

***Le Bestiaire d'amour* in Lombardy**

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*Le Bestiaire d'amour*¹ was written in northern France by Richard de Fournival, Chancellor of Notre Dame d'Amiens, in the middle of the thirteenth century. Drawing heavily on bestiary material,² it was addressed to an anonymous "dame," and for her it diverted well-known animal exempla to new purpose: a prescriptive/proscriptive analysis of profane love. Enriching that analysis are Aristotelian reminiscences and digressions. There are also flashes of misogyny, for the new love-bestiary's didacticism is Ovidian in its complexity. While ostensibly obeying conventional codes of courtliness, it effectively demotes woman from any position of superiority because, in a hierarchy where man's glory over the other animals is his reason, reason is the one quality to which his lady is unresponsive. Ending with a plea for mercy from *la belle dame sans merci*, Richard suggests there will be neither closure nor a happy ending for *Le Bestiaire d'amour*.

In the early fourteenth century, a time when enthusiasm for French epics, lyric poetry, and romance was at its peak in Italy, Richard's bestiary was "translated" (in the geographical sense) to Lombardy. The manuscript to be examined here is Pierpont Morgan 459.³ The manuscript, on vellum, was written and illuminated in northern Italy in

1 Richard de Fournival, *Li Bestiaires d'amours*, ed. Segre. *Master Richard's 'Bestiary of Love' and Response*, trans. Beer. Citations by page and line number are hereafter provided parenthetically in the text above.

2 For the particular bestiary used by Richard and for a study of the ambiguous love-bestiary that he dubbed his "*ariere-ban*," see Beer, *Beasts of Love*.

3 The remainder of this paragraph is quoted from my article "A Fourteenth-Century 'Bestiaire d'amour'" 19, n. 1. See also my article "Richard de Fournival's Anonymous Lady," 267-73.

the first half of the fourteenth century. The 32 folios contain 115 miniatures and 3 historiated initials. The Library description of the miniatures is as follows:

The style of the miniatures is rather coarse and childlike, especially in the drawing of the figures. There is however a pronounced sense for decorative effect, notable in the representation of birds and in the highly stylized trees and plants. Opaque colors, principally bright red, blue, and dark green, applied in large flat areas with little attempt at modeling, are used in combination with thinner washes of tans, greys, and flesh tones. The numerous miniatures set at irregular intervals in the columns of the text provide a lively effect. A similar style is found in several manuscripts of French text, but written and executed in Italy, probably in Lombardy.

The identity of the PM459 scribe is unknown, but two other fragments of *Le Bestiaire d'amour* survive from the region, suggesting the possibility of an earlier north Italian version upon which he could have drawn. Whatever the circumstances and whoever initiated the Italian version, it was an intralingual transfer uncomplicated by any personal or political agenda. "The scribe" took it upon himself to make available on his side of the Alps a work that had proved popular on the other. To this end he used the prerogatives that any scribe might exercise over "his" manuscript — and more, as will be seen!

Most immediately visible are the orthographic changes. The original Picard spellings have been modified as an important part of the acclimatization process. Thus, the conspicuously Picard spellings of velar *k* and palatal *t* in "ja soit *che ke* cascune cose puist estre seü" (Segre, 1. 2, my emphasis in all quotations) have been converted to "ja soit ce que chascune chose soit seüe" (f. 2r).⁴ Metathesized *r* has (usually) been restored: "desfremet" (Segre, 60. 4) becomes "desfermet" (f. 14v). Intervocalic *w* in "awan" (Segre, 13. 8) has been eliminated in "oan" (f. 4r); but consonantal glides have been introduced: "voudroie" (f. 15v) for "vauroie" (Segre, 65. 1 and also l. 6); and "semblant" (f. 13v) for "sanllant" (Segre, 56. 7). Such changes presumably reflected pronunciations that were current in the target public, thus easing the work's transition from northern France to northern Italy.

The conversion process is not absolute, however. The characteristic Picard spelling *iau* is not only acceptable but is even favoured in the Lombard manuscript: "maint biaux moz" (f. 3r), "biaus et nobles senz de l'ome" (f. 10v). But there is variability in rendering the suffix *-ellus*, for example, in the sequence "arondeus" . . . "oisel" . . . "oiseaus"

4 The quotations come from my transcription of the manuscript for an edition of PM459 (forthcoming). All translations are my own.

(f. 15v). Two diphthongized variants of *bon* occur in the same sentence as a *bon* with an undifferentiated nasal: “n'en ai nule *boen* esperance dou monde . . . ne nul *buen* conseil de vostre *bone* volenté avoir” (f. 3r; cf. also “*bon* enging” on f. 4r).

It is sometimes assumed that such variations have no significance or that they were scribal “lapses” (an anachronistically post-printing judgement if ever there was one!). It seems improbable, however, that affectivity played no role at all. The need to anticipate a new public's speech patterns and to remain within a familiar range of spellings/pronunciations was surely dominant, but after that a scribe's individual tastes (e.g., for variation, for intertextual reminiscence, or for the reproduction of a significant phrase intact) may have had influence. The scribe's most time-consuming activity was, after all, the actual execution of the product. Given the day-by-day attention he gave to the task of transferring the manuscript to its new context, the scribe's orthographical choices should at least be considered among his affective practices.

Syntactic changes were sometimes deemed necessary by the scribe as part of the task of textual acclimatization. At one end of the spectrum — where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish syntactic from orthographic change — are the minimal changes in case, number, and gender. Case usage is identical in the sentence “entre tous les autres sens n'est nus si nobles comme veoirs” [Segre, 35. 1; of all the other senses none is as noble as sight] and “de touz les autres senz n'est nus si nobles come li veoirs” (f. 9r). But the final *s* as a case- or number-designator is not always retained. In “.v. senz, ce sont veoir, oïr, flairier, gouster et toucher” [f. 9r; five senses, that is sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste] the subject morpheme *s* has been deleted from the substantival infinitives of “che sont veirs, oïrs, flairiers, gousteirs et touchiers” (Segre, 34. 1-2). And the scribe renders “Amors resamble le lion” [Segre, 24. 7; Love resembles the lion] as “Amors ressemble *le lyons*” (f. 7r), with a juxtaposition of object and subject morphemes.

This mingling of subject and object morphemes is more frequent in PM459 than in other manuscripts of *Le Bestiaire d'amour*, although the following passage seems to have caused anxiety not only to our scribe but to most transcribers: “il sont trois manieres de seraines, dont les .ij. sont moitié femes et moitié poisson, et le tierce moitié feme et moitié oseaus” [Segre, 29. 9 - 30. 1; there are three types of siren of which two are half-woman and half-fish, and the third half-woman and half-bird]. The apparent difficulty of determining number, case, and word-class, let alone gender, for the ambiguous sirens, which produced multiple combinations of “moitie[z],” “fame[s],” “poisson[s],” and “oisel/oisieaus” throughout the manuscripts, led to PM459's “il sont .iij. manieres de seraines dont les .ij. sont moitez fames et moitié poissons. La tierce maniere si sont moitez fames et moitié oiseaus” (f. 8r). It is not the most illogical of

the bunch. Similarly indiscriminate is the scribe's "nature recovre par voiz uns des greignors defaut qui *soit*" [f. 9r; Nature through voice repairs one of the greatest defects that exists]; however, so is "nature recevoir par vois une des griengeurs defautes ki soit en rien vivant" (Segre, 33. 9-10).

In several passages the scribe pluralizes according to his own perception of the meaning. When, to entice a tiger to its reflection, clever hunters put a mirror in its path "li sage veneor i metent *le mireoir*" [Segre, 41. 4 - 42. 1; the clever hunters put the mirror there], the scribe prefers a multiplicity of mirrors: "li sage veneor i metent *les mireors*" (f. 10v). Describing how Nature compensates for one defect of the senses by ensuring excellence in another, so that nothing can surprise the blind mole provided that some sound is emitted "por tant ke *sons en isse*" [Segre, 35. 5; provided a sound is emitted from it], the scribe prefers a plurality of sounds: "por que *son en issent*" [f. 9r; provided sounds are emitted from it]. And, for whatever reason, the scribe prefers "paintedure sert a *les oilz* et parole sert a *l'oreille*, [f. 2v; painting serves the eyes and word the ear] to "paintedure sert a *l'oeil* et parole a *l'oreille*" (Segre, 4. 6).

On the other hand, a helpful regularization of gender markers aids comprehension in PM459's revised description of the mole: "si come la talpe, qui ne voit gouste . . . mais *ele* ot si cler que riens ne *la* puet sorprendre que *ele* ne *la* perchoive" [f. 9r; which does not see at all . . . but hears so acutely that nothing can go unperceived and surprise it]. (Cf. "si com la taupe ki gouste ne voit . . . mais *il* ot si cler ke riens ne *le* puet sosprendre k'*ele* ne le perchoive," Segre, 35. 3-5). And PM459's spelling of ancient Troy as "Troie" instead of "Troies" (cf. Segre, 35. 3-5: "quant on voit paintedure une estoire, ou de Troies ou d'autre . . ." [when one sees the depiction of a history of Troy or of some other place]) is etymologically correct. Was this an intentional avoidance of the north-eastern French city? Does this reflect superior knowledge? (He was, after all, on the right side of the Alps!) Or is it merely a reflection of growing casualness toward final *s* and toward declension generally?

More noticeable syntactic changes occur when the scribe changes mood or tense. While the subjunctive remains very much alive, and the scribe may even add subjunctives — "je ne sai quele herbe ce *soit*" [f. 14r; I do not know what herb this is] for "je ne sai quel herbe chu *est*" (Segre, 60. 8) — there are shifts in other contexts away from the subjunctive: "ja li lions ne se moveroit por tant com li hom ne le *regardast*" [the lion would not move as long as the man did not look at it; Segre, 24. 6-7] becomes "ja le lyons ne se movroit por que li hom ne le *regardait*" (f. 7v); "si covient ke je i *parole*" [Segre, 8. 8; I must speak] becomes "si convient que je *doie parler*" (f. 3r).

Some changes in tense reflect changes in the direction of the narrative. The past tense in "vous *seistes* bien com a envis jou m'alai acointier de vous" [Segre, 32. 6-7; you

knew very well how reluctantly I went to meet you that first time] conveys Richard's accusation that when he met her initially, his lady knew his desires, led him on, then dropped him without mercy. But PM459's present tense in "vos savez bien com a envis je m'alai acointier de vos" (f. 8v) conveys the new directness and immediacy of a suitor who is actively courting the lady and intends to be accepted by her at the end of the story.⁵ Narrative shifts occur with PM459's conversion of certain verbs from third person to first person, thus intensifying and personalizing the experiences of the lover-narrator: "Et *ki ensi eüst fait, si n'eüst eü garde*" [Segre, 47. 10; A man who had taken these precautions would have had nothing to fear] becomes "Se *je eüsse ausi fait, si n'eüsse eü garde*" (f. 11v). Similarly, "[Vostre cuer] est la souverainne medecine de moi aidier, *si com il a esté devant dit*" [Segre, 59. 3; (your heart) is the sovereign remedy to help me, as has been said earlier] becomes more personal in "est la souverainne medecine de moi aidier, *si com je ai devant dit*" (f. 14r).⁶ The transmitting scribe has become so interested in the success of the narrator-lover that he identifies with him, and even shares vicariously with him the expectation of his/their ultimate reward.⁷

Lexical changes are frequent. The simplest type of change is the substitution of one word for another: "son defaut" for "sa defaute"; "esconser" for "repondre"; "faoncieus" for "faons"; "avis" for "jugement"; "ventree" for "litee"; "fichent" for "fierent." More significantly, the word "vachier" [Segre, 50. 8; cowherd] which Richard had used to characterize Argus, the myriad-eyed servant of Juno who was employed to spy on the heifer Io, is rendered merely as "home" [man]. The reason was surely not an informed judgment that, for example, "vachier" was too menial a label for the mythological Argus. Rather, the substitution moves the narrative one step further away from a myth that was surely unfamiliar both to Richard's audience and also to the new Lombardy public for whom PM459 was destined.

A few lexical substitutions modify the occasional crudity of Richard's animal comparisons. His violently offensive characterization of his past love-requests as dog-vomit which "flew out" from between his teeth ("ele me fu volee des dens"; Segre, 15. 2) is

5 The word "story" is used advisedly. The scribe has his own conception of *Le Bestiaire d'amour* which involves changes in direction, characterization, and "plot," bringing it closer to a *roman* than to a didactic bestiary-treatise on love. On one significant occasion, he even changes Richard's description of his work from a "contreescrit" [Segre, 14. 4; a counter-work, written against his previous writings] to a "conte escrit" [a story in writing].

6 See also the personalization of "Car li hom a .v. sens: veür, oïr, flarier, gouster et touchier, *si com il a esté devant dit*" [Segre, 42. 5-6; for man has five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, as was said earlier] to "si com je ai devant dit" [as I have said earlier] (f. 10v).

7 See pp. 8-9 below.

attenuated to “ele me fu de la bouche *issue*” [f. 4v; it issued from my mouth]. Where Richard uses self-parody to describe himself in *Le Bestiaire d’amour* as a loud-mouthed rooster — “covient ke je i parole plus *forment* k’en tous les autres” [Segre, 8. 8-9; I must speak more forcefully (in this composition) than in all the others] — the scribe prefers to present the narrator-lover as persuasive, not blustering. He prefers “convient que je doie parler plus *soutilment* que en tous les autres” (f. 3r). After all, PM459’s lover is destined eventually to win the lady by the subtly winning words with which the brilliant Lombard scribe will supply him.

One unsuccessful change is due to the scribe’s ignorance both of the word “eis” [bees] and of the source of Richard’s bee information, which Richard had vaguely⁸ designated as “The Natures”: “il est escrit es natures ke les eis n’ont mie oïe” [Segre, 37. 10; It is written in the books on natural properties that bees have no hearing]. Not realizing that with “es natures” Richard is claiming authoritative sources for his information, the scribe muddles through to the best of his ability, explaining the unknown “eis” as “a sort of bird” and expanding as follows: “il est escrit as natures *des oisiaux*⁹ *qu’il sont une maniere* qui n’ont pas oïe” [f. 9v; it is written in the natures of birds that there is one species that has no hearing]. Unfortunately, Richard’s fascination with bees soon leads him to narrate another attribute of the wondrous bees — their amenability to song: “Et puis ke ordenance de chant est si parfaite, il ne puet mie estre k’ele ne trespast pres des es, sans chu k’eles le sentent” [Segre, 39. 7-9; and since the order in song is so perfect, it cannot pass by the bees, whose structure is so orderly, without their sensing it]. The scribe, convinced by his invention of a species of hearingless birds, even adds a gratuitous adjective to his creatures to show they are “a good thing”: “Et puis que ordenance de chant est si parfaite, il ne puet pas estre k’elle puisse trespasser pres de *si gentiz oiseaus* qui si ordeneement sont faites, sanz ce que il ne la sentent” (f. 10r). A pretty but inconsequential remark in which Richard’s authoritatively derived apicular information is unrecognizable!

8 “The Natures” is a reference either to Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De proprietatibus rerum* or to Pliny’s *Naturalis historia* or perhaps to some vernacular work compiling animal information. See Beer, *Beasts of Love*, 55.

9 The scribe’s confusion of the birds and the bees is etymologically interesting. In most regions of Romance, the Latin “aves” and “apes” were early reinforced with a diminutive suffix to yield “oisel” and “abeille.” The Lombard scribe is clearly familiar with these longer, derivative forms, but the simple monosyllabic “eis” that still obtained in north-eastern France in the thirteenth century is unrecognized. Since also the diphthongs *ei* and *oi* were interchangeable in various regions, the *ei* of “eis,” even though derived from “apes,” would automatically suggest *oi* to the Lombard scribe. Hence his less than inspired guess “eis” = “oisiaus.”

Fortunately, the scribe's didactic expansions are usually more effective. A change in connectives — a “car” replacing “si que”; or the brief syntactic pointer “ce sont” in “ceste memoire si a .ij. portes, [ce sont] veir et oïr” [Segre, 4. 3-4; this memory has two doors, sight and hearing] — facilitate comprehension by minimal means. The ambiguous pronouns in “s'il avient c'uns hom past d'encoste li, s'il le regarde” [Segre, 23.10; if it happens that a man passes by it, if he looks at it] are clarified in “s'il avient que nus hom passe de costre lui et il regarde le lyon enmi le vis” (f. 6v). Synonymic binomials explain/expand the sense of “ruit” (Segre 54. 6) in “brait et crie” (f. 13r); of “pris” (Segre, 33. 2) in “pris et enlacié” (f. 8v); and of “nobles” (Segre, 42. 5) in “biaus et nobles” (f. 10v). Richard's simile of maternal nurturing “si com on norrist .i. enfant au doit” [Segre, 22. 8 - 23. 1; as one hand-rears a baby] acquires warmth and physicality by the additional five words of “ausi com l'en norist un enfant au doi *en son sein par amor*” (f. 6r). (It is worth noting that the lovingly breast-fed baby metaphor occurs in the narrator-lover's request for nurturing from his lady!)

The scribe of PM459 does not always resort to expansion to clarify his source. When Richard's didacticism becomes wordy, the scribe may reduce it as, for example, when he lops off the last four words of “cist escrits est mes arrierebans, et ausi ke mes darrains secours [*ke je puisse mander*]” [Segre, 8. 8; this composition is my *arrière-ban* as well as the last hope I can muster]. And he reduces two words to one in the ambiguous “jou ne me puc[h] tenir *ne souffrir* de vous dire men corage” [Segre, 11. 9-10; I could not restrain myself nor allow myself to tell you] which becomes the unambiguous “je ne pooie me tenir de vos dire mon corage” (f. 3r).

All of these changes pale in significance, however, when compared with the scribe's structural changes to Richard's *arrière-ban*. To enhance its appeal, he expands it by incorporating elements, “sure-fire hits,” from other sources. The earliest indicators of his expansive intentions for the work come in his new introduction, itself an expansion. A Provençal-style *vidha* imaginatively combines suggestions from the source with reminiscences of other love-narratives: Abelard, Héloïse, Tristan, Yseut, and *Le Roman de la Rose*. The narrator-lover is now described as “uns philosophes del ordre des jacobins qui ert apelez dans Helyes” [a philosopher of the Jacobin order who was called Elyes] and the lover's lady is now “Yselt . . . unes des plus beles gentils et renomée de toute cele contree” [f. 1r; Yseut . . . one of the most beautiful and noble women, and renowned through all that region].

Richard, after *his* introduction, had clustered chosen bestiary exempla thematically to illustrate his views on love and reason, love and the senses, and the remedies for love. (It is no accident that Ovid is the only author mentioned by name in *Le Bestiaire*

d'amour!) In PM459 this thematic development is obscured by frequent scribal interpolation: for example, a hen who defends her chickens from the fox, three types of falcons, a phoenix reascent amid the flames, an eagle teaching its young to gaze into the sun, a sunflower, a compass fixed on the pole star, the sea, a thirsty horse divining water, a stag hunt, a man walking toward the setting sun, a helpless elephant, a generous lion, a hawk and a partridge, a scratching hen, men at dice, a savage waiting out a storm, a barren tree, a fire-spouting rock.

The additions are disparate. Some even work against the particular context in which they are inserted. But a new logic binds them together in a different way. In the new pseudo-biography, "Yseut" is reported to have rejected Elyes's book of love because she saw it "was not finished." Here are her (i.e., the scribe's) words: "[Elyes] enquerroit la ce que li aparoit dou livre. Et ele li dist 'molt bien,' mes que 'il ne me semble pas acomplis'" [f. 1r; [Elyes] asked her what she thought of the book. And she replied it was "very good," but that "it doesn't seem finished to me"]. Her critical comment implies a sympathetic lady who may eventually relent (unlike the merciless "pucele" of Richard's *arrière-ban*). It also creates an urgent need for textual expansion of the original product, an expansion which, if done well enough, will ensure a happy ending. And as the omniscient scribe hints to his public at the end of the *vidha*, Elyes is given to understand "par le quel compliment et par le bel semblant qu'ele depuis li faisoit" [f. 1v; through this supplement and the good reception she afterwards gave it/him] that his pleasure in respect to love ("son plaisir endroit d'amors") will be satisfied. Thus, all the scribe's amplifications have been validated from the very beginning by an ingenious expansion. The success not only of the newly improved *arrière-ban* but also of Elyes himself has been assured, and the audience has been promised that a pleasurable experience is in store.

The first of the scribe's pleasurable additions is the lover's debate with his heart. Not surprisingly, there are more than superficial resemblances to other ruminations on the subject (in *Yvain* and *Le Roman de la Rose*, for example). Further, the scribe inserts a fable and seventeen disparate exempla, and then the lover urges his heart to bolder action: "alons tost et apertement au chastel de la bele por s'amor conquerre" [f. 28r; let us go quickly and boldly to the beautiful lady's castle to win her love]. The mention of the castle is again an obvious allusion to *Le Roman de la Rose*, making Elyes's storming of that castle as much a supplement to Guillaume de Lorris / Jean de Meun as to *Le Bestiaire d'amour*. PM459's scribe, who now identifies totally with the narrator-lover, rewards himself for his successful improvements to the source in this final exhilarating fantasy with the lady of the Rose:

Maintenant m'apella come suen chevalier et dist: "Biaus tres douz amis, venez avant et prenez ceste rose que je ai longement garde. Prenez la en sasine et en seneffiance de moi et de mon cuer duquel vos porterez desormais les clez et aurez en votre baillie. Que vos l'avrez bien deservi."

Lors metrai¹⁰ je avant jointes mains en genoillons et pris la rose. De la joie que je oi au cuer ne m'estuet parler. Et la pris molt volentiers par itel couvenant come elle la me bailla, dont tot jor en serai fresc et jolis par loiaument amer.

Ci fenist le livre de li arriere ban.

[f. 29v; Now she called me to her as her knight and said, "My very dear friend, come here and take this rose which I for a long while guarded. Take it in fief as a token of me and of my heart whose keys from now on you will carry and have in your keeping. For you will have won it truly."

Then on my knees I shall hold out my joined hands and I took the rose. No need to speak of the joy I felt in my heart. And I was not at all reluctant to receive it on the terms she gave it to me, which is why I shall forever be alive and happy through true love.

Here ends the book of the *arrière-ban*].

This "will-live-happily-forever-after" ending which rewards the Lombard scribe's enthusiastic contributions to the love story would surely not have met with Richard's approval. Nor would it have pleased the woman author of the real *Response* that appeared in four late manuscripts of Richard's bestiary.¹¹ That *Response* was written, ostensibly at least, by the woman to whom Richard had addressed his love lyrics and his *arrière-ban*. In "la response dou bestiaire que le dame fist contre la requeste que maistres Richars de furnival fist sour nature des biestes" (Paris, BNF f.fr. 412, f. 236v), the lady not only refuses Richard's love advances, but also attacks his motivation. The *Response* perpetrates a proto-feminist version of Genesis in which woman is proclaimed to be a nobler creation than man and in which Adam is pronounced to be responsible for original sin. And its author ends with a bitter denunciation of clerics who seduce women by their flattering words. As she implies from her forthright introduction onwards, Richard should not have wasted his time writing something so deleterious to all women: "Hom qui sens et discretion a en soi ne doit metre s'entente ne son tans a cose nule dire ne faire par coi nus ne nule soit empiriés" [Segre, 105. 1-3; A man who has intelligence and discretion must not employ his time or his attention to say or do anything by which any man or any woman may be damaged].

¹⁰ The mingling of future and past tenses is interesting. It reveals that the scribe has now identified so completely with the narrator-lover that he is living their final happy ending in a future fantasy.

¹¹ Paris, BNF f.fr. 25566; BNF f.fr. 412; Dijon, Bibliothèque Municipale, 526; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek 2609.

There is no way to determine whether the Lombard scribe (or, indeed, any of the scribes whose manuscripts do not include the *Response*) was aware that there had been an actual response to *Le Bestiaire d'amour*, let alone that it was so bitterly negative. Even if he had been aware of it, he was under no obligation to include in his manuscript a work that undermined *Le Bestiaire d'amour* and that might not appeal to the audience he was courting. PM459 exemplifies the range of prerogatives that a medieval scribe might exercise when “translating” a work across geographical borders, *viz.*, to change its orthography, syntax, and lexicon, and to make substantial additions and subtractions. This was the essence of *inventio*.

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