

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.
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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.
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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-