French Studies

LATE MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

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1. Narrative Genres

A welcome modern edition of an important text has appeared, *Le Roman de la Poire par Thibaut*, ed. Christiane Marchello-Nizia (SATF, 98), 1984, cvi + 187 pp. In a long, comprehensive, and painstaking introduction, the editor gives an analysis of the text and describes its nature, before pointing out clearly the many borrowings from the first part of the *Roman de la Rose* and arguing cogently for a date ‘vers le milieu du XIIIe siècle’. P. Carmona Fernández, *La transformacion de la narrativa a finales de la Edad Media*, Murcia, Limites, 1984, 218 pp., provides a broad historical and theoretical survey and then goes on to examine changing attitudes to love in texts from our period; these include Jehan de Saintré and the *Quinze Joyes de mariage*. The *Quinze Joyes* has come in for critical attention elsewhere. B. A. Pitts, *RoN*, 26, 1985: 69-73, considers the alternation of scenes of feast and famine in the text. An attractive introduction has appeared, *Les Quinze joies de mariage*, transl. Monique Santucci, Stock, 172 pp. The work is elegantly translated into modern French, a number of illustrations from incunabula are inserted, and, as well as a brief introduction, S. provides a long postface in which all the major problems provoked by the text are discussed. Paula Clifford, *La Chastelaine de Vergi and Jean Renart: Le Lai de l'ombre* (CGFT, 53), 92 pp., has produced a very workmanlike study of *La Chastelaine de Vergi*, in which, in the main chapters, she considers the structure of the poem, its use of traditional themes and motifs and its originality. She makes the telling point that, for *La Chastelaine*, originality may well be seen to reside in a distinctive combination of features found elsewhere. *Amadas et Ydoine, roman du XIIIe siècle*, transl. Jean-Claude Aubailly (Traductions des CFMA, 36), Champion, 113 pp., is a valuable addition to a useful series. In a brief but provocative introduction, A. describes the nature of the text, quite rightly emphasizing the psychological realism and the close attention to everyday description found in the romance, before suggesting the work’s possible message, ‘que les deux sexes se complètent et s’aident en une action heureuse et naturelle’. Amongst work on the epic, W. W. Kibler has produced a most welcome ‘Bibliography of fourteenth and fifteenth century French epics’, *Olifant*, 11: 23-50. R. F. Cook, ‘Unity and esthetics of the late chansons de geste’, *ib.*, 103-14, seeks a sympathetic response to the 14th-c. texts, suggesting that certain aspects of composition may be seen as deriving from
understandable audience expectations. J.-L. G. Picherit, ‘L’évolution de quelques thèmes épiques: la dépossession, l’exhérédation, et la reconquête du fief’, ib., 115–28, indicates the presence of his three themes in Gormont et Isembarl and then examines the variations on these themes that are found in Lion de Bourges and in Tristan de Nanteuil. There have been a number of studies on Arthurian material. J. H. M. Taylor, ‘Faith and austerity: the ecclesiology of the Roman de Perceforest’, Pickford Vol., pp. 47–65, has produced a rich, closely argued article, in which she suggests that the author of the Perceforest, through his presentation of the cult of the Souverain Dieu, was reflecting current misgivings about the institution of the Church. A. Gier, TLL, 22, 1984: 275–87, has studied the Arthurian section of Pierre Le Baud’s Chroniques des Bretons; he cleverly brings out the way in which the author employs Geoffrey of Monmouth’s Historia regum Britanniae and the manner whereby a Breton colouring has been added to the text. K. Halász, ‘The intermingling of romance models in a 13th-century prose romance: Roman de Laurin’, FMLS, 22: 273–83, concentrates on the Arthurian part of the work and emphasizes its significant differences from the rest of the romance. The Arthurian Encyclopedia (v. sup., p. 64), a beautifully produced volume, inevitably has a considerable number of references to works written in our period. R. H. Bloch, ‘Silence and holes: the Roman de Silence and the art of the trouvère’, YFS, 70: 81–99, is a complicated article in which B. argues for the importance of the romance because of the issues to which it addresses itself, notably the writer’s relation to writing. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski, ‘The poetics of continuation in the Old French Paon cycle’, RPh, 39: 437–47, concentrates on the 14th-c. Vœux du Paon, the Restor du Paon and the Parfait du Paon, as she shows how medieval authors reflected upon a series of texts and consciously created a coherent body of material. M. Zimmermann, ‘Spätmittelalterliches Liebesverhalten als Rechtsfall: die Arrêts d’Amour (um 1460)’, Akten . . . (Tübingen), pp. 272–87, offers a general survey of Martial d’Auvergne’s text and stresses the importance of the work in the development of late medieval French narrative prose.

2. Poetry

Peter F. Dembowski edits two of Froissart’s dits, Le Paradis d’Amour, L’Orlage amoureux (TLF, 339), 150 pp., with a full introduction, competently covering matters such as editions, dating, and language, as well as textual notes and a glossary; it is a particular pleasure to have the decidedly ingenious L’O. a. available in a modern edition. C. Nouvet, ‘Pour une économie de la dé-limitation: la Prison amoureuse de Jean Froissart’, Neophilologus, 70: 341–56, is a complex article in