enables her to reach strong conclusions, for example, on the importance of
the *fils à vilain* motif. As one might expect, given her experience as a co-editor
of the text, Eley’s arguments are always based on thorough knowledge of the
manuscript tradition. The elucidation of transmission, and resulting analyses,
are admirable. Accordingly, the strongest moments in this book are when Eley’s
understanding of the tradition shapes her literary arguments, such as in the
chapter on Anselot’s story.

However, though Eley’s textual analysis is convincing, her assumptions about
textual production raised two questions for me. First, Eley is keen to show that
*Partonopeus de Blois* is generically innovative: she uses the models of nuclear
fission and fusion, borrowed from Matilda Bruckner’s *Shaping Romance*, and of
plate tectonics. Her approach assumes the prior existence of generic frameworks
that interact when texts challenge or fit into those frameworks. But as critics
such as Fredric Jameson have argued, genre derives more from critical readings,
and thus it frequently works retroactively. More thoroughgoing reference to
genre theory could have enabled sharper questions about how *Partonopeus de
Blois* might be read within medieval French (and Anglo-Norman and Italian)
corporuses. Second, given that Eley praises *Partonopeus de Blois* so much for its
dazzling, witty intertextuality, why does she argue that the author and narrator
cannot be separated, at least for the initial audience (p. 10)? The narrator, to
whom Eley indeed once refers as ‘lyric’ (p. 73), regularly intervenes to bemoan
his lack of romantic success, as an unrequited lover, compared with the lovers in
the plot. Eley sees this figure principally as dramatizing the relationship between
poet and patron. But could the writer be drawing the narrator’s character
consciously through the language of troubadour lyric, as with Lancelot in the
*Charrette*? Thus *Partonopeus de Blois* might be plausibly located within a tradition
of written characterization through lyric quotation that includes, for example,
interpolated lyric narratives, a step that might shed further light on the difficult
question of dating.

These questions, however, do not detract from Eley’s overall success in
finally giving *Partonopeus de Blois* the detailed treatment it richly deserves.
Eley’s enthusiasm for the text shines through; her analysis is warm and
thought-provoking. She concludes by suggesting that, as the text itself invited
continuation, this book will initiate critical dialogue about *Partonopeus de Blois*:
an exciting prospect indeed.

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Christine Ferlampin-Acher, ‘*Perceforest* et Zéphir: Propositions autour d’un récit
arthurien bourguignon’, Publications Romanes et Françaises CCLI (Geneva: Droz,

Christine Ferlampin-Acher, whose many articles have already done so much to
advance the study of the *Roman de Perceforest* – a long neglected late medieval
masterpiece, finally starting to get the critical attention it deserves – has now published a book that is sure to stimulate fruitful controversy and further research into *Perceforest* in particular, and the literary culture of fifteenth-century Burgundy in general. A central thesis of the book, though one that Ferlampin-Acher readily admits does not allow for definitive proof, is that *Perceforest* dates not from the mid-fourteenth but rather from the mid-fifteenth century; she goes so far as to propose David Aubert as the likely author, possibly with some input from Jean Wauquelin. In defence of this claim, Ferlampin-Acher offers a wealth of evidence of several different kinds: onomastic and topographic allusions to people and places important to the court of Philip the Good; possible influence from late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century texts; an ideological orientation, both political and religious, that corresponds far better to fifteenth-century Burgundy than to fourteenth-century Hainaut; quotidian details in the depiction of banquets, tournaments, weaponry, and other matters that likewise reflect fifteenth-century practices far more closely than those of the previous century. The analyses are dense and can be difficult to follow without a close knowledge of *Perceforest*, itself a dauntingly long and exceedingly rich and complex work. And at times the reader may feel that too much is made of certain supposed parallels that might be due to little more than coincidence or to the pervasive presence of stock motifs that recur throughout medieval literary traditions. Nonetheless, there is much here that is persuasive, indeed ingenious, and if nothing else it is impossible to deny that if *Perceforest* was originally composed in the fourteenth century for Guillaume II of Hainaut, as the narrator's fanciful account of the book's origins suggests, it was reworked very thoroughly indeed in the 1450s – perhaps even rewritten entirely from scratch – to produce the version that survives today.

A focal point for Ferlampin-Acher's analyses is Zephir, the shape-shifting *luiton* whose role in protecting British and particularly Scottish knights, and preparing the way for the advent of Christianity, the arrival of the Grail, and the rise of the Arthurian world, is so central throughout *Perceforest*. The detailed examination of Zephir's changing status, a fascinating exposition that takes account of folkloric, literary, philosophical, and theological traditions, constitutes an important and original contribution to the study of this idiosyncratic text and its participation in the literary and intellectual currents of late medieval culture. Ferlampin-Acher's wide-ranging study of Zephir is a cornerstone of her argument that *Perceforest* is consistent with the proto-humanistic culture of fifteenth-century Burgundy in its views on religious practices, its assessment of the supernatural and of the status of demons and witches, its positive valuation of procreative sexuality, and specifically of the role of women, as a motor of history, and its fascination with the world of antiquity. Rather than seeing *Perceforest* as the last gasp of the medieval Arthurian tradition, Ferlampin-Acher argues that it should be viewed as a sign of something new – a renewal of both *matière antique* and *matière de Bretagne*, with a religious and political orientation relevant to its times; indeed, as a kind of precursor to the imaginative world of Rabelais. In conclusion, she expresses the hope that her hypotheses, as yet unprovable, will provide the basis
for further investigations into the questions that she raises. It seems certain that, however future scholars may determine the question of Perceforest’s date and authorship, Ferlampin-Acher’s work has opened avenues of enquiry that are bound to inspire much further work.

S.H.


In this study, Anne Ibos-Augé offers a detailed taxonomy of thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century French texts containing lyric insertions, including analysis of character-types and narrative contexts with which they are associated, prosodic and other formal features, the vocabulary used to demarcate lyric insertions and to designate both performance and audience reception of the pieces, and analysis of melodies whenever possible. The decision to end the study with the *Rosarius* of c.1330 is justified by the changes that the use of lyric insertions underwent during the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; certainly the corpus as it stands is already very large, comprising some seventy-five courtly, devotional, and didactic texts of various genres (sermon, romance, *salut d’amour*, *fatras*, drama, etc.). While readily acknowledging the arbitrary and limited validity of any taxonomic system, she usefully divides the role played by lyric insertions into four broad categories: those that function as ‘divertissement’, portrayed as performed in the context of dancing or other festivities; those that serve a discursive function, acting as direct discourse in a dialogue between characters; those deployed by an author as exemplary formulations or to commemorate a particular poet; and those that serve a principally formal purpose, such as the refrains used as the basis for the *fatras* or to introduce themes discussed in sermons. This approach means that the same text may be discussed in two or more sections, which can work against the development of sustained readings of the lyric insertions within a given poem or authorial corpus; on the other hand, it does allow for detailed exploration of the technique of lyric insertion itself, and the endlessly varied ways in which a wide range of authors developed it. Equal attention is given to literary and musical analysis; although many texts containing lyric insertions lack musical notation in the surviving manuscripts, Ibos-Augé has tracked down a very large percentage of such melodies through exhaustive study of *chansonniers*. Her detailed examinations allow for some interesting points to emerge: for example, she points out that certain texts, particularly ones occurring earlier in the tradition, aimed for a kind of musical unity in their selection of lyric elements or their adaptation of pre-existing melodies, while others, particularly later ones, seem if anything to have striven for diversity and variation. Her findings are summed up in a series of tables that present a list of all texts in her corpus, giving formal,