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Literary Intertextualities in the *Esperance* Series

Machaut's «*Esperance qui m'asseüre*», the Anonymous Rondeau «*Esperance qui en mon cuer s'embat*», Senleches' «*En attendant esperance conforte*»

1. Machaut's Ballade 13: «*Esperance qui m'asseüre*»

- 1 Esperance qui m'asseüre,
- 2 Joie sans per, vie à mon vueil,
- 3 Dous penser, sade nourriture,
- 4 Tres bon eür, plaisant accueil
- 5 Et maint autre grant bien recueil,
- 6 Quant Amours m'a tant enrichi
- 7 Que j'aim dame, s'aten merci.

- 8 Et se ceste attente m'est dure
- 9 En desirant, pas ne m'en dueil,
- 10 Car le gré de ma dame pure
- 11 Et d'Amours tous jours faire vueil.
- 12 Et s'a guerredon sans pareil,
- 13 Ce m'est vis, puis qu'il est ainsi
- 14 Que j'aim dame, s'aten merci.

- 15 Car souvenirs en moy figure
- 16 Sa fine biauté sans orgueil,
- 17 Sa bonté, sa noble figure,
- 18 Son gent maintieng, son bel accueil,
- 19 Et comment si dous riant oeuil
- 20 Par leur attrait m'ont mené, si
- 21 Que j'aim dame, s'aten mercy.

(ed. Chichmaref; balade notée 16)

This poem articulates the classic Machauldian topos: for the loving self, Hope (*Esperance*) transforms loving into a self-sufficient state which does not depend on actual erotic fulfillment; thus awaiting the Lady's favors becomes an end in itself. In the Machauldian corpus, this topos is elaborated narratively in the «*Remède de Fortune*», most explicitly in the final episode and the epilogue¹, in addition to being associated with Machaut's «authorial *je*» in the «*Prologue*».² Machaut's rhetorical point of departure here is, of course, the figure of *Esperance* in Guillaume de Lorris's *Roman de la Rose*.³ The ballade (like the «*Remède*») stages the poet-lover's self as an *exemplum*.

The first stanza opens with the poet-lover as a discursive object acted upon by an allegorized *Esperance* (1), the first in a series (2-5) of courtly «benefits» provided by a personified (Ovidian) *Dieu d'Amours* (6; derived, of course, from the *Rose*). In the refrain the voice of the poet becomes explicit as grammatical acting subject: here loving and waiting are presented as synonymous, or, rather, as causally linked. The state of *aimer* necessarily leads to that of *attendre*. At the same time, the parallel structure of the refrain (two 1st-person verb/3rd-person object clauses) suggests a contrast, a tension, between the two direct objects of these verbs: the *dame* is not synonymous with her *merci*.

Wulf Arlt's notion of the refrain as «fremder Text» is particularly useful here. On the one hand, the refrain functions as the logical end-point for the stanza as a whole, both syntactically and semantically. On the other

1 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 subtil*». *Guillaume de Machaut et l'écriture au XIVe siècle*, Paris 1985.

2 See Wulf Arlt's valuable discussion of the parallels between Machaut's ballade 13 and his «*Prologue*», in: «*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. 240-43.

3 See the suggestive remarks by Lorenz Welker (in the present volume p. 319) concerning the links between *Esperance* and *vie/vivre* (as well as *soffrir*) in Guillaume de Lorris's text, and their possible relevance to a reading of Machaut's ballade 13 (as well as of the Galiot/Philopoctus ballade *En attendant souffrir*). The *Remède* may also be seen as Machaut's «answer» (in terms of courtly doctrine) to the relentless drive towards physical possession and narrative closure embodied by Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose*.

hand, the refrain is of necessity separated from the rest of the stanza, having a kind of «quasi-independent» status within (and, indeed, outside of) the textual limits of this ballade.⁴ Thus, the syntactically «open» status of this refrain (beginning with «Que») allows it to provide one form of closure for the first stanza, while highlighting the fact that it can have different relationships with the two succeeding stanzas, a «flexibility» which Arlt considers essential to the «refrain function».

In the 2nd stanza, the «s'aten merci» of the refrain is elaborated («ceste attente», 8), as the 1st-person speaking subject asserts his wish to be the perfect object of the actions of «ma dame» (10) and Amours (11; cf. the «Remède's» epilogue). In the third stanza an allegorized souvenirs (15) acts upon the 1st-person poet-lover to recreate (in a kind of eternally iterative present) the initial moment of *innamoramento*. Particularly important is the phrase «son bel accueil» (18), picking up the «plaisant accueil» (4) and rewriting the Bel Accueil of the *Rose*, but with the «general» intertextuality discussed in section 1 of my «Literary Intertextualities in 14th-Century French Song», above.

2. The Anonymous Rondeau: «Esperance qui en mon cuer s'embat»

Esperance qui en mon cuer s'embat,
Sentir me fait d'amer la douce vie,
Mais faulx dangier le refuse et debat,
Esperance [qui en mon cuer s'embat.]

Cheoir ne puet se franc cuer ne le bat
Qui de doulcour tiengne la sengnourie.
Esperance [qui en mon cuer s'embat
Sentir me fait d'amer la douce vie.]

(Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, Ms. French 15, fol. 66)⁵

The rondeau also involves the generalized intertextuality of context found in Machaut's Ballade 13. The key opening word of the first-line/refrain situates the poem in the *Rose*/Machaut discursive world of the late 14th-century courtly lyric, but without specific intertextual links (at least not that I can see) to a particular Machaut text. It is rather, I think, a question of a set of variations on a common topos. The tensions between the allegorized figures *esperance* and *dangier*, as well as the hierarchy of *doulcour/franc cuer* are courtly commonplaces, as is the courtly erotic appropriation of feudal power relations (e.g., *sengnourie*). The rhyme scheme «s'embat», «debat», «bat» involves a clever set of semantic interpenetrations.

3. Jacob Senleches' Ballade: «En attendant esperance conforte»

- 1 En attendant esperance conforte
 - 2 L'omme qui vuolt avoir perfeccion;
 - 3 En attendant se deduc et deporte,
 - 4 En attendant li proumet guerredon,
 - 5 En attendant passe temps et sayson,
 - 6 En attendant met en lui sa fiance;
 - 7 De toulz ces més est servis a fayson
 - 8 Cilz qui ne sceit vivre sans esperance.
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- 9 Esperance tient overte le porte,
 - 10 Dont chaschuns puet avoir guarison.
 - 11 Esperance est de si noble sorte
 - 12 Que cilz ne doit pendre confusion
 - 13 Qui l'a o soy; et sanz li ne puet on
 - 14 Avoir loing temps de playsir habundance,
 - 15 Dont pendre assés puet consolacion
 - 16 Cilz qui ne sceit vivre sans esperance.

4 See Wulf Arlt's discussion of the status of the refrain (in Jehannot de Lescurel) in «Aspekte der Chronologie», pp. 209-27. For the refrain as «fremder Text» (including the syntactically open status of the refrain in Machaut's Ballade 13), see Arlt's discussion of the *Esperance* series in the present volume, pp. 300-302.

5 For a discussion of textual variantes as well as proposed emendations, see Wulf Arlt, «Machaut, Senleches und der anonyme Liedsatz «Esperance qui en mon cuer s'embat», above pp. 300-310.

- 17 Pour ce conoy et voy qu'elle m'ennorte
 18 A li tenir; et j'ay cause et rayson,
 19 Quar ja schay bien que s'elle estoit morte,
 20 Pou y veroit le mien entencion.
 21 Dont je vos pris en ma conclusion
 22 Que belle acueil priés pour m'alagance;
 23 En attendant suy [sanz] presoncion
 24 Cilz qui ne sceit vivre sans esperance.⁶

(ed. Apel, *CMM* 53/1)

I see the Senleches ballade as also participating in a «general» *Esperance* tradition rather than responding specifically either to the anonymous rondeau or to the Machaut ballade. It is suggestive, however, to compare the two ballades with regard to the status of «esperance» as courtly ideology, following the lead of Wulf Arit (above). The key contrast involves the fact that the Senleches text contains no reference to the *dame* who figures so prominently in the Machaut ballade, including its refrain. Indeed, Machaut's text may be said to be configured around the *dame*: all the positive courtly qualities experienced by the 1st-person lover are explicitly presented as emanating from her (esp. in stanzas 1 and 3). The act of *attendre* in Senleches appears to be, as it were, detached from the *dame*. It thus takes on a more abstract, more self-sufficient, even self-centered quality.

I find convincing and valuable Susan Rankin's reading of the Senleches (in the present volume): the poem is structured around a movement from 3rd to 1st person. In the first two stanzas, we have a (didactic) discourse positing a general rule which is valid for an abstract 3rd-person figure: «l'omme» (2), «Cilz» (8), «chaschuns» (10), «cilz» (12), «soy» (14), «Cilz» (16). In the final stanza, this general rule is applied to the particular 1st-person speaking subject of this poem, who here appears grammatically for the first time in the ballade, and who is grammatically explicit in every line of the stanza (except the refrain). I find very insightful Rankin's suggestion that the delayed appearance of this 1st-person voice illustrates precisely the necessity of «waiting patiently», i.e., the repeated «en attendant» that opens vv. 1, 3-6, as a general rule is wittily exemplified by the poet-lover who «attend» until the final stanza before manifesting himself. Also significant is the language of logical progression, esp. in stanza 3, which begins as a logical conclusion («Pour ce»), the application of a general rule to a particular case.⁷ This is picked up in «j'ay cause et rayson» (18), and «Dont je vos pris en ma conclusion» (21). We have a logical and legalistic stating of the case, before the final two lines explicitly equate the 1st-person figure with the formerly detached 3rd-person figure, a brilliant concluding «synthesis» signaled by the opening phrase of v. 23, which recalls the earlier generalized usage of the «en attendant motif» (1, 3-6) at the same time as it is transformed by now being applied to the poet's own voice: «En attendant suy...Cils qui...» (23-24).

Also important is the «belle acueil» of v. 22 in the ballade's miniature legal structure (cf. the different status of «bel accueil» in Machaut's Ballade 13, v. 18, and of course in the *Rose*). Again, it seems to me a case of the more general (or perhaps «weak») intertextuality of shared construct, discourse, generalized master text. I do not see a verbally specific (and functional) intertextual reference to the Machaut ballade. Nor can I see (at least not yet) a «hard» intertextual link between the Senleches ballade and the anonymous rondeau «Esperance qui en mon cuer», in spite of the musical citation of the generative «esperance» word.

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6 For the attribution to Senleches rather than to Johannes Galiot, see the editor's «Remarks» in Apel *CMM* 53/1, p. 169.

7 Cf. vv. 18-19 of Franciscus' «Phiton» ballade for another example of this convention.