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E pluribus unum?

On the Aesthetics of Latin-German Poetry in the *Carmina Burana*

Abstract

After a brief sketch of the literary dynamics of multiple authorship(s) in Medieval (Latin) literatures, the chapter focuses on a prominent, yet atypical phenomenon: the bilingual German-Latin poems among the *Carmina Burana*. These poems, it is argued, function within a principal dynamic of early and flexible transmission (or ‘wandering’) of single German stanzas unbound by individual authorship. As a reading of *Carmen Buranum* 169 (*Hebet sidus*) shows, these Latin poems characterized by their German final stanzas can be understood as learned interventions into the literary matrix of vernacular poetry, or *Minnesang*. Constellating two literary traditions in this way of marked plurality opens aesthetic spaces that are used to investigate from a critical perspective of learned clerical authors the tensions behind the loving subject of early German *Minnesang*.

Keywords

Medieval Latin Lyric, *Carmina Burana*, Walther von der Vogelweide, *Minnesang*, Medieval Authorship, German-Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages, Maccaronic Poetry

1.

At least against the background of modern systems and concepts of the literary, the question of ‘multiple authorship’ prompts a dual bewilderment. It undermines *eo ipso* the notion of there being one single creator of literary works, be he (or she) understood emphatically as an original genius or as in the biographical-historical sense of an author-subject. Where more than ‘the single’ author is recognized in the production of texts, there unfolds a multi-perspective dialectic that negates authorial claims to sole representation and that may transform them into a coexistence of authorizing entities – regardless of how these are conceived, and therefore especially when, as part of a broader concept of authorship, redactors, compilers, editors, and not least readers are

* Translated by Alexander Wilson. Quotations for which no other translation is cited have also been translated by Wilson.

(able to be) thought of as productive (co-)creators.¹ Multiple authorship thus refers to an intertwining, to something playful, to hierarchies in the production of literary texts, which dynamizes the status and the temporality of textuality and which opens up space for modes of aesthetics in which ruptures, boundaries, and relations are inscribed.

Yet this *a priori* deconstruction via pluralization of the author – of whom one has possibly taken leave for good but who nevertheless has been constantly mourned and whose resurrection has partly been achieved – represents only one side of the coin. This is because the question of multiple authorship also undermines precisely those positions through which the notion or myth of a single author with a claim to sole representation is usually called into question. If approaches such as those of Roland Barthes or Michel Foucault have dismissed the author in favour of the reception of a textual fabric or understood the author as an instance of exclusionary discursive mechanisms, the question of multiple authorship, in the sense of a conceptual rebound, gives rise to a dialectic dynamic, because the authorial individual is deprived as *prima causa* and as the origin of textuality and legitimacy on the one hand, but on the other is re-established as a necessary correlate of this deconstruction. After all, the question is a matter not only of deconstructive pluralization, but also of *authorship*, of the specific, distinct entities of production and legitimacy. The construction of diverse *auctores*, roles, and originators, which can hardly be thought of as indistinct, anonymous dimensions or factors, thus becomes an aspect of the dispersal into plural play. Crucial to the question of the conceptualization and the literary dynamics of multiple authorship is therefore not only the pluralization of the single author but also a dialectic between authorizing entities, the collective, and disempowerment on the one hand, and production, authorization, and legitimacy on the other. The aesthetics connected to multiple authorship – or rather, specifically established through it – thus derives its ‘different’ potential from its referentiality to this constitutive dialectic of the phenomenon.

2.

In the field of medieval Latin literature – the subject of these considerations – this dialectic, the play of entities, does not constitute an unknown entity.² In the literary

1 For general scholarship on the subject of ‘multiple authorship,’ refer to the introduction to this volume, especially section 2. On the topic of authorship in general, see e.g. the important edited collections by Henkes/Saller/Richter 2000; Detering 2002.

2 The question of authors and authorship was developed in the field of medieval studies especially in the context of vernacular philologies; see. e.g. the medievalist contributions in Haug/Wachinger 1992; Andersen et al. 1998; Fohrmann/Kasten/Neuland 1999; Meier/Wagner-Egelhaaf 2011; Meier/Wagner-Egelhaaf 2014. From the field of Romance studies, see Hult 1989 (Chrétien de Troyes) or Ascoli 2008 (Dante). Contributions firmly on Middle Latin are rather thin on the

culture of the Latin Middle Ages in particular, forms and modes of multiple authorship were admittedly not the rule, but nor were they a disruptive exception, as they were a consequence and correlate of the specific material, institutional, and also partly political implications of medieval Latin literature(s). First to be mentioned is the scope for post-authorial intervention generated in almost every respect by the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages, which rarely resulted in the *variance* celebrated at times in scholarship but which nonetheless opens up a theoretical potential for retextualization and thus a fundamental cultural matrix for collective, collaborative, plural, and often playfully fractured forms of authorship, of which the Latin Middle Ages was itself also aware.³ Numerous genres – such as hagiography and also sacred lyric poetry – are considerably influenced by this pluralization; this is in turn linked causally to religious, political, and institutional change. The *vita* of the saint is rewritten – however (un-)fractured or (un-)marked – to accommodate his spiritual radicalism, to establish religious norms, or to (de-)legitimize institutional and political claims in the sense of an agenda negotiated on the auratic subject; in a comparable way, sacred texts, such as the liturgical sequence, are rearranged, expanded, or abbreviated to address liturgical change or to mark religious identity.

As an institutional correlate of this ubiquitous practice, there can also be determined the production process in the medieval scriptorium,⁴ in which several entities contributed to the manufacturing of a text: a fundamentally collaborative practice that time and again goes beyond the simple collective, material fabrication of a manuscript. Thus the works of Hildegard von Bingen or Mechthild of Magdeburg,⁵ for example, in which central (male) figures from the sphere of the monastery and the church were significantly involved, show that dimensions of content and questions of authority and legitimacy were also affected in this respect.⁶

Partly connected to this, it can be seen time and again in the context of the staging of authorship by individual authors – be it Rupert von Deutz, Hildegard von Bingen, or Mechthild of Magdeburg – that they specifically do not regard or construct themselves as monadic author-subjects but situate themselves in relation to other entities – writers,

ground; central are the works of Alastair Minnis on the theory of authorship (see Minnis 1984 and Minnis / Scott 2003), as well as the works of Christel Meier-Staubach alongside the important considerations of Müller 1995, who contextualize the specific roles of authors; see e.g. Meier-Staubach 2000; Meier-Staubach 2015; and, in a broader sense, Bezner 2001.

3 See, for instance, Müller 1995, p. 27 (with reference to Bonaventura's theory): "The author is not the creator *ex nihilo*; they participate in a discourse that began much earlier and merely place their own accents by adding more or less of their 'own' material.

4 See e.g. Cohen-Mushlin 1994.

5 On Mechthild of Magdeburg, see also the contribution by Annette Gerok-Reiter in this volume, pp. 3–29.

6 See e.g. Poor 2004.

confidants, and not least God and the Holy Spirit, a practice that correlates with the theory of the sacral text developed in many biblical commentaries and which is associated, in the context of a Christian culture, with special forms of legitimacy and authorization.⁷ It is thus hardly surprising that, last but not least, a large number of relevant medieval writer reflecting on notions of the author and authorship devote themselves precisely to the problem of there being several productive entities in the process of developing and manufacturing literary texts. Against the background of scholastically transformed Aristotelian epistemes, Thomas Aquinas and Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Aegidius Romanus, and Henry of Ghent discuss how the relationship of plural entities – from God, to the human author, to the scribe, the compiler, and the parchment – can be thought of specifically as a complex of causes and authorizations.⁸ They thus open up a contemporary background for reflection in which the intertwining of different authorizing entities became conceivable, even the norm.

All this is not to say that there was not also, for instance, a clear awareness of the differentiation of authorizing dimensions, and also of authorship(s), in this field of discourse. Yet the conceptual and aesthetic aspects of this pervasive, fundamental matrix of multiple authorship, located in the broader field of ecclesiastical Latin literature, have not been systematically explored or described, either generally or with a view to individual authors or phenomena. In general terms, this would surely concern a ‘different’ poetics and aesthetics of multiple authorship, differentiated institutionally, historically, and with regard to the dynamics of transmission, in which the question of a new dimensioning of authorship within the framework of a dialectic of individual and collective, as well as of individual manufacture and supra-individual legitimacy, should be in the foreground – and this always against the background that in the Latin Middle Ages, concepts of non-plural, individual authorization and authorship also seemed to develop within the dialectical field, within the field of tension with collective practice and a collective construction of legitimacy.⁹ On the whole, multiple authorship therefore already proves itself *prima facie* to be a materially rich and conceptually productive field – indeed, not *eo ipso* as a disruptive mode, but as a fundamental one. One may say, pointedly, that the precarious status of plural production inherent in the modern discourse of author and authorship collapses in the Middle Ages.

7 On this topic, see especially the works of Meier-Staubach 2000; Meier-Staubach 2015.

8 Relevant here are Minnis / Scott 2003, especially pp. 165–276, as well as Minnis 1984, pp. 73–117; see also Ascoli 2008.

9 On this subject, see e.g. Ascoli 2008.

3.

For this very reason, the following contribution is dedicated to an area in which the pluralization of authorship in many ways poses a challenge and even an irritation with aesthetic potential, especially against the background of the medieval dimension. The focus of the following elaboration is on the secular, or rather the non-spiritual, lyric poetry of the Latin Middle Ages, more precisely on Middle Latin love poetry, and thus on a genre in which there is a not insignificant number of texts but for which there are hardly any authors.¹⁰ Unlike in the vernacular correlates of the genre, biographical author-subjects or authorial roles do not emerge here either in the texts themselves or in transmission through processes of attribution. No Walther von der Vogelweide or Heinrich von Morungen; no Jaufre Rudel; no Dante; and likewise no *accessus ad auctores*, *vidas*, or other author-centred collections. Even those generic author-subjects known as ‘archpoets’ or ‘goliaths’ from other genres of non-spiritual Latin poetry, i.e. from moral-satirical poetry and from goliardic poetry, are completely absent here (with a few insignificant exceptions). Where authors must have produced texts, yet are not marked as authors – be that intratextually or outside the literary text – the question of multiple authorship becomes precarious and, it seems, cannot be posed at all with regard to the entire genre, except in the sense of the possible retexualization and *variance* that can also be fruitfully discussed in Middle Latin love poetry.

Of course, no rule exists without exception, and it is precisely this exception that generates the potential to cause irritation, which makes the dialectical question of multiple authorship and aesthetics so conceptually interesting, both as regards modern and medieval forms and concepts of lyrical authorship. The phenomenon in question can be illustrated by taking a closer look at fol. 68^r of the *Codex Buranus* (Fig. 1), the most important collection of secular poetry of the Latin Middle Ages.¹¹

The poem illustrated here has an opening stanza distinguished by a large initial (“H”) and by alternately rubricated uppercase letters (“E-B-E-T”), followed by three further Latin stanzas – henceforth marked with smaller *litterae notabiliores* (I[n] – T[empus] – T[abet]) – before the poem ends with a final stanza now composed in Middle High German (*Roter munt*). The extremely meticulous scribes and redactors of the manuscript clearly expressed the notion that we are dealing here with *one* poem by not separating or differentiating the German stanza, which stems from a poem by Walther von der Vogelweide, from the preceding stanzas through the layout, despite its somewhat

10 On the genre, see Dronke 1968; Dronke 1975; Bezner 2021b.

11 On the *Codex Buranus*, see *Carmina Burana* (eds. Hilka/Schumann), II, 1, pp. 1*–98* and Klemm 1998. A list of the rich literature on the *Carmina Burana* will not be provided here; readers are referred to the introduction and bibliography in *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann), pp. 897–923, 1391–1408, and the study by Cardelle de Hartmann 2014, pp. 5–16.

larger initial.¹² This correlates with the stanza following the German one on the next, unillustrated page clearly being marked as the beginning of a new poem by the large initial and a paratext (*Item aliud unde supra*).

This plural construct is no exception in the *Codex Buranus*. Among the 131 love poems, i.e. in the largest of the three thematic sections of the collection,¹³ there are 45 poems that present an additional stanza in German – and these are distributed across various subgroups in the section.¹⁴ A third of the love poems in the most important codex of non-spiritual lyric poetry in the Latin Middle Ages are thus hybrid constructs, whose multiple authorship or supra-individual structure inevitably becomes a textual moment through this linguistic rupture.

Among the German stanzas, we find authors such as Walther von der Vogelweide and Neidhart, although these are the exception: only a small number of the additional stanzas are transmitted in parallel. Primarily without a known author, they indicate – as Franz-Josef Worstbrock, in particular, has pointed out – early, otherwise “hidden layers” of German *Minnesang*, which are to be located less in the paradigm of high *Minne*, but rather bear decidedly sensual traits referring to nature, and which are, as a rule, characterized thematically by a triad of spring, joy (especially dance), and community.¹⁵

This is a peculiar case of double authorship, in which two literary traditions or modes of authorization not only act and are intertwined with one another intertextually, but are also assembled and marked as two distinct linguistic and literary complexes, i.e. are displayed in their multiplicity. How does this phenomenon occur? What forms of multiple authorship are at stake here? Which aesthetic dimensions result in this interpenetration?

Since the beginning of the study of the *Codex Buranus*, scholarship has debated this phenomenon – and, notwithstanding further studies, four positions and conceptual clusters, which need not be further nuanced in the context of this contribution, can be distinguished:

1. ‘The struggle for the origin’

The phenomenon of the bilingual poems attracted great interest immediately after the discovery of the *Codex Buranus* in 1803 by Christoph Freiherr von Aretin. It is hardly surprising that philology in the 19th and early 20th centuries focused mostly on questions of priority and origin, which it attempted to answer especially through formal analysis of metre and rhyme schemes. The voices

12 See Sayce 1992, p. 235.

13 On the materiality and structure of the *Codex Buranus*, see *Carmina Burana* (eds. Hilka/Schumann), II, 1, pp. 1*–68*; Wachinger 2011a; *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann), pp. 905–914; Cardelle de Hartmann 2014, pp. 7–16; Bezner 2021a, especially pp. 91–95.

14 For an account of this phenomenon, see Schumann 1926 as well as Edwards 2000. For the subgroups, see e.g. Wachinger 2011a.

15 See Worstbrock 2001.

arguing for the priority of the German stanzas predominated; incidentally, an interpretive debate is found only in this paradigm.¹⁶ The debate continues *mutatis mutandis* into the more recent present.¹⁷

2. 'Learned irony'

Ulrich Müller's stimulating work, in particular, argues for a radical paradigm shift. In this respect, he attempted to show that the transition from Latin to German offered untapped potential for the interpretation of the poems and was connected particularly with irony and irritation.¹⁸

3. 'Learned play – considered collecting'

The most fundamental contribution to the problem was written as a reaction to the thesis of ironic refraction and comes from Burghart Wachinger.¹⁹ He was able to demonstrate that the 19th-century question of the codex's origins could not be solved concretely, as it is probable that there are borrowings in both directions. Moreover, he proved that while the argument in favour of irony could potentially not be ruled out for certain poems, it was implausible in many cases. Without interpreting individual poems, he subsequently concentrated on the by-then-current literary-historical interpretation of the overall phenomenon, for which he took into account two factors: the plan of the editors of the *Codex Buranus* to collect diverse examples, which led to the integration of the German *Minnesang* into the Latin material that otherwise originated in France; and the learned pleasure of a circle of clerics who were in principle acquainted with the two languages and literary traditions and who could appreciate them as part of a sophisticated culture of entertainment. The function of the German stanzas was thus essentially formal; it concerned the indication of the melody. According to Wachinger, semantic dynamics are not to be excluded but are ultimately not essential.

4. *Accessus ad auctores* – other

Finally, a Latinist perspective was adopted on the basis of Wachinger's studies by Ulrich Kühne, who understood the Latin stanzas in analogy to the *accessus ad auctores*, where he took up the old observation that many of the conclusive German stanzas had generally been transmitted as the opening stanzas of German poems, or that this at least appeared to be the case. In this understanding, the Latin stanzas introduced a learned circle of *clerici* who were not especially familiar with the vernacular to the vernacular tradition.²⁰

Following on from these studies, but at the same time complementing them, the rudiments of a different approach²¹ that gives more attention to the *interpretation* of the plural constructs, and which is connected to two premises that differ from previous scholarship, will be presented in the course of, and as a consequence of the issues posed in, this contribution. Firstly, scholarship to date has too strongly assumed an author-centred

16 See e.g. the studies by Martin 1876; Schreiber 1894; Ehrenthal 1891; Wallensköld 1893; Lundius 1907; and then Beatie 1967 and Janota 2000 (Refrain).

17 See e.g. Sayce 1992; Bertelsmeier-Kierst 2000; and Hope 2020, pp. 383–385, for summarization and elaboration, as well as now especially Stolz 2020.

18 See Müller 1980; Müller 1981; Müller 1988. Also relevant is Heinen 1974 (though this is qualified in Heinen 1999).

19 Wachinger 2011a and Wachinger 2011b.

20 See Kühne 2000.

21 A deeper engagement with this subject than is possible in this context will follow in a different publication.

view of the transmission of German texts, which has only recently begun to be corrected.²² Regardless of complex questions and processes of attribution, and without putting into question the existence of author-subjects like Walther von der Vogelweide, contemporary transmission is *de facto* open to the extent that the German poems, in particular, did not possess a fixed number or order of stanzas, and thus display a textual variance that should be central to the modern understanding of the genre of *Minnesang*.²³ This can be illustrated, for example, by Walther von der Vogelweide's so-called *Mailed* (May Song; L 51,13: "Muget ir schouwen"),²⁴ one stanza of which is found in the bilingual poem presented in Fig. 1 above. Apart from this presence in the *Codex Buranus*, six stanzas in the sequence I – II – III – IV – V – VI survive in the famous Manesse manuscript of songs²⁵ (manuscript C), under Walther's name; four stanzas in the order II – I – III – VI in manuscript A, under the name Leuthold von Seven; and only a single one (V) in manuscript S. The consequence of this fact – this reality of what represented 'one' poem – is rarely drawn out. In their respective versions, the poems can be understood as 'works' on a theme, as diverse answers to a problem area; texts become a shared space of possibility. The matter has thus less to do with *variance* in the deconstructivist sense, but rather with circulation as a space and index of a semantic spectrum in the broadest sense. A poem like *Carmen Buranum* 169, which ends with stanza I of the *Mailed*, can be allocated to this (play-)space, representing a manifestation – albeit a special one – of the *variance* that is also visible in the area of purely Middle High German transmission.

Secondly, earlier scholarship on the *Codex Buranus* has overvalued the taxonomic-distributive dimension and considered it too much in isolation. It is to be taken for granted that the redactors were interested in a well-organized arrangement. Thus Paul Lehmann and Bernhard Bischoff already referred to the moral dimensioning of the often transgressive material through poetry and thus defined a semantic level in the sense of one or even several macrostructures. Carmen Cardelle de Hartmann deepened their complexity by pointing out comprehensively constructed textual echoes, parallels, and contrasts, and postulated a general dialectic of morality and immorality as a central semantic interest.²⁶ In addition, it turns out that this semantic level is not only to be seen in relation to the moral problem of poems that are thematically precarious in essence but can also be grasped as a moment of an overarching logic of dialectical negotiation.²⁷ There were a number of means at the disposal of the redactors to enrich the

22 Pivotal here – also with a view to this chapter's subject – is the study by Kellner 2018.

23 See Kellner 2018, especially pp. 18–31.

24 Walther von der Vogelweide: Ton 28, pp. 190–192 [cited in the following as Song 28]. See the commentary by Kasten 1995; for interpretation, e.g. Bauschke-Hartung 2011; for a general introduction to Walther, e.g. Brunner / Neureiter-Lackner 1996.

25 Große Heidelberger Liederhandschrift (Codex Manesse); on this subject, see e.g. Kuhn 1980.

26 See Cardelle de Hartmann 2014, pp. 68–70.

27 On this topic and the following, see Bezner 2021a.

conceptual dimension of the individual poems and to produce overarching themes and dynamics. Through the tactical placement of key poems, deliberate rewriting, and specific sequencing and rhythmization within individual series, they therefore developed a practice of establishing constellations that generated complex semantic dynamics and was thus not just distributively oriented. Put simply, poems were arranged in the *Codex Buranus* in order to enrich dialectically the discussion of the themes and questions posed by individual poems.

The idea that it could be useful to read the rare phenomenon of bilingual poems not only formally, but also in the context of a principally open matrix of transmission, both in relation to interpretive and aesthetic issues and as an aspect of an overarching material semantics of the codex, will be demonstrated using an example – the aforementioned *Carmen Buranum* 169.

4.

4.1. *Carmen Buranum* 169

Carmen Buranum (CB) 169, with the incipit ‘*Hebet sidus*,’²⁸ is part of a group of four poems in all – though they are not transmitted together in the codex – which have always been regarded as belonging together,²⁹ and which are closely incorporated into the thematic and motivic logic of the respective subgroups of the codex.³⁰ Like the other representatives of the group, CB 169 is also considered idiosyncratic; as Otto Schumann writes, “stylistically, the songs [...] have in common a propensity toward rare words; unusual, partly sought-after, not always entirely comprehensible idioms; and peculiar images.”³¹ As can be seen from the beginning of CB 169, this undeniable linguistic idiosyncrasy evidently also conceals ingenuity and intellectual complexity:³²

28 *Carmen Buranum* 169 is edited in (a) *Carmina Burana* (eds. Hilka/Schumann), I, 2, pp. 285 f.; (b) *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann), pp. 554–556 (text) as well as pp. 1177–1180 (commentary); and (c) online under M Namenl/68r 1, in: *Lyrik des deutschen Mittelalters*, URL: <http://www.ldm-digital.de/show.php?lid=636&mode=0x600> (last accessed: 3 December 2024). See also the edition (building on Vollmann) with a modern German translation and important notes by Heinen 1999, pp. 9–15. Besides the commentaries mentioned above, interpretations and discussions can be found in Dronke 1968, pp. 313–318; Heinen 1999, pp. 9–15; and now also Hope 2020, esp. pp. 378–391.

29 See *Carmina Burana* (eds. Hilka/Schumann), I, 2, pp. 256 f. This concerns the poems CB 151, 165, 168, and 169. A study of the group is in preparation.

30 On this subject, see especially Hope 2020, pp. 385–391.

31 See *Carmina Burana* (eds. Hilka/Schumann), I, 2, pp. 256.

32 The text – with variations marked in the following – is cited following the edition *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann). Unless otherwise noted, translations from Latin correspond to the author’s trans-

Hebet Sydus leti uisus
 cordis nubilo,
 tepet oris mei risus.
 carens iubilo
 iure mereo:
 occultatur nam propinqua,
 cordis virgo floret in qua
 totus hereo.³³

In Amoris hec chorea
 cunctis prenitet,
 cuius nomen a Phebea
 luce renitet
 et pro speculo
 seruit solo; illam uolo,
 eam colo nutu solo
 in hoc seculo.

The star of once-cheerful eyes fades
 through clouds in my heart,
 the smile of my mouth, tired
 without rejoicing;
 I am sad, and rightly so:
 she hides herself, my heart's
 confidant, the girl, the flower,
 to whom I am entirely attached.

In Cupid's round dance
 she outshines them all – she
 on whose names it shines
 from Phoebus' light,
 and who serves as a mirror
 to the earth.³⁴ Yes, I want her,
 I adore her, at the slightest nod,
 here in this world.

lations in the German original of this chapter. Walsh's edition and translation of *Love Lyrics from the Carmina Burana* has been consulted.

- 33 The following is a variation from the edition used, *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann): *7 cordis vigor floret in qua* B, Vollmann; emendation F.B.
- 34 The formulation *et pro speculo / seruit solo* could also be rendered as 'and solely serves as a mirror,' perhaps a deliberate ambiguity that could become evident in the context of the subtle disempowerment of the statement (see also the following explanations of this poem in this chapter).

Unlike most of the love poems, CB 169 does not begin with the typical opening triad of spring, joy, and community, but with its opposite: a kind of 'depression' for the lover. Thus, for example, the word *tepere*, used in the poem, is described in the Ovidian catalogue of love as the opposing emotional state to love (*amor*): *seu tepet, sive amat*, as it says in the *Amores*.³⁵ The absence of rejoicing – *carens iubilo* – also evokes a poetological note via the word *iubilus*; at the beginning of the section of love poems, this very word (*jubilus*) is used as a generic term for love poetry.³⁶ The muted tone of the dominant vowels *e*, *u*, and *o* accords with this. The initial image of the 'fading star of once-cheerful eyes,' explained by Schumann as an idiosyncrasy, may in turn merge two intertextual horizons (which have thus far been overlooked): the fading of the star of Venus (!) in Lucan,³⁷ and Plato's theory of sight, according to which the light of day coalesces with the faculty of vision to generate the images that we see, while the all-darkening night leads to the fading of the visual function to produce the images of dreams.³⁸ In the poem, the absence of the beloved is thus associated with the absence of light, with darkness. A star associated with Venus fades; the gaze becomes blurred.

This level of imagery is carried forward in a contrastive manner in stanza II, where the memory of the beloved in the round dance is conceived as the outshining of other girls, while her name is associated with a mirror and compared with the shining of the sun onto the earth. The comparison comes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it is related to the radiant eyes of the nymph Salmacis.³⁹ Not atypical for the staging of speakers in Latin love poetry, there is created through this intertext a contrastive dimension overlaying the text. As the only one of the naiads who is specifically not asexual, but rather vain and indulgent, Salmacis, with her clinging desire, drags the innocent Hermaphroditus into the abyss by merging with him so that they become a hermaphrodite.⁴⁰ Following this subtext, anyone who 'wants' this beloved as insistently as the speaker is doomed. Upon the speaker's

illam uolo,
eam colo nutu solo
in hoc seculo.

35 See Ovid: *Amores* II,2, 53 f.

36 For a discussion of this consideration, see Carmina Burana (ed. Vollmann), pp. 1000 f.

37 See Lucan: *Bellum Civile* I,661 f.: [...] *Venerisque salubre / sidus hebet* [...].

38 See Plato: *Timaeus* 45 D (trans. Calcidius): [...] *qui visus vocatur* [...] *hebet* [...].

39 See Ovid: *Metamorphoses* IVa 347 ff. (Salmacis): [...] *lumina nymphae / non aliter quam cum puro nitidissimus orbe / Opposita speculi referitur imagine Phoebus*.

40 See Ovid: *Metamorphoses* 4,285–388. The relationship to Heloise, suggested by Dronke 1968, pp. 313–318, on the basis of this passage, is not very persuasive; for proof of this, see the commentary to Carmina Burana (ed. Vollmann), p. 1178.

Yes, I want *her*,
 I adore *her*, at the slightest nod,
 here in this world.

thus falls a shadow that is inherent in the negatively connoted *totus hereo* of stanza I. His perception of his beloved evidently has another side, which is articulated in the intertextual unconsciousness of his speech.

This ambivalence continues imperceptibly in the third stanza, in which the speaker laments the time of his daily loneliness:

Tempus queror iam diurne
 solitudinis,
 qui furabar ui nocturne
 aptitudinis
 oris basia,
 a quo stillat cynamomum
 et rimatur cordis domum
 dulcis cassia.⁴¹

Now, I complain of the daily
 loneliness,
 from which, in the violence
 of a suitable night,
 I stole kisses from her mouth,
 from which cinnamon drips,
 and the sweet smell of cassia
 covers the house of my heart.

The contrast of day and night is again central here, although this articulation of desire also becomes more multilayered on closer reading. In this verse, a clerical lover ostensibly laments, with echoes of the Song of Songs,⁴² the lost time of a now-blurred day in which no sexual union occurred. But why the use of the imperfect in *furabar*? Does it express the temporal duration of the encounter or just the attempt, the volition? The seemingly prosaic phrase *vi nocturne aptitudinis*, whose connotations are difficult to express in translation, is also astonishing. Thus, the term *aptitudo* ('fit') can refer to a 'physical connection,' to a 'concord,' to a 'suitable opportunity,' or to 'aptitude.' Yet the *locus classicus* for the word – rare in itself, and especially in the register of (Latin) lyrical language – is Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora* (752 D), where the

41 The philological discussion of the reading *quo* of *Codex Buranus* (see *Carmina Burana* [Vollmann], p. 1179) cannot be outlined here.

42 See Song of Solomon 6:9 with Vollmann 1987, p. 1181.

fit (*aptitudo*) invoked in the poem is contrasted with a connection, marked by the word *vis*, by means of coercion and violence.⁴³ In the poem, however, *aptitudo* and *vis* are not set against each other, but rather merged into the strange juncture *vi nocturne aptitudinis*. How does the word *vis*, with its undertones of coercion and violence, comport with the supposed fit and affection of the situation? Did the speaker want to seize kisses by force (as is commonly thematized in comparable poems)? Does he yearn for nocturnal dominance, cloaked by the redundant praise for the sweetness of a cinnamon-scented mouth?

In his account, however, the beloved also ‘melts away’ – as the beginning of stanza IV reads – without any hope of comforting release; the lament over the fading of her youth thereby reinforces the latent aggressive dimension of the formulation (*tabere*: ‘to melt away, flow away’). For the speaker, in any case, it is subsequently a matter of removing the distance to his beloved:

[...]
 tanti spatii
 intercisio
 annulletur, ut segura
 adiunctiuis prestet iura
 hec diuisio!

 May a large spatial
 separation
 be annulled, so that
 this partition
 grant legal security to those
 to be united!

The language is prosaic, technical, judicial. The doubled negation of an ‘annulment of separation,’ along with the terms *intercisio* and *divisio*, produces, against the tenor of what has been said, a continuous mood of separation, with the *segura iura* as its healing, probably referring to the emergence of marriage;⁴⁴ previously (only) a relative of the heart (*propinqua cordis*), the beloved is now apparently supposed to become a wife. The

43 See Boethius: *Commentarium in Analytica Posteriora*, in: *Patrologia Latina* 64, 752D: *necessitas autem est duplex, haec quidem secundum naturam et aptitudinem, haec vero violenta et contra aptitudinem* (‘Necessity thus exists in a twofold way; the one side is natural and suitable, the other violent and unsuitable.’ Not attested in the *Carmina Burana* [ed. Vollmann]).

44 The reference to the “private legal” problem of “loss of pertinence,” which has been raised over and over since Vollmann’s commentary (see *Carmina Burana* [ed. Vollmann], p. 1179) and which presupposes or asserts a homology of the terms “*adiunctivis*,” “*adiunctis*,” and “*adiacentibus*,” cannot be truly persuasive in view of the layer of meaning for *adiunctivis* that has been ignored; see on this subject Heinen 1999, pp. 12f.

formulation expressing the security gained in this way in double negation, through the abolition of a distance, generates the linguistic dominance of the very separation that is to be abolished: a renewed subtext that counteracts what is said, hoped for, and desired by the speaker, or at least makes it more complex than is expressed in the apodictic formulation. The final German verse then follows this wish (Fig. 1):

Roter munt, wie du dich swachest!
 la din lachin sin!
 scheme dich, swenne du so lachest
 nach deme schaden din!
 dest niht wolgetan.
 owi so verlornere stunde,
 sol von minnelichen munde
 solich unminne ergan!

After the partly reflective, partly downcast tone of the previous stanzas, there now follows a direct address, which is linked to humiliation and criticism. The beloved, whose radiant beauty was previously praised, now no longer simply ‘hides herself’ (cf. stanza I, l. 6: *occultatur*), but is perceived as derisive and derogatory; the reference to the ‘red mouth’ (*roter munt*) connects the perceived insult to her sexual attractiveness (which evidently does not lead to the speaker’s gratification). The insult then develops into a threat that oscillates between moralizing pressure (*scheme dich*; ‘shame on you’) and violence (*nach deme schaden din*; ‘to your detriment’). By the end, it becomes a complaint shimmering between self-pity and despair concerning the *unminne* of the beloved in lost time. Through the change of language, there undoubtedly emerges a rupture, whose connection to the Latin poetry becomes clear through reading the other stanzas of the *Mailed* not transmitted here.

By contrast, the version passed down under the name Leuthold von Seven contains only four stanzas (II – I – III – VI). While ‘the tenor’ of this version is aimed in a similar direction, “the song, however, [omits] those stanzas that address the lady’s irritating laughter and its effect on the singer. As a result, a crucial point of the song by Walther is dropped, and the song becomes superficial in contrast to the version in C.”⁴⁵ One could say pointedly that this version writes the fracture between the affect and the inner attitude of the singer and the lady out of the poem, in favour of a more topical, flirtatiously wooing subjectivity on the part of the speaker, and thus transforms the poem: a neutralizing transformation that appears over and over in the transmission of medieval lyric poetry, a semantic ‘labour’ on a difficulty underlying the whole spectrum of the poem.

The version in the *Codex Buranus* can thereby be considered the third version. It is conspicuous that the Latin and German texts (in C) are already linked in several

45 Kellner 2018, p. 335.

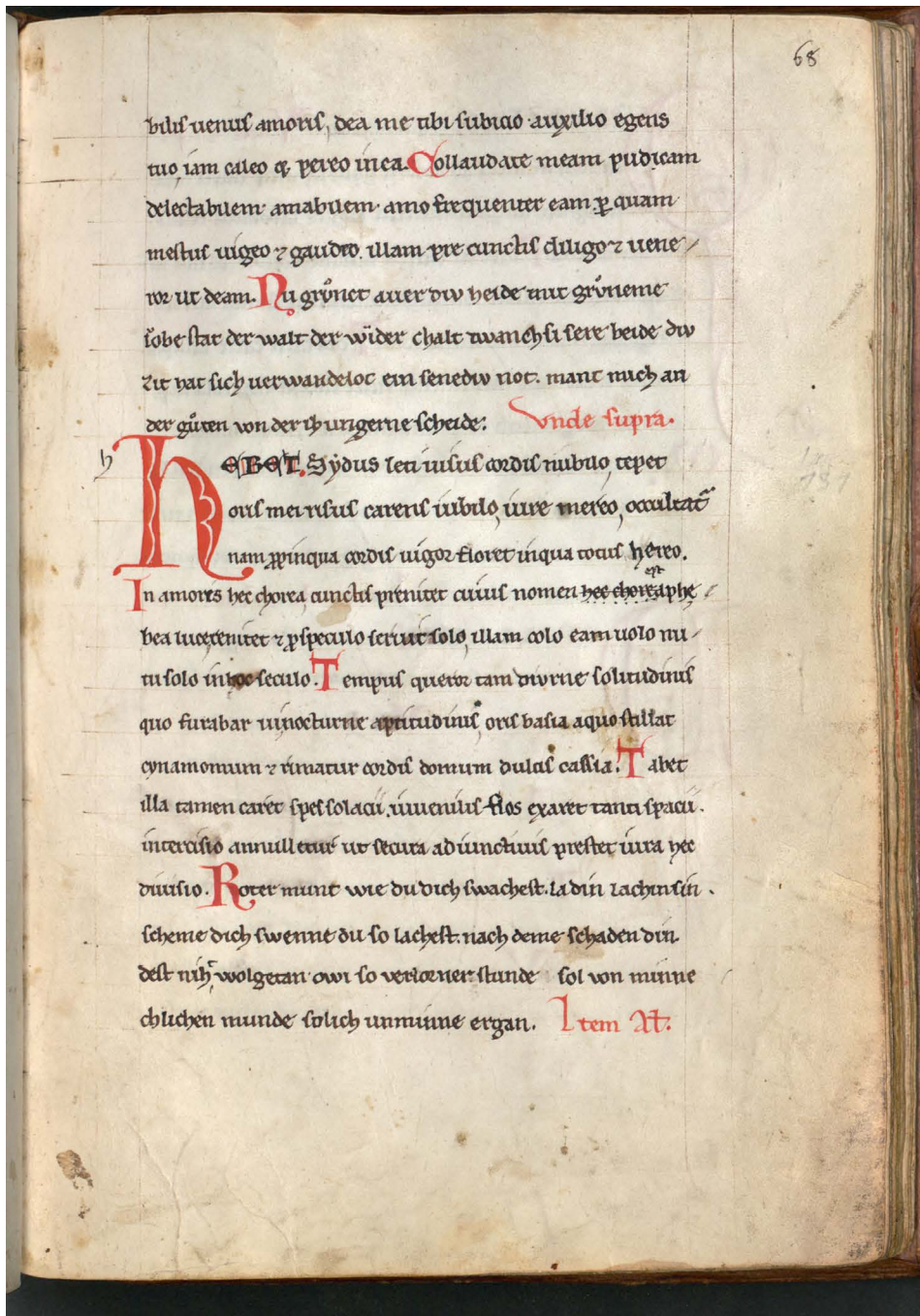


Fig. 1. Carmen Buranum 169. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Munich, Clm 4660 ('Codex Buranus'), fol. 68r.

respects.⁴⁶ For instance, two specific details or formulations from the Latin text and the stanza transmitted in the *Codex Buranus*, which are not to be understood generically, refer to each other:

1. The comparatively idiosyncratic Latin expression *tepet oris mei risus* refers to the core statement of Walther's *Roter munt, wie du dich swachest! / la di lachen sin!*, but now in reference to the speaker: it almost seems as if the speaker's smile were the formulated consequence of 'nach dem schaden min.' The lover's mouth is also addressed in stanza III, ll. 5–8.
2. A second connection results from the respective complaints about temporality: Walther's *ow so verlornen stunde* corresponds to the formulation *Tempus queror iam diurne / solitudinis* (stanza III, ll. 1–2). The lament of the learned speaker about the apparently subsequent period of loneliness in stanza III does not seem like a translation but rather like a concretization of the statement of the German speaker in the *Mailed*.

References of this kind are also found in other bilingual poems. They clearly point to a drive to interlock, to an effort to bind together these texts with multiple authors, and thus represent the textual correlate to the material unity of the layout. In order to answer the central question arising from this of how this alternative evocation of the inner world of the *Mailed*'s speaker could be understood, it is necessary to take a brief look at Song 28.

4.2. Walther von der Vogelweide, Song 28 (*Mailed*)⁴⁷

Interestingly, stanza I (following C) of the famous song⁴⁸ explicitly addresses itself to 'priests and layfolk' (*pfaffen unde leien*), thus already including a clerical audience. With the continuation in stanzas II and III, the marvels and delights of May in particular are sketched out: its pervasive potency; the rejuvenating magical power emanating from it; the joy elicited in dance and play; the harmony that it implies. Even the rivalry of the flowers 'on the meadow' (*uf dem anger*, stanza III) proceeds in a friendly, rather than hostile, agon; separateness does not lead to hatred.⁴⁹ The deictic language of the repeated evocations of spring is connected with the idea of an affective collective, from

46 On this subject (although they are diametrically opposed in their assessment), see Vollmann's commentary in *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann), p. 1180, and Heinen 1999, pp. 10–15.

47 A complete bibliography on Walther's poem is not provided here. Important for this context are the studies by Heinen 1974 and Heinen 1999, as well as Kellner 2018, pp. 331–337.

48 Song 28, stanza I: *Muget ir schouwen, waz dem meien / wonders ist beschert? / seht an pfaffen, seht an leien, / wie daz allez vert. / Grôz ist sîn gewalt, / in weiz, ob er zouber kunne: / swar er vert in sîner wunne, / dân ist nieman alt.*

49 E.g. Song 28, stanza III, ll. 1–4: *Wol dir, meie, wie dû scheidest / allez âne haz! / wie wol dû die bluomen kleidest / und die heide baz!*

which no one could wish to leave at the cost of losing their cheerfulness.⁵⁰ In characteristic manner, the gaze is directed in the fourth stanza through the apostrophe (transmitted in the *Carmen Buranum*) to the mouth of the young woman, who here (as elsewhere) is addressed as ‘lady’ (*frouwe*), and who thus tends to be elevated or flattered with regard to the social context of the evoked community. The pointedly urging questions and reproaches exert clear pressure on the lady, who, following the implication, refuses to partake in the pleasures offered by May: ‘Where do you get this nerve? [...] If you treat me ungraciously, then you are not good!’⁵¹ ‘Release me,’ as the speaker says – again in a flirtatious tone – from my troubles [...] Can you look around you? All the world rejoices together. Might a very little speck of joy come to pass for me?’⁵² In a manner characteristic of Walther, the end of the poem thus culminates in pressure being exerted on the lady by the male speaker, ultimately half-playful and half-urging, that she defer to a norm of love,⁵³ one naturalized in Song 28 via the evocation of nature and theorized elsewhere.

That echoes and parallels can be perceived between the German stanza at the end of *Carmen Buranum* 169 and the Latin stanzas has already been explained. Weaker, but certainly to be noted, are the echoes between the Latin stanzas and the other stanzas of the *Mailed* not preserved in the *Codex Buranus*: each poetic complex thematizes (the absence of) rejoicing, uses the motif of separation or detachment, and deals with the matter of age and youth, though not in a contrastive way.⁵⁴

Yet how are these parallels and echoes to be understood? It has been repeatedly pointed out by previous scholarship that the connection between the German stanza and the Latin portion appears to be rather contrastive or loose.⁵⁵ Also not to be dismissed out of hand, however, are the unity of the text established through its layout, the parallels and echoes that are hardly to be understood only generically, or the insight that ‘differ-

50 Song 28, stanza II, ll. 5–8: *Wê, wer wære unfrô? / sîr diu vogellîn alsô schône / singent in ir besten dône, / tuon wir ouch alsô!*

51 Song 28, stanza V, ll. 5–8: *Wâ nemt ir den muot? / ir sît doch genâden rîche: / tuot ir mir ungenædekliche, / sô sint ir niht quot.*

52 Song 28, stanza VI: *Scheident, frowe, mich von sorgen, / liebet mir die zît! / oder ich muoz an frôiden borgen. / daz ir sælic sît! / Muget ir umbe sehen? / sich frôit al diu welt gemeine. / möhte mir ein vil kleine / frôidelîn geschehen?*

53 That the brief and concise presentation given above does not even come close to doing justice to the poem should be noted here for safeguarding; see in particular the Germanistic studies quoted above.

54 See Song 28, stanza II, ll. 5–8 with CB 169, stanza I, l. 4: *carens iubilo*; Song 28, stanza III, ll. 1–2 with CB 169, stanza IV, ll. 5–8: *intercisio / divisio*; and, last but not least, Song 28, stanza I, l. 8 with CB 169, stanza IV, l. 3: *iuvenilis flos exaret*.

55 See *Carmina Burana* (ed. Vollmann), p. 1180: “The tendency of the stanza has nothing in common with the Latin song, but individual traits can be compared *ex opposito*.” For a more open approach with a view to research still to be undertaken, see Kellner 2018, p. 335.

ent' conceptions of rupture and textual cohesion can be discerned as part of a 'different aesthetic' in the Middle Ages and in the context of an overt culture of transmission. The necessary methodological consequence of these two poles – which has hardly been realized in scholarship thus far – is that in the interpretation of these plural constructs, it is precisely this kind of connection – the textual as well as linguistic rupture, perhaps also indicated by the larger *littera notabilior*; the dialectic 'breach-in-the-interlocking'; the staged difference – that has to be part of every reading – at least if one does not evade the interpretations offered by these texts by reference to technicalities or by speculative, supra-textual considerations about the circle of recipients, however plausible the latter may also be.

One of the rare forays made in this direction⁵⁶ interprets the shift between languages in the poem (which in this reading, however, can also be thought of in principle as having been written in a single language) as a consciously staged shock, through which the audience realizes that the reasons for the separation of the lovers are not to be located in social disapproval, as may be expected, but in the arrogance of the girl. It is precisely the crude, unlearned medium of German (in the eyes of the interpreter) in contrast to the elegance of Latin that thereby deepens the emotional agitation behind the speaker's grievance – a highly interesting reading, but one that overestimates the elegance of the Latin and appears to lose sight of the contrastive character of the references between the Latin and German stanzas. The following reflections therefore attempt to develop a different interpretation.

4.3. *Carmen Buranum* 169 and Song 28⁵⁷

Not unlike the versions of the German manuscripts, the bilingual manuscript can also be understood as a 'version' of the song – albeit a categorially special one – as an attempt to work through the problems, staging, and aesthetics laid out by the poem. The Latin stanzas thus develop what may be termed an 'alternative genealogy' of *Roter munt*, the decisive apostrophe of stanza IV. Whereas the speaker of the German poem pressures the *frouwe* in a flirtatious manner through the naturalizing evocation of established *topoi* and the entreaty to a collective *habitus*, an alternative interpretation, a 'different' subjectivity, is developed here behind the apostrophe to the lady. In the process, both the song and the modelling of the speaker are changed. The speaker, who is coyly exerting pressure in Walther, is now clerically 'corrected'; he becomes a fundamentally enmeshed subject, a speaker staged with an eye towards a clerical appreciation (perhaps his own), but who is also scrutinized over it. He is ostensibly a sorrowful lover who

⁵⁶ Heinen 1999, especially pp. 13–15.

⁵⁷ An examination of *Carmen Buranum* 151, which contains stanza III of Song 28, is not possible here and will be undertaken elsewhere.

seems to suffer during the day from being separated from the beloved whom he visits at night and to whom he is attached with his whole person; yet on closer inspection, he is an addict who perceives his girl in the Ovidian matrix of vanity and destruction, who imagines the nocturnal encounter or even compels it by force. The final German stanza, in particular, makes it clear that the *divisio* / *intercisio*, which from the point of view of the speaker is to be surmounted through 'legal' coercion, is probably based on the girl not (or even never) having directed herself toward him, but rather having turned her back on him. Where the speaker in the German poem had proclaimed dallyingly that 'no one grows old in this place,' here the clerical speaker threatens the inexorable wilting of the blossom of youth. The speaker, who sees himself subjected to the lady's faded smile when he wants to be reflected in it, becomes ambiguous, exerting personal pressure in order to overcome a slight. In particular, the disruption between the languages takes on an important dimension, albeit one that is probably not to be understood ironically and which is not merely 'shocking'; nonetheless, it underscores the central intrinsic difference, the rupture within a clerical subject that was previously present only in a connotative sense. Through the disconnect between the apostrophe and the preceding material, it thus becomes clear once and for all that it is not a playfully superior speaker articulated here, but rather a broken subject whose desire is also linked to desperation, humiliation, and aggression. It is precisely because moments from Walther's poem have been taken up in a transformative manner that, through the difference marked as a rupture, the layer of another perspective emerges, perhaps even one of a commentarial, critical view of the vernacular setting; a perspective that may well be closely connected with the semantic logic of the *Codex Buranus*, which is thus necessary to discuss as a last point.

5.

The authors of the Latin stanzas, behind whom the redactors or writers associated with the conception of the codex may conceal themselves,⁵⁸ could undoubtedly also have translated the final – German – stanza, or transformed it into the language and the discursive world of Latin love poetry; and the Latin stanzas would constitute a coherent lyrical construct on their own merits, even without the German ending. Yet the concluding stanza was appended and not translated – with the consequence of the poem becoming a plural construct. If we follow the interpretation developed above, the resulting multi-layeredness concerns a literary intervention into the vernacular discourse. Through the

58 See also Hope's important, though not very urgent, observation that the poems of the Hebet-Sidus group fit very well in thematic and motivic terms into the respective subgroups of the codex (Hope 2020, pp. 385f.).

simultaneous entanglement and confrontation of two literary traditions and modes, the redactors of the codex make it possible to rethink completely a generic apostrophe (*Rotermunt*) as the consequence of a different consciousness, which simultaneously opens up the view into a distinct, clerical world with its own values and modes of perception. It is precisely through this staged disruption, the constellation of German and Latin stanzas, that a tension is created. Through the loose, contrastive parallelism and interlocking of the stanzas – which is not easy to grasp, or even unobvious in itself, because of its conventionality – as well as through the background spectrum of the German versions, there emerges a dynamic of relationalization which opens up space for an alternative version of the poem's basic situation and which can be read as a commentary precisely because of the cultural difference marked in this way. In the largely authorless genre of Latin love poetry, there emerges through this assemblage a construct that is plural in itself, whose aesthetics generate a dynamic of comparison, of establishing relationships between things. The condition for the possibility of this plurality is, in general terms, the unfinished conversation of the texts of medieval lyric poetry – including and especially *Minnesang* – which is not only sustained through a fundamental *mouvance*, but probably also intended among the *auctores*.⁵⁹ In specific terms, however, this pluralization can be understood especially as an element of an all-encompassing practice of reconfiguration in the codex, through which the redactors seek to cast new light on familiar texts and problems. Through such reconfiguration, according to Theodor Adorno, it is possible

[to bring] the singular and dispersed elements [...] into various groupings long enough for them to close together in a figure out of which the solution springs forth, [...] to bring its elements [...] into changing constellations or [...] into changing trial combinations until they fall into a figure which can be read as an answer [...].⁶⁰

In this sense, the Latin-German poems seem to be experimental arrangements through which there is articulated a sceptical tone – one that deconstructs, criticizes, and problematizes the loving speakers of the genre – that permeates the codex. Such a tone does not require diverse authors, but it does require an aesthetics of plurality impossible without marked disruption.

59 On this subject, see the study by Kellner 2018. I would also like to thank Annette Gerok-Reiter for her suggestion that this point be emphasized.

60 Adorno 1977, p. 127; cf. Adorno 1990, p. 335: “[...] singuläre und versprengte Elemente so lange in verschiedene Anordnungen [zu bringen], bis sie zur Figur zusammenschießen, aus der die Lösung hervorspringt, [...], Elemente [...] so lange in wechselnde Konstellationen oder [...] Versuchsanordnungen zu bringen, bis sie zur Figur werden, die als Antwort lesbar wird [...].” The background of the concept and the connections between Adorno and Walter Benjamin cannot be expanded on here. This dimension, hinted at here only in a rudimentary manner (see Bezner 2021a), is to be developed in further work.

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