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Intertextuality

Hogenbirk, M.

DOI
10.1515/9783110432466-012

Publication date
2017

Document Version
Final published version

Published in
Handbook of Arthurian Romance

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Link to publication

Citation for published version (APA):
Hogenbirk, M. (2017). Intertextuality. In L. Tether, & J. McFayden (Eds.), *Handbook of Arthurian Romance: King Arthur's Court in Medieval European Literature* (pp. 183-198). (De Gruyter Reference). De Gruyter. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110432466-012

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Download date:17 Oct 2026

Marjolein Hogenbirk

Intertextuality

1 Medieval intertextuality

The term "intertextuality", coined in the late sixties by Julia Kristeva, refers to a literary theory or a reading method for analyzing how individual texts are connected to other texts, a phenomenon which is as old as literature itself.[1] Texts are mosaics of quotations and never entirely new: they are made up of, or connected to, earlier texts and traditions, and they continue them. The earlier texts, the intertexts (or, more accurately, pretexts), resound like other voices in the new text as a result of which the cultural life of the older texts is extended. This way of textual sharing invites a comparison between the textual traditions outside of the actual object of research, and the use of these texts inside it. It asks us to think about how and why an author is choosing a particular text, name or situation in his work and to what effect these older elements are reimagined. Over the years, intertextuality has become a much-used term which has come to be defined in many ways.

Medievalists in particular have developed various critical approaches. Long before the term was coined, they recognized a ubiquitous response to oral or written authorities in medieval literature, since authors "participate in an aesthetic of conventionality which prizes re-writing above "originality" *ex nihilo*." (Bruckner 1987, 222) However, there is no reason to believe that medieval authors just looked at previous texts as models and "classics" to be imitated. They are confronted with a set of choices, which range from taking a mimetic approach to exploring variations on well-known structural schemes, themes and motifs, to making a clean break with conventional patterns. Therefore, we are not dealing with a simple donor-recipient model. Intertextuality is part of the unique identity of medieval works, demanding an analysis of its particular function and use within the boundaries of the single text and its specific historical literary context.

1 I have used several studies, papers and commentaries on intertextuality for this chapter. I have benefited especially from the articles in Van Dijk et al. (2013), and from the following invaluable (Arthurian) studies: Bruckner (1987); Wolfzettel (1990); Kelly (1992); Besamusca (1993); Lacy (1996); Thomas (2005); Gordon (2010).

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DOI 10.1515/9783110432466-012

Literary historians studying medieval texts generally adopt the term intertextuality in a way that is restricted in relation to the objects of study, focusing mainly on the relationships between written texts. Moreover, they use it more as an analytical instrument for determining the meaning of a literary work, than as a theory. They search for thematic echoes of earlier texts, for quotations and citations and corresponding characters and situations in order to determine the meaning of a literary work within its specific cultural context (Wolfzettel 1990, 6). An axiom of this is that forms of textual sharing are likely to have been inserted deliberately by authors and are meant to be recognized. Consequently, intertextuality is considered to be a creative process, an ensemble or a form of play between poets and their readers.

This general approach towards intertextuality and reception raises several problems. The first is obviously the uncertain dating of individual literary works. Most of the time, it is difficult to determine which text refers to which. Seldom do we find the kind of concrete information seen in the thirteenth-century *Hunbaut*, in which the poet denies that he has stolen words from Chrétien (Winters 1984, ll. 186–187). Another difficulty is the problematic authorial status of medieval narratives and the notion of *mouvance*. Texts are fundamentally unstable and move in time and space. Every single text is unique and two manuscript versions of the same text often show considerable differences. As a result, scholars may experience major difficulties in discovering the author's intertextual intentions, assuming, but not knowing for certain, that a specific text in a certain manuscript indeed represents an author's voice. However, the medieval manuscripts in which the texts have survived are the chief witnesses to the reception and use of texts over time, as well as to the culture that created and appreciated them, even if we are generally dealing with later reception phases. So-called miscellanies and anthologies, for example, are also manifestations of intertextuality, since they offer numerous possibilities for the study of intertextual patterns both within the individual texts as well as between the texts incorporated in a certain codex.[2]

Another point for consideration when investigating medieval intertextuality concerns the way in which the narratives reached their audiences. The author of a text is usually visible in the narrator's interventions, and these, of course, could be voiced by a performer. All (implied) voices might have engaged the audience to search for correspondences with other episodes and texts (Krueger 1987, 140). However, we actually know very little about reception modes. Were the romances

2 See, for instance, an analysis of the famous Arthurian manuscript Chantilly, Musée Condé 472 in Walters (1994). See also Busby et al. (1993) and Busby (2002).

indeed meant to be performed orally, to be read (aloud) in smaller or larger settings or, perhaps most likely, were they received through both means? Another question is to what extent were subtle intertextual references noticed during noisy performances? On the other hand, performances delivered repeatedly, especially through the agency of a knowing jongleur, might have helped to raise audiences' awareness of intertextual allusions, textual correspondences or citations. In any case, in order to recognize subtle or even obvious intertextual borrowing, regardless of the various modes of reception, we must *a priori* presume that there was an audience of *connaisseurs* with a considerable amount of literary baggage, even if there are likely to have been different levels of understanding within and between audiences.[3] The audience for Middle Dutch romances, for example, must have been different from the audience for Chrétien and his direct followers, and may well have been less educated. And yet, we find specific references to French romances, so presumably these audiences, or at least a part of them, could similarly be described as "knowing experts" (Besamusca 1993, 187; Hogenbirk 2011, 130–132).

Apart from the common and more restricted approach to medieval intertextuality, a broader perspective on the phenomenon is possible. First, the notion of "text" may cover not only written texts and the field of literature. Systems, codes and traditions established in other art forms are also crucial to the meaning of literary works, and therefore "text" may also refer to every cultural system operating inside or outside of literary texts. Secondly, all references, intended or otherwise, to the cultural context or to other texts could be considered intertextual in a broader sense. Especially relevant to historical texts is the awareness that we are never able to reconstruct fully the experiences of historical readers and their exact horizon of expectations (I return to this below). We always include our own perspective and run the risk of knowing the author better than the author himself. This is a problematic aspect indeed, but it could also be considered an exciting and promising one. As twenty-first-century readers, we are able to overlook various traditions and may decide for ourselves which texts are engaged in a specific dialogue. Intertextuality, therefore, has no ending, and the potential meaning and interpretation of a text never stops.

3 See, for instance, Kelly (1992, 120); Schmolke-Hasselmann (1998, Ch. 8). See also Besamusca (*supra*).

2 The Arthurian perspective

Medieval Arthurian romance could be considered as the intertextual genre *par excellence*, since the intertextual links within the Arthurian tradition are "more elaborate and pervasive than in most other literary forms." (Lacy 1996, vii) Although notions of genre are unstable in the Middle Ages – no single medieval author uses the term *roman arthurien* [Arthurian romance] (see Moran, *supra*) – Arthurian romances form a distinctive group. From the very beginning of their existence in the second half of the twelfth century, the texts share their *matière* in the form of common characters, geography, themes and structures. New works consist of variations on these well-known elements. They function against the backdrop of the tradition as a whole, which makes Arthurian romances excellent objects for intertextual play.

At the same time, medieval authors of Arthurian romances frequently crossed linguistic and generic boundaries, which were obviously diffuse. Especially, but not only, in the later Middle Ages, texts can be characterized by a mixture of various textual models and traditions; the authors' liberty is endless. Romance writers frequently refer to (conventional) elements from other vernacular traditions and genres such as lyric, *chansons de geste*, hagiography, theological and scientific works. They moreover reflect on contemporary social issues and discussions, for instance on juridical practices, gender relations/roles or power structures. Consequently, Arthurian scholars need to unravel a multiple network of cross-references among romances and other texts and contexts, and are plunged into an extremely complex network of textual and cultural relations waiting to be interpreted and understood if, indeed, that were ever possible. The Flemish scholar, J. D. Janssens (1979–1980), therefore compares the study of the Arthurian genre to a quest in "het woud sonder genade" [the forest without mercy], an *autre-monde* location mentioned in the Middle Dutch Arthurian Romance, *De Ridder metter mouwen*.

In order to describe the dynamics of the history of scholarly interest in Arthurian intertextuality, without actually listing one study after another, we may take the four aspects of literary communication as a point of departure: the author, the text itself, the context and the reader/listener. In general terms, a development may be distinguished between an author-centred and production-focused research perspective and a more textual approach, eventually leading to the idea that the meaning of a certain literary work is not innate, but rather dependent upon the interpreting reader or listener and the cultural context resonating within the text. Before the twentieth century, the emphasis in Arthurian scholarship was on the study of the author's intentions and on identifying prior sources or contexts for a given author (see Byrne, *supra*). Borrowing from other works was

not considered as a positive characteristic per se, due to a romantic emphasis on originality. However, when scholars became more and more interested in the differences between texts, they concluded that originality and genius could also lie in the way in which authors reworked their material and inscribed it into a certain tradition. The romance genre in particular was seen to map out a set of potentials, which individual romances realize through their own variations, and therefore textual borrowing was advocated as playing a central role in the emergence of the genre. Consequently, authors of medieval narratives were seen more and more as innovators rather than as imitators.

In the 1960s, textual connections were considered an intertextual phenomenon. The focus on creativity and generic conventions resulted in a variety of influence studies of one author on others, or from one language, Latin or vernacular, to another. We also see studies about the influence of oral traditions such as, for instance, the *conte d'aventure* [story of adventure] mentioned by Chrétien, or about the influence of oral literature shown by onomastic evidence, such as in Flanders, where the name "Walawwaynus" (Walewein/Gauvain) was mentioned in a charter as early as 1118.[4] Formalism, structuralism and, later, deconstructionalism directed scholars' focus back to the text itself with its inherent meaning, its *conjointure* and *sen*, resulting in a decline in the study of literary interrelations. From the 1980s onward, scholars focused their attention on the reading and listening audiences, redactors, interpolators and scribes of manuscripts. Intertextuality was considered increasingly as a dialogue, as a two-way circuit between, on the one hand, the intertext and the text reinventing it and, on the other, the readers and listeners receiving the text (Bruckner 1987, 225). It informs us to some extent about the audience's own process of reading and their relationship(s) with contemporary poetic canons, in other words the so-called *Erwartungshorizont* or horizon of expectations. This concept, coined by Jauss, was developed as early as 1967, but for the Arthurian genre fully exploited by Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann in her major study on the Old French verse romances from Chrétien to Froissart (Jauss 1967; Schmolke-Hasselmann 1998). In a shorter article on the initial court episodes of several Old French romances, Schmolke-Hasselmann moreover demonstrates that conventional, intertextual signs direct the audience's attention to meaningful similarities and differences, so that intertextuality is considered as a literary game between author and reader/listener, who is a connoisseur of the genre (Schmolke-Hasselmann 1981). This way of looking at intertextuality implies a restricted perspective: a reference to an intertext is clearly marked in a text by the author and is obviously meant to

4 For "Walewein", see Uyttersprot (2004, 175–204).

be recognized and appreciated by the audience. Broader cultural perspectives, which view literature as a product of discursive societal practices, could also be considered as related to intertextuality. Theories by Foucault and Greenblatt (New Historicism) for instance, have been influential in recent decades, resulting in a wide variety of publications about subjects such as power or gender structures, conceptions of honour, and so on.[5]

3 Categorizations of Arthurian intertextuality

Intertextual references may appear in many guises, from exact quotations derived from specific pretexts, to the insertion of well-known characters, to the rewriting of entire episodes with either more or less subtle evocations. Intertextuality may even be created by readers or listeners rather than by authors. In order to understand the intertextual character of a text, we need to distinguish between generic and specific parallels, because of the fact that structural and schematic reproduction of generic models could easily be taken for references to a specific work. In other words: similarities between texts may be the result of direct borrowing, but also of a common tradition or convention. This point was signalled by Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner (1987) in an important study of the relationship between Chrétien de Troyes and his legacy. The study's starting point is the twelfth- and thirteenth-century practice of rewriting and its reception, including not only the reading and listening audience, but also the role of, for instance, interpolators and scribe-editors (225). Bruckner distinguishes three textual Arthurian traditions as each having specific forms of intertextuality. The verse romances represent what she calls (following Bakhtin) a "dialogical" form of intertextuality, continuing the playful game of romance which Chrétien himself began by reinventing and combining aspects from a number of romances. The textual expansion by the use of prose and *entrelacement* (as in, for instance, the Prose *Lancelot* in which the *Charrette* as the central episode is absorbed and retold) can be seen as a second form of intertextuality. Bruckner calls this "centripetal intertextuality". Finally, Bruckner sees the lengthy Continuations of Chrétien's unfinished *Perceval* as examples of "centrifugal intertextuality". This categorization is particularly successful in describing the Old French tradition. Literature

5 Amongst many examples, see, for instance, Wolfzettel (1994), and an article on the Middle Dutch *Walewein ende Keye* by Ad Putter (2007), which was inspired by Foucault's economic perspective on "honour". A very good study on the relationship between intertextuality and interdiscursivity (*discours*) is Franssen (2013).

from other vernacular traditions can demonstrate other forms. Later authors of German works, for instance, strove to advance traditions set by those writers conventionally accorded "classic" status in German literary historiography, such as Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach.[6] Wolfram's *Parzival* has dialogical, centripetal and centrifugal aspects at the same time. For Middle Dutch romance, on the other hand, one could easily state that several texts, especially the original Flemish romances such as the *Roman van Walewein* and the *Roman van Moriaen*, offer a form of dialogical intertextuality, just like the works of their thirteenth-century French colleagues, but in addition, they also sometimes refer to each other.[7]

With Bruckner's categorization, then, we can indeed distinguish several forms and principles of intertextuality within textual traditions, however it is still difficult to distinguish between common participation in the Arthurian genre and the recurrence of schematic models, as well as intertextual references to specific works. The same can also be said of the study by Klaus Ridder (1998, 42–44), in which he mentions specific intertextual categories such as *Gesamtstruktur* and *Strukturzitat* (macro- and microstructural parallels with well-known models from literary tradition), and groupings such as *Episoden-*, *Motif-* und *Personenzitaten*.

We need instead to look at individual texts, since every text has its own intertextual character and its own way of coming to terms with specific pretexts, the genre or its cultural context. The notion of using less complex definitions of textual borrowing was therefore introduced by Besamusca (1993, 16–17) in a study of the interrelationships of three Middle Dutch Arthurian romances, and I shall summarize this here. Besamusca attempts to define Arthurian intertextuality by taking the convention of rewriting as a vantage point, making a distinction between what he calls "specific intertextuality" and "generic intertextuality". The first refers to the actual rewriting of a specific work, or parts of it, while his notion of generic intertextuality is suggestive of intertextuality within the Arthurian genre and concerns elements that became commonplace and conventional. His examples consist of conventions related to characters, such as Gauvain's problematic relationship with women, typological elements such as the Arthurian romance opening, structures and motifs, which an author can discuss, criticize or approve. A dialogue with the genre as a whole may therefore reveal an author's particular views on conventional elements, and often on a poetic level. Meanwhile, specific intertextuality consists of connections between a text and one or more well-known other texts. Although specific parallels are also always

6 See, for instance, the study by Neil Thomas (2005) on the Middle High German *Wigalois*.
7 See, for instance, Besamusca (1993).

mediated by the model of tradition, the particular character of such a parallel offers readers, listeners and researchers sufficient reason to believe that a text reacts to another text. Furthermore, authors almost always mark specific intertextual parallels by inserting signals: a series of remarkable resemblances, verbal similarities, identical names, and so on. In those cases we can usually exclude generic intertextuality.

One might classify another intertextual category, namely, "intergeneric intertextuality" (cf. Besamusca 1993, 194–198).[8] This form of intertextuality refers to the connections of Arthurian works with material drawn from other genres or works. There is an anachronistic aspect connected to this form of textual borrowing, since medieval poets, readers and listeners obviously did not adhere to the modern generic concepts of scholarly discussion, as noted above. However, the term holds considerable promise, since it might allow for the discovery of intertextual references to texts from various generic origins, but also to non-narrative sources available to the author and his audience. One of the most interesting examples can be found in Chrétien's *Chevalier au lion*, where Yvain is ironically compared to Roland and praised for his prowess and his rather unsophisticated way of fighting (Chrétien de Troyes 1971, ll. 3229–3233). Another example is provided by the Middle Dutch *Roman van Walewein*, in which Walewein fights like an epic knight and in which Ysabele shows traits of the Sarasin princesses from certain *chansons de geste* (see Brandsma, *infra*). The two lovers also utter love complaints in style of the troubadour *canso* (Zemel 2010, 1–28; Hogenbirk 2011b). Connoisseurs of Walewein's flawed reputation might have raised their eyebrows here, so a generic play with conventions is also at stake.

Because it is impossible to give a full overview of the intertextual dynamics of a broad and long-lasting tradition as Arthurian romance, I will now elaborate on some general features of Arthurian intertextuality, by using the categories of generic, specific and intergeneric intertextuality in a case study.

8 Besamusca does not actually use this specific term. Norris Lacy (1996, viii) does mention "intergeneric intertextuality" and refers to the confusion caused by the ambiguous use of the term "generic intertextuality" as one of the themes of the International Arthurian Society Congress in Bonn in 1993.

4 Case study: The Middle Dutch *Moriaen* – contesting convention

Original Middle Dutch Arthurian romances from the thirteenth century have a paradoxical characteristic. They seem to be less sophisticated than most of their sources of inspiration, the French Arthurian romances, and yet they obviously respond to the French tradition. The Flemish *Roman van Moriaen* is a typical example from this tradition, especially with regard to intertextual borrowing.[9] The romance contains an interesting mixture of generic elements derived from different sources, Arthurian and non-Arthurian. Its main source of inspiration seems to be Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*, although there are also specific connections with the Middle Dutch *Roman van Walewein* on which I, however, will not be able to elaborate here.[10]

A small fragment and a complete, reworked version of the narrative have survived. The romance is a story of development and integration, of loyalty and friendship and of a black young knight, Moriaen, who surpasses his famous father, Perchevael. The Grail knight, Perchevael, made his way to the land of Moriane, fathered a son, Moriaen, but abandoned the latter's black mother whilst she was pregnant. Consequently, Moriaen and his mother lost their lands and possessions, an injustice to which fourteen-year old Moriaen wants to see an end by finding his father at Arthur's court and bringing him back to Moriane.[11]

At the beginning of the romance, the young titular hero, Moriaen, is an unknown black knight who is described in a traditional way: tall, black as a raven with teeth as white as chalk. However, he is beautiful in his own way and, above all, he is a Christian. *Moriaen* belongs to the group of Arthurian romances containing elements of the Fair Unknown motif. The author has combined this motif with a youth's search for his father, a biographical theme shared by many other medieval narratives, a group which Friedrich Wolfzettel calls *Enfance* romances (Wolfzettel 1973–1974). Arthurian romances with this theme are, for instance, *Le*

9 For my case study I have drawn material from my earlier publications on *Moriaen*: Hogenbirk (2009; 2011a; 2014). In these articles references can be found to other literature about the Middle Dutch romance.

10 For these connections, see Besamusca (1993, 100–110); Brandsma (*infra*) studies this text in some detail.

11 Research has shown that in the original version of the romance, Perchevael must have been Moriaen's father. In the only complete version to have survived, the Grail knight is substituted by Perchevael's brother, Acglovael. Another problem is Moriaen's age. The version in the Lancelot compilation has "xxiiij" years, but this passage is probably corrupt, since the narrator also states that Moriaen is a mere child.

Conte du Graal, *Le Bel Inconnu*, *Fergus* and *Wigalois*. These texts not only draw attention to the quest and development of the young protagonist, but also to the constellation – and more specifically the weaknesses – of the Arthurian court of which the hero finally becomes a member.[12] This is also the case in *Moriaen*. The young black outsider surpasses his well-known father and develops into the ministering angel of a vulnerable Arthurian kingdom by defeating invading Saxons. The similarities with other *Enfance* texts may be seen as a form of generic intertextuality, but there is no reason to believe that the author wanted to refer to this type of text in order to add a specific surplus to *Moriaen*.

Of importance for the romance's meaning, however, are the specific references to Chrétien's *Conte du Graal*. The text offers a specific intertextual response to Chrétien's work and embroiders on the unfinished text. The author must have known the *Conte du Graal* either in Old French or in its surviving Middle Dutch translation.[13] He works towards the closure of Perceval's storyline and explains what becomes of the quests for the Grail and the Bleeding Lance (which appears to be sought by Perceval, and not by Gauvain). Moriaen's quest for his father runs partly parallel with the section of *Le Conte du Graal* in which Perceval, over a period of five years of chivalric deeds during which he attempts to find the Grail, sends sixty prisoners to the court. In the opening scene of the Middle Dutch romance, one of these prisoners, a robber knight, arrives at court and forms the catalyst for the quests of Walewein and Lancelot, who promise Arthur that they will find the Grail knight and bring him back. While they are on their way, they meet Moriaen, who joins them.

Later in the romance, Moriaen's father Perchevael apparently stays with his uncle, the hermit, a familiar figure from the end of Chrétien's unfinished text. Chrétien's hermit episode implicitly suggests that Perceval would return to the Grail Castle to pass the test he had previously failed. The Flemish author introduces a remarkable variation: Moriaen and his friends are told that Perchevael has realized that he would never find the Grail, because he abandoned his mother when he took off to become a knight at Arthur's court, leaving her to die of grief, a part of Perceval's *enfance* that is recounted by Chrétien. In *Moriaen*, Perchevael gives up on his search for the Grail, and has become a hermit, too. His quest for the Grail is a failure, while in Chrétien's text the hermit episode seems to mark a new beginning for Perceval. Moreover, in *Moriaen* Chrétien's hero committed another sin: he abandoned Moriaen's black mother and her unborn child. With

12 See Echard (2007), which touches upon the criticism of the Arthurian court and Walewein's role in two other Middle Dutch Fair Unknown stories.

13 For the Middle Dutch *Perchevael* tradition, see Oppenhuis de Jong (2003).

these variations on Chrétien's story of Perceval, the author of the Middle Dutch text makes clear that the Grail knight is not the hero of this romance.

Unlike his father, Moriaen succeeds in his mission. At the outset, he takes care of his mother and makes up for the injustice done to her, thereby also redeeming his father's mistakes. At the end of the romance he brings Perchevael with him to his land, reclaims their property and makes amends for the injustice caused by his father's leave. Perchevael and Moriaen's mother finally marry in Moriane in the presence of their son and his Arthurian friends. With this, Perchevael's chivalric career has reached its end. A new and better hero has surpassed him: Moriaen, who eventually becomes the champion of the Arthurian court, protecting and saving the kingdom of Logres from the invading enemies.

With the character of Moriaen, the author reintroduces a representant of a traditional form of chivalry, different from Chrétien's enigmatic, religiously-inspired chivalric ideals. The Perceval-section in *Le Conte du Graal* shows that the key to transformation, healing and restoration lies in non-violence, nourished by Christian charity. The Flemish poet seems to criticize this new spiritual conception of chivalry. Moriaen's chivalric exploits are not linked to religious values, to sin and absolution, and do not lead to disaster, but rather result in peace. On his way to becoming a true knight, the young hero is inspired by the other protagonist from Chrétien's story, Gauvain (Walewein), who is described without the irony of the French text. Walewein plays a major role as Moriaen's tutor and friend; he teaches the young knight the principles of courtly knighthood. In the structure of his romance, the Flemish author follows Chrétien's pattern of the two interlaced quests of Perceval and Gauvain, but he restores an older hierarchy: Walewein does live up to his reputation here, he is the best knight in court, except perhaps for Moriaen. An interesting variation on common Arthurian schemes and on the *Enfance* texts is that Moriaen, in the end, neither becomes a true member of the Arthurian court nor marries. He takes his leave and continues living with his parents in Moriane. The emphasis of the storyline is entirely on his chivalric development, his out-classing of Perchevael and his friendship with Walewein.

Another source of inspiration for the author of Moriaen seems to come from the *chansons de geste*. In Flanders, the two genres were translated from French at the same time and a mixture of elements is also visible in other Flemish romances from this region. I have argued elsewhere (Hogenbirk 2009) that Moriaen shares characteristics with several Black Saracens from this genre. One of them is Rainouart au Tinel, another youth, who appears in the *Guillaume d'Orange Cycle*. This character is also marked by his blackness (but this time from the fires in the kitchen) and the descriptions of his physical appearance show many similarities to the portrait of the Middle Dutch hero. Rainouart, moreover, integrates into the white court, just like Moriaen. Furthermore, other *chanson de geste* elements can

be found in *Moriaen*: formulaic descriptions of fights and an emphasis on male companionship and friendship. Although there are no concrete signs of specific intergeneric intertextuality with texts such as, for instance, *Aliscamps*, or of genre criticism and irony, the mixture of generic elements in Moriaen can be seen as a remarkable characteristic of the romance, and it might tell us something about certain traditional chivalric ideals that the author wanted to emphasize in his text.

I have elaborated here on specific and (intergeneric) intertextuality in *Moriaen*, based on written texts. In addition, a broader perspective may also offer interesting insights into this romance. Medieval culture provides many models of discourse through which the events in *Moriaen* can be interpreted, and modern theories may even prove useful. Postcolonial theories, for example, may shed a light on certain power structures in the romance (see Lynch, *infra*). The author breaks with the contemporary image of black knights in the *chansons de geste*: Moriaen is handsome (although in his own way, according to the narrator), and he quite easily integrates into Arthurian society because he is a Christian, as well as the son of Perchevael. As the narrative proceeds, the narrator pays increasingly less attention to Moriaen's skin colour. By the end of the text, people no longer fear him and he is simply the good knight Moriaen. He seems to become more and more "white" as his integration into the Arthurian world proceeds. This may refer to an underlying cultural discourse on white dominance. From a twenty-first-century perspective we could conclude that the white Arthurian civilization is superior: black Moriaen is rather rough around the edges at the beginning of the romance and, having to adjust to the values of the Arthurian court, must therefore be coached by Walewein in order to integrate into the white world. But of course, there is more research needed into contemporary images, positive and negative, of black cultures in order to identify more concretely a possible underlying socio-historical discussion in *Moriaen*. Wolfram's *Parzival*, with black-and-white-spotted, handsome Feirefiz, the son of Parzival, must also be taken into account in this context, since this romance offers interesting parallels, although the authors did not seem to know each other's work. In sum, an Arthurian romance such as *Moriaen* can be argued as not only referring intertextually to a specific written literary context of pretexts, but as also possibly interacting with contemporary discourse; it is therefore ripe for study from a much broader, cultural perspective.

A final aspect of the intertextual dynamics of *Moriaen* concerns the manuscript context of the romance. The only complete version of the romance has survived in the famous *Lancelot Compilation* of *c*. 1320–1325, a Brabantine manu-

script containing ten Arthurian texts.[14] Moriaen can be found in a "Grail context" within this codex: the text is inserted immediately after a drastically reworked version of the *Conte du Graal* and a part of the *First Continuation*, and before the *Queeste van den Grale*. The romance thus literally forms another continuation to Chrétien's text and is also contextualized as a prelude to the completion of the Grail Quest by Galaad in the *Queeste*, in which Perchevael finally dies. In the compilation version of *Moriaen*, Perchevael as father is substituted with Acglovael by the compiler of the manuscript, likely because of the fact that the existence of a son would have been very problematic indeed for the Grail knight, whose achievement is at least partially due to his virginity. Yet, the intertextual links with Chrétien are still clearly visible and are complemented by the manuscript's own intertextual processes. The position amongst Grail texts, all of which are adaptations of Flemish translations of Old French sources, invites a more specific comparison between these compilation versions. Moreover, *Moriaen* and the preceding adaptation of Chrétien's romance have another interesting trait in common with several other texts in the *Compilation*: Walewein is an extremely positive character; he seems, indeed, to be the compiler's favourite. Research into these and other intertextual links, both generic and specific, between the texts in the manuscript promises to offer yet more insights into the reception of *Moriaen* by the compiler and the intended reader(s) of the manuscript. Furthermore, it may shed light on the ideology behind this codex which, in many respects, is still enigmatic.

From this case study, we can conclude that the meaning of an individual Arthurian romance such as *Moriaen* is inevitably shaped by other texts and by discourses, and not only in the author's time, but also in later contexts. Accordingly, research into the way in which authors, scribes or compilers appropriate, adapt and interpret the material they use, whether a restricted scope or a much broader research perspective is used, is a powerful instrument for us to use when attempting to tease out the meaning(s) of either a single text or a text collection. Arthurian texts like *Moriaen* offer their readers endless examples of intertextuality. Indeed, the phenomenon is a crucial element of their literary composition. A lot of work will be necessary to understand fully the bases and effects of textual sharing within the Arthurian genre, especially since each text, vernacular tradition or manuscript contains its own intertextual procedures. Therefore, in order also to identify larger developments in the evolution of the genre, intertextuality is an invaluable analytical tool, even if we do in fact realize that we will not be

14 The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 129 A 10. A study of this codex is to be found in Besamusca (2003).

able to explore the implications of so vast a notion comprehensively, let alone grasp the ultimate meaning of an individual text. A final key point to remember is that participating in an intellectual game played by medieval authors, readers, scribes and compilers, and thereby searching for the intertextual *surplus* in a text, is one of the most obviously rewarding literary pleasures of the study of Arthurian literature.

Acknowledgment: I thank Leah Tether for correcting my English and for her patience.

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