

2010

Book Reviews

The Poet's Notebook: The Personal Manuscript of Charles d'Orléans (Paris, BnF MS fr. 25458) by Mary-Jo Arn. Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2008. Pp. xx + 202. \$116.

For many, Charles d'Orléans is synonymous with late-medieval poetry, and he has long held a preeminent position in French studies. This volume, however, contains no poetry whatsoever, except in black-and-white reproductions of individual leaves of BnF MS fr. 25458. There is no literary analysis, nor is this a historical treatise contextualizing the life of the poet and the statesman. What the volume does contain, however, is a profound study of Charles d'Orléans' personal manuscript that not only revises and updates earlier examinations of this manuscript, but also places this manuscript within the context of contemporary literary production, thereby attempting to resolve some of the issues that arise from reading the royal poet, either from an aesthetic position or from that of literary history.

Mary-Jo Arn is explicit about the purpose of this study, noting specifically that her conclusions are based primarily on codicological observation (x), which is never a neat and tidy process, and that her intent is to provide the reader with a detailed study of a single manuscript. Indeed, the volume is organized as an extended critical apparatus, beginning with a detailed description of the manuscript and devoting a chapter to each of the four "stints" of copying before a final chapter about the implications of this work on future research. As such, Arn's editorial aesthetic parallels that of many medieval manuscripts, so that readers may browse the volume according to personal or scholarly interests.

The author suggests, and rightly so, that this work might lay the groundwork for a new edition of Charles d'Orléans' poetic corpus (ix) by bringing to light new information and revising the codicological studies of other prominent *Auréliens* such as Pierre Champion and Daniel Poirion. Arn herself is no stranger to Charles d'Orléans and his poetic production; she has published extensively on the subject, and is well aware of the poet's work both on the continent and in England, as is evidenced by her scrutiny of the manuscripts in the article collection entitled *Charles d'Orléans in England (1415-40)* (Rochester: Boydell & Brewer, 2000). Much of this volume is devoted to uncovering layers of scribal work by applying modern codico-

logical practices to Pierre Champion's 1911 edition, thereby contributing new scholarship and providing a necessary and long overdue revision of the early twentieth-century understanding of both medieval manuscript production and its implications for literary study. And while Arn notes that the project of reordering the poems of Charles d'Orléans' personal manuscript according to chronological order requires literary skill, a knowledge of literary history, and a sense of style, language, and tone to arrive at an approximate evolution of the poetic corpus, her argument is based on informed codicological observation of the physical form of the manuscript rather than speculation; she credits scholars whose work is revised or confirmed while simultaneously advancing new knowledge for the next generation of *Auréliens*.

The first chapter is devoted to a modern description of the manuscript as we know it, and contains all the standard information one might expect to find. There is information about the pricking and ruling of the manuscript, the numbering and binding of the manuscript (in medieval and modern times), an analysis of the different scribes and hands used throughout the manuscript (including Charles d'Orléans' autograph hand), an overview of initial capitals, marginalia, and general limning of the manuscript during its various stages of production, and a summary of the transmission history of the manuscript.

The next four chapters detail the four stints of copying that the manuscript underwent while in the possession of Charles d'Orléans, and each stint of copying is assigned an approximate date so as to avoid the pitfalls of absolute certainty. In chapter 2, which treats the earliest stint of the manuscript (ca. 1440–45), Arn notes the poet's practice of keeping compositions together before handing them over to copyists, and posits that the initial manuscript was conceived as a sort of album, with blank leaves distributed throughout the manuscript (56–57). As elsewhere in this study, Arn builds upon previous scholarship, attributing the relatively precise dating of this stint to the work of Patricia Stirneman (67). The analysis of this early codex suggests that Charles d'Orléans did not conceive of the manuscript as a collection of different lyric forms, but that he grouped his poetry into two large categories: short and long lyrics, subdivided by form (*ballade, complainte, chanson, carole, rondel*) (63–64).

The stints of copying in chapters 3 and 4 are both dated from the mid-1440s to the mid-1450s, by which time the poet has returned to France. During the second stint of copying, additional quires were added to the manuscript, and the lyrics are written in several different hands, including a number of short lyrics entered in the poet's own hand. At this point,

full-page copying ceased, but the duke's numbering of the ballads helps to reconstitute their intended order. The ordering of the *chansons* and *rondels* is more complex, as the poet apparently intended to place lyrics at the bottoms of the new leaves (77), but later added poems to the tops of some of these pages. Arn also analyzes the musical notation, and comments on the work of various scribes and limners. She refutes Poirion's claim that the duke did not travel with the book, arguing that the book was eminently portable (96), suggesting that the lack of consistency in the decoration was likely due to the royal patron's apathy (99). Since this is clearly not a typical royal manuscript, the style of decoration adds weight to the claim that this is a poet's working manuscript.

The third stint of copying, which dates to the same period, appears to have been the richest in terms of poetic production, and is detailed in chapter 4, which is arguably the most tentative chapter of this study. Arn identifies the third stint as the most difficult to reorganize, and notes that the identifying markers of this stint are unlimned red and blue initials that serve to differentiate this section of the manuscript from the previous two stints. Content and form provide additional clues for revising earlier arrangements of *ballades*, *complaintes*, and *rondels* (101). Adding to the complexity of Arn's task of reconstituting the original and intended form of the manuscript is the fact that this stint dates from the period of the *concours de Blois*, so that courtly production of poetry is intermingled with original lyrics by Charles d'Orléans. Specifically, these quires include a group of lyrics linked by nearly identical first lines and composed by different poets (including Villon, whose importance to late-medieval poetry is on a par with Charles d'Orléan); a discussion of the celebrated lyric series of *rondels* beginning with the line *En la foret de longue attente* is featured here.

Chapter 5 treats the fourth stint of copying, which ranges from the mid-1450s to ca. 1565. A discussion of the so-called English lyrics of Charles d'Orléans are the highlight of this chapter, but Arn limits her discussion to the date of composition, rather than the identity of the poet (138). In addition to shedding new light on an old literary controversy, Arn documents the physical aspects of the fourth stint, which features considerably plainer decorations than the previous stints, and she offers commentary on both the finished and unfinished lyrics of this final stint of copying.

While the four chapters detailing each stint of copying are virtually inaccessible to the casual student of Charles d'Orléans, the sixth and final chapter represents an effort to synthesize the import of this study, and is therefore of interest to neophytes and connoisseurs alike. This chapter reiterates the revision of Charles d'Orléans' personal manuscript based on new

codicological evidence and the existing body of manuscripts (including that of Marie de Clèves), neatly summing up arguments made in the previous chapters and the reasons for which some questions might remain unanswered, particularly with respect to the placement of the *complaintes*. Arn also discusses the effects of this reordering for Charles d'Orléans studies, suggesting that the structure of the poet's manuscript is more organic than formal, and making parallels to manuscripts containing the works of poets from the recent past, notably Jean Froissart and Guillaume de Machaut. As such, this study may be of particular interest to those who teach classes that touch on issues of paleography and codicology, with or without a literary context; an included CD collates the manuscript with the principal scholarly editions.

Arn proposes that this manuscript represents a chronicle, though perhaps not a chronological "sketch of Charles's literary life" (158), and briefly traces the literary reception of the poet's work in the twentieth century. Indeed, while Charles d'Orléans' lyrics are not a chronological account of his poetic production, they are very clearly ordered, so that "the manuscript gives us a rare glimpse into the writing of a poet working from young adulthood until his death as an old man" (169).

While Arn is sometimes hesitant in presenting her conclusions, particularly with respect to the third stint, this study leaves us with a more tolerable level of uncertainty than that of early twentieth-century codicological scholars. More importantly, Arn makes a solid contribution not only to late-medieval studies in general and *Auréliens* in particular, but also to all scholars who wish to take on the daunting task of codicological studies and their implications for literary criticism.

Saint Francis University

Karen Casebier

present times and introducing death as the only possible narrative close. As a consequence of this privileged relation to present time entertained in the individual letters, diachrony in the *Familiars* becomes the effect of the repetitions and of the intertextual connections among the various letters and the various books.

Following the bibliographical and theoretical discussions at the core of the first three chapters, in chapter 4 Antognini studies the diachrony and the autobiographical journey described by Petrarch in the twenty-four books of the *Familiars*. Finally, chapter 5 introduces the addressees of Petrarch's letters and presents a useful synopsis of the autobiographical journey reconstructed by Antognini in chapter 4. The table and the graphic composition of this long synopsis (about one hundred pages) make clear the temporal framework of the letters, with their many repetitions and multiple cross-references.

In conclusion, the theoretical insights along with the attentive and comprehensive structural and textual analyses make Roberta Antognini's study of Petrarch's *Familiars* an important and valuable addition to the bibliography concerning the autobiographical dimension of Petrarch's letter writing.

MASSIMO LOLLINI, University of Oregon

MARY-JO ARN, *The Poet's Notebook: The Personal Manuscript of Charles d'Orléans* (Paris, BnF, MS fr. 25458). (Texts and Transitions: Studies in the History of Manuscripts and Printed Books, 3.) Turnhout: Brepols, 2008. Pp. xxii, 200 plus CD-ROM in back cover pocket; 30 black-and-white figures, 1 color figure, and 8 tables. €80.
doi:10.1017/S0038713410001326

Mary-Jo Arn has undertaken a mammoth and extremely valuable task in this reexamination and reevaluation of Charles, duke of Orléans's personal manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 25458. Arn's modesty regarding her endeavor ("there are many things this study does not aim to do, things that are vitally important and should be undertaken in the very near future," p. ix) sounds a call to arms to fellow medievalists, a note familiar to those engaged in the study of social poetry and its material manifestations. The need for further literary studies is a point that she emphasizes strongly. Arn need not be so modest, though: her endeavor is excellent in its clarity, depth, and detail, and a highly entertaining read. Generously, she provides ample material here for future scholars to build upon.

BnF fr. 25458 began life as a well-planned and sumptuous presentation manuscript to contain lyrics written by Charles while captive in England. After its arrival back in France at the ducal court of Blois with the poet in the 1440s, the unbound quires were added to, both by Charles and by around forty poets, visitors, and household functionaries, including such well-known poets as François Villon and René d'Anjou. What was initially a "lovely scribal copy" (p. 4) became what Arn terms a "notebook," a poetic collection with few apparent guiding principles, haphazardly combining many scribal and autograph hands, differing vellum quality, as well as varying lyric forms, with puzzling blank spaces. Yet, as Arn asserts, "it is above all a serious collection of poetry" (p. 158), one that she makes a serious job of reevaluating here.

Arn's painstaking work challenges many of the assumptions readers of Charles d'Orléans have made for years based upon Pierre Champion's seminal 1907 study of the manuscript and his edition of 1923–27, which became the standard point of reference. In particular, Arn challenges Champion's somewhat arbitrary organization of the lyrics by generic category, preferring a principle of organization based on a period-by-period layering of lyrics that mimics and traces the poet's own stylistic development. Arn invites us to look into the material organization of the "book" or, rather, "box of quires" (p. 68) and thereby

to understand the poetic evolution of Charles himself: the *poeta-liber* dyad. Her arguments about the dating/layering of the pieces derive not from some unknown source, as is often the case with Champion's dating, but from her assiduous and methodical exploration of the codicological evidence. However, she sensibly resists the undoubted temptation to weigh in on the individual dating of lyrics. Arn includes discussion of both familiar and less familiar codicological observation: pricking and ruling, numbering, scribal corrections and marginalia, even the quality of the vellum are examined alongside scribal hand, decoration, and quire structure. After a fascinating introduction and manuscript description (chapter 1), complemented by the eight tables at the end of the study and the useful synoptic table on the attached CD-ROM, Arn expertly guides the reader through an often challenging, though always clear, technical analysis of the manuscript and its production. Four chapters (2–5) correspond to the four stints of copying of the manuscript: c. 1440 to the mid-1440s (stint one); mid-1440s to mid-1450s (stints two and three); mid-1450s to c. 1465 (stint four). We follow the manuscript from its initial incarnation as a carefully copied and decorated presentation copy and watch its transition into the scrappy “notebook” of the title right through to the addition of a further batch of vellum arranged into four untidy and undecorated quires (MM–PP) during the final stint. Arn meticulously unpicks the different layers of composition of Charles's “saint livre” (Villon, p. 158) and, in so doing, offers us tantalizing glimpses into some of the mysteries of the manuscript, including the perplexing puzzle of the blank half pages. A final chapter draws out the far-reaching implications of this study, ultimately demonstrating Charles's deep respect for his poetic collection, in spite of appearances, and showing how his development as a poet, and as part of a social grouping, became fused with the development of the material “book” in all its eccentricity.

Arn's study is the third publication in an exciting new Brepols series, *Texts and Transitions*, which includes Jane H. M. Taylor's *Making of Poetry: Late-Medieval French Poetic Anthologies* (2007). Arn's arguments here for the organization of Charles d'Orléans's social poetry map neatly onto Taylor's conclusions about the material organization of textual communities and ensure that this book sits well within the series, angled as it is toward what Stephen Nichols refers to as “materialist philology” (p. ix). As Arn asserts, “this is a social poetry, with clear traces of posturing and performance, of occasion and interaction with others” (p. 4). Arn's work is particularly welcome in the light of a new wave of scholarly work on Charles's poetic production being carried out by Jane H. M. Taylor, Jean-Claude Mühlethaler, Gilbert Ouy, Gérard Gros, Nancy Regalado, and Virginie Minet-Mahy, among others. Arn and John Fox's eagerly awaited new edition of the manuscript (with the first-ever English translation by Barton Palmer), forthcoming with Arizona's *Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies* series in 2010–11, will provide a practical illustration of the theories and complex codicological evidence collected here. There is no doubt about it: “the long-overdue renaissance in Charles d'Orléans studies is finally at hand” (p. xi), and Arn's remarkable study is leading the way.

EMMA CAYLEY, University of Exeter

LAURA ASHE, *Fiction and History in England, 1066–1200*. (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature, 68.) Cambridge, Eng., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007. Pp. xii, 244; 4 black-and-white figures. \$95.
doi:10.1017/S0038713410001338

This attractive, readable book on postconquest, (mostly) French-language historiography and historical romance is a new entry in the discussion of the medieval nation, nationalism, and colonialism, as well as the development of romance as a genre. Its chief goals are to explain incipient English nationalism as a function of territory, rather than language or ethnic-

cognates; the Alexander of this romance as opposed to the traditional warrior prince; the dating of the text and the identity of Jacques de Longuyon (both more problematic, it seems, than scholarship has commonly supposed). Scholars of the culture of the late Middle Ages, however, will be most intrigued by Bellon-Méguelle's *deuxième partie*, which is devoted to the *vœux* themselves and to the warrior games and court games which Huizinga found so dispiriting. The author is extremely interesting, and informative, on this *théâtralisation* and on the *esprit ludique* which she sees as informing all aspects of the *Vœux du paon*. Drawing largely on Caillois and on Michel Stanesco (*Jeux d'errance du chevalier médiéval*, 1988), she draws out the paradoxical seriousness with which Jacques de Longuyon treats and idealizes warrior games; she also addresses the interplay between war and love, between the battlefield and the *chambre des dames*, which is the staple of the *Vœux du paon*. She is particularly interesting on the *mécanismes amoureux*, the games of *le roi qui ne ment* and the *demandes d'amour* which crystallize this interplay. The book has a copious bibliography; all that is now needed is a good, modern edition, and that too, incidentally, Bellon-Méguelle promises us, 'prochainement'; it is to be hoped that she will be able to use it to discuss the extraordinarily rich manuscript tradition of this romance.

Durham University

JANE H. M. TAYLOR

Mary-Jo Arn, *The Poet's Notebook: The Personal Manuscript of Charles d'Orléans (Paris BnF MS fr. 25418)*, Texts and Transitions 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008). xxii + 200 pp.; 30 black-and-white illustrations; 1 colour illustration; 8 tables; CD-ROM. ISBN 978-2-503-52070-4. €80.00.

On Charles d'Orléans's release from captivity in 1440, he brought back to France a book of eighteen or nineteen quires containing poetry composed during his twenty-five years in England; this book remained with him until his death in 1465, when it had expanded to fill thirty-eight quires. It has since become one of the most fascinating, and also one of the most perplexing, medieval manuscripts, presenting puzzles of *mise en page*, ordering, numbering, and copying practice. Until now, scholars have been obliged to depend largely on the substantial work of Pierre Champion, author of the only full-length study of the manuscript (1907), who established what is still the standard edition of the poems (1923-7). Mary-Jo Arn undertakes a major re-evaluation of Champion's findings in her outstanding study, remarkable for its painstaking detail, its methodological precision, and the new insights offered into the poet's thinking about his poetry as a collection. Champion's conclusions, drawn sometimes from textual rather than codicological evidence and from proceeding verse form by verse form, are challenged by Arn's 'stratigraphic' examination of the book's physical composition, analysing its development copying stint by copying stint to generate a biography of the book and 'a chronicle of [Charles's] poetic journey' (p. 166). After a meticulous description of the manuscript in

its current state, helpfully illustrated by a series of tables visualizing details of composition and content, subsequent chapters present data pertinent to each of four copying stints, stretching from the late 1430s to early 1460s, culminating in a concluding section exploring the implications of this new material. The study is accompanied by a CD-ROM enabling the reader to view various versions of the manuscript's organization. Methodologically, Arn demonstrates particular rigour in her investigation, not only of scribal hands, decoration and limning, and layout, but also of pricking and ruling practices, the comparative textures of different batches of vellum, and the puzzling numbering system of the lyrics. She also glean information from comparison of the duke's book with other copies of his poems, notably Marie de Clèves's. Arn's conception of the manuscript as a 'notebook' revises notions of a tightly bound codex, arguing that the album brought back from England was more accurately a 'box of quires' (p. 68), whose construction in fact loosened in later years: Charles ceded copying increasingly to others and, through his lack of correction of errors of labelling, placement, and initialing, seems to have valued the recording of the material rather than its precise positioning or presentation. The most significant revision of Champion's work concerns the principle of organization of the book, which emerges not as an arrangement according to verse form, but as an assembly respecting the different 'weights' of lyrics: *ballades* and *complaintes* (Arn's 'type-1') on the one hand, *rondeaux*, *chansons*, and *caroles* ('type-2') on the other, combined with consideration of subject matter or theme. The function of blank space, hitherto seen as a possible site for musical notation, is also addressed, together with the status of the English poems in the collection. The study opens up important new lines of research into the duke's poetry and into the operation of literary manuscripts as social documents; it lays the groundwork for a much-anticipated new edition of the poems by Arn and John Fox, with R. Barton Palmer.

St Hilda's College
Oxford

HELEN SWIFT

Regina D. Schiewer, *Die deutsche Predigt um 1200. Ein Handbuch* (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). xiii + 823 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-019470-8. €148.00.

The genre of the early German sermon ('frühe deutsche Predigt') encompasses about 870 individual sermons preserved in around thirty interrelated collections, all datable broadly to the period c.1170-c.1230, and representing a tradition of preaching in the vernacular which is independent of the incipient mendicant orders. In quantitative terms, the early German sermon is by far the largest body of literature in the German language from the period of the courtly *Blütezeit*. Most – though not all – of the collections were already edited and made accessible to scholarship in the nineteenth century, and several studies in more recent years have explored the manuscript transmission of the sermon