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The Anglo-Norman Courtly Lyric
by
Carol J. Harvey
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Whereas many works of a religious or moral nature survive from the Anglo-Norman era, secular lyric poetry was until quite recently virtually unknown. Isabel S. T. Aspin's *Anglo-Norman Political Songs* provided the first, and to date the only, readily-accessible modern edition of secular lyrics. This collection of political poems and satires shows that the author of occasional verse is not only interested in singing the praises of the Blessed Virgin Mary or adapting parts of the liturgy into the vernacular; he is moved also to sing of the corruption of state or church, to lament the death of the noble departed, or to applaud the death of a traitor. Many other secular poems were discussed in M. Dominica Legge’s *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background*, which further demonstrated that the Anglo-Norman temperament was not always inclined to be serious and utilitarian and that the Anglo-Norman poet might even on occasion turn to thoughts of love.

Dr. Legge’s study of some forty anonymous amatory and occasional poems found in various Anglo-Norman mss indicates that most of the genres associated with the courtly lyric were practiced in England: the *canso* or love-song, the *pastoreta* or *pastourelle*, the *tenso*, the moral or political *sirventès* and the *planh*, or funeral lament, all of which originated in the south of France. In addition, genres of later, northern-French origin including the *ballete*, *rotrouenge* and *rondeau* are found. Other formal similarities between the Anglo-Norman and the continental lyric have been noted by editors of individual poems. Admittedly, relatively simple techniques such as *coblas unissonans*, *coblas doblas* or *coblas singulars*, which are not unknown in the poetry of other languages, may be attributed to spontaneous generation as readily as to conscious imitation. However, as far as the more sophisticated techniques are concerned, they may well be indicative of familiarity with continental practices. An Anglo-Norman example of *coblas capfinidas*, in which a key word or phrase from the last line of one stanza is repeated in the first line of the following, is
furnished by the *Lament of Edward II.* Another intricate technique used in courtly poetry is that of *rimas derivatas,* in which alternating masculine and feminine rhymes derived from the same root-word are employed. One Anglo-Norman poet who imitated the technique was obviously proud of his technical skill, entitling his poem "Ryme Bon."

Although genres and techniques are important formal elements of poetry, the courtly lyric of the troubadours is not to be defined solely in terms of poetic technique. The "grand chant courtois" evolved from a literary tradition inspired by the ideal of *fin’amors,* its essence is to be sought in the concepts of the lyric rather than in its formal aspects. In this regard too, the AN lyric shows similarities with the troubadour lyric. It draws upon the *topoi* of courtliness and exploits courtly motifs and metaphors; the themes are often couched in courtly terminology and they express the ideals of *fin’amors.* Yet the poetry which arose in the south of France and which was imitated by the *trouvères* of northern France is already old when the earliest extant AN poems appear, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It may be the object of unconscious misinterpretation or conscious transformation in a society considerably removed in time and place from that which furnished its matrix. In view of these social and chronological factors, it is interesting to assess to what extent the courtly motifs cultivated by the troubadours are reflected in the lyric poetry of the AN era.

One *topos* which may be considered both as a formal and a thematic element of courtly verse is the spring introduction. This is certainly not exclusive to the courtly love-lyric practiced on the continent: it is well-known in Latin poetry and in popular lyrics, and the recurrence of the month of May in introductory stanzas has led many to conclude that the *topos* stemmed from popular folk traditions associated with May Day. Nevertheless, though references to spring may exist in other traditions known to insular poets, the relationship between the renewal of nature and the rebirth of hope, between the song of the bird and that of the poet, and between budding tree and burgeoning love is a literary formulation unique to the courtly lyric. The *topos* is found in the AN poem *Quant le tens se renovele* (ed. Mayer, "Mss de Cambridge," 253–255, lines 1–7):

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Quant le tens se renovele
E reverdoie cy bois,
Cist oysials sa pere apele
Cele cum a pris a choys;
Lur voil chanter sur mun peis
D’une dame gent e bele,
Sur trestutes tourturele.
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The variations practiced by the troubadours are also found in AN verse: if spring is the time for lovers and for hope springing eternal in the lover’s breast,
then dreary winter is the time for sorrowing and for singing of unrequited love. The very grass is pale and wan, the birds are hushed and seek refuge in the leafless boughs. In the poem *El tens d'iver* (ed. Alfred Jeanroy and Artur Långfors, *Chansons satiriques et bachiques du XIIIe siècle* [1921; rpt. Paris: Champion, 1974], pp. 39–42, lines 1–10), nature is not merely a setting, but a mirror of the poet's melancholy and despair:

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El tens d'iver, quant vei palir
L'erbe pur la freidure
E les menuz oisels tapir
En la ramee oscure,
A grant dolur suvent suspir,
Tant vei eisir
Amur de sa nature:
La bele a qui joe pens e tir,
Senz rien merir,
Me gref a desmesure.
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The first words of one of the earliest AN poems extant, written on a blank page at the beginning of MS. Rawlinson G.22 in the Bodleian Library are undecipherable. Even so, in view of the courtly notions contained in the body of the poem, one may imagine that it is the song of the nightingale which has stirred the poet and inspired him to sing of his love (ed. John Stainer, *Early Bodleian Music* [London, 1901], Vol. 2, p. 3, lines 1–6):

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................ [ue]
[E sun] chant ai entendu:
Icele mun sanc remue
Dunt jeo fremis e tressu.
A li dunt ai peine e delit
Cri merci qu'ele ne m'ublit.
```

Other introductory stanzas are less interesting from the thematic point of view but not uninteresting from the point of view of similarities and comparisons. William IX of Aquitaine may start "Farai un vers de dreyt nien" or "Pos de chantar m'es pres talentz"—so, too, the poet of Harley 2253 says, "Ferroy chaunsoun que bien doit estre oye,/De ma amie chaunterai qe m'ad deguerpie" (ed. Thomas Wright, *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, Percy Society, IV [1842; rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1965], pp. 63–64, lines 1–2). The author of an elegy on Simon de Montfort laments (ed. Aspin, *AN Pol. Songs*, pp. 24–35, lines 1–3):

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Chauter m'estoit,
Mon cuer le voit,
En un dure langage;
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Another poet, inspired by love or his lady, declares simply “De ma dame vuil chanter / Ke tant est bele et bloie” (ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 375, lines 1–2).

The courtly relationship celebrated by the poet is an ideal which seeks to elevate physical love above the level of mere instinct or material self-interest. A new and indeed novel relationship is formed, in which social reality is frequently reversed, the lover declaring himself the servant of his lady. The feudal ceremony of vassalage, or homage, provides the analogy and central metaphor of courtly conduct. Paying homage to the lady, often symbolized by the clasped hands, is an expression of the humility the lover feels in her presence. The Provençal term midons indicates his willing acceptance of his lady as his “overlord” and his eagerness to acquit himself long and faithfully in her service. As the feudal lord William IX of Aquitaine declares his surrender to his lady’s will in Farai chansoneta nueva (ed. Press, Anthology, pp. 20–22), so the AN poets protest their humble and unfeigned loyalty to their lady (Lung tens ay de quer amé, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 248–49, lines 6–8):

De fin quer sanz fauseté
Dunt la serf en lealté
E serveray sanz feintyse.

They stress too the undying nature of their service, “Cum je vous ai servi sanz tricherie / E serviray tuz les jours de ma vie” (Jeo m’en voys, dame, ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 378, lines 5–6).

What qualities in the lady inspired such devotion? Troubadours such as Peire Vidal sing of her beauty and physical charms, her “bell cors plazen”; Giraut de Borneil praises his lady on account of “sos cors gais et isneus / E complitz de belas colors” (Can lo glatz e.l frechs e la neus, ed. Press, Anthology, p. 134, lines 14–15). AN poets may describe their lady quite simply as “bele et bloie” or may use more sophisticated verse and even two languages to extol her charms (En mai quant dait e foil e fruit, ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 381–82, lines 9–12):

Cler ot le vis et [le] cor[s] gent, nature moderamine,
Neirs le[s] surcils, les oyz (sic) riant, plenos amoris flamine;
Plus de cristal sunt blancs se[s] dens, justo locantur ordine;
Si n’a plus bele geik’ en Occident, a solis ortus cardine.

They may protest their inability to describe her incomparable beauty,13 a protest followed in Quant le tens se renovele by a detailed description vaunting the lady’s beautiful hair, wide brow, flashing eyes and small mouth. A similar
Les chevoys li lusent cumme fil de or;
Ele ad le col lung & gros,
Si ne y pert frunce ne os
Ne veyne.
Ele ad les oyz vers et rianz,
Les denz menu rengé devant,
Buche vermayle fete cum teint
En greyne.
Ele ad beu braz pur acoler,
Ele ad duz cors pur deporter;
Un mort purra resuciter
Sa alayne.

Such hyperbolic descriptions are reminiscent of the continental lyric though they are not exclusive to the genre, for the portrait conforms closely to models found in twelfth-century romances. From the lady's shining, golden hair to her sweet breath, virtually every detail of the eulogy is stereotyped, deriving from a standard concept of beauty. The commonplace phraseology—eyes "vers e rianz," teeth "menu"—is exploited on both sides of the channel by authors of both lyric and narrative verse.

Certain of the comparisons and metaphors common to these two forms may also be noted in the courtly lyric of the AN era. The lady is a treasure; God formed her with love, Nature created her with joy; she is noble, worthy of a prince or king; she must be an emperor's daughter, as the author of these macaronic lines exclaims (Dum ludis floribus, ed. G. L. Brook, The Harley Lyrics, 4th ed. [Manchester: Manchester UP, 1968], p. 55, lines 9-12):

Ele est si bele e gentle dame egregia
cum ele fust imperatoris filia,
de beal semblant e pulcra continencia,
ele est la flur in omni regis curia.

This emphasis on the lady's nobility reminds us that her physical beauty is but the reflection of her moral beauty. She has the mezura so prized by the troubadours, which Marcabrun described as "gentil parler" and which the classical troubadours considered as "moderation." She is gentle and generous, courtly and considerate (Quant le tens se renovele, lines 25-34):

Deu! tant est de bonte pleine
Ma dame al cors lunge e gent,
E de parole certeine
Beaus respunt (a) tute gent.
Bon mestre a ki ben aprent,
Kar curtesie la meine,
Franchise al cuer dreit l’aseine,
Largesce sun cors i prent;
Meint hom pur lui joie enprent,
Tant la trove sage e seyne . . .

This theme of troubadour poetry is not well attested in the AN lyrics extant, which focus more on the lady’s attitude towards her lover than on her courtly qualities. The object of the troubadour’s affections was often haughty, scornful of her lover’s attentions or at least indifferent towards him. Likewise in the AN poem Jeo m’en voys, dame, the lady is capricious and disdainful of the poet’s attentions, “ . . . ma dame aillors se humilie/Si qe devers moy est tut assurdie” (lines 19–20). She may be indifferent to the point of cruelty or appear to be wilfully unkind, provoking the aspiring lover to deplore her conduct (De ma dame vuil chanter, lines 11–14):

Duce dame, de mei grever
Pur quei estes si aprise,
Quant deu tut en vus amer
Ai m’entente mise?

The lover’s own attitude, which may be expressed in terms of a love-fear paradigm, provides a further obstacle to love: though he loves his lady, he fears to declare his love. Courtly conventions dictate that in view of the lady’s acknowledged social or moral superiority, the poet should be humble and timid even to the extent of concealing his passion. In Lungiens ay de quer amé the obstacle to the poet’s declaration of love remains unstated and interiorized as it does, for example, in Peire Vidal’s Per mielhs sofrir lo maltrait e l’afan (Press, Anthology, pp. 212–215). In other poems, the obstacle to love may be the gelos or slanderers familiar in troubadour poetry who have turned the lady against her suitor. One poet who complained that he had labored long in the service of love for precious little reward certainly thought so: in case he died of love he wrote a mock will in which he inveighed against those who had destroyed his chances of happiness, calling down on their heads all sorts of ills, including toothache (Longement me sui pené, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” pp. 252–253, lines 80–91):

As gelus Deu doint meschief,
Feu d’enfer par tut le cors,
Povre e riche de tresors!
Nul de eus n’i met dehors,
Kar trop sunt diverse genz;
Passion les fere as denz,
Par defors e par dedenz,
K’as amanz sunt mal veisin!
Trop sunt de felun e[n]gin;
D’assez sunt pire ke mastin,
Si les comand a malfée:
Tuz jur[z] eient il mal dehee!

For his part, the poet will willingly endure any such ills for the sake of his lady. Love is akin to a sickness. The troubadour Peire Cardenal may write that he “maigresc e sec” for his lady; so, too, the AN poet waxes pale and wan, grows sick and suffers physically. The physical effects are graphically described in Lung tens ay de quer amé (lines 25–28):

Tut ensi va de mun cors
Cum d’une torche eslumé[e]:
La char se destruit dehors,
Si n’esteynt point ma pensé[e].

Worse still, his peace of mind may be attacked, his very reason assailed. He is not merely “murns e pensif,” like the poet of Ryme Bon, but may fear impending madness. Sentiments reminiscent of William IX of Aquitaine’s Farai un vers de dreyt nien are expressed in the AN poem Malade sui, de joie espris (ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 376–78, lines 8–11),

Sages suy et si ne soi ren,
E jeo sui tant dolorouse[e]
Plus jolifs homme n’ert a nul jourz
Que ma n’est ci ne aillors.

Other poets may express love’s folly without employing the rhetoric of reversaris but nevertheless using courtly terminology: “Mès jo, cheitif sanz mesure,/Ai perdu sen e savoir” (Quant le tens se renovele, lines 59–60).

The captive and the prisoner of love are, of course, familiar courtly metaphors illustrating the physical and mental distress of the lovelorn suitor. An instance of the metaphoric captive as supplicant is found in Longement me sui pené (lines 19–21):

Mès tujur a joynte meins
La pri cum amy certeins
K’ ele pense de sun prisun.
M. D. Legge draws attention to an AN poem in which a less familiar image appears, the author comparing himself and his lady to the fabled unicorn captured by a maiden. "This comparison, derived from a favourite theme in the Bestiaires, also occurs in a poem by no less a writer than Thibault de Champagne." The AN author of Lung tens ay de quer amé certainly knew the legend, if not the actual poem, and ends by remarking (lines 57–60):

Soviengez vus ent, ma drue,
Ke sanz vus ne pus durer;
Si vus puys ben aficher,
Kar d’autre ne quer ayue.

However despairing, however languishing the lover may be, nothing will induce him to leave the service of his lady or of love itself. AN poets are as ready as continental ones to admit that this results largely from the paradoxical nature of love: it is pain but pleasure, sickness and medicine, sorrow but joy. Despite the anguish that love entails it is preferable to the peaceful yet dull life led by those who are unaware of li duz mal d’amér. They admit this freely, saying, “Trop me plest et si me pleink/De bon’amur q’ensi me blesce” (Malade sui, de joie espris, lines 27–28). This theme, which is central to troubadour poetry, recurs frequently in AN lyrics. One of the earliest AN poems extant, Jeo m’en voys, dame, concedes that there is nothing preferable to enduring love’s sweet suffering: “Q[ue] ii n’est ren que jeo desir[e] tant/Cum endurer la duce maladie” (lines 27–28). In a similar vein, the author of Ryme Bon admits, “D’un duz regard suy si ma! poynt,/Que jeo m’y murg, mes trop m’agree” (lines 9–10). Love’s sickness, love’s folly is so ecstatic a state that none would wish to be delivered from its douce détresse. Moreover a mere kind glance will suffice to free love’s prisoner or to heal the love-sick, for the lady is a mire, a doctor for such ills. AN poets draw upon this familiar courtly conceit frequently, exploring its ramifications. One lover, preferring to languish in vain hope, even pleads for a falsely-compassionate glance (Jeo m’en voys, dame, lines 21–26):

Succurrez moi, dame, d’un faus semblaunt
Pur recoverer arer[e] ma sotie.
Si vous me alez tuz les jours veir disaunt,
Jeo ai grant pour que mon sen ne m’occie.
Coverez un poi, si f[e]rez corteisie,
E me lessez languir en attendant.

False hope is, then, preferable to despair. The delirium of love is a state of delight, its madness preferable to wisdom.

One reason for this is perhaps more important than the fascination exercised
by the paradoxical nature of love. Through love one may glimpse a nobler self and aspire to a state of moral perfection. For the troubadours, love of a beautiful lady is an ennobling experience; it does not merely allow the lover to attain happiness but is also the source of all virtues and values, “Joie, solaz e duçur;/Sanz, curtesie e valur” (Tant suy a beau sojur, ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 249-250, lines 6-7). He who achieves love will be enriched morally. The qualities of generosity, moderation and courtliness first sung by the troubadours will blossom in the propitious climate of love, transforming love’s servant into a glorious and noble courtly lover, the fin amant. By contrast, the false suitor who pays court to a lady for her wealth will grow churlish, “recreanz” and “mautalentiz,” says the author of the above-quoted poem. He castigates the material and transitory goal of self-interested venal love, contrasting amur with avoyr in terms which recall Marcabrun’s denunciation of aver. The fin amant, however, will reap a “riche guerdon,” knowing complete happiness and rejoicing in his heightened qualities and capabilities. He is described in Grant pesç’a ke ne chantai (ed. Meyer, “Mss de Cambridge,” 251-252, lines 37-40):

Jolifs en tute seson 
Franc de quer, net cum faucon, 
Pruz e fer plus ke Lyon 
E bon crezien en Dé.

So it is that the hopeless hope of the long servitude of love takes on a moral significance, for it is a means of attaining that perfection mirrored in the lady. The suffering which love entails has its own moral and spiritual value, as a form of purification—as it is expressed in Chant ai entendu (lines 27-28): “. . . sufrance m’ad value,/E bien amer m’ad valuz.”

Evidence exists, then, that in general AN poets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are aware of the techniques and genres of the continental lyric and are familiar with the standard motifs and topoi which constitute the rhetoric of courtliness. The service of love, the prison of love, the malady of love, love’s paradoxical nature, the lady’s physical and moral perfection and the lover’s moral aspirations are all major themes of the continental lyric which are found in the AN lyric. Furthermore, the themes and terminology of courtly conventions colour poems other than the love-lyric, permeating, as on the continent, religious poetry. The domna is the madonna in a number of poems, including a bilingual poem utilizing the spring topos (ed. T. Wright & J. O. Halliwell, Reliquiae Antiquae, 2 vols. [1841 & 1843; rpt. New York: Ams Press, 1966], Vol. I, pp. 200-202, lines 1-8):

En Mai ki fet flurir les prez, 
et pullulare gramina,
E cist oysels chauntent assez
jocunda modulamina,
Li amaunt ki aiment vanitez
quaerent sibi solamina,
Je met ver wus mes penser s,
o gloriosa domina.


Mei ke suy ameruse, ne suy a blamer;
Kar je ay tel amy ke n’ad poynt de per;
Il est si tres beaus, e si franc de quer,
Ke en trest tut le munde ne trovera sun per.

Any doubts one might have had throughout the poem concerning the identity of the “lover” are finally dispelled by the *Amen* at the end of the poem.

Although courtly influences are evident in the main themes of the AN lyric, some dilution of the continental lyric tradition does occur. For example, insular poets speak of the servitude of love but they do not mention the stages of servitude the classical troubadours recognized: *fenhedor, pregador, entendedor* and *drut*. AN poets appear to have simplified the originally complex scheme of amorous vassalage, as did the troubadours’ disciples in Portugal and Sicily. The latter also discarded the *sennhal*, or pseudonym used by the troubadours to conceal the identity of the lady to whom the poem is addressed. Similarly, AN poets rarely feel the need for secrecy. A *sennhal* is used in only one AN poem: Edward II sends his lament on his imprisonment to the unidentified “La Bise”—“The Doe.” Moreover, this last poem, claimed in the ms as being “De le roy Edward le fiz roi Edward, le chanson qe il fist mesmes,” together with a debate by Walter de Bybbesworth, in which he takes Sir Henry de Lacy to task for not fulfilling his intentions of going on the Crusade of 1270, are the only two lyrics to which authorship is ascribed. Thus, whereas the names of more than four hundred troubadours are known, the AN poets are largely anonymous.

There are formal divergences, too: the *tornada*, or envoy, is found only infrequently in the AN lyric but many poems have a refrain. Most refrains enhance the musical and aesthetic qualities of the song and reinforce its courtly theme, as in *Mult s’aprisme li termines* (ed. J. Stainer, *Early Bodleian Music*, Vol. II, p. 4), a lament of unrequited love with the refrain: “Jeo sui li plus traiz del munt/Ki maingent de tuz cels ki sunt.” Other refrains are not integrated semantically; bearing little or no thematic relationship to the poem, they appear
to be of popular origin. Such is the case in *Quant primes me quintey de amors*: its stanzas extol the lady's qualities in courtly commonplaces but its refrain, which is not written down in full, is popular in character—"Va ester ke dundeus, va . . ." suggesting it was borrowed from a well-known poem or perhaps a dance-song. Another feature of the lyrics composed in England is the surprising number of bilingual and trilingual compositions in the courtly vein, in which various techniques are used to combine the three languages current in England during the AN era.

Such differences may be explained in terms of chronology, for in general the earliest poems preserved (*Chant ai entendu, Mult s'aprisme li termines, De ma dame vuil chanter*) show the most marked formal and thematic similarities with the continental lyric. Drawing upon courtly themes and conceits, they express a kaleidoscope of emotions lyrically and convey a common situation with intense personal immediacy. Many later poems, however, are disappointingly diffuse, little more than pale, uninspired imitations of a distant tradition, unrelieved by evocative imagery. Thus, despite their courtly themes and imagery, most of the six poems of MS. Dd. X.31 in Cambridge University Library (ed. Meyer, "Mss de Cambridge," 248–255), are closer in style and form to the spoken *dit* than to the lyrical *canso*. Desire, entreaty and service are expressed without that tension between sensual and spiritual love which characterizes *fin'amors*. Form and formulae are retained but the spirit of *mezura*, that quality of moderation which is the very foundation of *cortezia*, is lacking.

Although the conventional may become banal in later poems, courtly echoes are nonetheless heard, indicating the continuing influence of the troubadour aesthetic on AN verse. Specific points of contact between continental and insular poetry may be suggested. It would be convenient to assume that Eleanor of Aquitaine was responsible for the introduction of lyric poetry of a courtly nature to England, for as the queen of Louis VII she had played a seminal role in the introduction of courtly literature and customs to northern France. However, no AN poems remain which are anterior to 1173, when Eleanor was imprisoned by Henry II. Her son Richard the Lion Heart, friend of troubadours and himself a troubadour might have introduced courtly themes and techniques to England during his ten-year reign from 1189–1199. However, this king of England was first and foremost a prince of Aquitaine: in ten years he paid but two visits to England, spending six months there after his coronation and a further six weeks later in his reign. It has also been suggested that the diffusion of Provençal poetry was above all the work of Henry III and his queen Eleanor of Provence, many of whose compatriots settled in England. But it will be remembered that hatred of these same "foreigners" and of the favours shown them by Henry III led in 1258 to the Provisions of Oxford, confirmed in 1263 and corroborated by the Provisions of Marlborough in 1267. Thus specific influences would appear to be less conclusive than the general ones at work in a society whose dominion extended on both sides of
the Channel and which was both insular and continental in outlook. The sub-
jects of this society owed allegiance to the king of England, himself a vassal of
the king of France. There were many family bonds and commercial links—the
wine trade with the south, the wool trade with the north—even following the
loss of Normandy in 1204. Literary contacts may have been personal and
limited or broader and more general. The influence of Bernard de Ventadour,
whose biographer claimed he followed Eleanor of Aquitaine to England, may
have been negligible; Bertran de Born's association with the sons of Eleanor
and Henry II seems unlikely to have affected literary trends in England. How-
ever, the continuing influence of a puy, or poetry competition, held in London
for the best part of a century, cannot be discounted.

Nevertheless, our knowledge of the AN lyric is based on a relatively small
number of poems and must consequently be considered inconclusive. In addi-
tion, the majority of the poems are found in a single ms and many are inci-
dental to the ms in which they are preserved. For the one reverdie consciously
preserved in a parchment ms (Quant le tens se renovele), another is preserved
by chance, on a fragment from a thirteenth-century songbook folded over and
bound into a copy of Peraldus (En averil al tens delits, ed. M. R. James, Copy
of the Manuscripts, St. John's College, Cambridge [Cambridge: Cambridge
UP, 1913], p. 174). The only extant AN variation on the topos, El tens d'iver,
in which dreary winter mirrors the poet's melancholy as he reflects upon his
unrequited love, is written on a blank page of a ms of Juvenal and Persius.
Without the last two songs so fortuitously saved it would be said that the topos
is represented in AN amatory verse by a single example. Similarly, the only
rotrouenge extant (Quant primes me quintey de amors) is written on a flyleaf
and a number of short love-lyrics are known only because they are part of a
Manière de Langage. Finally, one of the earliest and finest love-songs, De ma
dame vuil chanter, preserved with its musical notation, was written invertedly
on the reverse of the last leaf of MS Ashmole 1285. This leads us to conclude
that these poems are the chance survivors of a more extensive corpus of lyric
poetry. They have been preserved by accident rather than design.

NOTES
1. As no AN chansonniers or other collections of verse survive, it was thought that the
sectar lyric was virtually non-existent. This view is represented by a number of schol-
ars, including Johan Vising, who stated that "lyric poetry, other than religious, hardly
exists in Anglo-Norman literature" (Anglo-Norman Language and Literature [London:
Oxford UP, 1923], pp. 37-38). A similar conclusion was reached by Constance B. West,
who like Vising imputed the paucity of secular lyric poetry to "the seriousness and the
utilitarian bias which seems to be characteristic of the Anglo-Norman temperament"
2. Anglo-Norman Text Society, XI (1953; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corpora-


5. In *coblas unissonans* the rhyme scheme and rhymes of the first stanza are repeated in all subsequent stanzas. With *coblas doblas* the same rhyme scheme is used throughout, but the same rhymes extend through two stanzas only. *Coblas singulars* are monorhyme stanzas of equal length whose rhymes change from stanza to stanza.

6. The technique of *coblas capfinidas* was originally imitated from the *chansons de geste* (see Fred Brittain, The Medieval Latin and Romance Lyric to A.D. 1300, 2nd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1951], p. 22). Jean Rychner analyses its effects in La Chanson de Geste (Geneva: Droz, 1955), pp. 74-80. It was however the troubadours who perfected this metrical technique, subsequently imitated in the lyric verse of poets of many countries.


8. Ed. Meyer, “Mélanges,” 379-80. The technique is discussed by Legge: “The rhymes are nearly all of the ‘grammatical’ type. These are described in the *Leys d’amors* and are used in lyrics by the Countess of Die and Bernart de Ventadorn” (*AN Lit.*, p. 347).


10. Differences between the ethics and aesthetics of courtoisie in the south and north of France have been noted by Zumthor: “dans le Nord (y compris l’Etat anglonormand, qui joua l’un des premiers rôles dans cette histoire) la courtoisie mit plus longtemps à trouver ses formes d’expression; elle resta largement ouverte sur l’action chevaleresque, intégra et valorisa le code d’honneur militaire, dont elle fit l’élément central d’une morale qui embrassait l’existence entière de l’homme et de la femme nobles” (*Essai de poétique médiévale*, p. 468).


15. The role of the senses, specifically sight and hearing, and their relationship with


21. According to Zumthor (Essai de poétique médiévale, pp. 406–416), the characteristic stanza of the *dit* ("strophe d'Hélinand"), is usually composed of twelve octosyllables rhyming aab aab bba bba. This is in fact only half as long as the stanzas of *Tant sui a beau sojou*.

22. See Rita Lejeune, “Le Rôle littéraire d’Aliénor d’Aquitaine et de sa famille,” *Cultura Neolatina*, Vol. XIV (1954), 5–57, who states that “[Aliénor] se trouve à l’origine de la renaissance française du XIIe siècle” (p. 5) and “à cause d’elle, les thèmes de la lyrique occitane vont faire éclorer la lyrique courtoise en langue d’oil; pour elle, ils vont même déborder dans le genre lyrique” (p. 20).


24. Vising maintains that this event has the “necessary result of a reinforcement of the dominant French element, and Anglo-Norman literature becomes much richer in the thirteenth century than before” (*Anglo-Norman Language and Literature*, p. 20).