The Judgment of Jupiter

Froissart’s *Joli buisson de Jonece*

I. Introduction

Jean Froissart (c. 1337–1405) is today best known for his *Chroniques*, a massive work of French prose documenting the events of the first half of the Hundred Years War, based largely on the author’s personal reporting and interviews with eye-witnesses. Before becoming the most important historian of the Middle Ages, however, Froissart was already famous among the courts of Europe as a poet. Froissart the versifier’s debt to Guillaume de Machaut is widely acknowledged by scholars, particularly in regard to the later poet’s tendency to mix lyric and narrative forms in his *dits*, inspired by such Machaualdian works as *Remede de Fortune* and the *Voir dit*. 1 Froissart’s *L’espinette amoureuse* (*The Hawthorn Bush of Love*, c. 1369) and its sequel, *Le joli buisson de Jonece* (*The Fair Bush of Youth*, 1372–73) are two such lyric-narrative *dits*, blending a strong first-person narrative with inset lyrics whose composition is performed in the text itself by the author’s narrator/poetic persona.

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Like Machaut’s body of work, Froissart’s *dits* are arranged in single-author manuscripts to construct a poetic corpus that is also a meta-narrative of the poet’s career. In *L’espinette amoureuse*, Froissart’s narrator portrays himself as a foolish, twelve-year-old lover and a novice love poet whose efforts to win the heart of a certain young lady go awry time and time again. This proto-*künstlerroman* provides the frame for a number of inset lyric poems which the narrator offers, without much success, to the young lady. Although he is consistently rejected by the object of his desire, Froissart’s inexperienced narrator is blinded by love and thus fails to understand that she has no feelings for him.

In the sequel, *Le joli buisson de Jonece*, Froissart’s narrator is now thirty-five and has seemingly, like the author at the time, entered the priesthood. Although he is disenchanted with love, the narrator travels back to the days of *Espinette* in a long dream vision, in which he relives his adolescent courtship of the young lady, with much the same results as the first time around: he writes poetry for her, and she does not share his affection. Finally, he wakes up and realizes that the return to youth has all been merely a deceptive dream. Renouncing love and love poetry once and for all, he asserts his unwavering allegiance to God and the Virgin Mary in a final lyric composition entitled the “Lay de Nostre Dame.”

*Espinette* and *Buisson*, which as a set I take the liberty of referring to as the *Bush* poems, are among Froissart’s works most evocative of Machaut. For example, in *Espinette* as in Machaut’s *JRB*, the action begins when the narrator crawls beneath a bush on a beautiful spring day. And while Machaut’s narrator symbolically travels back in time to the Easter season of *JRB* from the apocalyptic November scene which opens its sequel, the dream vision of Froissart’s *Buisson* begins on a dismal November night as the narrator is suddenly transported back to the bright springtime of his own earlier poem, *Espinette*.

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2. On Froissart’s poetic manuscripts as examples of single-author compilation, see Huot, *From Song to Book*, 302–27.

Correspondences like these abound, but Froissart’s *Bush* poems display their strongest point of structural resemblance with *JRB* and *JRN* in that the overarching narrative of the two texts is organized around a series of opposing judgments. At the beginning of *Espinette*, the narrator embarks on his career as a love poet by repeating the mythological Judgment of Paris and choosing Venus as the fairest of the goddesses, over Juno and Pallas. In turn, the narrator’s judgment in favor of Venus becomes the pattern for a whole series of bad judgments throughout *Espinette* as, rendered foolish by the goddess of love, he misinterprets the words and actions of the young lady and continues to pursue her after she has repeatedly told him she is not interested.

In *Buisson*, the chronic bad judgment shown by the narrator after repeating the Judgment of Paris is remedied as he assumes a new and more pious perspective on his life and work. In his November dream vision, the narrator meets Venus once again, and she leads him back in time to the titular bush of *Espinette*, the hawthorn under which he had judged in her favor twenty-three years earlier. He finds that the bush has grown to immeasurable size, but within it he is able to relive the events of *Espinette* as if they were happening all over again. Aside from repeating his old mistakes and being rejected one more time by the young lady, he also learns an important lesson from the personified figure who guides him through the bush, Jonece (Youth). Outlining a version of Ptolemy’s theory of the seven ages of man, Jonece explains to the narrator that once a man has attained the astrological age of Jupiter, his judgments grow clearer; under Jupiter’s influence, a man finally turns his thoughts to God and learns to reflect clearly on the state of his soul. In this identification of the Jovian age with piety and worldly renunciation, Froissart follows the common late medieval tendency to allegorize Jupiter as the Christian God, as in the early fourteenth-century *Ovide moralisé*, a key source of myth material for both Machaut and Froissart.

While the Judgment of Paris begins the narrator’s service to Venus in *Espinette*, his initiation into the age of Jupiter is made official in *Buisson* as

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5. Although Froissart would not have known Ptolemy in the original Greek, the philosopher’s seminal work on astrology, the *Tetrabiblos* (Latin *Quadripartitum*), was circulated widely in the West beginning with Plato of Tivoli’s 1138 translation from Arabic to Latin.

he becomes painfully aware of the divine judgment to which he is subject. Awakening from his dream, he concludes that the pursuit of erotic love and love poetry are vanities (“wiseuses,” v. 5160) and will be condemned by God when it is time for the soul to account for its actions:

Car ce sont painnes et nuisuses
Pour l’ame, qui noient n’i pense
Et qui il faut, en fin de cense,
Rendre compte de tous fourfais
Qui n’est que cendre et poureture.

For these things are harmful
for the soul, which doesn’t think about them, but
for which it is necessary at the end of its tenure
to give an accounting of all the bad things
the body which is but ashes and decay.

(vv. 5161–66)

This epiphany leads Froissart’s narrator to abandon *eros* for the Virgin, as expressed in his “Lay de Nostre Dame” (vv. 5198–442). Faced with eternal condemnation for serving Venus, the narrator can only pray that Mary will speak for him, acting as an “advocate” (v. 5186) on his behalf. Only in this way might he find a positive answer to the *Dies irae* hymn’s chilling question, “Quid sum miser tunc dicturus?”

Que diras, What will you say
Quant veras when you meet
Ton Signour your Lord
Au darrain jour? on the Last Day?

(vv. 5333–36)

For the narrator, the question of what can be said in his defense weighs heavily, since it is his own use of language—his poetry—which comes under the most scrutiny in this imagined day of reckoning. As for Guillaume le Clerc in the thirteenth century, Froissart uses the Judgment as a dramatic backdrop against which to perform the renunciation of earlier, vain writing.7

*Espinette* and *Buisson* show Froissart at his most pseudo-autobiographical,8 and the second poem’s Last Judgment on love poetry has usually been understood as part of a larger reflection made by Froissart on his own

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7. On Guillaume le Clerc, see above, Introduction, 17–18.
career. At the time of *Buisson*'s composition in 1373, Froissart had recently been ordained as a priest and been granted the benefice of Estinnes-au-Mont (in the present-day Belgian province of Hainaut), a position secured for him by his patron, Wenceslas I.9 Froissart’s new status as a man of the cloth is announced in *Buisson*’s prologue with the narrator’s mention of his “ordenance nouvelle”:

Or voi je cangié mon afaire
Enaultre ordenance nouvelle.

Now I see my situation changed
into another, new way of life. (vv. 458–59)

After *Buisson*, the author would turn his attention increasingly away from love poetry and dits to the writing of his *Chroniques* and his more obscure Arthurian romance *Meliador*, of which no completed copy exists. Citing this turning point in the poet’s career, Michelle Freeman has iconically labeled *Buisson* Froissart’s “farewell to poetry.”10 Most scholars have likewise affirmed that the poem articulates a kind of palinode, or dramatic recantation, of the first half of Froissart’s body of work. Peter Dembowski and then William Kibler, for instance, have referred to *Buisson* as a Dantesque “mid-life crisis” in which Froissart’s poet-narrator performs the author’s own change of direction.11 This decisive moment is also reflected in the way Froissart’s works are compiled, as the earlier poetic works are not found together with *Meliador* or the *Chroniques*.12

11. Peter Dembowski, *Jean Froissart and his Meliador: Context, Craft and Sense*. Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1983. 36–41; William Kibler, “*Le joli buisson de Jonece*: Froissart’s Midlife Crisis,” in *Froissart Across the Genres*. Ed. Donald Maddox, Sara Sturm-Maddox. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998. 63–80. Lassahn also notes the similarity with Dante’s narrator at his “mezzo del cammin” (“Pseudo-Autobiography and the Role of the Poet,” 127 n3). Sylvia Huot has articulated the following, more nuanced account of Froissart’s gesture in *Buisson*, which is closer to my own argument in this chapter: “Froissart’s ‘farewell to poetry’ in no sense entails a loss of respect for the poetic arts, nor does it imply that Froissart’s own abilities are waning. It implies simply that the themes of lyricism and ‘courtly love’ no longer serve Froissart’s needs, and he turns to a different sort of literature. Indeed, as Froissart passes in review the French lyrico-narrative tradition and his own participation therein, one senses that he is not so much turning away from poetry as he is transposing poetic process into a new register” (*From Song to Book*, 316). Claire Nouvet’s unpublished dissertation (“La fragmentation du système poetico-lyrique de Jean Froissart,” Diss. Princeton University, 1981) is probably the most ambitious attempt to account for Froissart’s “farewell” in terms of his larger corpus and career.
Given the way it puts Froissart’s career into perspective, it is not my intention to question the “farewell” gesture of *Buisson*. One thing about the poem, however, cannot be overemphasized: that it represents a spectacularly poetic farewell, more self-celebration, homage to the poet’s influences, and elaborate thank-you to his adoring fans, than searing self-judgment. Like *Espinette*, *Buisson* provides a fantastic narrative frame for Froissart’s love lyrics even as it distances the author from erotic poetry in time and mentality. *Buisson* is also a celebration of the great and wealthy courts whose generous patronage Froissart enjoyed. The poet draws attention to his financial success in *Buisson* by spending nearly 150 verses (vv. 230–373) cataloging the various gifts and sums of cash he has received from his many loyal patrons.

Froissart’s humorous treatment of money is by no means unique to *Buisson*. In this poem, as elsewhere, it reflects the author’s awareness of his status as a literary figure, and of his texts as literary commodities, if among a relatively small and intimate readership. Froissart’s poetic works seem never to have achieved the wide circulation of his *Chroniques* and are preserved today in only two manuscripts. Nevertheless, the author expressed a distinct concern with his own textual coherence, more explicitly so even than Machaut, whose manuscripts enjoyed greater popularity and richer workmanship. As Jacqueline Cerquiglini puts it, “Froissart’s essential activity is that of collecting.” The nature of the collection is the author-book, the compiled corpus, which was for Froissart more overtly than for Machaut an object of economic exchange with a distinct value in the marketplace. Because he was so conscious of his public literary status and of his participation in a wider economy of book production, Froissart could not be content to simply write off any part of his work. Accompanying the critical perspective on love poetry in *Buisson*, then, there is also a strong impulse to recuperate past writing, to defend its place in the literary record. Like Machaut’s *JRN*, this sequel is not simply a point of rupture with an earlier version of the writing subject, but a conjunction of past and future poetry which emphasizes the importance of both.


15. See Lechat, *Dire par fiction*, 265.

As I show in this chapter, Froissart’s will toward re-collection is surprisingly evident in *Buisson’s* meditation on the Last Judgment, which serves not only to mark renunciation, but also to reaffirm and validate the past. In that it both abjures and defends the poet’s youthful poetry, Froissart’s Last Judgment corresponds closely to the way that Gisèle Mathieu-Castellani has defined her concept of *la scène judiciaire de l’autobiographie:* “La scène judiciaire se met en place dans un double geste de répudiation et de rappel” (“The judicial scene [of autobiography] takes place through a double gesture of repudiation and recollection”). Deguileville’s *PA* and Machaut’s *JRN* have already provided two examples of this *double geste,* in which earlier writing is spotlighted as it is indicted, advertised as it is accused. In Froissart’s *Buisson,* even as the judgment of God blames the subject for having written vain poetry, so too does it celebrate his literary past.

For Froissart, the need for a complete poetic record is not only because, as Saint Bernard put it, what has been written on the parchment of the soul can never be scratched out, can never be hidden from the eyes of an omniscient God. This is certainly an important part of the impulse to remembering the past in *Buisson,* and the poem is even framed as a literary testament in which Froissart’s pseudo-autobiographical narrator will give a sincere and thorough accounting of his life before he dies (vv. 1–10). Yet Froissart suggests that the responsibility he feels toward his readers also makes it necessary for him to reaffirm the value of past poetry. Not only may the author be guilty for having endangered readers’ souls with vain entertainment, but, quite apart from that, he is indebted to audiences for the generous financial support they provided for his more youthful works.

As it concludes what is perhaps the most overtly humorous of all the texts I consider in this book, Froissart’s scene of Last Judgment expresses a distinct ethical seriousness about literature which is further complicated—and not only enlivened—by the capitalistic relationship of a writer and his aristocratic and princely consumers. If the more literal account book of author-patron transactions is to be squared with the great Book of judgment, how does the poet define the nature of his responsibilities to the reader? Specifically, is the now repentant author guilty of having brought into the world poetry he himself has characterized as vain? Have well-paying readers been left with a worthless, or even a harmful product?

As a *double geste,* I believe Froissart’s use of the divine judgment motif in *Buisson* may be read as a symbolic attempt to reconcile the two great

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judges of his life—God and the Patron. In this chapter, working my way back to Froissart’s closing meditation on the Judgment, I show how this eschatological meditation constitutes both a repudiation and a reendorsement of the author’s love poetry, and of the larger courtly tradition into which it is inscribed.

Following the most conventional reading of *Buisson*, I begin with repudiation. In the first section of this chapter, I consider how Froissart’s imagined Judgment works to enact the “farewell to poetry” spoken of by Freeman.19 Examining the *Bush* poems as a continuous narrative, I show how Froissart employed the imagined scene of eschatological judgment at the end of *Buisson*—the allegorical judgment of Jupiter—as a counterpoint to the uncertainty of the judgments his pseudo-autobiographical narrator had exhibited while in the service of Venus. What I add to prior scholarly discussion of Froissart’s “farewell” and his “mid-life crisis” is a more nuanced picture of the ways in which the poet used judgment motifs to weigh the ethics of his own writing and to narrate the difficult procès of acquiring both moral and poetic authority.

In the second part of the chapter, I turn to the aspect of rappel and to the way that the ethical relationship of author and reader comes to depend on Froissart’s defense and revalorization of his earlier poetry as much as on its renunciation. Needing to respond to his expectant readers as well as to God, Froissart calls earlier writing back to mind in order to justify its presence as part of the author’s corpus, his complete works. The Last Judgment of *Buisson* suggests a symbolic means of unifying past, present and future, as it does not in fact condemn Froissart’s erotic works outright. Instead, it argues for a new interpretation of the poet’s past, enabling him to defend his authority to God and the Patron at once.

II. Froissart’s Judgment of Paris, or a Portrait of the Artist as a Young Machaut

To work back toward Froissart’s meditation on the Judgment Day as it functions in the larger narrative of the *Bush* poems, the best place to begin is another scene of judgment with cosmic proportions, this one near the beginning of *Espinette amoureuse*. This first judgment scene represents the start of the poet’s vocation, and not coincidentally, it is more than a little

inspired by Guillaume de Machaut’s *Jugements*.

At the beginning of *Espinette*, in the “joli mois de may” (v. 351), while he sits beneath a hawthorn bush, Froissart’s twelve-year-old narrator is suddenly confronted by four mysterious figures embroiled in a dispute. As he too had lain in a bush in the springtime, the narrator of Machaut’s *JRB* had encountered a knight, a lady, her lady-in-waiting and a small dog. In Froissart’s *Espinette*, the group of four assumes more grandiose proportions: they are the god Mercury and the goddesses Juno, Venus and Pallas; but just like Machaut’s group, the goddesses are fighting amongst themselves and seek a judgment to resolve their dispute.

Addressing the narrator, Mercury claims that he has been quietly watching over him for four years. He then refers to the Judgment of Paris legend to explain why he and the goddesses have come to visit the young man so unexpectedly. The legend’s details, which Mercury largely skips over, go like this: at the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis, all the deities of Olympia are in attendance and having a good time, when suddenly Eris—Discord—crashes the party. Attempting to provoke a quarrel among Juno, Pallas and Venus, Eris places a golden apple before them, inscribed with the words “For the Fairest.” Naturally, all three goddesses claim the apple for themselves, leading them to seek arbitration from Jupiter. Jupiter does not wish to incur the wrath of the other goddesses (including his bad-tempered wife Juno) by favoring one of them, so he recuses himself from the judgment and delegates the shepherd Paris for the task instead. Mercury leads the three goddesses to Mount Ida, where Paris tends his flock, and the goddesses plead their cases and offer various bribes to the bemused young man. In the end, Paris awards the apple to Venus because her offer proves more seductive. In return, the goddess gives him the love of Helen, putting into motion the Trojan War.

Speaking to the twelve-year-old narrator in Froissart’s bucolic scene of judgment, Mercury explains that Pallas and Juno are still enraged by Paris’s decision, and that they have demanded the judgment be resubmitted to another authority, none other than the narrator himself. Claiming that since he is young and innocent he ought to be able to make a more clear-headed choice than Paris (vv. 474–82), Mercury asks the narrator which goddess he thinks the fairest. When the narrator admits his ignorance, Mercury is more than willing to lend an opinion; he explains in no uncertain terms that Paris made a disastrous judgment in awarding

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the apple to Venus, as among other things, this caused the Trojan War (vv. 440–66). Mercury thus offers the narrator a chance to right Paris’s decision by strongly suggesting that he not choose the goddess of love this time. But the narrator just has to learn the hard way and disregards Mercury’s advice. With little hesitation, he repeats the judgment of Paris and opts for Venus (vv. 483–524). This does not surprise Mercury; with a sigh, the god says only that he thought as much: all lovers make the same decision (“Tout li amant vont celle voie,” v. 524). Mercury then disappears into thin air, leaving the narrator in the hands of the goddess of love. The narrator’s judgment for Venus signifies the choice of erotic love and love poetry as his vocation, as against the military career represented by Pallas and the life of material wealth by Juno. Venus is overjoyed by the narrator’s decision, and she promises that she will reward him by accepting him into her service (vv. 605–8).

As things turn out, this does not seem like much of a reward. Although it does not bring about a second Trojan War, the narrator’s judgment has catastrophic results for him personally. The momentary choice of a particular life—the service of Venus, the vocation of love poetry—determines the narrator’s interpretation of reality thereafter. Namely, love and its poetry blind him to the fact that the object of his desire does not return his sentiments. 21 As in Machaut’s Jugement poems, then, Espinette exploits the semantic ambiguity between jugement as an official pronouncement and jugement as an individual mental faculty used at each moment of life to interpret the world. The tragicomic series of events following the judgment for Venus, recounted with irony by Froissart’s more mature narrator, deserves to be summarized here in some detail, since it helps to show how bad judgment is portrayed in Espinette as a symptom of erotic desire, and of courtly poetry.

After Venus promises to reward the narrator, she disappears and he meets a young lady reading Adenet le Roi’s thirteenth-century romance Cléomades (v. 696). 22 The two read together for a time; afterward, the young lady asks him to lend her another good book. Smitten, he writes her a ballad (vv. 927–44) declaring his love and folds it into the volume he lends her,

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22. The young lady remains effectively anonymous throughout the Bush poems, although at the end of Espinette (vv. 4179–85), Froissart’s narrator claims that her name is hidden in a previous passage (vv. 3386–89) along with his own. Based on v. 3389 (“Violettes et margerites”) the young lady has usually been identified as “Margerite,” but William Kibler has suggested that her name could also be “Violette” (“Self-Deception in Froissart’s Espinette amoureuse,” Romania 97 [1976]: 80–81). Because of this uncertainty and the fact that she is never directly named in the text, I call her simply the “young lady.”
Mahieu le Poirier’s *Baillieu d’Amours*, a seminal text of the medieval love debate tradition. Upon receiving the book back from the young lady, the narrator is dismayed to find that his literally-inserted lyric is right where he put it, as if she chose to ignore it. And indeed, although she clearly likes to read, the young lady does not care for any of the narrator’s poems. He, however, is blinded by Venus and burns with desire, remaining oblivious to the disinterest of his audience.

Over time, the narrator composes a substantial amount of fixed-form lyric poetry for the young lady, which Froissart inserts into his own text. In these lyrics and in the narrative that frames them, the gulf between the young lady’s feelings of annoyance toward the narrator and his ability to judge those feelings grows ever wider. Sometime later, for instance, the narrator offers the young lady a rose, which she tries politely to decline (vv. 994–1004). He, however, misconstrues her refusal as false modesty, insisting that she take the gift. After another negative response to his pleas (v. 1120), he writes the young lady a ballad demanding her love, to which she replies in exasperation, “He’s really asking a lot!” (“Ce qu’il demande, c’est grant cose!” v. 1296). But against his better judgment, the narrator still does not lose hope. When he learns that the young lady is to be married (vv. 1435–36), but soon thoughts of the impending union propel him into a long state of fever, during which he writes a new batch of unwanted poetry for her (vv. 1556–2355). He seems to lose his grip on reality entirely as he is possessed by the heat of desire; at one point hallucinating the young lady’s presence in a mirror she has given him, he convinces himself that she has sent him a poem of comfort (vv. 2617–996).

Later in *Espinette*, the young lady resigns herself to tolerating the narrator’s continued intrusions into her life, although she dismisses the poetry he writes for her as emotionally feigned (vv. 3583–85), an insult that he does not register. Soon thereafter, she breaks off their relationship, giving the excuse of malicious rumors told about them (vv. 3751–58). At the end of *Espinette*, the narrator attempts to enter back into contact with the young lady and asks her to sit beside him: “Les moi venes chi douce

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24. This scene is another good example of Froissart’s frequent gestures of homage toward Machaut, since it bears a close resemblance to the intervention of Venus that follows the Judgment of Paris in Machaut’s *Fonteinne amoureuse*, as well as to scenes in his *Remede de Fortune* and *Voir dit*. De Looze (*Pseudo-Autobiography*, 110) notes similarities in the mirror episodes in both authors, as does Picherit (“Le rôle des élements mythologiques,” 499).
amie” (“Come here beside me, sweet friend,” v. 3781). She responds with the perfectly unambiguous words, “point d’amie chi pour vous!” (“There’s no friend for you here!” v. 3783). When she sees that she has still not gotten her point across, she vents her frustration by violently tearing a handful of hair from his scalp (vv. 3789–92). The narrator, however, is only momentarily deterred, and finally decides to interpret this gesture as a definitive token of her affection (vv. 3817–33), which he composes a closing ballad and lay to celebrate (vv. 3834–4146). He is not simply stubborn or ignorant, but suffers from chronic self-deception, perhaps, as he himself muses in retrospect, as the result of having been too young for love (vv. 133–36).

So does one bad judgment—the fatefuly repeated choice of Paris—cause the narrator’s entire deliberative faculty to be knocked askew in its interpretation of the world and of the reactions of his very first reader, the anonymous young lady. Although religious themes are not as explicit in Espinette as in Buisson, already in the earlier poem the narrator’s choice for Venus and its repercussions can be traced directly to later medieval Christian beliefs about the faculty of judgment. As Margaret Ehrhart has shown in her study of the Judgment of Paris legend, the decision of Froissart’s narrator to bestow the golden apple on Venus follows the traditional medieval reading of the legend, which was based on the allegorical interpretation given to it by the Church Father Fulgentius (c. 460–c. 530). For Fulgentius, Jupiter’s deferral of judgment to Paris represented God’s endowment of man with free will and the ability to choose for himself a life of contemplation, of activity, or of pleasure-seeking. In the early fourteenth century, the Ovide moralisé had effected the myth’s translation into popular Christian allegory by identifying the golden apple with the forbidden fruit of Eden and Paris’s choice with the moment of the Fall.

In her account, Ehrhart demonstrates how this basic pattern of Christian allegoresis was applied to the Judgment of Paris legend throughout the Middle Ages and in Froissart’s poem. As the emblem of judgments made

26. See Ibid.
29. Ibid., 76, 84.
30. Ibid., 85–93. Ehrhart (90) notes that the Ovide moralisé is the first text to interpret the Judgment of Paris in the light of salvation history.
31. Ibid., 141–51.
in the state of blindness incurred by original sin and by his own adolescent sexuality, the narrator’s inevitable repetition of Paris’s judgment is the catalyst for his inability to judge the words and actions of the young lady. That the narrator’s perceptions are distorted by overheated sexual desire shows how one bad judgment reproduces itself endlessly on the level of the individual poet, much as the faulty judgment made by Adam and Eve reproduces itself in the human lineage as a whole and will do so until the Last Judgment puts things right. 32

While the narrator’s poor judgment is everyone’s judgment after the Fall and the judgment of all lovers (“Tout li amant,” v. 524), it is also the judgment of Guillaume de Machaut. Not only does Froissart’s Judgment of Paris recall the bushy beginning of Machaut’s Jugement dou roy de Behaingne, it conflates that scene with the climactic episode of one of Machaut’s most famous dits, La fonteinnie amoureuse (1360), 33 an episode which is Machaut’s own version of the Judgment of Paris. 34 In Fonteinne, Machaut’s narrator-poet meets a certain lovelorn prince—identifiable with Machaut’s then patron, Jean duc de Berry, who is weary with heartache because he has to leave France, and the woman he loves, to become a hostage in England. After talking at length and collaborating on some poetry, poet and prince fall asleep together beside a fountain. In a shared dream, Venus comes to them and recounts the judgment of Paris from her own perspective (vv. 1633–2144). She tells them how Paris chose her and how she gave him Helen in return, conveniently omitting to mention what happened afterward between the Greeks and the Trojans. Boasting of her magical power over lovers, Venus then proves her point by making the prince’s lady appear to him in the dream and console him (vv. 2207–526). As a result, the prince is saved from a heartache too cruel to endure and declares that he is converted to the cult of Venus, promising to build the goddess a temple and make sacrifices to her (vv. 2543–60). In his account of the Judgment of Paris, Machaut lends a relatively sympathetic portrait to Venus. Most of all, she proves a benevolent influence in permitting the beloved to transmit herself to the lover over great distances through the medium of poetry. 35 For the poet, the prince’s double in Fonteinne, the choice of Venus

32. As Ehrhart points out, “The author of the Ovide moralisé sees in the Judgment not the fall of Adam and Eve but the fall of Everyman, the individual reenactment of our first parents’ sin” (The Judgment of the Trojan Prince Paris, 92).
35. And, as R. Barton Palmer (ed., Fonteinne, lxii) argues, Machaut’s version “connects the young man’s choice (viewed as sinful in the Ovide moralisé) with a morally worthy dedication to the different aspects of the aristocratic life.”
likewise suggests that the goddess is a desirable force in the composition of good verse. As a servant of Venus, Machaut’s narrator gives expression to his patron’s longing, which makes it possible for the lover who is absent to become present.\footnote{36}

Putting him beneath the bush, and at the center of the Judgment of Paris, Froissart casts his narrator as a young Machaut, identifying the posture he himself had adopted as a writer of lyrics and \textit{dits} with that of his most important influence. For the younger Froissart, the choice for Venus is something of a non-choice, as it represents both a state of sin—carnal desire—into which all people are born, and a poetic over-determination: who else but Machaut could Froissart have imitated? Who else but Venus could he have served in writing poetry? By redescribing the service of Venus as the poet’s vocation, Froissart parodies his younger attraction to Machauldian courtly poetry even as he continues to pay homage to Machaut.\footnote{37}

In particular, Froissart’s conflation of the bush scene from \textit{Fonteinne amoureuse} serves to reference the way that Machaut had used shifting judgments as a plot device throughout his body of work, including in the \textit{Jugement} poems. \textit{Espinette} evokes Machaut’s mastery of that spirit of controlled chaos, of constantly fluctuating opinions, which Thomas L. Reed has labeled the “aesthetics of irresolution,” characteristic of much medieval debate poetry.\footnote{38} But Froissart’s Judgment of Paris, in comparison with Machaut’s, is more unequivocally the depiction of a foolish decision, a rewriting which also serves to characterize Machauldian courtly poetry in terms of dubious judgment.

\footnote{36. In \textit{Fonteinne}, these powers are also associated with the God Morpheus, the poem’s alternate title being the \textit{Livre du Morpheis}. The exaltation of Venus is not without its ironies; Margaret Ehrhart has argued that Machaut’s is a moralizing interpretation of the Judgment of Paris legend directed at Jean duc de Berry, who at the time of the poem’s composition was about to leave his new bride Jeanne d’Armagnac to become a hostage in England, where he would remain for the next seven years. According to Ehrhart, Machaut would have used the choice of Venus by both Paris and the fictionalized patron as a negative exemplum of how the pursuit of \textit{eros} leads to folly (\textit{The Judgment of the Trojan Prince Paris}, 130–41). This interpretation of Machaut’s poem has its merits, since it was Jean de Berry’s obligation at the time of the poem to reject Venus for Pallas, the goddess of war.}

\footnote{37. Lechat (‘\textit{Dire par fiction,’} 298) argues that through his own interpretation, Froissart reads Machaut’s Judgment of Paris as a reference to the poet’s vocation.}

\footnote{38. Thomas L. Reed, Jr. uses this expression specifically in regard to medieval English debate poetry (\textit{Middle English Debate Poetry and the Aesthetics of Irresolution}. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1990). Machaut’s \textit{Voir dit} provides another good example of the author’s fascination with uncertain judgments, as the dreaming narrator asks “Le Roi qui ne ment” for advice on love, but this supposed authority figure only laughs at him (see Imbs and Cerquiglini-Toulet, eds., \textit{Le livre du voir dit}, vv. 5244–733). The game of the “roi qui ne ment” is also referenced in Froissart’s \textit{Espinette} (v. 220) as part of the narrator’s long litany of childhood pursuits, and then replayed in the dream world of \textit{Buisson} (v. 4427).}
Appearing four years after *Espinette*, *Buisson* is an attempt to strike down the Judgment of Paris once and for all and to move beyond the unstable judgments of venereal verse. The emblem of the narrator’s newfound sobriety is the planet and deity Jupiter, whose importance is revealed to him by Jonece when he first revisits the bush. The narrator, amazed by the boundless green shrub all around him, asks Jonece to explain its meaning. Jonece tells his charge that, according to the astronomy lessons he received some time ago, the bush’s seven branches correspond to the seven planets that influence man throughout life, in seven neatly demarcated periods of astrological influence (vv. 1554–707) extending from the Moon at birth to Saturn at man’s decline and death.

Jonece’s understanding of the planets corresponds to the schema of the seven ages of man as found in the fourth book of Ptolemy’s *Tetrabiblos*.39 According to Jonece, the Moon nourishes the child for the first four years of its life (vv. 1616–26). Mercury, who looks after the child for the next ten years, teaches it to speak and move (vv. 1626–36), before relinquishing control to Venus for the following decade:

Puis vient Venus, qui le reprent
Et qui .X. ans apriés en songne.
Vous devés savoir de quel songne:
D’ignoarance le leve et monde,
Et li fait congnoistre le monde
Et sentir que c’est de delis,
Tant de viandes com de lis,
Et le fait gai, joli et cointe
Et de tous esbanois l’acointe.
(vv. 1637–45)

Although Mercury did hand the young narrator over to Venus after his judgment in *Espinette*, Jonece’s vision of celestial influence does not perfectly describe the narrator’s own experiences with the goddess of love. He was twelve, not fourteen, when he entered Venus’s service, and this after

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only four years in Mercury’s care, not ten.\textsuperscript{40} Moreover, Jonece’s description of the goddess’s power is surprisingly positive, casting her as a teacher who frees man of ignorance and acquaints him with the great sensual pleasures of life. Jonece’s explanation does not account for the foolish things that the narrator did under Venus’s service or the considerable pain she caused him. Jonece’s description therefore seems an ironic touch on Froissart’s part, since the reader of \textit{Buisson} who has also read \textit{Espinette} is well aware of the havoc Venus has wreaked, and since the original Ptolemaic model likewise presents the goddess in a rather negative light:

Venus, taking in charge the third age, that of youth, for the next eight years, corresponding in number to her own period, begins, as is natural, to inspire, at their maturity, an activity of the seminal passages and to implant an impulse toward the embrace of love. At this time particularly a kind of frenzy enters the soul, incontinence, desire for any chance sexual gratification, burning passion, guile, and the blindness of the impetuous lover.\textsuperscript{41}

This list of physical and psychological symptoms more accurately describes Froissart’s twelve-year-old narrator after his judgment under the hawthorn bush.\textsuperscript{42} He too had been hormonally blindered to the reality of his situation, engulfed by the flames of passion.

Once he has returned to the hawthorn, the narrator of \textit{Buisson} is just as distracted as he had been in his youth, so he pays little attention to Jonece’s answer to his question. He confesses that he just cannot concentrate on this astrology lesson, since he wants only to think about love, springtime, music and dancing (vv. 1709–55). Although Froissart’s newly reenchanted narrator gives no thought to it for the time being, however, Jonece’s vision of the seven ages foreshadows his literal and figurative awakening at the end of \textit{Buisson}—his sudden awareness of the Last Judgment—in that this model describes the path the narrator will take from Venus to Jupiter. After Venus, says Jonece, the next ten years of a man’s life belong to the Sun, when his desires move from love to the acquisition of honor and fortune (vv. 1646–51). Next, Mars begins a twelve-year term similarly devoted to the pursuit of wealth and power, but with more sinister connotations of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{40} As the narrator admits in \textit{Espinette} (vv. 133–36), he may have been too young for Venus.
\item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{Tetrabiblos} 4.10 (in Burrow, \textit{The Ages of Man}, 198).
\item \textsuperscript{42} Although it does not rely on theories of astrological influence, Philippe de Novare’s \textit{Quatre ages de l’homme} (first half of the thirteenth century) notes that “les jones genz ont faus jugement en aus” because of excessive sexual desire (\textit{Les quatre ages de l’homme}. Ed. M. de Fréville. Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1888. 2.49).
\end{itemize}
greed and material acquisition through violence (vv. 1652–67). Following Mars, says Jonece, Jupiter at last directs a man’s attention to the welfare of his immortal soul, for twelve years or more, prior to the age of Saturn, the time of his death. As Jonece explains, it is Jupiter who teaches man to think upon his end and thus to live correctly:

Puis vient Jupiter tout le cours,  
Qui a l’omme fet grant secours,  
Car d’outrages et de folies  
Et de plusieurs merancolies,  
Ou jadis il s’est embatus  
Et dont il a esté batus  
Tant par li com par l’autrui ire,  
Compains, vous poës moul bien dire  
Que la planette l’en delivre  
Et plus seir estat li livre,  
Qu’on doit priser et honnourer,  
Car elle li fait savourer  
Pais de corps et repos pour l’ame,  
Ordener sepulture et lame,  
Amer l’Eglise et Dieu cremir,  
Recongnoistre et de ce fremir  
Que chils mondes n’est q’uns trespass.  
Ceste planette ne lait pas  
L’omme, anchois l’estoie et yverne  
Et .XII. ans ou plus le gouverne.  
(vv. 1668–87)

Then the time of Jupiter comes around,  
which brings great help to a man, for  
from presumptuous and silly acts  
and prolonged bouts of melancholy,  
in which he had long been sunk,  
and by which he had been beaten,  
as much by himself as by others’ anger,  
friend, you can truly say  
that the planet delivers him at last  
and brings him a more certain state of mind,  
that we all should value and honor,  
for it allows us to feel  
peace in the body and in the soul,  
to prepare our sepulcher and stone,  
to love the Church and fear God,  
to recognize and tremble at the thought  
that this world is only passing.  
This planet never abandons the man,  
but lights his way summer and winter,  
and directs him for twelve years or more.

Since “presumptuous and silly acts” and “prolonged bouts of melancholy” (vv. 1670–71) are exactly what the love-struck narrator had experienced in Espinette, Jupiter seems particularly effective in ridding his subjects of the bad judgments of Venus, who has now returned to tempt the middle-aged dreamer by leading him back to the great buisson.

Chronologically, it may be true that Froissart’s narrator is not yet at the right moment in his life to fall under the sway of Jupiter. According to Jonece’s model, at thirty-five he should have just left the Sun and be under Mars. But as the telos and not simply the end of a Christian life, Jupiter is more than just a step along the way at a prescribed period of time; rather, by the conclusion of the poem the planet comes to represent the narrator pulled out of time altogether and into the eternal present of God’s judg-
ment, the *nunc stans*, as he is finally saved from the pain of temporal existence and the frailty of human perception. Jupiter’s is the perfected age, which prepares man for the dark days of Saturn, his decline and death.\(^4\) Not strictly chronological, but eschatological, Jupiter signifies man come to terms with his end, his soul readied for the final Judgment.

With Jupiter and Venus vying for control over the narrator, the intervention of the other planets remains largely in the background. However, the desire for material acquisition, characteristic of both the Sun and Mars, is also important. In a passage near the beginning of *Buisson*, the narrator confesses that he has sinned against his nature by unsuccessfully trying his hand at commerce (vv. 94–97).\(^4\) It is not long afterward that he lists the various sums he has been given for his writing by Froissart’s many patrons (vv. 230–373). One may well infer that Jupiter’s age, the time when a man’s thoughts draw toward the ultimate reward, moves the subject away from the vain pursuit of riches as well as from the vanity of erotic desire and erotic poetry.

As I see it, the purpose of Jonece’s discussion of the seven ages within the larger narrative of the *Bush* poems is two-fold. In the first place, it lends further emphasis to the changing judgments of the pseudo-autobiographical narrator-poet as a function of his existence in time. Like the reversals of opinion in Machaut’s *Jugement* poems, the Ptolemaic model depicts the poet as a creature of differing opinions in the course of a career. The influences of the heavenly bodies represent not only various ways of being, but ways of seeing the world based on divergent desires, different value judgments that shape one’s interpretation of reality. While Venus represents the younger narrator’s careless practice of love poetry, and the Sun and Mars stand in for the narrator writing for money and honor, Jupiter corresponds to the author turning his rhetorical gifts to pastoral ends, to the more serious endeavor of prose historiography in a time of horrific warfare, and to non-erotic themes in general. By portraying the ages of life as a tumultuous course of competing celestial influences, Jonece’s schema of the seven ages amplifies the representation of the author’s own career and corpus as being subject to inevitable shifts in judgment during twenty-three years of poetry.

\(^4\) Sarah Kay ("Le moment de conclure," 136) notes that the "Lay de Nostre Dame" signifies the Age of Jupiter. Freeman ("A Farewell to Poetry," 242) and Kibler ("Froissart’s Midlife Crisis," 66) both note, in my opinion, incorrectly, that Mars is responsible for governing judgment and reward in *Buisson*, while Kelly (Medieval Imagination, 179) considers that the narrator’s "rude awakening" to a “world of age, care and sin” corresponds to the sign of the Sun.

\(^4\) "Si me mis en le marcandise" (v. 94). It is not clear to me whether Froissart is referring to actual commerce or to the idea of writing for financial gain.
In the second place, Jonece’s exposition of the psychological life-cycle serves to naturalize these shifts in judgment, by making them a regular part of the human developmental pattern, as much as they are stages in a narrative of Christian spiritual growth.\footnote{See Burrow, \textit{The Ages of Man}, 42, 179.} This naturalization works to suggest that the poet’s errors in judgment are relatively excusable, since they are appropriate to the moment in which they took place. As the narrator puts it in \textit{Buisson}, “leurs saisons ont toutes coses” (“all things have their season,” v. 1735), and by extension, all things have their place in the evolving corpus. Already in \textit{Espinette}, Froissart’s older narrator had forgiven his younger self because of the natural inclinations of his age:\footnote{In a similar way, Dante explains that his \textit{Convivio} is not necessarily to be thought an improvement on his previous work, \textit{La vita nuova}; rather, \textit{Convivio} reflects a different point in the author’s life, which calls for different themes. See Il \textit{convivio}. Ed. Gian Carlo Garfagnini. Rome: Salerno, 1997. i.16.} 

\begin{quote}
Mais tant qu’au fait, j’escuse mieux
Assés les jones que les vieux,
Car jonece ne voelt qu’esbas.
\end{quote}

But all the same I forgive more readily
the young than the old,
for youth wants nothing but fun.

(vv. 17–19)

But as there is a time for \textit{esbas}, there is also a time for repentance and preparation for the Judgment, as Jonece makes clear in his description of Jupiter’s age. Unlike Machaut’s conflicting \textit{Jugements}, then, Jonece’s theory of planetary influence fits the fragmentation of the self over time and throughout a body of work into an overall narrative progression with a beginning and, especially, an End. Rewriting Machaut’s \textit{JRB} and \textit{JRN} in his own diptych of contradictory judgments, Froissart affirms and even amplifies the depiction of the poet and his corpus as fragmented by divergences of opinion, all of which have their time and place. But Froissart transforms his narrator-persona’s changes of opinion and sentiment into a narrative of moral perfection and, finally, repentance in the face of divine judgment.

In this process of self-transformation, which is also a quest for moral and poetic authority, Froissart performs a systematic replacement of the kind of “aesthetics of irresolution”\footnote{See, again, Reed, \textit{Middle English Debate Poetry}.} typical of later medieval debate poetry. If the young poet’s limited worldview is identifiable with the fluid and uncertain judgments of the love debate works he reads—symbolized especially by the narrator’s copy of the \textit{Baillieu d’Amours} and by his abundant
references to Machaut—Jupiter replaces these typically courtly judgments with a faith in the lasting certainty of Christian truth.

This substitution is represented most dramatically near the end of the dream vision of Buisson, where a classically courtly trial scene takes place. The young lady assumes the role of the narrator’s judge as she reads his poetry. The personification Desir acts as the narrator’s “advocas” (v. 4348) by bringing the young lady a ballad (vv. 3996–4013) which the narrator had written for her, and which is described as “witnessing” to his suffering and “representing him” (vv. 3887–88). A virelay is then entered into evidence (vv. 4048–69), various personifications make speeches, and finally, the narrator himself pleads directly to the young lady for a verdict of mercy, claiming his long suffering:

Merchi vous pri a jointes mains, With folded hands I pray you for mercy,
Que vos frans coers me soit humains. that your noble heart be human to me.

(vv. 4483–84)

The principal question to be judged here is an old one, oft-repeated in courtly texts and used by Brunetto Latini in his Rettorica as a means of transferring legal rhetoric to vernacular love poetry: does the lover’s suffering entitle him to mercy? Does the beloved have an ethical obligation, if not to return his feelings, then at least to take pity and reward his love service with like affection? When he asks for the young lady’s judgment, the narrator hopes to hear her pronounce the compassionate sentence “Je te retieng pour mon servant” (“I retain you as my servant,” v. 4546); but instead, she says only this:

Fols est qui sert qui son tamps pert, He’s a fool who serves and wastes his time,
Mes services fais loyaument but service performed loyally
A personne d’entendement for a person of understanding
Ne fu onques mors ne peris never was dead or wasted
Qu’en le fin ne soit remeris. so that it was not rewarded in the end.

(vv. 4556–60)

48. See above, Chapter 1, 39–40. Bloch (Medieval French Literature and Law, 184–88) discusses this pseudo-juridical question as it occurs in the work of the Occitan troubadours, from whom Latini’s account of the legal posture is ultimately drawn. In the Baillieu or Court d’amours—the book the narrator lends the young lady and into which he inserts his first poem to her—the question of merci is also brought up for judgment. See Mahieu Le Poirier, Le Court d’Amours de Mahieu le Poirier, ed. Scully, vv. 2010–79.
It is not at all clear whether the young lady is designating the narrator as one still wasting his time in useless service after twenty-three years, or one who will be rewarded in the end. Even if the latter case is true, it is not yet apparent when that end might come.\(^49\)

Before the narrator and the young lady can speak further to clarify these points, her boisterous court of personifications interrupts them. The personifications—Plaisance, Desir, Humilité, Jonece, Maniere, Pité, Douls Samblant and Francise—begin a lyric poetry competition. All of them compose *souhetz*, wish-poems that evoke courtly themes, especially the desire for eternal love and springtime (vv. 4639–991). As they are recited, the *souhetz* are dutifully recorded by the narrator-poet and inserted into Froissart’s own text. In order to determine whose *souhet* is the best, the competitors agree to submit their compositions to the judgment of the Dieu d’Amours (v. 5044). In the dream, steeped in courtly preciosity, this *nominatio iudicis* would seem to refer to Cupid, or Eros, Venus’s son and one of the most traditional arbiters of love debate poetry.\(^50\)

But this judgment is also interrupted. Before the Dieu d’Amours can be consulted, the dream ends and the narrator-poet suddenly wakes up. After thinking about his dream, he rejects Venus and her poetry, fearful of the Judgment to come; clearly, the true Dieu d’Amours is now Christ, to whom all of the narrator’s actions—but especially his poetry—are to be submitted. Likewise, the burning desire the narrator had felt for the young lady becomes the eternal fire (”ardant painne,” v. 5202) into which unrepentant sinners will be cast. Venus’s influence is rejected for the pious and circumspect age of Jupiter, and the wish poems of the dream and the narrator’s own love poems to the young lady are transformed into prayers to the Virgin. The end (*fin*) when all faithful servants will be rewarded with mercy no longer refers to the ambiguous terms of the young lady’s judgment, but to the Judgment itself. Likewise, the narrator’s service to Venus and his request that the young lady grant him *merchi* and accept him into her service are replaced by the service he will now undertake to the Church and the clemency he hopes the Virgin’s advocacy will win for him:

\(^{49}\) In a similar vein, in *Espinette* the narrator says that he has been “mortelement jugiés” (“sentenced to death,” v. 3742) by the personification Male Bouche and the young lady.

\(^{50}\) See, for example, *Les débats du clerc et du chevalier: étude historique et littéraire suivie de l’édition critique des textes.* Ed. Charles Oulmont. Paris, 1911. Repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1974. In the *Baillieu d’Amours*, the text which the narrator lends the young lady, cases are presented to the baillif of the God of Love. See *Le Court d’Amours de Mahieu le Poirier*, ed. Scully. In this edition, Scully (xvi n13, n14; xvii n15) also points to the depiction of the court of the God of Love in *Li fablel dou Dieu d’amours*, in *De Venus la deesse d’amour*, and in Guillaume de Lorris’s *Rose* (vv. 863–70).
Humlement je me voel retraire  
Humbly I wish to retire myself
Viers le Mere dou Roi celestre,  
toward the Mother of God in heaven,
Et li prie qu'elle voelle estre  
and pray that she agree to act
Pour moi advocate et moiienne  
as my advocate and intermediary
A son Fil, qui tout amoiienne,  
with her Son, who mediates everything
Et qui est vraiis feus habondans,  
and who is the true living fire,
Caritables et redondans,  
merciful and abundant,
Pour coers enflamer et esprendre.  
that sets every heart ablaze.
(vv. 5183–90)

And now that he is cognizant of his own soul's peril, the narrator does not hesitate to exhort his readers to repentance as well:

Dont, entroes  
So while
Que bien tu te poes  
you still can
Et as loisir dou retourner,  
and have time to turn back,
Si t’esmoes  
rouse yourself
Et ton coer promoes  
and press your heart
Au justement considerer  
to consider carefully
Quel conquoes  
all the ways that
Li Viels ou li Noes  
the Old and the New
Testaments te puet pourfiter.  
Testaments can profit you.
(vv. 5354–62)

For the narrator, the movement toward Jupiter represents a new and superior ethics of writing. Placing his work in the perspective of the Last Judgment, he understands that the real purpose of revisiting his younger days as a love poet in the bush has been his salvation through a very public repentance, providing closure to his past and turning his talents toward devotional and evangelical ends. In the process, the intentionally disjointed judgments of Machaut and of the broader courtly tradition become the object of parody and critique.

But while this gesture of worldly renunciation is dramatically announced by the narrator, it is only half of the overall effect of the Bush poems and their juxtaposition of judgments. To concentrate exclusively on Froissart's renunciation in Buisson is to overlook the various ways that the author expresses a debt to his readers, not only to the uncaring young lady for whom he first began to write, but also to the more appreciative audiences Froissart had found among the various courts of Europe. As Froissart suggests, his material and ethical obligation to patrons demands that he defend
and revalorize the poetry he had written for them, even as he claims to move beyond it.

I have now shown how Froissart positioned his Jovian Last Judgment as a counterpoint to love poetry and its disorderly judgments. It remains to see how the ultimate judgment scene of *Buisson* also serves to reaffirm the poet’s connection to the courtly tradition and to his own past writing. Thus I now move from *répudiation* to *rappel*, examining in more detail how Froissart recalls his earlier poetry just as he distances himself from it, and how the need to re-collect past writing becomes for the author an ethical impulse just as important as the need to recant.

III. God’s Capital, Venus’s Gifts, and the Judgment of the Patron

As he sits down to compose *Buisson’s* prologue, Froissart’s narrator seems already to have undergone the spiritual transformation related at the end of the poem, when he awakens from his dream fantasy of young love and realizes that he is not young but middle-aged, that it is not May but November, and that with each passing day he draws closer to his death and Judgment. When he introduces *Buisson*, then, the narrator is already under the sign of Jupiter. As he begins the poem, the now spiritually mature narrator frames his dream vision of the bush as part of a literary testament, in which he will make a thorough moral inventory of the past before he dies:

> Des aventures me souvient  
> Dou temps passé. Or me couvient,  
> Entroes que j’ai sens et memore,  
> Encre et papier et escriptore,  
> Kanivet et penne taillie,  
> Et volenté apparellie  
> Qui m’amonneste et me remort,  
> Que je remonstre avant me mort  
> Comment ou Buisson de Jonece

I remember the adventures  
of times past. Now it is necessary,  
while I still have sense and memory,  
ink, paper and a place to write,  
a knife and sharpened quill,  
and a readied will  
which warns and exhorts me  
to tell before I die  
how in the Bush of Youth

51. Freeman (“A Farewell to Poetry?” 243) has noted the testamentary style of *Buisson’s* opening lines (vv. 1–10). Although Freeman identifies Mars as the governing planet for judgment and reward, these verses seem to fulfill Jonece’s claim that the age of Jupiter prompts one to get one’s last affairs in order (“Ordener sepulture et lame,” v. 1681). On Froissart’s place in the tradition of testamentary literature, see Lechat, *Dire par fiction,* 260. Lechat argues that the testamentary opening and the ending prayer of *Buisson* “signifient tous deux sans equivoque le renoncement à la poésie amoureuse” (*Dire par fiction,* 319).
Fui jadis, et par quel adrece. I once was, and how I got there.

(vv. 1–10)

In that *Buisson* is also a re-vision of *Espinette*, itself a satirical portrait of Froissart’s younger days as a writer of love lyrics, the testament promises closure on the poet’s life and work, prior to his death (“avant me mort,” v. 8). Paired with the Last Judgment at the end of *Buisson*, the testamentary opening fashions a retrospective and penitential narrative, a final putti ng-to-rights of the author’s accounts which is also a symbolic *dénouement* of Froissart’s poetic corpus.\(^{52}\)

But the narrator’s project of personal accounting is made more difficult from the beginning by the seemingly divergent ethical claims that God and the readership place on his soul. Readings of *Buisson* as a conversion narrative (“farewell to poetry,” “mid-life crisis”) risk oversimplifying what is in fact a highly complex tale of personal change and inner conflict, in which the narrator’s judgments are constantly shifting. It is especially important to remember that, even well before his transformative dream and his meditation on the Last Judgment, Froissart’s narrator clearly expresses his desire to repent for serving Venus and for wasting his time with vain love poetry. The first thing that *Buisson*’s narrator recounts as he makes out his testament is an episode from his more recent past when, in middle age, he was visited by a version of Boethius’s classic character Lady Philosophy. Froissart’s “Dame Philozophie”—actually more of a voice in the narrator's head than a fully fleshed-out Boethian personification\(^{53}\)—accuses the narrator of offending Nature by giving up writing (vv. 102–94). As Philozophie contends, Froissart’s narrator is exceptionally gifted in poetry, and it would be a grave sin indeed to hide his light under a bushel:\(^{54}\)

*Tu ne dois pas escarciier* You must not be greedy with

*Ce qui te poet agratiier,* that which can give you a good name;

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\(^{52}\) See Lechat, *Dire par fiction,* 319.

\(^{53}\) Contrary to much of the Boethian tradition, Froissart does not recount Philozophie’s appearance with any detail, and does not even treat her as a separate character until over a hundred verses after she has begun to speak (vv. 59–191). Before Philozophie is named, her voice is identified simply as “Pensees” (v. 102), seemingly internal to the narrator.

\(^{54}\) Freeman notes that Philozophie’s argument reflects “the clerkly topos that one must not hide one's light under a bushel” (“A Farewell to Poetry?” 237–38). That Philozophie, like Machaut’s equally Boethian Bonneurté, may be read as giving voice to eschatological accusation, provides something of a counterpoint to Michael Cherniss’s view of the medieval Boethian tradition as a secularization of the apocalyptic (*Boethian Apocalypse: Studies in Middle English Vision Poetry*). Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1987).
Se tu ies ables et propisses if you are skillfull and apt
D’aucun art et celi guerpisses, at some art but abandon it,
Enviers ta nature mesprens. you sin against your very nature.

(vv. 139–43)

As a voice in the narrator’s head, Philozophie gives expression to readers, imagining what they would say if they knew he was calling it quits. Philozophie’s “accusation” is worth quoting at length, both because it is funny, and because it expresses the specific duties of those whom God, or Nature, has endowed with the gifts of poetry.

Neis, que diroient li signeur And what, indeed, would the lords say
Dont tu as tant eü dou leur, who gave you so much of what was theirs,
Li roi, li duch et li bon conte, the kings, the dukes and the good counts,
Des quels tu ne sces pas le compte, whose number you can’t even figure,
Les dames et li chevalier? the ladies and the knights?
Foi que je doi a saint Valier, By the faith I owe Saint Vallier,
A mal emploiiet le tenroient they’d consider it a waste
Et aultres fois il retenroient and another time would refuse you
Leurs grans largeces et leurs dons. their liberal payments and their gifts.
Et de droit ossi li pardons And they’d be right, too,
Ne t’en deveroit estre fes, not to pardon you,
Quant tu ies nouris et parfés, since you are well brought-up and made,
Et si as discretion d’omme and you have the good sense of a man,
Et le science qui se nomme, and the knowledge that is called
Entre les amoureuses gens among lovers
Et les nobles, li mestiers gens, and among aristocrats, ‘the noble profession,’
Car tous coers amoureus esgaie, for it makes every amorous heart rejoice,
Tant en est li oïe gaie. such is its hearing gay.
Et tu le voes mettre hors voie, And you want to push it to the side,
Si que jamais nuls ne le voie? so that no one can ever know it?
Il ne fafit mie a consentir. This is not right at all.
Bien t’en poroies repentir! You could well repent of it!

(vv. 147–68)

In much the same way that Deguileville and Machaut use their literary guilt as a clever occasion for new poetry, Froissart imagines himself facing the accusations of readers in order to insist that he be allowed to keep writing. But compared with the texts I have considered by Deguileville and Machaut, Froissart’s Wittiest riff on the trope of reader accusation is that
his poet-narrator is judged first and foremost for ceasing to write, not for the questionable things he has written; surely, he has lots more great poetry to offer the world!

In his humble retirement, the repentant narrator wants nothing of the return to poetry, and much less to the pain and burning desire of young love. The first time that Philozophie suggests he begin writing again, he tells her in no uncertain terms that he is not interested:55

Pour Dieu, laissé moi repose! For God's sake, leave me in peace!
Vous dites que bons jours m'ajourne You wish me good day
Et qu'en grant aise je sejourne: and that I be in great comfort.
Je le vous acorde. Atant, pes! Okay, you’ve got it. Now enough, be quiet!
(vv. 218–21)

Nevertheless, Philozophie persists and continues to argue that poetry is the narrator’s true purpose as a created being:

Se Diex vosist, il t’eüist fet Had God wanted, he would have made you
Un laboureur grant et parfet a great and powerful laborer
A une contenance estragne with a strange face
Ou un bateur en une gragne or a thresher in a granary
Un maçon ou un aultre ouvrier or a mason or another such manual worker,
Je n’ai cure quel manouvrier. I don’t care what kind.
Et il t’a donné le science He gave you the know-how
De quoi tu poes par conscience through which you can in good conscience
Loer Dieu et servir le monde. praise God and serve the world.
(vv. 179–87)

In its emphasis on the poet as a specific member of the estates with specific duties to perform unto God and man, Philozophie’s diatribe evokes Guillaume le Clerc’s thirteenth-century poem Le besant de Dieu, discussed in the introduction.56 In Besant, the poet affirms that his rhetorical talents have a God-given purpose which he must fulfill—the saving of souls—and that he must repent for the “vaine matièr” (Besant, v. 82) of his past, namely his “romanz, fablels e contes” (Besant, vv. 80–81) with no spiritual value.

55. Freeman (“A Farewell to Poetry?” 237) does note that the narrator is reluctant to return to love poetry, but in my view does not adequately address how this starting point complicates the “farewell” gesture at the end of the poem.
56. See above, 17–18.
Once again, however, Philozophie’s is an accusation that weighs more on the author’s failure to continue writing than on sins committed in his earlier work. Not only, claims Philozophie, have (vernacular) poets been necessary to record the gallant deeds of heroes like Tristan, Perceval and Arthur (vv. 405–13), but the narrator is not all that different from the Doctors and Evangelists whose writings founded the Church itself (vv. 414–21). Philozophie is remarkably irreverent in that, while she affirms the narrator may be able to “loer Dieu et servir le monde” (v. 187) with poetry, she seems to disregard any traditional distinction between moralizing verse and the sort of “vaine matire” of which Guillaume le Clerc repents to begin his Besant.57 Philozophie moves without pause between the writers of romance and the Fathers of the Church. Are praising God and serving the world united for the narrator, then, as they might be in the ministry of a parish priest, or are they two separate and contradictory activities? Does the world (monde) refer to the readership of worldly poetry, or perhaps to the flock of souls for whom Froissart is now personally responsible? If Machaut’s corpus is distinguished by diversity of form and opinion, Philozophie seems to suggest that Froissart’s narrator should not be afraid of founding his own authority on a body of work in which erotic and religious compositions are freely mixed.

To an even greater degree than in Philozophie’s treatment of the estates, Froissart recalls Guillaume le Clerc’s Besant de Dieu in his repeated use of monetary language.58 Guillaume’s eponymous besant is the coin, or talent, of Matthew 25, the specific spiritual capital that God has given to each human being to invest, and of which God will make a thorough accounting at the Judgment. Like Guillaume, Froissart is clear that his own spiritual capital is the ability to write well. But, as is one of the poet’s trademarks, Froissart makes his accounting much more about the literal money he received for writing, and the responsibilities it entails. Philozophie demands that the narrator recite the names of those who supported his work over the years. He obliges, and, in a lengthy passage (vv. 230–373), enumerates Froissart’s many real-life benefactors, including Philippa de Hainaut, Blanche of Lancaster, King Charles V of France and King David II of Scotland, as well as Froissart’s beloved patron and sometime

57. On the irreverence of this version of Dame Philozophie, see Douglas Kelly, “Imitation, Metamorphosis, and Froissart’s Use of the Exemplary Modus tractandi,” in Maddox and Sturm-Maddox, eds., Froissart Across the Genres. 112.

58. Likewise, he recalls La repentance Rutebeuf by struggling with the problem of receiving financial gains for vain writing. See above, Introduction, 19.
poetic collaborator Wenceslas I, who had recently helped to secure the poet’s new benefice at Estinnes-au-Mont. The list of patrons reads like a ledger book in which the narrator notes the specific sums he received for his work: among other entries, one hundred florins from King Edward III of England (v. 261), “chevaus et florins sans compte” (v. 275) from Lord Edouard Spencer, fistfuls of florins more from Enguerrand VII, “li bons sire de Couchi” (vv. 279–81), twenty gold florins from the Count of Savoy (v. 343), and forty ducats from Lord Tiercelés de le Bare (vv. 360–62).

Accusing the converted narrator of ingratitude for the generous support shown his writing, Philozophie insists that these literal sums of money have their ethical weight just as much as the parabolic capital he received from God. The narrator is thus in a bind: if his previous work is sinful and to be left in the past without further explanation, as he wishes, is he not guilty for bilking his readers, giving them poetry that is not only valueless but perhaps spiritually destructive? On the other hand, if this is not the case, as Philozophie suggests, then isn’t the poet’s silence an affront to God, Nature and the Reader alike? Inserted into Froissart’s literary testament, the financial relationship of poet and patron threatens to frustrate the narrator’s desire for a quiet retirement during which he can concentrate on the betterment of his soul. In this way, Mars and the Sun—both emblematic of money—are not fully eclipsed by Jupiter, but also contained within the Jovian perspective. If Froissart is to make it up to God and claim a new spiritual authority, he must remain aware of what he owes human beings.

Froissart further underlines the need to reconcile the demands of his generous audience with the demands of religion when, at the beginning of his litany of patrons, his narrator refers to the late Philippa of Hainaut, Queen of England, as having “made and created him” (“Car elle me fist et crea,” v. 237). This statement implicitly conflates the generous gifts of the patron and her crucial role in literary creation with the poetic abilities Froissart received from the ultimate Creator, insisting on the problem of divided loyalties: to whom is the poet most immediately accountable for his talents, and how can he possibly do justice to both God and the reader? In a similar way to Machaut’s Jugement poems, then, Buisson and the Bush poems in general are about the author’s need to resolve the conflicting judgments of various patrons over time and throughout the evolving corpus. The difference is that Froissart’s newest patrons are God, the Church and the Virgin Mary, not the infamous Charles de Navarre. But like Machaut’s JRN,

59. In Prison amoureuse, a number of lyric poems may have been written by Wenceslas, while lyrics appended to Froissart’s Meliador are explicitly attributed to him.
Buisson does not suggest an easy answer to the conflict. Even when Froissart’s narrator thinks he has achieved a more perfect perspective, renouncing his vain works for a pious self-judgment, the voice of the readership and the presence of his earlier writing continue to haunt him.

As he recites the long list of patrons—some of whom are registered as deceased—the narrator is moved to reflect on the fleeting nature of human life (“Mes temps s’en fuit ensi qu’uns ombres,” v. 376) and again asks Philozophie to just leave him alone so that he can think about more important matters than love poetry:

Si vous suppli, tres chiere dame,  
Laissiés moi dont penser pour l’ame.  
J’ai eü moult de vainne glore,  
S’est bien heure de che tamps clore  
Et de criier a Dieu merchi,  
Qui m’a amené jusqu’a chi.  

So I beg you, very dear lady, 
just let me be to think upon my soul. 
I have had much vainglory. 
Now it is truly time to put an end to this age 
and to ask the forgiveness of God, 
who has brought me thus far. 

(vv. 385–90)

In a sense, Philozophie’s visitation of the narrator is a reversal of the more traditional narrative of sudden eschatological awareness (*memento mori*): it does not interrupt the pursuit of vanity with thoughts of man’s last end, but rather interrupts the narrator’s attempts to think about his last end with the “accusation” on behalf of those for whom the narrator had written worldly poetry, which he now dismisses as “vainne glore” (v. 387). The effect of this reversal cannot simply be reduced to parody, because Philozophie’s glib accusation nevertheless emphasizes the reality of the author’s debts to the audience. Retiring from the world is too easy a solution, in that it neglects the extent to which the author’s responsibility to other human beings is also his responsibility to God. In a similar way to the unexpected entrance of Dame Bonneurté in Machaut’s *JRN*, the voice of Philozophie complicates the eschatological judgment by demanding that the audience be given its due. As in *JRN*, God emerges as the *tiers* between author and patron, summoning him to trial just when he least expects it.

Little by little, the reluctant narrator is won over by the entreaties of Philozophie, the imagined, collective voice of the readership. But since he is now an older man removed from the passions of youth and beginning his life as a priest, he fails to see what more he can possibly write. He asks Philozophie “Que porai je de nouvel dire?” (“What new can I say?” v. 433) and, in order to protest that he is no longer the same person famous among
the great courts of Europe for his exercise of “li mestiers gens” (“the noble profession,” v. 160), he proceeds to recite the titles of Froissart’s *dits*, as well as the lyric forms he had once excelled in:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Voirs est q’un livret fis jadis} & \quad \text{It’s true that once I wrote a book} \\
\text{Qu’on dist l’Amoureus Paradis} & \quad \text{they call *Le paradis amoreux*} \\
\text{Et ossi celi del Orlôge,} & \quad \text{and also *L’orloge amoreuse*,} \\
\text{Ou grant part del art d’Amours loge;} & \quad \text{which contains much of the art of love;} \\
\text{Apriés, l’Espinette amoreuse,} & \quad \text{after that, *L’espinette amoreuse*,} \\
\text{Qui n’est pas al oyre irurese;} & \quad \text{which is not so rough on the ear;} \\
\text{Et puis l’Amoureuse Prison,} & \quad \text{and then *La prison amoreuse*,} \\
\text{Qu’en plusieurs places bien prise on,} & \quad \text{that people in many places really like,} \\
\text{Rondiaux, balades, virelais,} & \quad \text{also *rondeaux, balades, virelais*,} \\
\text{Grant fusison de dis et de lais;} & \quad \text{and a whole lot of *dits* and *lais*;} \\
\text{Mais j’estoie lors pour le tamps} & \quad \text{but then, because of the time,} \\
\text{Toutes nouveletés sentans} & \quad \text{I felt completely fresh and new,} \\
\text{Et avoie prest a le main} & \quad \text{and I had ready to hand} \\
\text{A toute heure, au soir et au main,} & \quad \text{at every moment, day and night,} \\
\text{Matere pour ce dire et faire.} & \quad \text{the material to do and say such things.} \\
\text{Or voi je cangié mon afaire} & \quad \text{Now I see my business changed} \\
\text{En aultre ordenance nouvelle.} & \quad \text{into a new order of things.}
\end{align*}
\]

Now that he has remembered his earlier patrons, it is only right that the narrator recall and honor the poems he wrote in exchange for their money, gifts and hospitality. Froissart’s is a literary testament in the fullest sense: not only does it make public the private spiritual accounting of the moribund person, it also gives a thorough accounting of the compiled corpus, to which *Buisson* itself is added. As in Guillaume’s protest to Bonneurté in *JRN*, this work of re-collection is at once a gesture of distancing and a gesture of recuperation that insists upon the value of past poems for their audiences.

In response to the narrator’s protests of irreversible writer’s block, Philozophie encourages him to look back on his earlier writing to find inspiration and continuity with the present:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Et adonques me renouvelle} & \quad \text{And thus Philozophie brought back to me} \\
\text{Philozophie un haut penser} & \quad \text{a sublime thought,} \\
\text{Et dist, ’Il te couvient penser} & \quad \text{and said, ’You must think}
\end{align*}
\]
Philozophie’s words here recall Bonneurté’s accusation in Machaut’s *JRN* (“Si resgardes dedens vos livres,” *JRN*, v. 869) as well as Saint Michael’s pronouncement that Deguileville’s pilgrim should respond for his *ouvrages* (*PA*, v. 1121). For Philozophie, as for Bonneurté and Saint Michael, the poet’s body of work (“tes oevres,” v. 463) also happens to constitute the weightiest body of evidence for or against his soul. The corpus requires the author’s continued answerability to God and man, which makes rewriting his most important and difficult labor (“tu oeuvres,” v. 464).

To inspire the narrator, Philozophie asks him to take out of storage a portrait he had once commissioned of his “droite dame” (v. 485), the young lady of Espinette. The narrator retrieves the beautifully rendered image from the box in which he had kept it hidden for many years and, immediately upon seeing the young lady’s face, he is taken back to vivid memories of the time over two decades earlier when he first wrote for her. Then, he is inspired to compose the first lyric insertion of *Buisson*, a *virelay* (vv. 563–91). As the narrator puts it, the spark was reignited in him (vv. 620–24), enrapting him once again with young love and its poetry.

After she has convinced the narrator to reread his corpus, Philozophie vanishes. Again, the narrator oscillates between his desire to return to the past and his desire to renounce that past. In fact, it is at this point that he makes a first, lengthy meditation on the Last Judgment, just as terrifyingly vivid as the imagined eschatological scene at the end of *Buisson*:

```
La n’i ara nullui couvert
De kamoukas ne de velus;
Sains Jehans, sains Mars et sains Lus
Et sains Mahieus droit la seront,
Qui leurs buisines sonneront
Dont ressusciteront li mort.
Vechi pour nous .I. grant remort,
Car cascuns rara sa char propre.
La n’ara pité nul opprobre
Ne signourie point d’arroi,
Mes vera on le puissant Roi
Rendre sa crueuse sentense:
There no one shall be covered
with fine silk or velour;
Saint John, Saint Mark, Saint Luke
and Saint Matthew will be right there
and will sound their trumpets
which will cause the dead to rise up.
Let this be for us a great warning,
for each will have his own flesh again.
There will be no pity for sin,
but we will see the great Lord
render his frightening sentence:
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It is unclear whether this is the voice of the fully mature (Jovian) narrator speaking from after his dream as he writes his testament or the voice of the still-hesitating narrator speaking before the dream. In either case, the sudden interruption of the Judgment into an episode of nostalgia for youthful love further accentuates the oscillation of renunciation and writing, between the judgment of the reader and the judgment of God. Froissart continues to build a mood of eschatological expectation into his text, all the while conflating the immanence of divine judgment with the voice of a dissatisfied audience demanding its money’s worth.

After his dialog with Philozophie, the narrator’s internal conflict is heightened as his dream vision begins and another of the poet’s benefactors returns to visit the narrator and accuse him of ingratitude. This is none other than Venus, the goddess whose service the narrator entered long ago when he judged in her favor beneath the hawthorn bush. Seeing Venus again, he is moved to praise her for giving him “very precious gifts” (“don moult riche,” v. 890); the goddess, then, is also an important patron. But the narrator’s gratitude soon fades, and he proceeds to complain at length about the rejection and pain he experienced in Venus’s employ, finally blurring out his long-suppressed anger at the goddess and her ilk:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Siques je di que tout vo sort} & \quad \text{So that I say about all your kind,} \\
\text{Ne me sont que confusions} & \quad \text{that they are nothing but trouble to me} \\
\text{Et tres grandes abusions.} & \quad \text{and are very great delusions.}
\end{align*}
\]

(vv. 921–23)

In response, Venus scolds the narrator for blaming her unfairly and for being ungrateful (vv. 924–48). Then, like Philozophie, she encourages him to look back on his past, borrowing from the language of penitential introspection:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Te souvient il de le saison} & \quad \text{Do you remember the time} \\
\text{Pour quoi a laidengier m’acoelles?} & \quad \text{for which you now begin to badmouth me?}
\end{align*}
\]

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60. This is an excerpt of the full passage (vv. 802–37).
61. On the temporal ambiguity of this passage, see Kay, “‘Le moment de conclure,’” 164–65.
62. This outburst might be compared to Deguileville’s pilgrim’s rejection of Venus in PVH2 (vv. 8765–66). See above, Chapter 2, 79.
Je t’en pri que tu le recoelles
Et ton coer bien en examinees
Et jusques au droit fons le mines.
(vv. 949–53)

I pray that you recollect it
and that you examine your heart thoroughly
and search it to its very core.

Also like Philozophie, Venus complicates the narrator’s initial repentance by suggesting that he is in error for rejecting love poetry out of hand. In order to prove her point, she leads the narrator to the giant hawthorn bush of the poem’s title, where he meets Jonece. In the bush, the narrator replays his disastrous attempts to woo the young lady and, awakening from his dream some four thousand verses later, realizes that the return to spring and youth was an illusion, another bad judgment caused by reading too much love poetry. This sudden shock of mortality causes the narrator to reflect on his impending Judgment and, once again, to reject Venus—seemingly for good this time. Thinking about his dream, the narrator even returns to his concern with economic motifs, by designating sin as a merciless money-lender:

Pour ce me vodrai retrenchier
Que d’acroire a un tel crenchier
Que pechiés est, qui tout poet perdre:
Je ne m’i doi ne voel aherdre.
(vv. 5174–77)

So I wish to renounce
borrowing from such a creditor
as sin, who can make me lose everything:
I should not, nor do I, wish to attach
myself to it.

With the Judgment hanging over his head, the narrator reconsiders his personal book of accounts, attempting to declare his worldly debts null and void so that he can repay his supreme creditor.

But as dramatic as it is, the Last Judgment that Froissart’s narrator makes on his poetry is only one part of a much more complex internal struggle between the narrator’s perceived duties to readers (and Venus) and his perceived duties to God. That it serves to close Buisson, and to end Froissart’s career as a writer of dits, should not blind us to the fact that this Last Judgment reveals Froissart’s double ethical impulse, in which the author’s debt to his audience is acknowledged as much as his debt to God—or, indeed, as an inalienable part of his debt to God, which must somehow be squared with the imperative to put away childish things now that he has reached the Jovian age. As I show in the next section, Froissart used the closing lay of Buisson in order to reclaim earlier writing for the benefit of audiences, finally reconciling his duty to indulgent readers—and his debt to Venus—with his duty to God.
IV. Recollection and Redemption in Froissart’s “Lay de Nostre Dame”

In Chapter 1, I considered how Marian poets called upon the lawyerly Virgin (Advocata Nostra) to represent human subjects in a new light, a trope Guillaume de Deguileville (Chapter 2) then transferred to the author’s defense of his earlier poetry and his ability to rewrite himself at will. Froissart owed much to French Marian poetry. In particular, the souhetz composed by the personifications at the end of Buisson’s dream vision are evocative of the confraternal tradition of devotion made famous by the puys of northern France. Froissart, in fact, competed successfully at the puys of Abbeville, Lille, Valenciennes and probably Tournai; his master Machaut had been involved in the same circuit of competitions.63 Even before the sobering conclusion of the narrator’s dream in JBJ, some of the souhetz already resemble the prayer-poems of the confraternal feasts, as their desire drifts away from earthly love and continuous springtime—the illusory universe of courtly poetry—and toward the Christian promise of eternal life. The personification Douls Samblant, for example, makes reference to the Judgment as he composes his wish for ever-lasting youth, love and poetry, just before the personifications ask the narrator to present their souhetz to the Dieu d’Amours for judgment:

\begin{quote}
En cel estat, non pas I. an entier,
Mais jusqu’à dont que Diex pour nous jugier
Vorra cha jus ses signes envoieer,
Peuïssons nous ensi soalsciier
En l’eage que nous ariens plus chier!
(vv. 4921–25)
\end{quote}

In this state, not one year only,
but until that time when God, to judge us,
will send his signs down into this world.
May we thus rejoice
in the age that we all hold dearest!

Even as he expresses the desire that young love last forever, Douls Samblant acknowledges its impermanence, and his awareness of the Judgment to be made on all poetry by the true God of Love. In turn, this nod to the devotional tradition signals a change in Froissart’s conception of authority—it marks a transition from the rhetoric of earthly love to the divine rhetoric of prayer that has become the poet’s highest calling.

63. See Gros, Le poème du puy marial, 84–97. See also Cerquiglini-Toulet, La couleur de la mélancholie, 10–11. Freeman (“A Farewell to Poetry?” 242) notes that the souhetz evoke the poetry of the confréries. Froissart wrote in Picard French, the original language of the puys.
In his devotional turn, Froissart also drew inspiration directly from Machaut, whose large corpus of lyrics to the Virgin had helped to define much of the preceding tradition of fixed-form poetry in French, and whose polyphonic *Messe de Nostre Dame* (c. 1365) had changed the shape of the liturgy itself.\(^{64}\) In *Buisson*, Froissart’s narrator appears to reference Machaut’s devotional side at the very moment when he himself turns to Mary: it is a certain “motet nouviel” from Reims (vv. 5075–76) that *Buisson*’s narrator sings in the very last moments of his dream, on his way to present his poem to the judgment of the Dieu d’Amours, who begins as Cupid but becomes Christ after the narrator has awakened. Ending the dream, this allusion to the Marian motets of Guillaume de Machaut, canon at Reims, provides Froissart with a kind of symbolic transition point between human and divine judgment, and profane and religious expressions of love, in which he can situate his literal and figurative awakening to a higher authority on poetry.\(^{65}\) Thus, just as he had identified his earlier self with Machaut’s chaotic judgments and his praise of Venus, so does Froissart’s narrator identify his awakened, Jovian self with Machaut’s more spiritually mature compositions. In this way, Froissart makes a stronger Machauldian homage than ever, by suggesting that Machaut’s own ability to surpass earthly poetry for celestial subjects had inspired his own.

By requesting the Virgin’s advocacy at the Judgment, like so many of his predecessors, Froissart was also signaling the traditional role of Advocata Nostra as a proponent of creative interpretation, whose ability to transform personal narratives and texts was closely tied to her capacity for obtaining mercy. As in *Pierre le changeur* or Deguileville’s *Pèlerinage de l’âme*, the appeal of Froissart’s narrator to the lawyerly Virgin stages the reinterpretation, and thus revalorization, of his own personal narrative, and by implication, of Froissart’s own corpus.

The “Lay de Nostre Dame,” the closing eschatological meditation and Marian prayer of *Buisson*, serves to reevaluate and ultimately redeem Froissart’s earlier poetry as part of a Christian narrative. In the lay, references to earlier moments in the *Bush* poems are frequent. For example, while in both *Espinette* and in *Buisson*’s dream vision the narrator suffers from the intense burning of erotic desire, the lay transforms this sensation into the


\(^{65}\). See Sylvia Huot, “Reading Across Genres: Froissart’s *Joli buisson de Jonece* and Machaut’s Motets.” *French Studies* 57.1 (2003): 1–10. Huot argues that the motet, “a hybrid genre juxtaposing erotic and devotional registers, has a dramatic effect on the denouement of Froissart’s last *dit amoureux*” (2) and marks “the point at which erotic fantasies give way to penitential meditation” (9). On the motet from Reims, see also Lechat, ‘*Dire par fiction,*’ 321.
torments of hell (“ardant painne,” v. 5202) from which only the Virgin’s intercessory power can save sinners; the lover’s fire also becomes the holy flame (“ce saint feu,” v. 5191; “li feus plaisans,” v. 5408) that Christ ignites in the hearts of the faithful. Similarly, the narrator’s identification in Espinette of erotic love as the root (“rachine,” v. 83) of goodness becomes instead “la rachine jesse” (v. 5396), which is to say the Virgin as announced in Old Testament prophecy. The ever-expanding buisson, too, undergoes one last metamorphosis; it is no longer the site of nostalgia for young love or even Ptolemy’s cosmos, but now the burning bush (“Buissons resplendissans,” v. 5402) that spoke to Moses, which the narrator cites as yet another Old Testament prefiguration of the Virgin (vv. 5374–77, vv. 5402–6).

The images of the root of Jesse and the burning bush are particularly good examples of a textual continuum between erotic and spiritual desire, rather than a rupture between them, because these images suggest that the bush of Espinette figuratively grows into the Buisson and ultimately into the burning bush of the lay. While Froissart gestures toward the poet’s teleological ascent to divine truth, he also reasserts the presence of the root which cannot be cut out without killing the mature being—the corpus and the Christian subject. The original judgment of the hawthorn bush, the choice of Venus, is revalidated in the narrator’s Last Judgment. Venus finally proves that she is not to blame after all, but rather has been an important step in the narrator’s development—a teacher, just as Jonece claimed her to be in his description of the ages of man (vv. 1637–45). Likewise, the young lady’s ambiguous judgment near the end of the dream, that loyal service is always rewarded in the end (vv. 4556–60), comes to fruition: the end transforms and authorizes what has come before it and justifies the poet-lover’s tribulation, which has not in the last accounting come to nothing. Not only has the narrator not wasted his youth with unrequited longing, damned himself, or squandered his master’s capital, but he will be rewarded, because his desire to serve God was there all along—for those who know how to interpret his earlier poetry.

In Christian understanding, the Last Judgment is not only the time for revealing individual moral worth, but also for finally unveiling the full significance of Scripture to all mankind. For Froissart’s narrator, the imagined Last Judgment is likewise as much a spiritual fulfillment of the author’s youthful writing as a pronouncement of his guilt or innocence. As Alice Planche has noted, the ultimate model for the work that the “Lay de

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66. On this motif, see Mâle, L’art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France, 148; Huot, From Song to Book, 321. Kelly (“Imitation, Metamorphosis,” 113) uses the example of the burning bush to highlight Buisson’s emphasis on the poet’s transformative powers.
Nostre Dame” performs on Froissart’s profane poetry is scriptural allegoresis, which reinterprets the narrator’s earthly desire as the beginning of his ascent toward higher things, and as a foretelling of his new calling:

À en croire la fin, les brûlures de l’amour et l’image de la Dame sont répudiées et exorcisés. Pourtant elles apparaissent au lecteur comme d’obscures annonces, comme des essais et des promesses: un avant, et un Avent [. . .] On accepte mal que les aspects sensuels en soient récusés, sans cicatrice et sans nostalgie, dans un mouvement manichéiste.67

To believe the end [of Buisson], the flames of love and the image of the Lady are rejected and exorcised. And yet they appear to the reader as obscure portents, as a past time [avant] that is also an Advent [. . .] One accepts with difficulty that the sensual aspects are banished [from the text], without scars and without nostalgia, in a Manichean movement.

As Planche’s description suggests, Froissart drew close parallels between his own work and Scripture. Throughout the “Lay de Nostre Dame,” the narrator insists upon the way Old Testament prophecy announces the Virgin and the birth of Christ:

Anchiennement
Par mainte gent
Et justement
Selonc l’Anchiien Testament,
Estoit prophetisiet et dit
L’avenement
Dou saint Advent.
(vv. 5230–36)

Et ceste oevre auctorisie
Estoit un grant temps devant
Apparant,
Demonstree et prononchie
Par Ysaïe
Et Jheremie,
Par David et par Helie.
(vv. 5252–58)

The narrator symbolically associates his youthful poetry of profane love with the prophecy of the Old Testament and with its typological events, now fulfilled in Froissart’s new “testament,” the symbolic last accounting of *Buisson*. Cleverly, Froissart suggests that the verses he wrote while in Venus’s service also contain higher truth which should not be left out of his corpus, since they prepared him for Christian devotion, and since they prefigure that devotion for readers of Froissart’s complete poetic works.

In this sense, the lay also appears to fulfill Philosphie’s earlier affirmation in *Buisson*, that the narrator might become a participant in the same spiritual work as the Evangelists and Doctors, even through his worldly poetry. As Philosphie puts it in her accusation, he can “Loer Dieu et servir le monde” (v. 187) all at the same time. Through its insistence on allegorical reading and creative reinterpretation, Froissart’s “Lay de Nostre Dame” not only defends Froissart’s earlier poetry but upholds its value for readers. By reevaluating the texts into which they have invested time and money as newly worthy of Christian contemplation, *Buisson’s* Last Judgment asserts that the audience may turn back to the author’s earlier work without being scandalized or feeling cheated.

By instructing his audience on just how to interpret his writing, Froissart the priest also makes the ethics of reading part of his evangelical message. Curiously, in the “Lay de Nostre Dame,” the narrator directly addresses the “Jewish law” (and later simply “Jew” [“Juïs,” v. 5380]) in the second person singular; it is this hearer whom he exhorts to repent before it is too late:

Par virtu noble et divine,                By noble and divine power,
Lois juïse, or adevine                  oh Jewish Law, now think
Comment et par quel doctrine           how and by what teaching
Chils qui le monde enlumine,            he who illuminates the world,
Couchiés ou monument digne,             couched in his worthy monument,
Ressuscia dou tombiel.                  rose again from the tomb.
(vv. 5302–7)

Given his repeated insistence on the allegorical sense of Scripture and, by extension, of his own past poetry, it is my belief that Froissart’s addressee should likewise not be understood only in the literal or historical sense, as the Israelites and their descendants. Instead, the apostrophe to the Jewish

68. Planche (“Buisson ardent,” 397) notes Froissart’s self-comparison to the Doctors of the Church.

69. This sense, whereby “Jewish law” signifies simply “the Jews,” has been the traditional reading of the passage beginning with Auguste Scheler: “Lois juïse (vocatif) doit se traduire par: ‘people
law may be taken in the typological sense in which it represents a Pharisaical adherence to the strict letter of the text. In my discussions of the Devil’s Rights tradition and Deguileville’s *Pelerinage de l’âme*, I have suggested how this sort of literalism, characterized as both Hebraic and Satanic in representations of eschatological judgment, could also be used to depict certain bad readers of poetic texts, those unable to correctly interpret allegory or to accept the author’s ability to rewrite himself. Sternly placing the same sort of undesirable audience member before the seat of Judgment, Froissart’s narrator suggests that the ethics of literature are reciprocal—that while the author has a duty not to mislead or swindle readers, they in turn must be careful not to misjudge his good intentions (even if the author himself was unaware of them at the time). Accordingly, the two halves of Froissart’s poetic personality should be read together as complements, just as the Old and New Testaments complement each other in Christian teaching:

Dont, entroes
Que bien tu te poes
Et as loisir dou retourner,
Si t’esmoes
Et ton coer promoes
Au justement considerer
Quel conques
Li Viels ou li Noes
Testamens te puets

So while
you still can
and have time to turn back,
rouse yourself
and press your heart
to consider carefully
all the ways that
the Old and the New
Testaments can profit you.

(vv. 5354–62)

Taken as an exegetical model to be applied to Froissart’s own erotic poetry, the insistence on the essential complementarity of the historical and figurative senses of Scripture demands that the palinode be read, like the advent of the New Law, as both transformation and fulfillment. In this gesture, however, the historical reality of past events is also upheld. Just as it is necessary for Moses’s encounter with the burning bush to be both a literal occurrence and a prefiguration of Mary, so too is it necessary for Froissart’s erotic longing to have really existed, and to be preserved in the record of the corpus, in order for its allegorical sense to be fulfilled.  


70. In Erich Auerbach’s understanding of the terms, Froissart’s scriptural poetics would be less allegorical as such and closer to Auerbach’s conception of *figura*, which he considered the domi-
In this creative mode of interpretive judgment, even Jupiter—Froissart’s astrological emblem of divine certainty in judgment—is subject to more than one meaning. For Ovid and Petrarch, the god had represented the very inconstancy of the lover’s identity as he underwent the metamorphoses of desire. Even in the *Ovide moralisé*, which Froissart knew well, Jupiter is not only allegorized as the Christian God, but also left intact as the lascivious pagan deity who is always changing his shape in order to effect sexual conquest. In a similar way, the narrator’s own belonging to the age of Jupiter can and should be read as double—for it includes both a continued attachment to sexual desire and a higher judgment which transforms that desire, retroactively, into a prefiguration. The past stays where it is in the corpus, as allegorical portent and real presence.


72. See, again, Auerbach, “Figura” and above in this chapter, n70.
At least, such is the judgment that the narrator seeks in his request that Mary, his ultimate reader and patron, defend him—in the heavenly court on the Last Day, and in the court of reader opinion. As in so much Marian poetry, Froissart’s Virgin signals the triumph of the New Law, and its power to both rewrite and fulfill the Old:

Sains Jehans au doi
Nous enseigne quoi?
Ton Fil, qui pour nous volt morir,
No Nouvelle Loi
Confrema par soi,
Quant homs mortels volt devenir.
(vv. 5224–29)

What does Saint John point to for our instruction?
That your Son, who wished to die for us, confirmed by his death
our New Law
when he agreed to become man.

Directing readers toward a new understanding of Froissart’s earlier poetry, the closing palinode of Buisson is more optimistic than it initially seems in regard to the possibility that more language will serve in the poet’s defense. In Buisson’s Judgment scene, the poem’s central question, which the narrator asks Philozophie before his dream—“Que porai je de nouvel dire?” (v. 433)—is transformed into the troubling question of the “Lay de Nostre Dame,” borrowed by Froissart from the Dies irae hymn: “Que diras?” (v. 5333). But the poet’s greatest hope—that something new really can be said in his cause—is fulfilled precisely as he completes a rewriting of his past. Froissart’s rewriting is not only a response to the new imperative to impart spiritual truth to readers, but also to the audience’s demand for enjoyment—our desire to get our money’s worth, as expressed before the narrator’s dream vision by Dame Philozophie.73 Froissart’s Last Judgment on himself authorizes our appreciation of the play of meanings in his poetry, the contradictory desires of the subject over the course of time. It thus symbolically holds the poetic corpus together as a complete package, unifying the writing subject as a moral being and his book as a discrete unit of economic exchange which, like the Old and New Testaments, should be read as a whole. A good Christian reader might well take a lesson from the narrator’s renunciation of inordinate sexual desire; but as a reader one is also invited by the same palinodic gesture to begin all over again, to return like Froissart’s narrator to earlier poetry and to the pangs and thrills of young love, to enjoy the intimately human spectacle of an individual

struggling with conflicting judgments over time, and the dramatic evolution of a great artist in the course of his career.\textsuperscript{74}

Significantly, both of Froissart’s extant poetic manuscripts end not with \textit{Buisson}, but with the short \textit{Plaidoirie de la rose et de la violette}, a legal debate between two flowers—the Rose and the Violet—about which of the two is more beloved.\textsuperscript{75} After the flowers’ respective advocates have pleaded their cases before Imagination, they agree to submit them to the judgment of the Fleur de Lis, who resides in the “noble royaume de France” (v. 306). It would be difficult to find a more light-hearted, typically courtly, and even Machauldian representation of judgment as this.\textsuperscript{76} While Froissart never wrote another \textit{dit} after \textit{Buisson}, he did not completely abandon the jovial and uncertain judgments of courtly debate poetry, which he had both lampooned and celebrated in \textit{Espinette} and \textit{Buisson}.

Like the prologue to Machaut’s \textit{Jugement dou roy de Navarre}, then, Froissart’s “Lay de Nostre Dame” hardly represents a final judgment. Instead, it evokes a much less definitive kind of eschatological trial—the continuous ordeal to which the poet is subject as, in the face of a dissatisfied audience, he recognizes the presence of the divine judge. Like Machaut, Froissart used an eschatological \textit{mise en scène} not to bolster his claims to absolute truth, but to suggest that the poet’s judgment must be constantly answerable to the perspectives of the readership. It is this answerability which, even in the rarified air of the Jovian perspective, guarantees that the poet will never be finished reinventing himself. But it is this answerability which, tying the author to his work, also founds his authority.

While \textit{Buisson} makes an eloquent plea for regarding Froissart’s courtly and religious sides as part of the same whole, it is important to remember that, unlike Machaut’s corpus, Froissart’s body of work was physically fragmented, since \textit{Meliador} and the \textit{Chroniques} are compiled separately from each other and from the lyric poetry and \textit{dits}. This apparent disunity is actually a testament to the strength and variety of Froissart’s output, since

\textsuperscript{74} This double geste is similar to Petrarch’s Marian palinode in \textit{Rime sparse} 366, which Froissart may have known (see above, n71). On the double nature of Petrarch’s palinode, see Phillippy, \textit{Love’s Remedies: Recantation and Renaissance Lyric Poetry}, 61–91.

\textsuperscript{75} See Scheler’s edition, in \textit{Œuvres de Froissart: poésies}, II: 235–45. In ms. BNF fr. 830, \textit{Buisson} is followed by \textit{Le dit dou florin} and then \textit{La plaidoirie}. In BNF fr. 831, \textit{Buisson} is followed directly by \textit{La plaidoirie}. It bears noting that \textit{Buisson} does not follow directly upon \textit{Espinette} in either manuscript. In BNF fr. 830 the two poems are separated by the collections of \textit{ballades}, \textit{virelais} and \textit{rondeaux}. In BNF fr. 831, the same intervening poems are present, as well as \textit{La prison amoureuse}, the \textit{lais amoureux}, the \textit{pastourelles}, and the \textit{chançons royaus amoureuses et serventoys de Nostre Dame}.

\textsuperscript{76} Anthime Fourrier (ed., \textit{‘Dits’ et ‘Débats,’} 67–68) has pointed to Machaut’s \textit{Dit de la fleur de lis et de la marguerite} as a likely source for this poem.
the three sections of his work are too large to realistically be contained within a single codex. Yet the conflict between courtly and religious registers in *Buisson* also refers, less directly, to the generic break represented by *Meliador* and especially the *Chroniques*. The decision to leave off writing love poetry was not, after all, followed by a sustained burst of religious composition. Rather, the turn toward historical writing was far more consequential for Froissart’s career and legacy, and this new direction is also referenced, however obliquely, by the same apocalyptic crisis which puts the earlier love poetry into question.

Although I have focused here primarily on the tension between the courtly and devotional in Froissart’s verse, it is interesting to note that, as in Machaut’s *JRN*, we also see Froissart in *Buisson* at the crossroads of the courtly and historical modes. And like Machaut, we see Froissart struggling with the problem of how to reconcile the poet’s historical existence with that of the pseudo-autobiographical persona constructed through first-person narrative and single-author compilation. In the end, Froissart seems to have solved this problem in a different way than his master: in the *Chroniques*, Froissart transformed the historical genre itself into a highly subjective medium told through the first-person reporting of the author. This subject, no longer a poetic persona but a prose documentarian, switches the central focus of his narrative from the collaborative production of verse to the collaborative production of historical meaning. Instead of travelling the land to dash off lyric compositions for rich patrons and disdainful young ladies, Froissart the chronicler now shows himself travelling the land to gather and weight testimony from a wide variety of interlocutors. This becomes the raw material for the author who uses his faculties of judgment to reshape it into his own version of history. It is thus, of course, a heavily biased version of history, and one particularly favorable to the England of Froissart’s beloved patroness Philippa de Hainaut and her husband King Edward III. Yet, unlike *JRN*’s prologue (partly inspired by Froissart’s most important chronicle source, Jean le Bel), there is no pretense to a Last Judgment or a last word on history here. Rather, as in the *Bush* poems, the *œuvre* reveals itself as an endless renegotiation of truth by the author, his sources, and his audiences. This work does not establish an objective version of events—no more than Machaut’s trial before Charles de Navarre results in a “certein jugement.” Instead, it


78. See Ibid., 81, for a similar comparison of the *dit* form to Froissart’s *Chroniques*. 
constantly gestures toward its own subjectivity, insisting on the ethical pri-
macy of the particular judgments made by individual subjects at individual
moments in time.\textsuperscript{79}

In the generation after Machaut, Froissart the poet and historian is
indicative of an increasingly bold expression of vernacular literary author-
ity throughout Europe, and of the increasingly sophisticated practices of
patronage and compilation upon which that authority depends. As a later
fourteenth-century example of the poet facing Judgment, Froissart’s work
is especially representative of the growing prominence of single-author
compilation—still a novelty in Machaut’s day—and, more generally, of the
book as a consumer object in high demand.

Yet if Froissart belonged to a moment in time that allowed him to
claim his authority with greater confidence, the later fourteenth century
also posed a different kind of ethical challenge for the author, relative to
his involvement in new systems of economic exchange. In the wake of the
Black Death—Machaut’s moment of crisis in \textit{JRN}—a large-scale trend of
urban reconcentration was under way, bringing with it a greater circulation
of capital. While Machaut always depicts himself writing in the service of
patrons, the monetary compensation he received from them is rarely, if
ever, shown in the text. In contrast, although Froissart represents his favor-
ite readers as a relatively small and elite group, the poet’s fascination with a
monetized economy speaks to his awareness that his audience was growing,
and that he himself had become a kind of commodity on the marketplace.
What is more, although money is integrated into the patron-poet relation-
ship, in Froissart’s work it also threatens to destabilize that relationship, by
shattering its feudal foundations and replacing them with a much wider
system of circulation in which any reader might participate on equal terms.
As the issue of monetary gain is reflected in the poet’s scene of Judgment,
it shows to what extent the later fourteenth-century author’s value was
no longer simply a function of his skillful use of spiritual capital—like
Guillaume le Clerc’s \textit{besant}—but tied to an increasingly specialized concep-
tion of professional authorship with its own distinct problems to work out.

In the next and final chapter, I conclude by suggesting that, in the gen-
erations after Froissart, such changing ideas of poetic vocation and poetic
authority eventually distanced later poets from the kind of eschatologi-
cal \textit{mise en scène} that I have described as a feature of fourteenth-century

\textsuperscript{79} Paul J. Archambault has argued that the subjective, ever-shifting perspective of the \textit{Chroniques} may have been influenced by Froissart’s encounters with Ockhamist thought (“Froissart and the Ockhamist Movement: Philosophy and its Impact on Historiography.” \textit{Symposium} 28.3 [Fall 1974]: 197–211).
French poetry. In particular, the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would see a new emphasis on the primacy of individual expertise, and on the subjective judgment of the author, as against the objection of critical readers or the voice of prior authority. This development, heralded in part by deeply self-reflective authors like Froissart, drew fifteenth- and sixteenth-century poets away from the anxious ethical dialog of the fourteenth-century scène judiciaire. Instead of a deferential and at times self-abasing model of apologetics, later poets would come to privilege a different kind of legal scene, in which their authority to make judgments—and not the audience’s—sits in closest proximity to the divine.