleur languit:
13	Ce sont Refus, Desdaing, Despit,
14	Honte, Paour, Durté, Dangier,
15	Qui me blessent en l'esperit,
16	Quant à ma dame merci quier.
17	Si ne puis durer longuement,
18	Car ma tres douce dame rit
19	Et prent deduit en mon tourment,
20	Et ès meschiés, où mes cuers vit.
21	Ce me destruit, ce me murdrit,
22	Ce me fait plaindre et larmoier,
23	Ce me partue et desconfit,
24	Quant à ma dame merci quier.[11]

Machaut's own citation of «Ovides» (4) sends us to the *Ovide moralisé*, and a set of clear verbal reminiscences in the model text:

Phiton fu serpens merveilleus,
Fiers et felons et orgueilleus,
Et si grans qu'il tenoit de place
Plus que deus arpens n'ont d'espace.
Phebus l'ocist a ses saietes…«[12]

The intertextual function of this Ovidian model is multi-faceted. First, the procedure of citing a Latin *auctor* is itself significant (even though Machaut is using a vernacularization of that *auctor*): it marks Machaut as a learned clerkly writer — and this is the discursive point of departure for the ballade. Second, the shift from two «arpens» to one «erpent» does not strike me as semantically significant in and of itself with regard to Machaut's rereading of Ovid, but rather as an indication of the kinds of liberties he will take with his model text. Third, the insertion

9   Cf. *Lettura del «Fiore». Letture Classensi XXII*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Baranski, Patrick Boyde, Lino Pertile, Ravenna 1993; esp. Baranski, «Lettura dei sonetti I-XXX», pp. 13-35; and Pertile, «Lettura dei sonetti CLXXXI-CCX», pp. 131-154.

10 See Douglas Kelly, *Medieval Imagination. Rhetoric and the Poetry of Courtly Love*, Madison 1978, pp. 121-54; Kevin Brownlee, *Poetic Identity in Guillaume de Machaut*, Madison 1984, pp. 37-63; Jacqueline Cerquiglini, *«Un Engin si soutil». Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle*, Paris 1985.

11 Balade notée 43, ed. by Vladimir Chichmaref, Paris 1909.

12 *Ovide moralisé*, 1.2651-55 (books 1-3 in: *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Academie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam. Afdeeling Letterkunde*, n.s. 15), ed. by Cornelis de Boer, Amsterdam 1915.

of the adj. «crueus» (6) in Machaut's descriptive catalogue involves the first opening out of the mythographic register of the *Ovide moralisé* into the courtly erotic register of the ballade. Finally, the *Ovide moralisé*'s interpretive gloss of the Phiton narrative as the triumph of Christ (Phebus) over Satan (Phiton) is not explicitly evoked at the beginning of Machaut's poem, but serves, I suggest, as an informing element for the set of transformations that Machaut will effect on his initial subtext. The Christological gloss will re-emerge intertextually in the final stanza, for which it provides an implicit supplementary context.

When we consider Machaut's ballade on its own terms, the following schema emerges. The first stanza involves a key discursive shift: it moves from the evocation of the learned Ovidian *exemplum* (1-6) in literal terms (supported by bookish authority and involving *fabula*) to the courtly allegorical representation of the Lady's (metaphorized) refusal with which the stanza closes (7-8): «le mervilleus serpent» (1) becomes «le serpent qui m'escondit» (7), by means of the comparison initiated in v. 5 with the general «serpent» figure.[13] At the same time, we move from an impersonal clerkly voice (1-6) to a personal lyric one (7-8), where the first-person pronoun appears for the first time. This shift is fully effected only in the refrain, which situates the speaking subject for the first time within the courtly discursive world.[14]

The second stanza elaborates the allegorical figure of the (now seven-headed) serpent representing the Lady's refusal (see «m'escondit», 7) in terms of a set of personifications deriving from the *Rose*. The first-person voice of the poet presents himself as a courtly male object acted upon (12, 15).

In the third stanza the 1st-person courtly subject/object emerges fully and dominates: the stanza stages progressively his suffering from the mocking (i.e., active) rejection of his Lady. By vv. 21-23 this 1st-person subject presents himself as dying as a result of his Lady's metaphoric blows. As a courtly speech act what we have is a conventional attempt to move (and to shame) the Lady by a rhetorically exaggerated presentation of the Lover's suffering and the Lady's cruelty. The mimesis of the Lady thus finally involves a split into her personified rejection (actual) and her personified *merci* (potential). At the same time, this final stanza re-evokes the initial Ovidian subtext (now including the *Ovide moralisé*'s gloss) in courtly terms: the male Lover is implicitly cast as «toute humaine estracion» (*O.m.*, 1.2650), threatened and persecuted by the rejecting Lady, who plays the role of Phyton or the Devil. Thus the implicit courtly plea is for the Lady's (personified) *merci* to play the role of Apollo/Christ. The full Ovidian (i.e., *Ovide moralisé*) subtext presents the Lover's success as analogous to Christian salvation, and his failure as analogous to diabolical damnation. The rhetorical strategy of the ballade involves implicitly placing the courtly Lady's erotic decision in these (polemically) theological terms. The courtly sense of the key term *merci* from the refrain is thus given a supplementary semantic force.

Magister Franciscus's *Phiton* Ballade

1   Phiton, Phiton, beste tres venimeuse,
2   Corps terrestien, combien regneras tu?
3   Nés et creés de gent tres aïneuse,
4   Prouchainement convient que soyes batu
5   De par Phebus, le tres bel,
6   Qui siet en haut, au gens corps tres ysnel,
7   Qui durement convient que te confonde,
8   Tu qui contens gaster la flour du monde.

9   Bien te descript Ovide si crueuse,
10 Car en venin est toute ta vertu,
11 N'onques ne creut autre si doumageuse;
12 Et se nature n'eust bien porveü
13 Ton esperit plein de fiel,
14 Contre le ciel eüst fait tel apel
15 Que de toy produire fust quarte et monde,
16 Tu qui [contens gaster la flour du monde].

17 Et se lonc temps fortune tenebreuse
18 Te sueffre en haut, nient mains, je conclu
19 Que ta duror ne sera pas joyeuse.
20 Ainsy Phiton ne fu mie abatu
21 D'un tout seul dart sus sa pel.
22 Li tien pour vray que tuit ty cuer revel
23 Sera enclos en misere parfonde,
24 Tu qui contens gaster la flour du monde.[15]

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13 See Wulf Arlt's astute analysis of «Machauts Pygmalion-Ballade» in *Das Paradox musikalischer Interpretation, Bericht über ein Symposium zum 80. Geburtstag von Kurt von Fischer*, ed. by Dorothea Baumann, Roman Brotbeck, and Joseph Willimann (forthcoming).

14 The semantic independence of the refrain thus contrasts with its syntactic dependence. For syntactic openess (or flexibility) as a feature of the 14th-century refrain, see Wulf Arlt's comments in the present volume; and «Aspekte der Chronologie und des Stilwandels im französischen Lied des 14. Jahrhunderts» in: *Aktuelle Fragen der musikbezogenen Mittelalterforschung. Texte zu einem Basler Kolloquium des Jahres 1975*, Winterthur 1982, pp. 209-27.

15 *CMM* 53/1, ed. by Willi Apel.

Franciscus's *Phiton* ballade strikes me as a re-writing of Machaut's Ballade 38 which simultaneously combines the *Ovide moralisé* subtext utilized by Machaut and the Ovidian Latin story from *Metamorphoses* 1.438-444. At the same time, Franciscus's ballade transposes Machaut's use of the Ovidian Phyton story in the courtly erotic register into a new courtly political context, in which the patron displaces the *dame* as the object of desire and the source of power within the rhetorical world of the ballade. In this context I make the standard assumptions that Franciscus's ballade was produced in the entourage of Gaston Fébus (who would thus be the patron figure) and that it refers to some kind of enemy of the Count of Foix.[16]

The intertextual links with Machaut's ballade are initially suggested by the first line of Franciscus's 1st stanza (which recalls Machaut's v.1) and the first line of Franciscus's 2nd stanza (which recalls Machaut's v.4).[17] A further verbal reminiscence is Franciscus's «si crueuse» (9) and Machaut's «si crueus» (6), all the more important in that this word is not present in Machaut's Ovidian model. There is also the mention of Phebus by name (Machaut, v.2; Franciscus v.5), of which more later. In connection with these verbal reminincences it should also be mentioned (see Apel, 55) that there is a musical citation in Franciscus's first three measures of the first three measures of Machaut's ballade, each passage beginning with the name Phiton.[18] On the one hand, this musical citation emphasizes «Phiton» as key word (as generative kernel); on the other hand, it reinforces the link between the two ballades and thus the suggestion that Franciscus's text should be read against Machaut's.

The discursive configuration in Franciscus's ballade involves a series of striking shifts vis-à-vis Machaut's: the *je* of the Franciscus-poet addresses directly the *tu* associated with Phiton, who is cast as a threat not to the poet himself (as in the Machaut ballade) but rather to the 3rd-person «flour du monde». This could signify either Gaston (politically or militarily) or Gaston's territory (or a part of it). There is perhaps a pun on *gaster*/Gaston. In addition, what might be called Phiton's «general» dangerousness is stressed. The speaking subject in Franciscus's ballade is thus outside the ballade's miniature plot line, upon which he comments and passes judgement in such a way as to support his patron in a struggle from which Franciscus is (presumably for reasons of class) himself excluded as direct participant.

The general schema of the ballade is as follows. In the first stanza the poet (speaking in the present) predicts the future defeat of Phiton (1) by Phebus (5), using an impersonal construction (4). In the second stanza, he selectively describes several of Phiton's defining features (9-13), concluding with a past contrary-to-fact condition (12-15). The final stanza begins by restating (17-19) the prediction made in stanza one, which is now presented as a logical conclusion drawn by the observing poet figure (contemplating «fortune» [17], a significant new element), who appears explicitly for the first time in the ballade to speak in his own voice: «*je* conclu / que...» (18-19; emphasis mine). There is then a striking shift (20-21) as Phiton (mentioned by name for the final time) is situated in the past, and thus detached from the present Phiton figure with whom he has up until now been treated as synonymous, and who now is presented as a model with whom the ballade's *tu* is compared. A frame is formed as the stanza concludes with a second restatement of the prediction of future punishment (22-23) in the first-person: «Li tien pour vray que ...» (22). This detached, «externally» judgemental *je* (as grammatical subject) contrasts significantly with Machaut's engaged, «internally» self-descriptive *me* (as grammatical object, in vv. 18-23).

I note two additional interesting aspects of Franciscus's ballade relevant to the present discussion of intertextuality.

First, Franciscus seems to be supplementing the *Ovide moralisé* (as used by Machaut) with Ovid's Latin *Metamorphoses* for his rewriting of Phiton. The dominant feature of the monster in Franciscus is his venom, a program initiated with the rhyme word of v. 1 («venimeuse»), then elaborated in vv. 10 («venin») and 13 («fiel»). This feature is absent in Machaut's Phiton (as it is in the *Ovide moralisé*), but appears in the Ovidian Latin («effuso...veneno», *Met.*1.444). Is there the suggestion that this forgrounding of poison involves a «Fransciscan» political overwriting of a Machauldian erotic register?[19]

Second, an important shift occurs from Machaut to Franciscus with regard to the focus on and presentation of Phebus. While Machaut's Phebus is simply mentionned by name (2), Franciscus's Phebus is elaborately and positively qualified: «le tres bel, / qui siet en haut, au gens corps tres ysnel» (5-6). Clearly at issue is the

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16 See, e.g., the editor's «Remarks» on this ballade in *French Secular Compositions of the Fourteenth Century. Vol. 1: Ascribed Compositions*, ed. by Willi Apel, American Institute of Musicology, 1972, pp. 54-55. Pierre Tucoo-Chala speculates: «peut-être le comte d'Armagnac doit-il être comparé à la bête immonde?» (in: *Gaston Fébus. Un grand prince d'Occident au XIVe siècle*, Pau 1976, p. 153).

17 Cf. the verbal correspondences between the two ballades noted by Nigel Wilkens in: *One Hundred Ballades, Rondeaux and Virelais from the Late Middle Ages*, Cambridge 1969, p. 127.

18 For the musical significance of this citation, see Christian Berger, «Die melodische Floskel im Liedsatz des 14. Jahrhunderts: Magister Franciscus' Ballade ‹Phiton›», in *Trasmissione e recezione delle forme di cultura musicale. Atti del XIV Congresso della Società Internazionale di Musicologia*, ed by Lorenzo Bianconi etc., Bologna 1987 III, Torino 1990, pp. 673-79.

19 It is intriguing to speculate on a possible reference to the attempted political assassination of Gaston Fébus by *poison*, engineered by Charles le Mauvais, King of Navarre, through the Count's son, Gaston, as recounted in detail in Froissart's *Chroniques* 3.21 (See *Jehan Froissart. Chroniques. Livre III* ed by Léon Mirot, in vol. 12 of *Chroniques de J. Froissart*, ed. by Siméon Luce u.a., Société de l'Histoire de France. 15 vols., 1869-75 [in progress].) The enemy referred to in the refrain of Franciscus's ballade («Tu qui contens gaster la flour du monde») would thus be Charles le Mauvais.

«official» (self-)portrait of Gaston Fébus, as conveyed, e.g., by Jehan Froissart in his *Voyage en Béarn*.[20] Also relevant is the *Ovide moralisé*'s depiction of Phebus (in the gloss) as «dieus de sapience, / solaus et lumiere du monde» (1.2672-3), which would reinforce the suggestion that the «flour du monde» is Gaston Fébus. It is worth noting, in this context, that *monde* as rhyme word (*O. m.* 1.2673) recurs in the refrain of Franciscus's ballade. This would further associate Phoebus Apollo and the Count of Foix.

At the same time, the image of Apollo as hunter (stressed by both *Met.*1.441-44 — cf. esp. *deus arcitenens*, 1.441 — and by *O.m.*1.2655-60) takes on an extra dimension of meaning because of the fundamental importance of the component «hunter» to Gaston Fébus's ⟨official⟩ identity. The Count of Foix is, of course, the author of the *Livre de Chasse*, and he is portrayed by Froissart as an idealized amalgam of the hunter, the lover and the warrior.[21] The key depiction of Phebus as hunter in Franciscus's ballade (from the point of view of political patronage) is thus initially (4-6) implicit, depending on the Machauldian («de sa flesche occit», v.2) and the Ovidian (*O.m.*1.2655-60; *Met.*1.441-44) subtexts. The explicit treatment in Franciscus's ballade of Apollo the hunter as Phiton's slayer is both deferred and indirect: «Ainsy Phiton ne fu mie abatu / d'un tout seul dart sus sa pel» (20-1). The intertextual presence of Machaut and Ovid is thus essential to the functioning of Franciscus's ballade as a political encomium to Gaston Fébus with regard to his public identity as exemplary hunter (here doubling his public identity as exemplary soldier).[22]

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20 See *Chroniques* 3.1-3.27 (and esp. 3.19).

21 This tripartite portrait of Gaston Fébus in Froissart's *Voyage en Béarn* (also found in the opening of Gaston's own *Livre de Chasse*) involves a culturally significant 14th-century expansion of the classic medieval «armes et amours» formula to designate aristocratic class identity. See Jacqueline Cerquiglinil, *La Couleur de la mélancolie. La fréquentation des livres au 14e siècle. 1300-1415*, Paris 1993, pp. 89-95, «Du duel à la triade: Armes et Amours et [...] compilations».

22 See also *Five Ballades for the House of Foix*, ed. by Peter Lefferts and Sylvia Huot, Newton Abbot 1989, esp. p. ii.