

45

Ma dame, jeo vous doi bien *comparer*  
Au cristall, qe les autres esclumine,  
Car celle pierre, qui la poet toucher  
De sa vertu reçoit sa° *medicaine*;  
5 Si en devient° plus *precieuse* et fine.  
Ensi pour vo *bounté* considerer  
Toutz les amantz se porront amender.

Vostre figure aici pour deviser,  
La chiere avetz et belle et femeline,  
10 Du quelle, qant jeo me puiss aviser,  
Jeo sui constreint, ensi com de famine,  
Pour vous amer de tiele discipline  
Dont m'est avis qe pour vous *essampler*,  
Toutz les amantz se porront amender.

15 El Cristall, dame, om porra bien noter  
Deux *propretés*, semblable a vo covine.  
Le Cristall est de soi et blanc et clier.  
Dieus et nature ensi *par* double line  
Vous ont de l'un et l'autre fait saisine,  
20 *Par* quoi des biens qe vous avetz pleiner,  
Toutz les amantz se porront amender.

Ceste balade, dame, a vous encline,  
Envoie pour vos *graces* commender.  
De *vostre* *essample* et de *vostre* doctrine  
25 Toutz les amantz se porront amender.

4 sa. It appears that an earlier l has been overwritten to form an s.

5 MS *endevient*

45

- My lady, well ought I to compare you°  
°to the crystal,° which brightens others,  
for this stone, whatever can touch it  
from its power° receives its beneficial effect.°  
5 Thus it becomes more precious and fine.  
°Just so, in thinking about your goodness  
all lovers can improve themselves.
- Also, to describe your form,  
You have a face both fair and womanly,  
10 by which, when I can gaze upon it,  
I am compelled,° just as if by hunger,°  
to love you with such discipline°  
that° it seems to me that in following your example°  
all lovers can improve themselves.
- 15 In the crystal, lady, one can well observe  
two properties, similar to your nature.°  
The crystal is in itself both white and clear.°  
Just so, God and Nature, by a double lineage,°  
have put you in possession° of both one and the other,  
20 because of which, from the good qualities that you have in full,°  
all lovers can improve themselves.
- This ballade, lady, bowed down° to you,  
I send in order to commend your grace.°  
By your example and by your teaching,  
25 all lovers can improve themselves.

45 is the last of five ballades on the lady's virtue and its effect upon not just the persona but on others as well (see the note to 21). It resembles the others in this group not just in theme but also in diction. As in 31, 38, and 39, the persona structures his praise of the lady around her "bonté," "beauté," and "grace" (lines 6, 9, and 23). 45 echoes 21 in its use of "eslumine" (line 2: cf. 21.1) and two forms of "essample" (lines 13, 24; cf. 21.25). In its account of the effects of the lady's beauty, in its reference to the "discipline" of love (line 12) and in its refrain, it is most like 31, and in its use of a stone as the point of comparison and in its citation of God and Nature as the source of the lady's character it does not merely echo 38 but may depend upon it for the referent of "l'un et l'autre" in line 19. 45 offers perhaps the strongest statement of the five

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*Balade 45*

ballades of the beneficial effects of love, without any claim upon reciprocation, and in that way it marks another step towards *50B*'s conclusion.

- 1 As Butterfield notes (*Familiar Enemy*, 255-56), Machaut uses a similar line, "Je puis trop bien ma dame comparer [I can very well compare my lady]" to begin two different poems, *Lou*. 203 and his *Dit de la Harpe*. Froissart repeats Machaut's line in his Bal. 35.1 and uses a variant of it, "Je puis moult bien comparer mon desir [I can well compare my desire]," in Bal. 17.1. Gower follows these only in his use of "comparer": the objects chosen for the comparison differ in each case, and Gower's is unique in being addressed to the lady herself; and if there is a formula here, it ought to include other ballades that begin with a comparison, such as 12 ("La dame a la Chalandre comparer / Porrai [I could compare my lady to the calandra]"), 13, 15, *et al.*
- 2-3 "Les autres [others]" must refer to other stones, and the underlying referent of "qui [whatever]" in line 3 must also be an implicit "pierre [stone]," especially if we can rely upon the feminine forms of the adjectives "precieuse" and "fine" in line 5, which otherwise would refer (nonsensically) to the crystal itself. On the use of indefinite "qui" with reference to an inanimate object see *DMF* s.v. "qui," II.B.
- 2 *crystal*. Butterfield (*Familiar Enemy*, 255-56) cites Chaucer's reference to the "cristal" in "To Rosemounde," line 3, among other less precise resemblances between this poem and Chaucer's as part of her discussion of the sharing of diction and imagery among French and English poets. The context is notably different: Chaucer uses the brightness of the crystal as an image of the lady's beauty and makes no mention either of its restorative effect or its dual properties (line 18). Gower too cites the brightness of the crystal in *CA* 5.5066 and, in lines reminiscent of Chaucer's, in 4.1321-22 as they appear in manuscripts of the "first recension," "The beaute of hire face schon / Wel brytere þan þe Cristall ston," but such comparisons were commonplace, especially, it seems, in English: see the dozens of citations in Whiting, C587-594, and also Hassell C346. The source for the characteristics that Gower attributes to crystal in this poem are much less certain. Marisa Galvez's survey of the appearance of crystals in classical, Biblical, and medieval texts—including a *canso* by Bertrand de Born and the two crystal stones in the fountain of *RR* (1535-68)—finds a wide variety of significances deriving from the stone's physical properties—its hardness, its transparency, its "purity"—but without any reference to its presumed restorative power ("Dark Transparencies: Crystal Poetics in Medieval Texts and Beyond," *PQ* 93 [2015]: 15-42). Yeager (in his note to lines 2-4) finds few references to crystal in the lapidaries. See also the note to line 17 below.
- 4 *power*. On the various senses of "vertu" see the note to 21. *beneficial effect*. *AND* s.v. "medicine," 3, "medicinal virtue."
- 6, 8, 13 For "pour" plus infinitive modifying the subject of the main verb, see the note to 14.1; for its use without reference to a specific subject (as in line 8), see the note to 11.5.
- 11-12 *compelled . . . to love*. On the "constraints" of love see the note to 15.9. When "constreint" precedes an infinitive, one expects "a" (as in *MO* 2030) or "de" (as in *MO* 18043) rather than "pour"; see *DMF* s.v. "contraindre," III.A. Though Macaulay punctuates it differently, Gower may also use "constreigne . . . pour" in *MO* 10663-65. In his note to *MO* 6328 (1:411), Macaulay lists other instances in which Gower uses "pour" for "a" or "de" (including 4<sup>2</sup>.4), "representing perhaps the English 'forto'." *just as if by hunger*. Cf. *MO* 28542 (with reference to the multiplication of the loaves and fishes), "Et la famine leur constreine [and hunger oppresses them]."
- 12 *discipline*. Macaulay, in his note to line 13, translates "manner," but something more specific about the woman's effect upon the persona seems to be implied. Cf. 21.3, 31.6 and the note to 21.
- 13 *that*. For the use of "dont" after "tiele" see the note to 4<sup>2</sup>.11.

- in following your example.* "Essampler" echoes 21.25. My translation follows Macaulay, who suggests, in his note to this line (1:469), "'by taking you as their example,' . . . but this is not the usual sense of 'essampler'." This sense is not recorded in *AND* (s.v. "essampler<sup>1</sup>") nor can any other instance be found in Gower, but *DMF* s.v. "exempler," A.2. provides one citation, from Deschamps (308.168), for "imiter l'exemple de [imitate the example of]." Gower does use "essampler *de*" to mean "to take as an example," both to follow and to avoid, e.g. in *MO* 5424, 12422, 15094 (a use not recorded in the dictionaries). Gower also uses "essembler" as a noun (*MO* 2962, 10310, 13661, *et al.*), and if one were disposed to emend, one might consider "par vostre essembler [by your example]". Cf. *AND* s.v. "essamplaire"; *DMF* s.v. "exemplaire," especially the citations under A.2.b.
- 16 *nature.* On the other uses of "covine" in *50B* see the note to 31.22. Here, as in 31.22, the translation is compelled by the context. It is supported by citations in *AND* s.v. "covine," 5 (where the definition provided is "actions, behavior"), and by several of those in *DMF* s.v. "convine," II.A (where the definition is "État, situation (matérielle ou morale) où se trouve une personne, manière d'être [state, condition (material or moral) in which a person is found, manner of being]." See also *MO* 12459 and 14045. In these citations, the word occurs in both positive and negative contexts. Macaulay, in his note (1:469), provides "disposition."
- 17 *both white and clear.* "Clear" is one of the most common adjectives used to describe the crystal in the passages cited by Whiting (C589) and Hassell (C346). "White" also occurs (Whiting C592, four citations after 1450), and in Whiting C587 we find "Whiit and bright as cristal" from the Wycliffite Bible, Numbers 11.7. This line is still a bit puzzling for "white," if it does not simply mean "bright" (which would not really be a separate quality) suggests that the crystal is translucent or opaque rather than clear. According to Galvez (note to line 2 above, p.17), the two properties of the crystal that were noted by classical authors were its hardness and its transparency. One might well understand the persona's reluctance to imply in his praise of his lady that she is "dur [hard]."
- 18 *lineage.* *AND* s.v. "line," 3; *DMF* s.v. "ligne," III.A.2.
- 19 *put you in possession.* "Saisine" is related to the verb "saisir [to seize]," and it has various senses related to "seizure" and "possession," mostly in a feudal or juridical context; see *AND* s.v. "seisine," *DMF* s.v. "saisine." In his glossary, Macaulay gives "possession," which, in the sense of "the act of possessing" rather than "something that is possessed," appears to be the meaning of the 14 instances of "saisine"/ "seisine" in *MO*. There is only a single example of the expression "faire saisine" in either dictionary, in *AND*, *loc.cit.*, 5, where it evidently means "to take possession, to seize," which doesn't work well here. But in *MO* 29741-42 Gower writes, with reference to Mary's ascent to heaven, "mesmes dieu la meine et guie / Et de son ciel l'ad fait saisine," which appears to be "God himself leads and guides her and puts her in possession of heaven." *MED* (s.v. "seisin(e)," 2) gives one citation (from *Ayenbite of Inwit*, c. 1340) of the phrase "don into seisine of," meaning "to put (sb.) in possession of (sth.)." If this is the correct sense, "l'un et l'autre" then appears to refer to the "propretés" of the lady, but if so, the properties in question are not at all clear unless they are to be found in 38.15-18, the only other instance of God and Nature working together in *50B*, and if 39 was originally the last of this group of five ballades (see 39.23 and the note to 39), then 45 might very well have followed directly after 38. Alternatively, "l'un et l'autre" might refer instead to God and Nature. There is one citation in *AND*, *loc.cit.*, 3 to support the definition "possession of a person as a ward," and though the grammatical context is very different, this might possibly be "made you a ward of both one and the other," in which case the direct reference to 38 would be unnecessary. An unsolved puzzle.
- 20 *in full.* An apt translation from Macaulay's glossary. Cf. *AND* s.v. "plener<sup>1</sup>" *DMF* s.v. "plenier."
- 22 *bowed down.* "Encline" is feminine in form, and it thus appears that it ought to modify "ballade," but there is no clear sense in which it can do so. Macaulay, in his glossary (1:505), provides

23 “addressed,” which he has evidently inferred only from the context of this line. *AND* s.v. “enclin,” 6, gives “appropriate, suitable,” but with only one not very helpful citation. All of the more obvious meanings of “enclin” apply not to the ballade but to the subject “I” of the verb in the next line. The most literal of these is “bowed down”; *AND*, *loc. cit.*, 1; *DMF* s.v. “enclin,” A. By extension, it can also mean “submissive” (*AND*, 9), “attentive” (*AND*, 7), or “well disposed towards” (*DMF*, B.1.a). *your grace*. Though the poem is very much concerned with the lady’s gracious qualities, we have to at least consider the possibility that this is instead (or also) the honorific “your grace.” See *AND* s.v. “grace,” 7; *MED* s.v. “grace,” 5.b. For another use of “vos” in the singular see 9.5. Cf. the notes to 6.9 and 12.