

Introduction

This project falls into two major areas of study. One is that of textual criticism; the other is the study of the Roman de la Rose and its medieval reception. Both topics have provided the arena for considerable scholarly debate.

Textual criticism encompasses a variety of approaches that tend to be grouped as either "Lachmannian" or "Bédierist": that is, as to whether the editor seeks primarily to reconstruct, or at least to approach, the original authorial text from the various surviving manuscripts or to present, with as little intervention as possible, the text of the manuscript judged as best. In some cases editors have preferred to present a series of versions in parallel or sequential format, rather than to settle on just one version. Given the very different sorts of manuscript traditions that obtain for different texts and the varying critical notions of textuality and authorship, it is unlikely that any one editorial method will ever emerge as dominant to the exclusion of the others; indeed it can be very useful for the same text to be edited according to different methods.

While textual criticism has never ceased to flourish, recent years have witnessed a significant renewal of interest in both the theory and the practice of text editing, including a re-examination of the debate between the Bédierists and the Lachmannians.² This renewed debate is fueled in part by the modern interest in the textual object and in the primacy of the reader. The situation of the medieval text oddly concretizes certain tenets of twentieth-century critical theory. The medieval scribe is the very embodiment of the modern notion of the reader who, in reading, constructs the text anew. The medieval author, frequently anonymous, at best a shadowy

¹ For a succinct discussion of different editorial methods, with examples of each, see Speer, "Textual Criticism Redivivus"; Foulet and Speer, On Editing Old French Texts, pp. 1—39.

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² This interest in textual criticism is reflected, for example, in L'Esprit Créateur 27, 1 (1987), edited by Uitti and titled The Poetics of Textual Criticism: The Old French Example; and in the appearance of studies devoted to a critical examination of editorial practices, such as the essays assembled by Kleinhenz, ed., in Medieval Manuscripts and Textual Criticism; B. Cerquiglini's Eloge de la variante; Speer's "Textual Criticism Redivivus" and "Wrestling with Change"; Foulet and Speer's On Editing Old French Texts; and Hult's "Reading it Right."



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figure whose words have been obscured by generations of copyists, may well seem little more than a hypothesis or a linguistic function. Indeed, such a claim has in effect been made with regard to the Rose: Roger Dragonetti has suggested that Guillaume de Lorris is only a fiction devised by Jean de Meun.3 Yet the work of those scholars who have combined textual criticism and codicology with literary criticism shows that while the notion of authorship in a manuscript culture is significantly different from that which exists in a print culture, there is no need to reject the very concept. David Hult, for example, while stressing that we can know nothing of Guillaume de Lorris' life, has shown the integrity of Guillaume's Rose and presented the codicological evidence, admittedly slender, that argues for the independent existence of that poem.⁴ Daniel Poirion has shown that certain textual variants in Guillaume's Rose point to a reworking of the text – whose prior existence is thus implicitly established - by readers familiar with Jean's continuation, or even by Jean himself.⁵ The combined disciplines of textual literary criticism allow us to see that the two parts of the Rose do emanate from different authorial origins. And in the course of their history, the poems of Guillaume and Jean passed through the hands of numerous scribes and poets who produced the proliferating versions we know today.

As a result of this tireless activity on the part of medieval readers and writers, the *Rose*, like most medieval works, exists in a variety of texts; the object of study must be defined according to one's critical priorities. Do we wish to study a historical process of creation, continuation, adaptation; or to reconstruct two distinct moments of original poetic creation, to be preserved as such? Are we interested in a text as a reflection of its author or of the circumstances of its composition; or are we more concerned with its subsequent reception by medieval readers and its impact on later authors, who may never have known the text in its original version? There is, of course, no reason to view these possibilities as mutually exclusive. The field of medieval literary studies must include a full range of perspectives and the various approaches that each entails.

It has become commonplace to point out that in the medieval vernacular tradition texts were not fixed, and that their creation and recreation depended on the combined work of poets, scribes, and performers, whose activities often overlap. It has been some twenty years since Elspeth Kennedy called attention to "the scribe as editor," in a phrase that has since

³ Dragonetti, Mirage des sources, pp. 200-25.

⁴ Hult, Self-fulfilling Prophecies, especially pp. 10-55. 5 Poirion, "From Rhyme to Reason."



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become part of the critical vocabulary of medieval literary studies. David Hult has shown the fine line dividing scribes, remanieurs, and authors. Jean Rychner proposed that a scribe who reworked a fabliau might be considered as the author of the new version. Many studies have examined the important role played by scribes in transforming a text or group of texts into a book, a role that authors assumed only gradually and never more than partially. The study of Old French literature can never be divorced from the question of transmission. Whether we wish to focus on the work of the original author or that of subsequent scribal editors and remanieurs, it is necessary to examine the history of the text and to distinguish, as far as possible, the stages by which the various surviving versions were created. The remanieur's innovations cannot be evaluated if we have no knowledge of the earlier version on which he or she worked; a medieval author's use of prior texts cannot be gauged if we do not know which versions of those texts were in circulation during that author's lifetime.

Literary critics have devised various approaches to the phenomenon of textual variance, recognizing that they, no less than editors, must confront the variant, the interpolation, the remaniement; must learn – or at least attempt – to distinguish between scribal intervention and scribal error. Daniel Poirion has termed the writing of the Middle Ages "manuscriture," in an effort to differentiate it from the very different written traditions of print culture. Poirion points out the necessity of studying the variants, both large and small, that characterize the different versions of a medieval text; these variants have their own history and their own meaning. More recently, Bernard Cerquiglini has stated somewhat flamboyantly that "l'écriture médiévale . . . est variance." This formulation, of course, is really a restatement of Zumthor's by now standard notion of mouvance.

- ⁶ Kennedy, "Scribe as Editor." See also Huot, "Scribe as Editor: Rubrication as Critical Apparatus in Two Roman de la Rose Manuscripts"; Shonk, "Scribe as Editor: The Primary Scribe of the Auchinleck Manuscript"; Rosenstein, "Mouvance and the Editor as Scribe."
- ⁷ Hult, Self-fulfilling Prophecies, pp. 25-93.
- 8 Rychner states: "Le copiste responsable de ces variantes a fait le texte sien, se l'est approprié dans une certaine mesure, et il n'est sans doute pas absolument exacte d'appeler 'copiste' l'auteur de ce qui ressemble si peu à une copie," in Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux, vol. 1, p. 45.
- ⁹ For an examination of the role of the scribe in a particular manuscript tradition, including a consideration of the affinities between the work of scribes and that of poets, see Walters, "Rôle du scribe." On the role of the late medieval poet in manuscript production, see Williams, "An Author's Role in Fourteenth-Century Book Production"; and Wimsatt and Kibler, "Machaut's Text and the Question of His Personal Supervision." I have traced the roles of scribes and poets respectively, and the thematization of writing and compilation, in a series of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century texts, in *From Song to Book.*¹⁰ Poirion, "Écriture et ré-écriture au moyen âge."
- 11 B. Cerquiglini, Eloge de la variante, p. 111.
- On mouvance, see Zumthor, Essai de poétique médiévale, pp. 65-75; Speer, "Wrestling with Change." Zumthor was not the first to acknowledge this aspect of medieval literature, but his term has become standard.



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While mouvance may be most pronounced and its pace most accelerated in the more fundamentally oral genres of lyric and chanson de geste, the phenomenon certainly exists in written traditions as well.

Admitting non-authorial versions to the canon of medieval studies entails a liberal definition of the object of literary study. A text should not be excluded just because its author chose to embed it in another text originally written by someone else (the interpolation); or just because it is the work of more than one author in succession (the abridgment or remaniement). The question is admittedly complicated with the Rose. Not only do we have to distinguish between the Rose as written by Guillaume, and Guillaume's Rose in some possibly altered form as read or revised by Jean and used as the basis for his poem; but also we must account for the various revisions and corruptions to which the conjoined Rose was subject, including the life of certain interpolations that originated in one version of the poem and were later inserted into other versions as well. What would be seen as a corrupt text with regard to Guillaume must be seen as an original authorial text with regard to Jean; what would be seen as corrupt with regard to both Guillaume and Jean is an authorial original with regard to a later remanieur or interpolator; and so on. If we are willing to tolerate two authors, then why not three or more? As we will see, the notion of the Rose as a poem with two (and only two) authors was already well established in the fourteenth century: the names of Jean de Meun and Guillaume de Lorris were known to all, while those of interpolators, abridgers, and remanieurs were almost never recorded. But anonymity is hardly grounds of exclusion of a text from literary study.

In examining the different versions of the Rose, I have thus accepted the idea that each version has its own integrity as a literary text, and that the figures who produced these texts must be included among the poets of the Rose. In distinguishing between deliberate and inadvertent alterations, I have given the scribe the benefit of the doubt wherever possible. If the line is metrically and grammatically correct, if the rhyme is acceptable, and if it makes common sense, I accept it as authentic to that version of the poem. In relatively few cases, where the text is clearly corrupt, I acknowledge scribal error. Admittedly grammatical and metrical correctness are not necessarily an index of intentionality. But for the purposes of this study, in order that each version be examined as far as possible on its own terms, I have chosen to err on the side of acceptance rather than rejection of the reading found in the manuscript.

The Rose exists in three modern editions.¹³ Those of Poirion and Lecoy,

¹³ The editions are those of Langlois, Lecoy, and Poirion.



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"best manuscript" editions, have the advantage of allowing the reader access to a particular version in its integrity; and due to the difference in base manuscripts, these two editions allow for some interesting comparisons. For more complete information about the textual history of the poem one must turn to the earlier edition by Langlois, which aims to reconstruct the original text of the poem's two primary authors while providing extensive critical apparatus. But even Langlois does not list all variants. His concern with establishing the original text, quite understandable at a time when there was no critical edition, led Langlois to discount manuscripts with a strongly altered text.

Langlois reported more fully on his study of the manuscript tradition in Les Manuscrits du "Roman de la Rose": Description et classement. 14 He shows that the two portions of the poem must be treated independently, since Guillaume's romance circulated prior to Jean's work and had already developed variant readings. Not only were different versions of Jean's continuation attached haphazardly to different versions of Guillaume's poem during the early years of the manuscript tradition; but also, since scribes often used more than one manuscript in copying the Rose, the two parts of the poem would not necessarily come from the same source even in late manuscripts. As a result Langlois assigned a double siglum to each manuscript. I have found it more convenient, however, to refer to manuscripts solely by the sigla for Jean de Meun. Most of my discussion is devoted to Jean's Rose, which was subject to far more revision and rewriting than that of Guillaume. In the manuscript list, all manuscripts cited are listed under the siglum pertaining to Jean, after which I give the complete double siglum devised by Langlois. An asterisk preceding a siglum indicates that the manuscript was not classified by Langlois, and that I have assigned it to one of his families.

With regard to Guillaume's poem, Rose manuscripts must be divided into two groups; with regard to Jean de Meun, the manuscripts again fall into two groups, but these do not correspond to the groups created by Guillaume's text.¹⁵ In both parts of the poem, each group contains several families. In some cases the family resemblance among manuscripts is quite

¹⁴ For descriptions of fourteenth-century manuscripts not included in Langlois's catalog, see Astor Collection of Illuminated Manuscripts, no. 51; Dean, "Un Manuscrit"; Fawtier, "Deux manuscrits"; Ham, "Cheltenham Manuscripts"; Hawkins, "Manuscripts of the 'Roman de la Rose'"; Pickford, "'Roman de la Rose' and a Treatise"; Walters, "Parisian Manuscript."

¹⁵ For Guillaume, the groups are distinguished according to whether or not they include Fear as a fourth guardian of the Rose in vv. 2835–67 of Langlois's edition (ed. Lecoy, vv. 2819–51); see Manuscrits, pp. 241–43. For Jean, the groups are distinguished by the presence or absence of a couplet occurring between Langlois's vv. 8178–79 (ed. Lecoy, vv. 8148–49); see Manuscrits, pp. 351–52. Group I versions of Guillaume are not necessarily paired with Group I versions of Jean; likewise for Group II. For Guillaume's poem there is also a small third group of manuscripts with a mixed text.



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clear cut. The *B* family, which I will discuss in Chapter 4, is an early remaniement of Jean's portion of the poem that survives in a large number of manuscripts, many of which present a fairly uniform version of Guillaume's portion as well. Langlois identified twelve *B* manuscripts and one fragment, making this the largest family in Jean's Group I; and he provided a detailed analysis of the subgroups, representing different recensions, that exist within it. I have no argument with his conclusions concerning the relations among the *B* manuscripts. Langlois, however, did not attempt to analyze the *B* remaniement or its various manifestations as an interpretation of the *Rose*, or to determine the social and intellectual contexts that might have informed the redaction of the various manuscript versions. It is to these questions that my own study is addressed.

It is among the manuscripts of Group II for Jean's Rose that the greatest variety is found. The largest family by far is L, which accounts for thirty-one of the 116 manuscripts classified by Langlois and can be thought of as the vulgate text of Jean's Rose. Closely related to L are the K, M, and N manuscripts - with six, six, and fourteen representatives respectively among those classified by Langlois - which share interpolations and variants in common with L and with one another in different combinations. The other families in the second group have elements in common with one or more of those four families, sometimes with material from B as well, and sometimes also with deletions, interpolations, or other variants of their own. Some of Langlois's families thus derive from a recognizable common ancestor, a particular revision of the Rose; while others are mixed, clearly deriving ultimately from a combination of more than one source. The high rate of "contamination" often makes classification extremely difficult, resulting in "families" of only one or two manuscripts that are in fact composites of as many as three or four other families.

When a text had been strongly altered, Langlois generally assigned it a siglum based on the version that lay behind the alterations. MS Tou, the remaniement by Gui de Mori – the only remanieur whose name is known – was assigned its own siglum, probably because the changes are so extensive, as we will see in Chapter 3, and because the text has a named author. But although MS He is in large part Gui's work, Langlois did not place it in a family with MS Tou; in his eyes it was an altered version of the H text rather than an altered version of Gui's remaniement. In the same manner he assigned the heavily abridged MS Lm to the L family, focusing not on the unique elements of the text but on those that it shares with the other L manuscripts; and he perceived MS κv , which contains hundreds of lines of interpolations, as an altered version of the κ text rather than as a new version requiring its own siglum. He reports only partially on the



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textual abridgments of MSS He and Lm, and says virtually nothing at all about the interpolations of MS κv or the extensive changes wrought in MS Tou. Such omissions can be explained in part by the sheer quantity of data; as it is, Langlois's account of manuscript families and variant readings fills nearly three hundred pages, not counting the individual manuscript descriptions. But Langlois's selectivity is also determined by his bias towards the original text. Interpolations and deletions are later alterations that can be ignored if it is possible to identify the text used by the abridger or interpolator. Again, one certainly cannot deny the utility of knowing what version of the text inspired a given set of revisions, or of grasping, as far as possible, the network of inter-manuscript relations. But to discount the importance and the interest of scribal revisions and remaniements is to overlook a crucial aspect of medieval literary tradition, one from which we have much to learn.

Such criticisms are not meant to obscure in any way the immense debt we owe to Langlois for providing us with the first critical edition and manuscript study of this important text. If he was unable completely to control the bewildering forest of variants produced by a poem of nearly 22,000 lines, with a manuscript tradition stretching from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries and resulting in the survival of well over 200 manuscript and printed copies, manifesting significant differences ranging from single words to thousands of lines - let this not be viewed as a fault of his, but rather as an indication of the enormity of the task. In 1925, the Swedish scholar Werner Söderhjelm published a description of a fifteenthcentury Rose manuscript in the Royal Library of Stockholm; having noted certain affinities of the manuscript with Langlois's L and N families. Söderhjelm explained his decision not to attempt a definitive classification of the manuscript: "Je renoncerai donc à pénétrer plus avant dans les broussailles de la filiation des manuscrits du Roman de la Rose, presque inaccessibles au commun des mortels malgré les voies frayées par les admirables efforts d'Ernest Langlois."16 Anyone who has worked with the body of Rose manuscripts is sure to second Söderhjelm's opinion. The definitive, comprehensive study of the Rose manuscript tradition will be possible only through the combined work of many scholars; and it will certainly rest on the foundation established by Langlois.

The project that I have undertaken here thus builds on and continues Langlois's work. The questions posed by scholars of medieval literature have inevitably changed somewhat in the course of the twentieth century; and the very fact of having a critical edition invites us to go on to further

¹⁶ Söderhjelm, "Un manuscrit du Roman de la Rose," p. 86.



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studies of the manuscripts, aimed at different goals. I propose here to return to the manuscripts and to study individual versions of the Rose. My study is not exhaustive; it examines a few specific rewritings of the Rose in some depth. Rather than seeking the "origins and sources" of the Rose, as did Langlois, I am concerned with its afterlife, with its history as a text.

Three fundamental purposes inform this study. One, to have a better basis on which to study the reception of the Rose by medieval poets. Just what did a medieval reader find when he or she opened a copy of the Rose? We cannot assume that Machaut, or Chaucer, or Christine de Pizan, necessarily read the text that we find in the modern editions. Passages that we consider interpolations or corruptions may have been accepted by them as canonical, or at least known as interesting variations. I will suggest, in fact, that Machaut knew certain passages that are not now considered authentic, and that Deguilleville knew the Rose in one or another recension of the B text.

Second, to gauge the medieval reading of the poem written by Guillaume and Jean. How was it understood? What aspects of it were considered important, or shocking, or difficult, or superfluous? What kind of text did people think it was, or want it to be? In exploring these questions manuscripts are an invaluable resource, including - or even especially those that preserve an altered version of the text. Kate Harris has shown the usefulness of what she terms "bad texts" for studying medieval approaches to the works of Gower.¹⁷ Her insight is equally applicable to the Rose and, indeed, to any medieval text that survives in multiple manuscripts. Robert Ivy's study of the manuscripts of Manessier's continuation of Perceval is aimed at establishing the text, distinguishing interpolations or other modifications from the original.¹⁸ Yet along the way he offers tantalizing insights into the character of the various redactions: remanieurs combined the text with material from other sources, scribes edited the different continuations in order to create a coherent whole, and so on. Studying the ways that different scribes or poets expanded or reshaped the texts and the aesthetic or ideological principles that guided them would shed light both on medieval poetics, and on the Perceval and its meaning for medieval

This last point leads to the most general purpose underlying my study, which is to explore the ways that manuscript studies can enrich the field of literary criticism. Non-authorial versions of a text are interesting in their own right as medieval poems. Some are perhaps more interesting than

¹⁷ Harris, "John Gower's Confessio Amantis: The Virtues of Bad Texts."

¹⁸ Ivy, Manuscript Relations of Manessier's Continuation of the Old French "Perceval".



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others, but all deserve study. Medievalists are quite accustomed to texts that are anonymous, and to those that exist in only one or two manuscripts. We also accept texts that are adaptations of previously existing texts, whether Latin or vernacular, written or oral: for example, the Roman d'Eneas, Marie de France's Fables and Lais, and the various prose and verse versions of the Tristan material. In her study of a reworked version of the Eneas, Annie Triaud argues that remaniement was a way of expressing one's admiration for a great poem: to rework a text was to renew its vitality.19 The activities of scribal editors and remanieurs are an essential part of medieval literature. In a fascinating study of the two redactions of the Roman des sept sages, Mary Speer has shown that each version has its own stylistic integrity, and each can be related to a different social milieu.²⁰ Jean Rychner's important study of the fabliaux similarly shows that individual versions can be characterized by both style and ethos; careful analysis of multiple versions contributes to our knowledge not only of the fabliau as a constantly evolving literary form, but also of the literary tastes of different medieval social classes.21

The work of Speer, Rychner, Ivy, and others shows that the Rose is far from unique in having inspired successive revisions. Nonetheless, the Rose was a particularly important text, both inside and outside of France. Its importance lies not only in its pervasive influence on subsequent medieval literature, but also in its encyclopedic scope. To study the reception of the Rose is not only to trace the transformation of literary motifs, but also to encounter the range of medieval ideas about love and marriage, gender and sexuality, about sin and free will, about language and power, about human society, nature, and the cosmos. And because the Rose manuscript tradition is so vast, it yields a rich variety of material: interpolations and abridgments, reworkings of the text on both a large and a small scale, extensive programs of rubrication and illumination, a significant body of marginal annotations.

Any study of Rose reception necessarily participates in the tradition of scholarly debate over the meaning of the Rose and its meaning for medieval readers, two distinct matters that have not always been adequately separated. Naturally, showing that a given medieval reader considered

¹⁹ Triaud, "Une version tardive de l'Eneas."

²⁰ Speer, "Editing the Formulaic Romance Style." In "Wrestling with Change," Speer briefly discusses the three redactions of Branch 1b of the Roman de Renart (pp. 323-25), arguing that the A redaction is "qualitatively better . . . [and] more authentic, closer to the author's intention," and hence the version to be used in any study of the text "for itself" (p. 325). Nonetheless she acknowledges that the other redactions can be useful "to find out how these scribal revisers treated their models and went about compiling Renart's adventures for a new public" (ibid.).

²¹ Rychner, Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux, vol. 1.



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Reason a figure of divine Sapience does not prove that Jean de Meun considered her to be that, any more than finding another medieval reader who treated her as simply the enemy of erotic passion proves that to have been Jean's idea. Medieval reactions to the Rose are far too varied to be used as a guide to the authors' intentions. The study of medieval readings of the Rose does necessitate a close examination of the text, however, and the evaluation of a medieval reader's response entails decisions about what aspects of the poem triggered such a response. The study of Rose reception additionally teaches us about the medieval interpretation of vernacular literature, and about the central role played by the Rose in the development of French literature as a learned and versatile art form.

Pierre-Yves Badel has already laid the groundwork for the study of Rose reception in fourteenth-century France.²² His "Roman de la Rose" au XIVe siècle is essential reading not only for Rose scholars but also, given the importance of the Rose both in and outside of France, for anyone working in the field of fourteenth-century literature. As Badel shows, the Rose was read in all literate circles of society. Identifiable owners of Rose manuscripts in the fourteenth century include members of the royalty, the aristocracy, the clergy, and the bourgeoisie. Copies of the poem appeared in the libraries of religious institutions and of the Sorbonne. Given this extremely diverse readership and the encyclopedic quality of the poem, it is no surprise that the influence of the Rose can be discerned in the most varied literary works.

However, although Badel's study is a model of thoroughness with regard to the presence of the Rose in literary texts and other documents of the fourteenth and very early fifteenth centuries, he does not attempt to evaluate the Rose manuscript tradition. This omission is certainly understandable given the wealth of material. Badel's work is concerned with borrowings from the Rose and with citations or evaluations of the great poem in the works of other writers, not with the textual tradition of the Rose itself. His interest in establishing the social and intellectual context in which the Rose was read led him to survey manuscript owners as well as the nature of texts paired with the Rose in anthology codices, and he does cite rubrics and colophons from time to time. But he does not offer analyses of individual manuscripts. As a result his study contains no account of

Badel, Le "Roman de la Rose" au XIVe siècle. Badel's study goes through the querelle and its immediate aftermath, and includes a list of citations of the Rose in texts of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. The influence of the Rose also extended outside of France to the Low Countries, England, Italy, and Byzantium; see Van der Poel, De Vlaamse 'Rose'; Sutherland, ed., Romaunt of the Rose; Richards, Dante and the "Roman de la Rose"; Vanossi, Dante e il "Roman de la Rose"; Kahane and Kahane, "Hidden Narcissus."