

**La poésie politique dans les littératures européennes du XII^e au XV^e siècle /
Politische Lyrik in Europa vom 12. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert /
Political Poetry in European Literature from the 12th to the 15th centuries /
La poesia politica nelle letterature europee tra il XII e il XV secolo**

Abstracts

**(De)Forming the Present:
Politics of ‚renaissance‘ in Medieval Latin Poetry**

Prof. Dr. Wim Verbaal
(Universiteit Gent)

The appeal to classical Antiquity may be considered one of the most characteristic and persistent features of Western European history. As a phenomenon it has even acquired a highly qualitative value, condensed into the single word ‘renaissance’ that refers to a historical high peak in artistic, intellectual, and other achievements.

For this reason, Western cultural historiographers enumerated one ‘renaissance’ after the other, up until the Italian one that is considered to be the final and ultimate ‘Renaissance’, opening Modern Times. Of course, we now know that this has less to do with historiographers, who do not want the epochs they are studying to be undervalued, than the continuous presence of Antiquity in literature and schools that never had to be reborn – perhaps with one exception.

Less studied, to my knowledge, are the political reasons for and implications of this incessant appeal to classical Antiquity during the Middle Ages (and far beyond). As perhaps the most important transmitter of classical Antiquity was Latin writing, it seems obvious that medieval literature in Latin and these political implications of the appeal to Antiquity are closely interwoven.

In my contribution I hope to shed more light on this interwovenness of Latin literature and its political implications, what I would label its ‘politicity’. In a first part I want to show the inherent ‘politicity’ of Latin writing in the Middle Ages, because its rebirth cannot be separated from a conscious political will. Politics thus remain an important factor in its medieval history, as I want briefly to sketch, paying specific attention to the poetical forms that were used for implicit or explicit political poetics.

In the second and main part of my paper I will focus on two of these so-called ‘renaissance’ periods by presenting some poems by two of their main representatives. Hildebert of Lavardin († 1133) was the most important poet around 1100 and one of the most influential models for the poetry of his time and of the 12th-century ‘renaissance’. Albertino Mussato († 1329) is one of the founders of Italian humanism, pupil of Lovato dei Lovati and in many aspects an important inspiration for Petrarch. By confronting and contrasting a few of their poems, notably their ways of requesting support from the politically mighty, I want to illustrate by all the parallels and differences the fundamental politicity of their poetical classicism.

Le poète, les armes et le roi, dans le « Corde fero tristi » de Serlon de Bayeux

The poet, the arms and the king, in Serlon de Bayeux's 'Corde fero tristi'

Prof. Dr. Marie-Agnès Lucas-Avenel
(Université de Caen Normandie)

The poetry of Serlo, canon of Bayeux, is a poetry of circumstance composed at a time and in an environment – the duchy of Normandy in the 11th and 12th centuries – that had favoured writers for a century. Literary production was as rich as it was varied, and benefited from the support of successive dukes, who surrounded themselves with eminent men. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, however, the duchy went through a difficult period due to the quarrels between the Conqueror's sons. Serlo's work was composed during William's reign, and then that of his sons. His early poems bear witness to the spoliations to which some canons, like himself, fell victim in order to endow the new Benedictine abbeys, and then to the reception of the Gregorian reform, as Serlo was the son of a priest, and perhaps married himself. He was a victim of these spoliations and wrote violent satires against the reformers. He received the protection of Odo de Bayeux, his bishop, whom he praises.

As part of the conference, we will be looking at the 'Corde fero tristi', which bears witness in 339 Leonine hexameters to the capture of Bayeux in 1105 by Henry I Beauclerc, the last of William the Conqueror's three sons, who became King of England in 1100 after the death of his second son, William II Rufus. Henry led an expedition to Normandy against his eldest brother, Robert Courteheuse, to seize the duchy. Serlo was an eyewitness to the capture of Bayeux, which he recounts. However, it is above all his own voice and that of the canons that the poet wishes to convey. Recounting the events in the style of an epic, he denounces the cowardice and greed of the city's defenders, who accuse the anathema-stricken canons of being responsible for the defeat. Now hungry and naked, he wept over his ruin and deplored the low esteem in which literary men were held in his country. However, since he had benefited from the clemency of the victorious king, and was then given a gift by a powerful benefactor, he praised him and sought his support. The poem thus takes on the varied forms of epic narrative, complaint and satire, before concluding with a reminder of the power of poetry to bring eternal glory to the man it celebrates.

After a brief presentation of the historical context in which the poem was written and the events it relates, we will see to what extent the event, the source of the poet's indignation, is the starting point for an invective against his detractors and the more discreet praise of a benefactor whose identity needs to be clarified. This will be based on a study of a number of devices that demonstrate the subversive power that Serlo attributes to his poetry, and which he uses in both parts of his poem to belittle his powerful adversaries and then to try to escape from his own misery. However, Serlo's portrayal of himself as a beggar at the end of the poem, followed by his praise of the poetry of a benefactor whom he does not name, raises questions about the sincerity of the poet, who may be practising self-mockery because he is unable to express himself freely.

The Strenuous Joys of Old Norse Panegyrics

Prof. Dr. Mikael Males
(University of Oslo)

While the political dimension is prominent in ON panegyrics, a discussion of such features in a cross-disciplinary setting easily gets stranded on the stylistic “strangeness” of the genre, which must first be overcome in order to focus on the political content. In addition, scholars tend to posit too stark a dichotomy between the stylistic level and the content of the poems, since stylistic features were often key to the intended effect. For these reasons, the talk will focus on the ways in which skaldic stylistic added to the meaning of panegyrics, in spite of overwhelming metrical restraints. The talk will focus on the semantics of circumlocutions and how these add to the glorification of the addressee, as well as on how intertextual references were used for the same purposes.

In Praise of the Emperor: Political Poetry in Medieval Greek Tradition

Dr. Nikolaos Zagklas
(Universität Wien)

In the introduction to Zbigniew Herbert's *Selected Poems* (1968), Al Alvarez noted that "we take for granted that there is a fundamental split between poetry and politics. The problem is not that the twain can never meet but that they can do so only at a great cost. The complexity, tension and precision of modern poetry simply does not go with the language of politics, with its vague rhetoric and dependence on clichés." (cited also in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, s.v. "Politics and Poetry"). By contrast with modern poetry, medieval Greek poetry was highly rhetorical and was frequently used as a medium for the propagation of the political agenda of the Constantinopolitan court. Throughout the Byzantine period, the ties between poetry and politics found their expression in various genres (encomia, historical epics, ceremonial poetry etc.) and linguistic registers, from the highbrow to the vernacular. Even one of the most popular Byzantine metres (the fifteen-syllable verse, also known as political verse) was deeply entangled with the expression of politics in the public sphere. Much of the poetry in political verse was addressed to various members of the imperial family on various ceremonial occasions, including songs or other kind of encomiastic works. However, Byzantine poetry claims ties to politics even when it is not used in a ceremonial setting. For example, school contests organized in Constantinople in the middle Byzantine period created the appropriate circumstances for the composition of poetry with a political nature. Religious songs contain strong political messages. Even so, political poetry in Byzantium has never been studied systematically. The paper aims to discuss the nexus of poetry and politics in the middle Byzantine period (especially in the twelfth century). It will argue that political poetry can be characterised as an umbrella term which includes a wide range of Byzantine works of ceremonial and encomiastic character.

**Political Poetry in the Service of a Female Ruler:
Court Rhetoric in the Age of Queen Tamar (r. 1184–1212)**

Dr. Sandro Nikolaishvili
(University of Southern Denmark)

In 1178, an unimaginable event occurred in the kingdom of Georgia. King Giorgi III (r. 1156–84) crowned his daughter, Tamar, as a co-ruler. It became apparent that Giorgi wanted Tamar not only to inherit his throne but to become a ruler in her own right. Tamar assumed power after Giorgi III died in 1184. For the first time in history, a woman was sole ruler of the powerful Georgian kingdom. During Tamar's reign, medieval Georgia reached the apex of its military and political power. Consequently, Tamar became one of the most celebrated and eulogized Georgian rulers.

Tamar and her supporters conducted large-scale, well-devised legitimization propaganda campaigns to counter challenges and opposition to her reign. Her royal authority was carefully constructed and communicated to various social strata through diverse media. The court poems, Ioane Šavteli's *Abdulmesiani* (the servant of Messiah) and Grigol Čaxruxaze's *Praise of King Tamar*, played a significant role in enhancing the positive image of the female ruler. Composed by Tamar's inner circle and written in a high-register classical Georgian, *Abdulmesiani* and *Praise of King Tamar* are the only surviving medieval Georgian court poems. The authors of these poems utilize diverse methods and rhetorical strategies to impose specific messages on the audience. The recurring theme in *Abdulmesiani* and *Praise of King Tamar* is Tamar as a capable and powerful ruler despite her gender. She had a major role in public state governance, made decisions, conducted wars, and negotiated with foreign powers.

The fascinating theme harnessed in the court poems was that Tamar was a wise ruler well-versed in philosophy and theology. Aside from her learnedness, the poets who composed Tamar's poems commented on her rhetorical skills, claiming her to be an exemplary polemicist. Although the Georgian kingdom in the twelfth century was the dominant player in the Caucasus and out of the Byzantine orbit, Tamar's contemporary discourse on ideal rulership closely resembles Byzantine imperial rhetoric. The authors of *Abdulmesiani* and *Praise of King Tamar* utilized encomiastic motifs (imagery and language) like those used in Byzantine narratives to create idealized images of emperors and imperial women.

Hebrew Laments of the Crusades as Political Poetry

Prof. Dr. Ophir Münz-Manor
(The Open University of Israel)

In this lecture I explore Hebrew para-liturgical poems that were written as a (literary) response to the riots undertaken by the crusaders against Jewish communities in the 'Rheinland' during the first and second crusades. These poems were written as part of a longstanding tradition of Hebrew versification yet the unique and harsh historical circumstances led to the composition of poems with distinct political and theological characteristics. Lacking political power *per se*, the Jewish communities sought to process and react to the devastating events by various ritual means, most notably by performing the poems in communal commemoration events. One of the prominent features of this poetry is its vehement and violent language against Christianity, which is unparalleled in earlier periods, due to the different historical and political context.

In the lecture I examine in details several of these poems and elaborate on their literary as well as political and theological facets. Moreover, in order to fully understand the change that occurred in the Middle Ages I compare them to some late antique poems from Byzantine Palestine. Additionally, I touch upon the afterlife and impact of this poetry on later poetic traditions of Hebrew poetry and on political poetry and discourse in particular.

**Temi politici e sociali nella lirica armena del XIII secolo:
il caso del canzoniere di Frik**

**Political and social themes in 13th-century Armenian lyric poetry:
the case of the Frik songbook**

Prof. Dr. Andrea Scala
(Università degli Studi di Milano)

Within the sphere of medieval Armenian poetry, the Frik songbook (13th–14th century) is unusual in presenting odes that touch on political and social themes. Political themes also inform other literary genres of the Armenian Middle Ages such as the Lamentations, long poems in which the fall of a Christian city is mourned, but in the Frik songbook political and social reflection enters lyric poetry and achieves perhaps the most convincing results. In Frik's Canzoniere, various odes stand out, focusing on themes such as social injustice, the irrational distribution of wealth and honours, and the suffering of the Armenian people under Mongol domination. An example of a lyric rich in references to Armenian socio-historical reality at the end of the 13th century is that dedicated to Arghun Khan and Bugha. The ode of 192 verses in quatrains focuses on the conspiracy hatched in 1289 by Bugha, a high court dignitary and finance minister, against his own ruler Arghun, the fourth Il-Khan of Persia. The historical event cues Frik to address general themes such as the divine origin of the legitimacy of sovereigns, but also more specifically contingent themes such as that of the oppression of the Armenian people, harassed and impoverished in the 13th century by the obligation to supply the Mongol army stationed in the territories of historical Armenia. These themes are addressed by Frik with vigorous images and through a rich dialogue with the biblical text, which is poetically reworked and thus becomes a point of reference for refined allusive strategies. The talk will attempt to bring to the audience's attention examples of political themes present in Frik's Canzoniere, dwelling above all on the ode dedicated to Arghun Khan and Bugha, and to reflect on some aspects of the poetic technique adopted by Frik in dealing with subjects that are on the whole new for Armenian lyric poetry.

Testi e temi politici nella poesia provenzale

Political texts and themes in Provençal poetry

Prof. Dr. Stefano Asperti
(Sapienza Università di Roma)

Within the corpus of troubadour lyric (approximately 2,500 poems), references, connotations and political implications can be found in several hundred texts, distributed over almost the entire chronological span concerned, from the second third of the 12th century (the era of Marcabru) to the end of the 13th and the very first years of the 14th, and associated, with varying density, with all the territories that saw the flowering of this tradition: the southern regions of present-day France, Catalonia, northern and central Italy, the East. Political themes and/or references can be found in a wide typological range of texts: if the *sirventese* is by definition the type that, by election, is dedicated to satire, hence to topical themes, we can also encounter references and readings of political situations and conflicts in a *tenzonas*, exchanges of *coblas*, crusade songs, songs of funeral mourning...

Some moments appear particularly significant: the conflicts between the Capetians and the Plantagenets for supremacy in the West, shot through with endemic feudal turbulence; similarly those between the Counts of Toulouse and the Counts of Barcelona-Kings of Aragon for supremacy in Languedoc; the events linked to the Albigensian Crusade and its aftermath, with the institutional rearrangements that followed the Treaty of Paris of 1229; the unstable balance of power in Provence in the first half of the 13th century up to the assertion of Angevin control, around 1260; the conflicts that marked the history of Italy in the 13th century and that saw the involvement of even major players, such as the Emperor, often supported by the local aristocracy, and the powerful municipal leagues, leading up to the great clashes triggered by Angevin expansion.

Conflicts and wars are often mentioned in these texts, and this is certainly a salient characteristic that allows scholars to group texts together and to establish important threads. The intervention proposes to move beyond this – albeit important – characterisation to point out as qualifying factors certain aspects of the value system that serve as inspiration and character of the texts: valour, value, honour. These qualifying factors are well explained by the origin and deep rootedness of the lyricism of the troubadours within a feudal society: very evident in the work of Bertran de Born and Guillem de Berguedà, they continue to reappear, ending up as a characterising trait and perhaps in a certain way a limit to this poetic tradition. An attempt will be made to follow the persistence and remodelling of this original nucleus through a significant sample of texts diverse in age and origin.

Rimatori guelfi (e ghibellini) nel X fascicolo del Canzoniere palatino
Guelph (and Ghibelline) rhymers in the 10th fascicle of the Canzoniere Palatino

Dr. Matteo Cambi
(Opera del Vocabolario italiano – CNR, Firenze)

MS Florence, BNC, Banco Rari 217 (P) is better known under the name *Canzoniere palatino*: together with the manuscripts Vaticano Latino 3793 (V) and Laurenziano Redi 9 (L), it constitutes one of the most important *canzonieri* of the ancient Italian lyric poetry. The vellum manuscript consists of 78 folios divided into 10 fascicles, and arranged in three parts based on the criteria of lyric genre: of the three sections that make up the codex, the first is dedicated to the genre of the *canzone* (fascicles I–VIII), the second contains the part reserved for the genre of the ballad (fascicle IX) and the third houses the genre of the sonnet (fascicle X).

P presents a complex compositional stratigraphy dictated by a textual architecture that is not always definable and perspicuous. A clear example of this is the subject of the proposed intervention: the structure of the tenth fascicle of the manuscript. It will be observed how the choice of the canon of authors presents considerable differences from those of the other fascicles: it does not contain texts of the Sicilian School and excludes many of the great thirteenth-century Tuscan authors. On closer inspection, in fact, the last fascicle of P presents rather a collection of sonnets that appear to be selected with ‘heterodox’ criteria with respect to the canon of the previous sections, starting from the choice of authors included therein: many of them are attested for the first time in the concluding section of P, which preserves numerous *unica* by otherwise unknown poets.

This paper is based on the reconstruction of the historico-biographical profile of some of these poets (Gonnella Intelminelli, Bonodico da Lucca, Ranieri dei Samaritani, Dello da Signa). Using unpublished or little-known documents, an attempt will be made not only to trace the biography of these individual poets, but also to place them within the precise cultural milieu that, at the end of the 13th century, contributed to the diffusion and circulation of the lyric genre in the Italian peninsula. On the basis of these new acquisitions, moreover, the hypothesis is strengthened that the inclusion of these authors and their poems in the last section of P is intended to represent, in some way, a sort of ‘poetic geography’ embodied by a compact and politically cohesive series of pro-Guelfian poets from the Tuscan and Bolognese area, whose relations were not exclusively literary but rather ascribable to a political and intellectual association.

The concluding part of the talk will be dedicated to an analysis of the language of the sonnets handed down by P: it too presents some very interesting traits, which further bring out the peculiarity of the tenth and last section of the anthology.

«di valor dimembrata» l'allegoria del corpo politico da Guittone al Saviozzo

“di valor dimembrata”: the allegory of the body politic from Guittone to Saviozzo

Dr. Alessandro Pilosu
(Sapienza Università di Roma)

For historical reasons, Italian political poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is particularly sensitive to the use of personifications of cities and/or proto-national entities. At this time, territorial fragmentation caused a multiplication of instances in which literary activity became an effective vehicle for propaganda: the use of prosopopoeia, in particular, has a great emotional impact on contemporary recipients of texts, who are often the political actors themselves, and on coeval or later readers, thanks to the pliability of the images, which are often dramatic and truculent, and the possibility for the authors to insist on the *concordia ordinum* of single entities. The first major allegory is offered by Guittone d'Arezzo in *Magni baroni certo e regi quasi*, in which the city of Pisa, once “*donna de la provincia e regin'anco*”, is depicted as “*ancella / di bellor tutto e d'onor dinudata, / di valor dimembrata*”: the fixing of the *tòpos* created by Dante in *Purgatorio*, VI initiates numerous fourteenth-century productions in which guittonian and dantesque images are taken up, reinterpreted and instrumentalized. This contribution aims to reconstruct the evolution of political prosopopoeia within Italian poetry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, identifying classical sources and investigating some exemplary cases still little known to critics, attempting to define the evolution of the figure from ‘communal’ to ‘lordly’ or even ‘proto-national’, and to highlight the role of medieval political poetry as a privileged instrument of mediation, apology and propaganda.

La poesia politica dai trovatori a Dante

Political poetry from the troubadours to Dante

Prof. Dr. Marco Grimaldi
(Sapienza Università di Roma)

In troubadour lyric, *sirventes* plays a fundamental role within a set of poetic forms that can be considered tripartite. Alongside the love song, which constitutes its keystone, and the dialogue genres, the troubadours in fact develop a genre that seems to occupy the same place as the *genera orationis* of ancient rhetoric: that is, to accuse and defend, to convince or to dissuade, to praise or criticize and, more generally, to explain and demonstrate. In fact, even within what we define as *sirventes* it is possible to identify numerous sub-categories: “personal” texts, in which what matters most is the praise or the insult of friends and enemies; texts that deal with much more general issues such as morals, faith, crusade; funeral texts that fall within the broader genre of Middle Latin and Romance *planctus*; poems that can be considered partisan texts in which the poet chooses to sing in support of a specific political party. In the early Italian poetic tradition, which was originally shaped above all in imitation of that of the troubadour, the box of *sirventes* and in particular of historico-political poetry remains empty. It is a fact that in the *Sicilian school* there is no place for *sirventes*, whose corpus is composed mostly of love poems. There are very rare traces of other genres and the place of the *genus demonstrativum* is completely occupied by the *tenzoni* in sonnets, nonetheless used by Sicilian poets almost exclusively to debate love or the nature of love. So, by imitating and translating the troubadours, the Sicilians renounce historico-political poetry. The picture changes again during the 13th century with the diffusion of vernacular poetry in the cities and in the municipalities. In this intervention, by examining in parallel troubadour and Italian texts referring to the struggles between the Hohenstaufen and the Angevins, I will try to draw an overall picture of the convergent evolutions of historico-political poetry between Italy and Occitania

**Die politische Lyrik Walthers von der Vogelweide
im Kontext der altokzitanischen Sirventes**

**The Political Poetry of Walther von der Vogelweide
in the Context of the Old Occitan Sirventes**

Prof. Dr. Ricarda Bauschke-Hartung
(Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf)

Walther von der Vogelweide, the most important lyric poet of the German-speaking Middle Ages, is regarded as the founder of political sung poetry. He expanded gnomic poetry, which until then had concentrated on moral didaxes, to include current affairs by commenting on the political situation, engaging in propaganda for changing patrons and thus providing insights into the dispute for the throne between the Hohenstaufen and the Guelphs after the death of Frederick I Barbarossa. Walther also breaks new ground in formal terms: he composes numerous different melodies in order to force the political message of his songs. Since he was also a minnesinger, there were frequent points of contact in form and content between his political poetry and his love canons.

In ancient Germanic research, as in German literary historiography in general, Walther von der Vogelweide is stylised as the great innovator who opened up lyric poetry to the political theme; he is regarded as an exceptional figure with a high potential for originality (Hahn 1986, et al.). This may be true from a purely German-language perspective, but it is not tenable in this form in the context of Occitan lyric poetry. Since Wilhelm Nickel (1907) in his study “Sirventes und Spruchdichtung” cannot identify any counterfactuals, and Rolf Ehnert (1976) in a study on Bertran de Born and Walther von der Vogelweide also denies Germania-Romania points of contact, the possibility of cross-linguistic interaction has been lost from philological view for over a century. Nickel does concede that Walther, as the first German-language political poet, may have received the impetus from Occitan Romania; but he does not concede anything more.

This approach is based on a fundamental error in thinking: Nickel looks for concrete intertextual references and parallels in content, such as praise of the emperor, scolding of the pope, etc. However, there can be no such consonance, because the attitudes towards the emperor and the pope were different in Romania and Germania. The Trobadors are disinterested or even dismissive of German politics, while Walther makes himself the mouthpiece of his respective patron. The situation is different, however, when one looks for systemic parallels or common structures, namely how praise, how scolding, etc. are formulated. Here, comparable uses of rhetorical strategies can be identified. It cannot be ruled out that, in principle, Middle Latin poetry was the model for sirventes and German political poetry in each case, but it is hardly plausible that Walther should have referred to Latin models alone, completely independently of the Occitan poetic practices that existed at the time.

This assumption is supported by the fact that a counterfactual (Zotz 2005) and parallel uses of motifs have been identified for Walther's Minnesang (Bauschke 1999). The fact that a tendency is emerging in research to rethink political lyric poetry as well can be seen in the summary attempt by Bernd Bastert (2011) to open up a comparative perspective for Walther's gnomic poetry as well. Unfortunately, Bastert has left it at only a few points of contact for his compilation.

In my lecture, the extensive *Sirventes* oeuvre of Peire Vidal and Walther's political statements in the role of the political poet will be related to each other. Peire Vidal is particularly suitable for this purpose: 1. the two poets probably met in person (Walther's stay in Austria and Peire Vidal's trip to Hungary); 2. intertextual references to Peire Vidal can be found in Walther's Minnesang, which makes an extension to the political poetry plausible; 3. the patrons of both poets are part of a diplomatic network; 4. a particularly high degree of mobility can be assumed for Peire Vidal and Walther alike; 5. both lyricists promote the statements of their poetry through self-confident first-person performances. An autopsy of selected songs can show that both poets revolve around similar categories of themes, using the same images and figures of thought to support their statements. Walther's rhetorical ideas can already be found in the poetry of Peire Vidal, and the vernacular is also the subject of polemics: while the Occitan side defames German as ugly gibberish, Walther defends his own language community.

The lecture focuses explicitly on the beginning of political poetry in Germany, not on later generations, for whom it is easier to find contacts to Romania. For the aim is to relativise the hitherto monolithic position of Walther von der Vogelweide as the sole and presuppositionless founder of political lyric poetry in the German language. For this reason, the comparative philological analysis of Peire Vidal's and Walther's poetry is to be combined with general considerations that primarily concern the status of cultural contact. In this sense, the similarities are not only individual textual phenomena of appropriation, but the results of a lyric system that can be thought of as transcending languages. Walther's *sangspruch* poetry, which until now has had the aura of a monumental singularity, can – according to the thesis – be freed from the nationalistic German perspective and recognised as part of an European system of political poetry.

**Das gute Gericht des Königs. Spielarten des Politischen in der Minnekanzone bei
Hug von Werbenwag und Schenk Ulrich von Winterstetten**

**The King's Good Judgment. Varieties of the Political in the 'Minnekanzone' in Hug
von Werbenwag and Schenk Ulrich von Winterstetten**

Dr. Daniel Eder

(Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel)

The planned contribution examines the unfolding of a political discourse background for Middle High German love poetry of the 13th century by choosing as its subject the 'Minnesang-oeuvres' of Hug von Werbenwag and Ulrich von Winterstetten. The focus is on the two songs KLD 27,I: *Wol mich hiute und iemer mêre* (Hug) and KLD 59,X: *Ich solde den liechten sumer loben* (Ulrich), which are closely related through intertext and contain – in Hug's case more overt, in Ulrich's song only quite discreet – allusions to the dispute over the throne between Heinrich Raspe and Emperor Frederick II or his son Conrad IV in 1246/47. Both 'Minnekanzonen' act out this dispute through the question of which king actually has a well-functioning court, so that the Minnean 'I' could possibly be 'justified' in his complaint about the unfulfilledness of his courtship.

This hypothetically acted-out situation (the I sues before the royal court for the establishment of legal peace – in matters of love!) is certainly not a projection that primarily formulates 'realistic' requirements of royal or imperial rule. It is first and foremost a literary constellation that – as will be shown – builds on genuine literary traditions (e.g. the 'Minnegericht') and concretises them at certain points through the technique – long established, not least by Walther von der Vogelweide – of combining the registers of 'Minnesang' and 'Sangspruch' poetry. At the same time, however, it must be asked to what extent the integration of speech attitudes that can be called 'political', in the broadest sense, into the 'Minnekanzone' opens up a space of discourse that not only allows certain evaluation criteria for royal legal practice, and thus for the legitimation of rule, to emerge (the king's good court), but also provides a domain for political statement in the love-themed speech of the courtship song as a lyric that was still dominant in the 13th century. In the end, the texts do register the love-themed insufficiency of such 'political solutions' and pragmatism. This, however, opens up the question of the significance of this recording of political-dominion-evaluative discursivities, the framings of which are expressed very differently in Hug and Ulrich, the finding of a complex field of tension of registral, motivic and contextual dichotomies, which make the 'political' appear concealed as love-thematic, but nevertheless in return also extrapolate it as potentially 'intrinsically valuable'. In this sense, the primarily socio-historical readings of research from the last decades should be transferred into a poetological and literary-theoretical dimensioning of the phenomenon.

**Hybride Form und die (Un-)Möglichkeit epistemischer Deutung:
Das Wappengedicht ‚Der Fürsten Warnung‘**

**On hybrid forms and the (im-)possibility of interpretation:
The heraldic poem ‘Der Fürsten Warnung’ (A Warning to Princes)**

Assoc. Prof. Mag. Dr. Klaus Amann
(Universität Innsbruck)

The poem ‘The Warning to Princes’ from the first decade of the 15th century oscillates between coat of arms poetry, a speculum for princes, general criticism of the times and reactions to contemporary events and political conditions. The text has been handed down in two manuscripts from Innsbruck (University and State Library Tyrol, Cod. 900, approx. 1413) and, in a textually expanded version and with colored pen drawings, from Nuremberg (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, HR 131, ex 1494) and comprises respectively 314 and 543 lines of verse in rhyming couplets. Four triads of outstanding princes are presented one after the other and their coats of arms are described: the three most generous princes (Magnus of Sweden, Leopold of Austria, Hermann of Thuringia), the three best Christians (Charlemagne, King Arthur, Godfrey of Bouillon), the top three Jews (Joshua, King David, Judas Maccabeus) and the top three Heathens (Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Hector). These triads of the best are contrasted with three “rabid ones” (Nebuchadnezzar, Evil-Merodach, Nero), who are exemplary for the present of the poem. References to concrete events are only hinted at; King Ruprecht, who returned unsuccessfully from Italy in 1402, may have been the target of criticism.

The lecture would like to dig into some possible interpretations of this ultimately quite enigmatic text and put it up for discussion. I would like to stress three points that play an important role in the political discourse of the Middle Ages: First, there are the “Nine Worthies” or “Neuf Preux”, which the “Princely Warning” uses and which were a common topos throughout Europe; in the German-speaking world it would be again and again depicted in a very concrete way in politically representative contexts, both aristocratic and early bourgeois. Examples include the town halls of Cologne and Lüneburg, and the Schöne Brunnen in Nuremberg and various castles, such as Runkelstein near Bozen. Second, the apparently competent blazons focus on symbols of knightly virtues and the exercise of power and, by way of description, exhibit the presence of power in the text. Third, the juxtaposition of the exemplary rulers with the “rabid ones” is the starting point for the scolding of time and princes. It is currently not possible to say with absolute certainty which specific events and ruling personalities the unknown author was thinking of here. However, it seems to be more important to contextualise the ‘Warning to Princes’ in contemporary political poetry and take a look at its discourse strategy in relation to *laudatio temporis acti*, example poetry, general complaint of the times, vivid depiction of the symbolism of power and – last but not least – a warning to the powerful, for whom a bad end is certain if they abuse their power.

D'Alain Chartier à Georges Chastelain :
Le lyrisme, vecteur de la pensée politique au temps de Charles VII

From Alain Chartier to Georges Chastelain:
Lyricism as a vehicle for political thought at the time of Charles VII

Prof. em. Dr. Jean-Claude Mühlethaler
(Université de Lausanne)

Along with Christine de Pizan, Alain Chartier was part of the first generation of “engaged writers” in France. He took up his pen in response to the crises that shook the reign of Charles VI. In his prose *Quadrilogue invectif*, the secretary of the future Charles VII intervened in the affairs of his time, but the echoes of his political and moral commitment can also be found in his lyrical writings.

POLITICAL ISSUES SURROUNDING THE IDEAL COURTOIS: ALAIN CHARTIER, MICHAULT TAILLEVENT, MARTIN LE FRANC

Alain Chartier wrote the *Livre des quatre dames* (in heterometric verse) the day after the defeat at Azincourt in 1415. The *actor* listens to the complaints of four ladies: the friend of the first has died on the battlefield, the friend of the second is a prisoner, the third knows nothing of the fate of her friend, and the friend of the fourth has cowardly fled. Between the praise of the dead and the captives, and the curse of the fugitives, courtly love proves indispensable to the honour that the aristocratic elite claims to legitimise its superiority. In the *Breviaire des nobles*, which consists of a series of ballads, Alain Chartier clarifies his thinking: love is the cement of social unity, while hatred destroys the bonds between men and threatens the life of the kingdom.

This was a recurring theme in the lyricism of Charles VII. It can be found in Michault Taillevent's *Psautier des Vilains* (inspired by the *Breviaire*) and, above all, in Martin Le Franc's *Champion des dames* (1442). By contrasting the sinful love of Venus with the celestial love embodied by the god of Love surrounded by Peace, Prudence, Justice and Strength, Le Franc opens up his defence of women to political reflection. By challenging the “secular princes” through the voice of the Church, he invites us to read the allegory in the light of recent events, from the Battle of Azincourt to the Peace of Arras (1435). The political vein in the *Champion*, which is grafted onto the courtly discourse, offers the image of an author at the service of the common good.

MORALITY AND POLITICS: ALAIN CHARTIER AND PIERRE DE NESSON

Alain Chartier does not always use courtesy to deliver a political message. In *Debat du herault, du vassault et du villain*, the very word *amour* is absent, even though chivalric ethics are at the heart of the debate between herald and vassal. The villain, who comes to complain about his misfortunes, only receives a scornful laugh. The debate is a “farce”. But under the veil of comedy, it denounces the lack of social responsibility of the nobility, who are reluctant to work for peace. In *Lay de Paix* (c. 1424–1426), Chartier takes himself

seriously. He chose the most difficult form – the great lyric lai – to address the princes of the House of France through the voice of Paix. Dame Paix paints a bleak picture of the situation, then recalls the times when France was prosperous before multiplying the imperatives, exhorting the princes to leave the path of sin. Satire, remembrance, exhortation: the *Lay* is skilfully constructed to seduce an audience resistant to the voice of reason.

Alain Chartier's *Lay de Paix* is answered by Pierre de Nesson's *Lay de Guerre* (before 1430). The lyrical variation is replaced by a *cri*, a proclamation of War that mobilises Lucifer's troops. The military vocabulary gives the speech an epic feel, and the flat-rhymed decasyllabic form, with its ample breathing, allows the argument to develop and recent events to be evoked. The "goddess of abysses" reads current events through her own interpretive grid and denigrates *Lay de Paix*, deeming him dangerous for his plan to destroy France. *Guerre* attacks the Duke of Burgundy, who has allied himself with the enemy, but whose opinion she fears will be changed by Grâce. *Guerre*'s appeal to hatred should be read as an antiphrase: like Chartier, Nesson is an ardent defender of the union of the French. By making love the cement of peace between princes, he is following in a long tradition that goes back to Boethius and, beyond him, to Plato. Good government is conceived in the image of universal harmony.

LE DIT DE VÉRITÉ OF GEORGE CHASTELAIN

Le Dit de Vérité was written around 1459, when tensions between Charles VII and Philip the Good were at their height. According to George Chastelain, the "livret rime" caused an uproar at the French court. Accused of slander, the author defended himself by writing *Exposicions sur Vérité mal prise*. In the course of the debate, which pitted Imagination Française against Entendement, the actor's lawyer, the *Dit* was dissected verse by verse. The *Dit* opens with a prologue: it celebrates the love that governs the whole of creation, but ends with a burst of anger. Unlike his predecessors, Chastelain does not use personifications: he criticises the French in his own name. Entendement admits the bitter tone of the *Dit*, but finds it legitimate, because George, concerned with "la chose publique", has spoken the truth: he is the dismayed witness of a situation that is dangerously deteriorating. But the king's supporters did not accept the authority of the poet who, in the *Dit*, sings the praises of his master, the Duke of Burgundy, at length. As a partisan and subjective voice, Chastelain was open to attack; the actor's good "intencion" was not enough to exonerate him in the eyes of his political adversaries. At the same time, George knew how necessary his commitment was to the country; a moral authority, he saw himself as a modern orator. For him, as for his predecessors, the sin that plagued the kingdom was "an object of imputation, accusation and blame" (Ricoeur). Each author, in his or her own way, uses lyrical writing to serve the political ideal that needs to be restored. But George Chastelain goes further than Pierre de Nesson, Michault Taillevent or Martin Le Franc: like Alain Chartier in *Quadrilogue*, he attempts to change the course of history.

**Politique courtoise et poétique du recueil :
le manuscrit BL Harley 4431 de Christine de Pizan**

**Courtly politics and the poetics of the collection:
Christine de Pizan's manuscript BL Harley 4431**

Dr. Philippe Frieden
(Université de Genève)

The Harley Manuscript 4431, now in the British Library, was given to Isabeau of Bavaria around 1414 by Christine de Pizan. It is presented as the last collection of her works. Long considered from the point of view of the authority that such an undertaking could confer on its author – think of Guillaume de Machaut or Jean Froissart, who had already sought to collect their works in a similar form – the manuscript known as the “Queen’s” manuscript would more firmly establish the authority that Christine had acquired over the years through her literary production. It would be the keystone, as it were.

However, there are several elements that distinguish this manuscript from the collections that preceded it. Unlike the earlier collections, we know exactly who dedicated the volume. In addition, a versified piece has been placed at the head of the series to serve as a prologue-dedication to the project. Finally, Christine de Pizan added a new collection of poems, the *Cent balades d’amant et de dames*, which concludes the manuscript and to which Harley MS 4431 is the only surviving witness. All these elements can help us to see Christine de Pizan’s work in a different, more political light.

As I am unable to discuss all the texts that make up this imposing collection, I will concentrate on a few “introductory” pieces, often addressed to the Queen herself: the dedicatory epistle, the amorous lament, the opening epistle of the *Debate of the Rose*, and the ballad-prologues of the lyric collections placed at the beginning and end of the collection. These texts underline the strong link between the manuscript and its dedicatee, and all function as small poetic arts, either at the level of the collection or for the pieces they introduce; all, or almost all, are written in verse. They will serve as the common thread running through my analysis.

La poésie politique anglaise à la fin du Moyen Âge : une littérature en tension

Political Poetry in English in the Late Middle Ages: Literature under pressure

Dr. Aude Mairey

(CNRS, Laboratoire de Médiévistique occidentale de Paris)

In England at the end of the Middle Ages, when political unrest was mounting – leading on several occasions to the spectacular deposition of monarchs – political poetry in English, a language fully developed at the time, constituted a major field of literature, taken in the broadest sense, particularly between the end of the 14th century and the 1450s.

However, it takes different forms. First of all, there are long ‘Mirrors for Princes’ or similar (the role of history, for example, is very important), apparently centred on the theory of good government but in reality firmly rooted in their time. This is the case, for example, with the main works of two poets well known across the Channel, Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate, long described as propagandists in the service of the Lancastrian dynasty that came to power in 1399.

But these poets, to name but two, also composed much shorter poems, known as ‘poems of circumstance’, for a particular person or event, sometimes on commission. However, the majority of the poems of circumstance, which flourished in connection with the internal political tensions of the 15th century, were anonymous: nonetheless, like other media, they played a part in the efforts at political communication of each of the parties involved in these troubles.

We will present two examples that reflect the richness of these different forms of political poetry – Richard the Redeless (c. 1401) and Mum and the Sothsegger (c. 1409), written shortly after the deposition of Richard II (1399), probably by the same author. It is as much a question of revisiting the notion of ‘propaganda’, the use of which in the medieval period seems tricky, as it is of suggesting that the author of these works was part of a continuum of political and cultural representations, while shaping them in a dynamic rather than passive movement.

Hostis fidei in propinquo est: il 'Türkendiskurs'
in versi nella poesia neolatina del XV secolo italiano

Hostis fidei in propinquo est: the 'Türkendiskurs'
in verse in 15th century Italian Neo-Latin poetry

Dr. Ludovica Sasso
(Universität Münster i.W.)

Following the fall of Constantinople (1453) and up to the Battle of Lepanto (1571), there was a noticeable increase in the literary production of Neo-Latin works, both prose and poetry, treating the historical events surrounding the Ottoman advance in the West. The verse compositions dedicated to this theme, identified with the category of *Türkenlyrik*, are characteristically occasional poems (panegyrics, satires, *lamentationes*, epitaphs, *vaticinia*, paraenesis): in them, the authors re-purposed genres that in antiquity were mainly devoted to the themes of love and grief (such as the elegy) or mockery and mourning (such as the epigram), adapting them to the new theme of Ottoman expansion in Europe which occasioned a defensive solidarity of European Christian powers, a *unitas christiana*. Furthermore, the fall of Constantinople was in itself an epoch-making event, often identified by historical-literary critics as the 'great drama' of pre-modern Europe, and thus of urgent interest also to Renaissance humanists and intellectuals: the authors who wrote political lyrics about it included important and famous personalities of the time, such as Enea Silvio Piccolomini and Giovanni Gioviano Pontano, but also distinguished men of letters, both lay and professed (e.g. Battista Mantovano), and active intellectuals engaged in diplomatic assignments, such as Lodrisio Crivelli or Pietro Bonomo, as well as military men. In the collected *corpus* of around 200 poetic compositions from the Italian sphere on the Ottoman advance in the West, there is certainly a greater prominence of authors coming from or operating in geographical areas directly affected by the Ottoman advance or politically more exposed and involved in the struggle against what for around two centuries stood out as the enemy *par excellence* of the Christian West. A quarter of these lyrics were composed, for example, by authors operating in the Veneto area, such as Girolamo Balbi, or in what is now Friuli Venezia Giulia, such as Raffaele Zovenzoni or Cimbriaco. The Friuli area was prominent for historical-political reasons, given the region's ties with Venice and the Habsburg Empire, but also immediate ones: it was the victim of violent attacks by the Ottomans. This is not to say, however, that the tradition of political poetry with an Ottoman theme took shape exclusively as peculiar to a local cultural history: following the events of Otranto (1480-1) the Apulian-Campania area also becomes important, but the 'Türkendiskurs' poetically involved intellectuals working in every corner of the Peninsula, from Milan to Rome, from Florence to Bologna, inaugurating a specific tradition of poetry with a political theme that would survive even beyond the famous victory of Lepanto over the Ottoman fleets. In time this tradition would come to overlap with literary production on the same subject in vernacular languages, as well as being an integral part of a political

discourse of transnational interest, which also saw active and prolific poets and writers from other areas of Europe, particularly Dalmatian, Magyar, Austrian and German (to use modern criteria of linguistic-national identification). Since the albeit vast bibliography on the subject of the ‘Turks’ has not paid particular attention to the large corpus of Neo-Latin compositions in verse on the subject, this paper will illuminate this corpus by highlighting the thematic and stylistic intersections and interferences (geographical and temporal) of some exemplary cases, with particular attention to the poetic ‘sub-genres’ of panegyrics and *exhortations*. Such textual typologies, in fact, not only represent the preferred genres of the poets who wrote about the Ottoman advance in the West in verse, but above all constitute the typologies through which the themes and political functions or motivations of this peculiar humanistic-Renaissance poetic tradition best emerge: they tend to present not only eulogies of victorious commanders in a battle against Ottoman armies or fleets, or exhortations to war and the defense of Christendom, but also critical analyses of the contingent history and political strategies of a Europe that tended to be weakened by internecine wars and ambitions for power and domination of one kingdom by another. Given the era that will be examined at the conference, we will focus on the first phase of the production of Ottoman-themed lyrics in Italy, with attention also paid to early testimonies (with respect to the fall of Constantinople), such as Giovanni Marrasio’s *Exhortatio ad movendum bellum iustum contra Syros, qui Terram sanctam occuparunt* (1450 ca).