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THE PROTEAN CHARACTER OF ROMANCE as the genre which constantly reinvents itself through fission and fusion with other traditions and its own ever-renewable self is nowhere better exemplified than in the anonymous *Partonopeu de Blois,* probably written toward the end of the twelfth century (ca. 1182-85). Little known today, even to medievalists, *Partonopeu* was a best-seller in the Middle Ages: it circulated in numerous manuscripts, was imitated, adapted, and translated into at least nine different European and Scandinavian languages.[1] Anthime Fourrier has described *Partonopeu* as a kind of *summa* of twelfth-century forms and interests (440), the rich diversity of whose elements supplies a multiplicity of threads in *Partonopeu*'s romance tapestry ingeniously entwined through more than 10,000 verses in the romance proper (and then prolonged for an additional 4,000 verses in a Continuation that may or may not be by the same author).[2] I plan to focus here on the way *Partonopeu* moves from the unidirectional linearity of the opening genealogy into the amiable and open-ended wanderings of romance and continuation—a transformation effected in part through the personal engagements of lyric.

A quick summary of the romance will help situate the analysis of *Partonopeu,* which I might facetiously subtitle "Beauty and the Beast." Its story belongs to the same type as that well-known French fairy tale,[3] but the title roles—more appropriately viewed from the variation of the Cupid and Psyche story—are reversed in terms of gender. Like the fairy mistresses of Celtic *lais,* Melior, the Empress of Byzantium, lures the 13-year-old nephew of the French king to Chef d'Oire, where she plans to keep him secretly until he can be knighted and presented to her barons as a suitable husband. While he remains invisible to all the inhabitants of Chef d'Oire, Partonopeu enjoys the pleasures of love with Melior each night, but only on condition that she remain invisible to him. After a year and a half (during which he twice returns to France), Partonopeu betrays the taboo imposed, in spite of Melior's warnings. Once seen by her lover, Melior's magic powers are destroyed and Partonopeu is banished. Seeking death in the Ardenne forest, Partonopeu is discovered

by Melior's sister Urraque, who persuades him with false news of Melior's pardon to accompany her to Salence. There Partonopeu recovers his health and prepares for the three-day tournament arranged by Melior's barons to choose her husband. Winner of the tournament, for both his prowess and beauty, Partonopeu is finally married to a forgiving Melior (who throughout the second half of the romance has exchanged the role of powerful fairy mistress for that of haughty, but hesitating lyric *domna*). In an epilogue, the romancer promises to tell us more, if the lady for whom he is writing winks appropriately in his direction—which she does, according to the Continuation.

The narrator's desire to win the love of his lady is presented as motivation for the entire romance project and repeatedly explored in personal interventions that play on lyric models. The lyric persona of the narrator is one of the major innovations of the romance: it appears already in the springtime opening, elaborated in the Prologue as an incitement to write down a "beautiful and good and marvelous" adventure (71). The more typical romance narrator, trained in the arts of rhetoric, also appears in the Prologue: he knows about Greek and Latin books and can bring to a vernacular public a "story of ancient times" (78). In the face of possible criticism from "cil clerc" (77) who might accuse him of wasting his time, since he is not writing in Latin, he offers a defense taken from Saint Paul: everything written in books may be put to good use by those who know how to discern good and evil, following good examples and avoiding bad ones. Any moral problem which may arise then is not to be located in the role of the romancer or the language of the story, but rather in the character of the readers.

The narrator's combination of personae has a significant impact on the triangular relationship he thus sets up between himself, the story narrated, and the vernacular public. *Partonopeu*'s story, as he tells it, seems to attract and intermingle two different kinds of responses, typically associated with two different genres: the subjective engagement of lyric and the objective stance of romance. Insofar as the narrator speaks in the authorial and didactic modes, he stands apart from his story and allows us to judge it with the objectivity of distance that mirrors his own. Yet intertwined with that stance is the narrator's lyric persona, which, on the contrary, is repeatedly involved in the characters' stories as negative and positive models for his own love story.[4] He is emotionally engaged in the romance, and he hopes to use it to enhance his personal engagement with one particular member of his public, Passe-Rose (the name he gives his

lady in the epilogue to the Continuation). Not only does he hope that she will draw out the appropriate lessons to be learned from the conduct of his characters, but he also makes her responsible for the story's existence as written document. The narrator's own experience is the bridge that connects our world with the world of fiction, marking it simultaneously as other and our own.

We might compare these two contracts between narrator and public, one detached, the other affectively engaged (at least by desire), to the contrasting spectacles arranged for different publics by Melior: the knightly jousts and animal combats conjured up by Melior in her private chambers for father and tutors are spectacles that incur no risk for the organizer and witnesses; they contrast with the more exciting and dangerous ones shared with Partonopeu in the darkness of her bed. Their erotic engagement brings into risk the exercise of Melior's powers, which must be protected by the taboo of invisibility. Like the romancer, Melior is a creator of fiction, as she arranges Partonopeu's story to bring him to Chef d'Oire and entertain him during his sojourn. Like the narrator, she tells stories of ancient times (1868) and even contemporary French history (1911 ff.). Both the narrator and Melior are lovers, whose love generates romance fictions; both seek to use those fictions to invite and control the response of a beloved.

Robert Hanning has discussed Melior and her sister as artist figures who offer two different models of romance for the creative reader Partonopeu.[5] Hanning interprets Partonopeu's betrayal as a challenge to Melior's absolute control of their story and sees Urraque's manipulations as a more realistic romance model attuned to the demands of feudal society. If the first part of the romance does indeed appear more marvelous than the later events, we can see, nevertheless, how Melior's arrangements anticipate the ending more or less as we have it. Rather than oppose Melior's fabulous world to Urraque's more realistic one, I would suggest the romance situates them both as stages within the larger experience, each necessary and formative as Partonopeu's and Melior's identities interact and develop through a series of male and female roles, each chosen from a whole gamut of literary models synthesized in the unique blend of *Partonopeu*.

But Hanning's distinction between romances which are more or less marvelous may reflect medieval writers' own comments on one of the more suspect aspects of romance writing, one to which the author of *Partonopeu* seems to allude, when he specifies in the Prologue that moral

lessons may be extracted even from Saracen fables (104). *Fables* is a key word for understanding the problematic intersection of history and fiction in the romance tradition. Wace's well-known comments in the *Roman de Brut* describe how Arthur's adventures have become so embroidered in the retelling that they are "neither lies, nor completely true," for they have made truth into fable ("de verité ont fait fables").[6] While some romancers may explicitly defend their works from charges of falsehood, the author of *Partonopeu* first deals indirectly with the issue by phrasing it as a linguistic one, occasioned by his shift from Latin to the vernacular, Latin being the usual, authorized language for "estoire d'antif tens" (78). This romancer strongly resists the tendency of medieval clerics to stake out an exclusive claim for literacy defined as Latinity; he crosses the boundary between clerical and lay and declares the vernacular, even pagan fables, as fitting a location as Latin for serious—and enjoyable—learning (cf. Marie de France's General Prologue to the *Lais*).

The overall strategy of *Partonopeu* puts into question any simple opposition between what Wace distinguishes as *fable* and *verité*. If we focus on the relationship in this romance between truth and fiction, history and romance, what strikes us most forcefully is *Partonopeu*'s seamless fusion of elements, its erasure of clear boundaries. Certainly shifts in the threshold of credibility between the twelfth and the twentieth centuries should make us cautious about deciding what is realistic or marvelous from a twelfth-century point of view. The bestiary lore, for example, that strikes us as pure fancy may have appeared to a medieval audience as scientific fact. But when I speak of fusion, I do not mean to imply a total disappearance of the constituent elements. I am not suggesting that the medieval public did not view *Partonopeu* as a blend of fiction and fact. On the contrary, Fourrier has already described how different medieval allusions to the romance, and even certain rewritings of it, highlight its fictionality or its historicity (pp. 441-42). Any individual reader may lean to one aspect or the other, but the romance itself seems to revel in the combination, the crossovers between categories of all sorts. It thus invites us to explore the methods and effects of fusion.

Consider how the long genealogy (vv. 135-498), narrated at the end of the Prologue, provides a kind of transition from history to romance. Genealogies are a popular genre in the twelfth century. As form, they furnish a kind of presumption of historical veracity without the narrator making any specific claim to that effect. The narrator here introduces

Partonopeu's genealogy by referring first to his source, not a particular book or author, but rather a group of unspecified Latin and Greek books. This topos authorizes the 364-verse genealogy he is about to elaborate, in which he chooses one of two rival historical traditions, both accepted in the twelfth century, concerning the descendants of Troy. Geoffrey of Monmouth and others may have claimed Trojan ancestry for the British monarchy, but the narrator of *Partonopeu* reports on the Trojan descent of the French kings through Priam's son Marcomiris (Fourrier, 392-97). What differentiates *Partonopeu*'s genealogy from the standard of the day, however, is the place where it stops, not (as is usual) with the contemporary figure who illustrates the glories of his lineage,[7] but rather with King Clovis and his nephew Partonopeu, still situated so far in the past that the romancer can easily use Clovis' son Lohier to allude both to his actual son, Clotaire I, who lived in the 6th c., and the tenth-century Lothaire (954-86) during whose reign lived the founder of the Blois lineage (Fourrier, 398). Just as the historical tradition followed here contains a gap of eight centuries between Priam and Marcomiris, a gap for which the author of *Partonopeu* invents his own solution by bringing them together as father and son (Fourrier, 395), so the romancer opens a gap at the time of King Clovis, into which he inserts the story of Partonopeu of Blois, now linked to the Merovingian line through Lucrèce, a sister of Clovis unattested by historical documents.

The transition from genealogy to romance is smoothly effected through the description of the Ardenne forest, which falls within the limits of Clovis' kingdom. According to the narrator, it was filled in those days with exotic animals and "other great marvels" (513). There the King goes hunting, accompanied by his nephew, who is lured away from the rest of the king's party and launched on his own marvelous adventure by the hidden machinations of Melior.

Let me stress here that the historical and the fabulous are not necessarily opposed in twelfth-century historiography—or romance—although they may at times be distinguished. As Paul Zumthor points out, the nature of the "facts" narrated in histories and romances does not differentiate two types of discourse.[8] Certainly the marvelous is also the subject of much history writing in the twelfth century, although the separation between history and romance widened as the marvelous became the focal point for romance and the truth it signified superseded claims for historical veracity.[9] Most important in this context, the combinations of *realia, probabilia* and *mirabilia* in *Partonopeu* do not so

much invite us to cut apart and analyze them into separate boxes, as to explore where the combinations take us, once we admit that the world of romance has many lessons to offer along with its considerable pleasures. Just as the characters move back and forth between West and East, complementing and embellishing the genealogy's single movement from East to West, so are we moved with them through worlds of fiction and history, reality, and romance.

Chef d'Oire, Melior's capital city built especially for Partonopeu (and modeled by the narrator on Constantinople), emblematizes the blend of literary genres and the intermingling of reality and fiction that characterizes *Partonopeu*.[10] Fourrier (401-02) has pointed out how much of the apparently fabulous character of Chef d'Oire and the exercise of Melior's power there corresponds, in fact, to contemporary history: a marriage between Louis VII's sister and the heir to Byzantium took place in 1180; on a number of occasions in the 11th c. women exercised imperial power in Constantinople; Byzantine emperors were known for their interest in the occult sciences; and twelfth-century travel reports describe spectacles not unlike those put on by Melior for her father. In *Partonopeu,* as in Chrétien's *Cligés,* we do not find the real West vs. the fabulous East, but rather particular combinations of both the marvelous and the real to be explored in France and in Byzantium. Reality is enhanced and extended by the play of fiction; edification and enjoyment are both increased by the combination.

Partonopeu demonstrates not only in its representation of Chef d'Oire, but through the whole fabric of the story, that the logical tendency to set up truth in a series of oppositions—truth/fiction, truth/deception, truth/lies—is undermined by the romance model and its supplementary logic, its own tendency to fuse disparate elements into a beautiful semblance which signifies its own truth.[11] Douglas Kelly associates this kind of literary truth with what we nowadays call ideology and identifies topical invention as the means to find truth in matters considered by authors and audience as "credible, if also debatable."[12] *Partonopeu*'s ideology (understood in this sense) might be summarized in borrowed words as "Beauty is truth and truth beauty." But we have to understand all that beauty stands for in this romance. We can catch a glimpse of its development here in the context of the genealogy, by looking briefly at the three figures who play key roles in forming new generations out of the dying Troy.[13]

Priam's son Marcomiris, we are told, was smuggled out of Troy as a

baby. His nurse protected him by concealing his identity from the traitorous Anchises, presented here (as in the *Roman de Troie* and its source) as the one who betrayed Troy to the Greeks. But Marcomiris grows up to be the image of his noble brothers: by the age of fifteen, he so resembles Hector and Paris that his true identity is revealed. To save his life, he is taken off to France, where he subsequently becomes the founder of the French royal house. In describing the conduct of Anchises as traitor to King Priam, the narrator begins to elaborate a theme that will reappear prominently in key episodes of the romance and its Continuation: the "fils a vilain," a serf raised to a position of authority by the king, alienates him from his nobles and leads him inevitably to dishonor. Fourrier has discussed this aspect of *Partonopeu* in light of contemporary history as a reflection of the author's conservative political philosophy critical of royal policy regarding non-noble *auxilium et consilium* (411-28). He has also interpreted the linking of the house of Blois with the Merovingian line as a glorification of the poet's patron (397). Although I would nuance Fourrier's evaluation of the romancer's political conservatism, what needs to be emphasized here is the extent to which both the "fils a vilain" theme and the glorification of the Blois lineage are based on the common notion that birth determines values, good or bad. The theme of beauty, which physically and spiritually embodies that concept, is thus the positive counterpart of the "fils a vilain" theme. In this romance, beauty is emphatically not just skin deep.

When the narrator describes Eneas' mother as a kind of *mal mariée,* whose infidelity is justified to save her son from Anchises' bad blood, he anticipates Melior's later corollary about Partonopeu's good blood and justifies in advance her careful choice: since "(m)aus fruis ist de male raïs.../ Miex vaut bons fix en pechié nes./ Que mavais d'espouse engenrés" (307, 313-14). Both the narrator's comment and the *franche dame*'s conduct authorize Melior's own considerable use of *engin,* once she has chosen Partonopeu for his extraordinary beauty and birth.[14] Although he is only thirteen, Melior already knows that Partonopeu will be one of the elite (1501). As she herself tells Partonopeu, she has chosen him, Hector's cousin, "Car ja li sans ne mentira,/Mais nature tos tans fera;/Ne soffera la gentillece/Que ja faciés rien fors noblece" (1511-14). Her argument gives voice to the underlying rationale that motivates—at least in part—the narrator's inclusion of a genealogy as transition from Prologue to romance.

It seems all the more significant then that a romance which began with the carefully enumerated generations of the French royal lineage does not end with any announcement about Partonopeu and Melior's descendants (though we may assume they constitute for the romance's contemporary audience the illustrious forebears of the house of Blois). In the course of the romance, the importance of beauty and lineage will be affirmed, but also shown to be inadequate if used alone as the single principle of harmonious social integration. Melior's choice of Partonopeu at age thirteen made his beauty the dominant cause of her love: his prowess was expected as the corollary of his beauty, but only demonstrated *post hoc*. The crisis of Partonopeu's betrayal suggests the instability of such an arrangement. The second half of the romance replays the original beauty contest as matchmaker, when Melior (like Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther) searched throughout the world for a suitable husband. But this time the use of a tournament will make the demonstration of male prowess a necessary and appropriate factor for recognizing male beauty. In this respect, we might see the hugely amplified tournament episode, used to lead into the romance's culminating events, as a kind of counter-balance to the genealogy as introduction to the romance proper: where birth and noble line dominate the genealogy leading from the Trojans to the Merovingian royal house, individual performance stars during the tournament fighting and furnishes the basis for judging the finalists.[15] The realization of the tournament itself as a kind of beauty contest, in which prowess decides the finalists and beauty the elected winner, serves nevertheless to undermine any disjunctive opposition, as it intertwines both sets of values in a more comprehensive system.

In its light-hearted enjoyment of momentary puzzles made to yield satisfying resolutions, *Partonopeu* allies itself with idyllic romances from the East, like *Floire et Blancheflor,* themselves a subset of what Dafydd Evans has designated "wishfulfilment" romances. These achieve their happy endings by combining love and marriage, despite the incompatibilities of the two within a feudal society that sees marriage rather as a tool for the political and social gains of the lineage.[16] Evans identifies the use of fantastic adventure and the supernatural to reconcile personal desire and social exigency as clues which signal the unreality of such fictional solutions (132). But who knows to what extent such fictions nevertheless became models for different views on love and marriage or the relation between the individual and society? Romance is not merely a

passive reflector of contemporary history and *Partonopeu* seems designed at will to invent new fusions of history and romance, reality and fiction, as we enjoy the pleasures of both and the limits of neither.

We might compare *Partonopeu* in this respect to the erotic pleasures of lovemaking—a not inappropriate metaphor for a romance whose action begins with an unusually graphic description of its hero's and heroine's initiation into love (1302-4). Unlike the more theologically-oriented sex-for-procreation (which we might locate here in the genealogy), the characteristic rhythm of sex-for-pleasure is the repeated and prolonged rise and fall of tension; the desired end is not ending at all, but rather momentary pause and prelude to a new beginning. There is, for example, a pleasurable rise in "tension" when Melior nearly recognizes Partonopeu during the dubbing ceremony before the tournament: the ultimate recognition, however, is deferred and then doubled during the tournament itself by the increase of participants, as first Urraque and her lady Persewis and then Melior herself finally recognize the unknown knight as Partonopeu.

But the rhythm of deferral does not only characterize the development of events within the romance; it evolves into what we might call a poetics of continuation. *Partonopeu* first ends with the marriage of the main characters. This "natural" endpoint for a romance that has already gone on for a considerable number of verses (a romance and a half by the standard measure of Chrétien's) is not, however, to be taken as any indication that there's no more to tell. A romance whose geographic and moral center is supplied by Chef d'Oire clearly locates us in the more ample dimensions of the *romans antiques.* In a 49-verse epilogue, the narrator explicitly introduces the idea of continuing his romance. He even enumerates the possible strings of narrative to be picked up, events he briefly summarizes as the stories of three secondary characters (10625-42). With these short descriptions he no doubt hopes to entice his lady and lure her into further romance, as Melior once lured Partonopeu. If the lady agrees that his meritorious service in writing deserves a favorable recognition, a mere wink from her will set him to writing again, but for now his love pain is so great as to interfere with his power to work (10609-24).

While the link between love and composition is a commonplace of troubadour lyric, where lovers often complain that their suffering makes song impossible (and yet they sing on heroically!), these comments are truly remarkable as a first for romance. A survey of twelfth-century

romance epilogues yields not a single other announcement of the sort that promises there is more to the story as yet untold, until we come to Renaut de Beaujeu's *Le Bel Inconnu* (which may be late 12th or early 13th c.).[17] On the contrary, the epilogue generally functions as an elaboration of the *explicit* and usually includes among its topics the affirmation that there is no more to tell. Although Chrétien's *Conte du Graal* already gives rise at the end of the twelfth century to the first of its many continuations, it does so by virtue of its unfinished and puzzling form, rather than by any explicit, authorized promise of more. The innovative *Partonopeu* does not simply participate in the typical romance pattern of the twelfth century, where romances generally remain separate and discrete, and only implicitly acknowledge, through their own discontinuity, the romance tendency to proliferate and continue. *Partonopeu* boldly announces the possibility for continuing its story and thus prepares the way, along with Chrétien's own experimentations, for the combinations and cycles of romances that will become so popular in the thirteenth century.

One facet of *Partonopeu*'s innovation here can be grasped in the way the narrator ties the continuation to his own love story, once again intermingling story and frame. When he claims to know more and thus turns the marriage ending into a momentary suspension of action (10607-8), the narrator uses a ploy dear to Melior: he withholds knowledge from his beloved to gain power and control as much as possible the other's conduct. While the narrator's insertion of his own love story into the matter of romance offers a model for the variations explored in *Le Bel Inconnu* and *Florimont,*[18] he seems to go further than any of his followers in anticipating, on the one hand, the fusion of lyric and romance we will see in the *Roman de la Rose,* when the lyric "I" becomes the hero of his own romance, and, on the other, the multiplication of heroes that characterizes the prose cycles and the verse romances of multiple quests. That multiplication appears directly in the substitution of heroes announced in the epilogue: we could hear about the love stories of Anselot (a young squire who wanted to accompany Partonopeu into exile), Gaudin (the hero's companion at the tournament), and the Sultan Margaris (a rival for Melior's hand at the tournament). In the actual Continuation, Melior and Partonopeu will appear, but more as incidental figures than as principal characters; we are offered instead the inconclusive stories of Anselot and Margaris, neither one furnishing much happy closure in comparison with Melior and Partonopeu's love story.

This may, in fact, be a reflection of the way the narrator himself seems to take more and more of the limelight in the course of the Continuation—and he, unlike Partonopeu, has no happy ending to report for his own aspirations in love, which hover perhaps between Anselot's exile from a lady who loves him and the Sultan's definitive rejection by Melior. The narrator's own virtuoso performance in rhetorical play, his exploitation of different literary styles and genres, seems to displace our primary interest from the "what" to the "how" of the stories told. In Anselot's meeting with Partonopeu we see the narrator playing with the form of school debates, while Anselot's story itself is a kind of *lai* told in the first person. When the narrator changes to rhymed alexandrines for the epic part of the Margaris episode, his intervention about the difficulties of such a form, willingly assumed to increase the beauty of the ending and respond to his lady's command (1463-73), insistently calls attention to the writer's role and the story used as vehicle for his own love.

We may understand in this light why Margaris becomes a writer in the Continuation, as if the narrator projects himself more and more into his character—or vice versa (cf. Krueger, "Textuality," 66-69). In the narrative of the tournament, we already saw the Sultan as Partonopeu's counterpart. In fact, the degree of interest manifested in Margaris, not only by the narrator (e.g., 9553-8), but by Partonopeu himself who constantly admires his opponent and fears that he may be the better knight (e.g. 9449-56, 9563-74), seems to prepare our interest in the Sultan as a major character, even a rival hero, in the Continuation. It is then not without significance that Margaris shows his poetic talents more than his chivalric power when he returns as Melior's suitor.

This interaction between character and narrator serves to make the writer figure emerge as one of the heroes of *Partonopeu,* the beauty of whose art, as finely polished as his verses, is the fitting mirror in which to see Melior's and Partonopeu's incomparable beauty. That art and its power are nowhere more evident than in the romance's transformation of what is essentially the simple plot of a *lai,* whose kernel has been enormously amplified by fusion with a diversity of materials and traditions.[19] But *Partonopeu* does illustrate the usual romance pattern in its overall structure and, like Chrétien's romances, it grows through a series of analogues as its different parts anticipate, repeat, and reflect on each other. Consider the returns to the Ardenne forest: the structure of the Continuation, which introduces the "digression" of Anselot's story within the narration of Margaris' invasion, takes us back to the moment

when Partonopeu eluded Anselot in the forest—that is, it recalls the crisis episode in the middle of Partonopeu's story, when he returned to the very place where his adventure began in the opening hunt with King Clovis. There in the Ardenne, Partonopeu's story starts again, once he is found by Urraque, and proceeds through the tournament to the happy ending. In a similar pattern, the Continuation introduces a loop in the narrative: Anselot's spin-off story, initiated and suspended when the friends parted in the forest, is resumed when Partonopeu finds Anselot during a hunt near Chef d'Oire; through Anselot's own retelling, his story is now taken from the Ardenne to its unhappily suspended conclusion. The digression first interrupts and then returns us to the Sultan's invasion, as it replays Partonopeu's own story with a different ending. To the analeptic recapitulation of the main plot that we can thus discern in the Continuation correspond the genealogy's proleptic variations, which anticipate crucial elements of the major section (the themes of East-West movement, the beneficial deception of women, and the "fils a vilain" vs. beauty and blood).

These repetitions and variations remind us again of the romance's erotic rhythm which desires both ending and renewal of pleasure. Melior bases part of her original refusal to pardon Partonopeu on her horror before the prospect of an open-ended series of *mesprison*: if he has fallen again, after being pardoned the first time, Melior can but anticipate more and worse faults (4987-92). But the romancer shows himself less frightened of such openness. In fact, the second epilogue of ms. T closes with his announcement that he could write yet another book, this one about the lady herself (3927-30c). This projection functions more as praise of Passe-Rose than promise to write more, as the narrator anticipates the moment when he and the lady could finally become the main characters of their own book.

The romance thus ends *again* with the evocation of more—a possibility fulfilled in certain respects by the manuscript tradition itself, as it continued to rewrite and rework *Partonopeu,* not only in French, but through *translatio* into other languages and cultures.[20] *Partonopeu* sets a standard for beauty and pleasure, for experimentation in form and fusion, that becomes exemplary for the romancers who follow.

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Notes

1. Anthime Fourrier, *Le Courant réaliste dans le roman courtois en France au Moyen Age: I. Les Débuts (XII^e Siècle)* (Paris: Nizet, 1960), 315-17.
2. Arguments for or against the "authenticity" of the Continuation are inconclusive: see Fourrier, 316-17; K. Sneyders de Vogel, "La Suite du Parthénopeu de Blois et la version hollandaise," *Revue des Langues Romanes* 48 (1905): 5-29; *Partonopeu de Blois: A French Romance of the Twelfth Century,* ed. Joseph Gildea, D.S.A., 2 Vols. (Villanova, PA: Villanova Univ. Press, 1967), II, Pt. 2, 3. All quotations will be taken from this edition of the romance.
3. S. P. Uri, "Some Remarks on *Partonopeus de Blois,*" *Neophilologus* 37 (1953): 93.
4. Cf. Roberta L. Krueger, "The Author's Voice: Narrators, Audience and the Problem of Interpretation," *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes,* eds. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly and Keith Busby (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), 1, 125-29; "Textuality and Performance in *Partonopeu de Blois,*" *Essays: Critical Approaches to Medieval and Renaissance Texts,* ed. Peggy Knapp (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1985), III, 57-72.
5. "The Audience as Co-Creator of the First Chivalric Romances," *Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981): 17-18.
6. The well-known verses from B. N. 1450 are quoted by Alexandre Micha, *La Tradition manuscrite des romans de Chrétien de Troyes* (Geneva: Droz, 1966), 37.
7. Cf. R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies: A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1983), 80-81.
8. Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 347.
9. Douglas Kelly, "*Matiere* and *Genera dicendi* in Medieval Romance," *Yale French Studies* 51 (1974): 147-53.
10. Cf. Carole Berconici-Huard, "*Partonopeus de Blois* et la couleur byzantine," in *Images et signes de l'Orient dans l'Occident médiéval: Littérature et Civilisation* (Aix-en-Provence: CUERMA, 1982), 179-96.
11. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Ed. de Minuit, 1967), 203-34.
12. "The Art of Description," in *The Legacy of Chrétien de Troyes,* eds. Norris J. Lacy, Douglas Kelly and Keith Busby (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), I, 209-10.
13. For a more extended analysis, see the chapter on *Partonopeu* in my book, *Shaping Romance: Interpretation, Truth, and Closure in Twelfth-Century French Fictions* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming).
14. Just as Eneas' nobility is thus assured through his mother's praiseworthy *engin,* so Partonopeu's Merovingian descent will come through the female line, though presumably with no need for deception on his mother's part, since the poet's artifice supplies the invention here. For a study of the polyvalent *engin* in twelfth-century romance, see Robert W. Hanning, *The Individual in 12th Century Romance* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977), 105-38.
15. Cf. Robert W. Hanning, "Beowulf as Heroic History," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 5 (1974): 13-14.
16. "Wishfulfilment: The Social Function and Classification of Old French Romances," in *Court and Poet: Selected Proceedings of the Third Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1981), 129-34.
17. For an analysis of *Le Bel Inconnu,* which raises many of the issues explored here, see Laurence de Looze, "Generic Clash, Reader Response, and the Poetics of the Non-Ending in *Le Bel Inconnu,*" in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context. Proceedings of the 5th Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society,* eds. Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1990), 113-23.
18. Cf. John L. Grigsby, "The Narrator in *Partonopeu de Blois, le Bel Inconnu* and *Joufroi de Poitiers,*" *Romance Philology* 21 (May 1968): 536-45.
19. Cf. Catherine Hilton, "Convention and Innovation in *Partonopeu de Blois,*" Diss. Univ. of Massachusetts, 1984, 46-55.
20. See Fourrier, 317 n11, and Gildea, ed., II, Pt. 2, 12-13.