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978-0-521-03931-4 - The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission

Sylvia Huot

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The *Romance of the Rose* was one of the most important works of medieval vernacular literature, exerting a profound impact on subsequent French literature for the next two hundred years and influencing medieval English, Italian, and Dutch literature as well. This study addresses the reception of the *Rose* by French-speaking readers from the late thirteenth to the early fifteenth century. The main emphasis is on a study of the manuscript tradition as a guide to the variety of ways in which the poem was read, interpreted, and appreciated during this period. Such evidence as readers' annotations and glosses, textual variants and rewritings, and manuscript illumination is used to construct a picture of the milieu in which the *Rose* was read, the interests and concerns of its readers, and the different ways in which they reacted to and reshaped the poem. The discussions of the manuscript tradition are complemented by a detailed examination of the use of the *Rose* by two important French writers of the fourteenth century: the monastic author Guillaume de Deguilleville and the courtly poet Guillaume de Machaut.

The importance of the *Rose* has long been recognized, as have the interpretive difficulties it presents. This is the first study, however, to examine systematically the evidence of the manuscript tradition, offering analyses of individual versions of the poem. It brings to light much previously unpublished material. It also demonstrates the value of manuscript analysis for the study both of medieval literature and of the ways in which the medieval audience read and interpreted texts.

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Arr. [My siglum.] Arras, Bibl. Mun. 845
Ba. Ba / *Ba.* Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr. 1571
Bá. Bá / *Bá.* Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr. 1576
Be. Be / *Be.* Turin, University Library L. III. 22
Bé. Ra / *Bé.* Arras, Bibl. Mun. 897
Bi. Gi / *Bi.* Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr. 25524
Bi. – / *Bi.* Fragment; identified by Langlois as belonging to Hermann Suchier (*Manuscripts*, pp. 166–67)
Bí. Gu / *Bí.* Paris, Bibl. Nat. fr. 24389
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**Bü.* [My siglum] Private collection. See *Astor Collection of Illuminated Manuscripts*, no. 51.
By. φα / *By.* Chantilly, Musée Condé 911
**Bco.* [My siglum] Copenhagen, Royal Library NGS 63, 2° [formerly Fr. LVI]
Ca. Ca / *Ca.* Dijon, Bibl. Mun. 526
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**Npr.* [My siglum] Princeton University, Firestone Library, Garrett 126
Ter. Ter / *Ter.* Lost; most recent known location was Maihingen, Öttingen-Wallerstein Library
Tou. Tou / *Tou.* Tournai, Bibl. Mun. 101
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