

OLD FRENCH SERIES • VOLUME 12

THE FABLES OF MARIE DE FRANCE

MARIE DE FRANCE

Esope

The Fables of Marie de France

One Hundred and Three Fables

with a word-for-word interlinear English translation
preserving the original word order

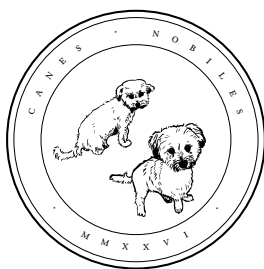


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The Old French text follows Karl Warnke's text, *Die Fabeln der Marie de France*,
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Set from a page scan of Warnke's edition

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The spelling is Warnke's Anglo-Norman, with the acute on a tonic final e and the tréma where two vowels do not form a diphthong, both on one e where he sets them so, and speech stands between his single marks. The Latin titles are his; his variants are not reproduced.

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Prologus

PROLOGUE

The learned should give their care to good books and to the examples and sayings of the philosophers, who wrote down good proverbs so that others might improve. Romulus wrote to teach his son to guard against trickery, and Aesop wrote fables for his master, translated from Greek into Latin; no fable is so foolish that the moral after it holds no philosophy, and the weight of the tales lies there. The poet rhymes them at the request of one who is the flower of chivalry, learning, and courtesy.

Cil, ki sevent de letreüre,

Those who know of letters

devreient bien metre lur cure

ought well to-put their care

es bons livres e es escriz

in-the good books and in-the writings

e es essamples e es diz,

and in-the examples and in-the sayings

que li philosophe troverent

that the philosophers found

e escristrent e remembrerent.

and wrote and recorded

Par moralité escriveient

By morality they-wrote

les bons proverbes qu'il oeient,

the good proverbs that-they heard

que cil amender s'en poissent

so-that those to-amend themselves-thereby might

ki lur entente en bien meissent.

who their mind on good might-set

5

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Ceo firent li anciën pere.

That did the ancient fathers

Romulus, ki fu emperere,

Romulus who was emperor

a sun fiz escrist e manda

to his son wrote and sent-word

e par essample li mustra

and by example to-him showed

15 cum se deüst cuntreguaitier

how himself he-ought to-watch-against

que hum nel peüst engignier.

that one not-him could to-trick

Esopes escrist a sun mestre,

Aesop wrote to his master

ki bien cunut lui e sun estre,

who well knew him and his state

unes fables qu'il ot trovees

some fables that-he had found

20 de Griu en Latin translatees.

from Greek into Latin translated

Merveille en orent li plusur

Marvel thereat had the most

qu'il mist sun sens en tel labur;

that-he put his wit in such labor

mes n'i a fable de folie

but not-there is fable of folly

u il nen ait philosophie

where there not be philosophy

25 es essamples ki sunt après,

in-the examples which are after

u des cuntes est tuz li fes.

where of-the tales is all the weight

A mei, ki la rime en dei faire,

To me who the rhyme thereof ought to-make

n'avenist niënt a retraire

not-it-would-befit at-all to relate

plusurs paroles ki i sunt;

many words which therein are

mes nepuruec cil m'en sumunt,

but nevertbeless he me-thereto summons

ki flurs est de chevalerie,

who flower is of chivalry

d'enseignement, de curteisie;

of-learning of courtesy

e quant tels huem m'en a requise,

and when such man me-thereof has asked

ne vueil laissier en nule guise

not I-wish to-leave-off in any wise

que n'i mete travail e peine,

that not-therein I-put toil and pain

ki que m'en tienge pur vileine;

who that me-thereof may-hold for boorish

mult dei faire pur sa preiere.

much I-ought to-do for his prayer

Ci comenceraï la premiere

Here I-shall-begin the first

des fables qu'Esopes escrist,

of-the fables that-Aesop wrote

qu'a sun mestre manda e dist.

that-to his master he-sent and told

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De Gallo et Gemma

I · THE COCK AND THE GEM

A cock scratching on a dunghill for food finds a precious gem. A rich man, he tells it, would have set it in gold, but he has no use for it and will do it no honor. So it is with many people who do not get what they want: they despise the good and take the worse.

Del coc recunte ki munta

Of-the cock he-tells who climbed

sur un femier e si grata;

on a dunghill and so scratched

sulunc nature purchaçot

according-to nature he-sought

sa viande, si cum il sot.

his food so as he knew-how

5 Une chiere gemme trova;

A precious gem he-found

clere la vit, si l'esguarda.

bright it he-saw so it-looked-at

'Jeo quidai', fet il, 'purchacier

I thought says he to-see

ma viande sur cest femier.

my food on this dunghill

Or t'ai ici, gemme, trovee;

Now thee-I-have here gem found

10 ja par mei n'en iers remuee!

ever by me not-thence thou-wilt-be moved

S'uns riches huem ci vus trovast,

If-a rich man here you had-found

bien sai que d'or vus honurast,
well I-know that with-gold you he-would-have-honored

si acreüst vostre clarté
so would-have-increased your brightness

par l'or, ki mult a grant bealté.
by the-gold which very has great beauty

Quant ma volenté n'ai de tei,
Since my will not-I-have of thee

ja nule honor n'avras par mei.'
ever any honor not-thou-wilt-have by me

Altresi est de meinte gent,
Likewise it-is of many folk

se tut ne vait a lur talent,
if all not goes to their liking

cume del coc e de la gemme.
as of-the cock and of the gem

Veü l'avuns d'ume e de femme:
Seen it-we-have of-man and of woman

bien ne honor niënt ne prisent;
good nor honor at-all not they-prize

le pis pernent, le mielz despisent.
the worse they-take the better they-despise

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De Lupo et Agno

II · THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A wolf drinking at a spring accuses a lamb drinking downstream of fouling his water. When the lamb answers that the water runs from the wolf to him, the wolf says the lamb's father did the same six months ago, and when the lamb says he was not yet born, the wolf strangles and kills him. So rich robbers, viscounts, and judges invent false pretexts to haul those in their power into court and strip them of flesh and skin.

Ci dit del lou e de l'aignel,

Here he-tells of-the wolf and of the-lamb

ki beveient a un duitel.

who were-drinking at a stream

Li lous en la surse beveil,

The wolf at the spring was-drinking

e li aignels a val esteit.

and the lamb to below was

5 Irieement parla li lous,

Angrily spoke the wolf

ki mult esteit cuntrarious;

who very was contrary

par maltalent parla a lui.

in ill-will spoke to him

‘Tu me fes’, dist il, ‘grant ennui.’

Thou me dost said he great trouble

Li aignelez a respundu:

The little-lamb has answered

10 ‘Sire, de quei?’ ‘Dunc ne veiz tu?’

Lord of what Then not seest thou

Tu m'as ceste ewe si trublee,

Thou me-hast this water so troubled

n'en puis beivre ma saülee.

not-thereof I-can to-drink my fill

Altresi m'en irai, ceo crei,

Likewise myself-thence I-shall-go that I-believe

cum jeo vinc ça, murant de sei.'

as I came hither dying of thirst

Li aignelez dunc li respunt:

The little-lamb then to-him answers

'Sire, ja bevez vus a munt!

Lord indeed drink you to above

De vus me vint ceo qu'ai beü.'

From you to-me came that which-I-have drunk

'Quei!' fet li lous, 'maldiz me tu?'

What says the wolf revilest me thou

Cil li a dit: 'N'en ai voleir.'

He to-him has said Not-thereof I-have will

Li lous respunt: 'J'en sai le veir.

The wolf answers I-thereof know the truth

Cest meïsmes me fist tis pere

This same to-me did thy father

a ceste surse, u od lui ere,

at this spring where with him I-was

ore a sis meis, si cum jeo crei.'

now has six months so as I believe

'Que retez ceo', fet il, 'a mei?'

What you-reproach that says he to me

Ne fui pas nez, si cum jeo quit.'

Not I-was at-all born so as I think

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'E quei pur ceo?' li lous a dit,

And what for that the wolf has said

'ja me fez tu ore cuntraire

indeed to-me dost thou now wrong

e chose que tu ne deis faire.'

and thing that thou not oughtest to-do

Dunc prist li lous l'aignel petit,

Then took the wolf the-lamb little

30 as denz l'estrange, si l'ocit.

with-the teeth him-throttles so him-kills

Ço funt li riche robeür,

That do the rich robbers

li vescuente e li jugeür

the viscounts and the judges

de cels qu'il unt en lur justise.

of those that-they have in their power

False achaisun par coveitise

False pretext out-of covetousness

35 truevent asez pur els confondre;

they-find enough for them to-confound

suvent les funt a plait somundre:

often them they-make to trial to-summon

la char lur tolent e la pel,

the flesh from-them they-take and the skin

si cum li lous fist a l'aignel.

so as the wolf did to the-lamb

De Mure et Rana

III · THE MOUSE AND THE FROG

A mouse who lives in a mill invites a passing frog to stay the night, and they eat their fill. The frog praises her own home in a marshy meadow and leads the mouse through the dew to a river, where she has her tie a thread to her leg, fastens the other end to her own, and tries to drown her. A kite seizes both, eats the frog, and lets the mouse go. Cunning felons are glad to trick good companions, but the harm they mean for others often falls on themselves.

Sulunc la letre des escriz

According-to the letter of-the writings

vus musterrai d'une suriz,

to-you I-shall-show of-a mouse

ki par purchaz e par engin

who by effort and by device

aveit manage en un mulin.

had dwelling in a mill

Par essample cunter vus vueil

By example to-tell you I-wish

qu'un jur s'asist desur le sueil;

that-one day herself-she-sat on the threshold

ses gernunez apareilla

her little-whiskers she-arranged

e de ses piez les pelucha.

and with her feet them she-combed

Devant li passa une reine,

Before her passed a frog

si cume aventure la meine;

so as chance her leads

5

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demanda li en sa raisun,

she-asked her in her speech

s'ele ert dame de la maisun

if-she was lady of the house

dunt ele se faiseit si mestre,

whereof she herself made so mistress

si li acuntast de sun estre.

so to-her should-tell of her state

15 La suriz li respunt: 'Amie,

The mouse to-her answers Friend

pieç'a qu'en oi la seignurie.

long-since that-thereof I-had the lordship

Bien est en ma subjectiün,

Well is in my subjection

quant es pertus tut environ

since in-the holes all around

puis herbergier e jur e nuit

I-can to-lodge both day and night

20 juër e faire mun deduit.

to-play and to-make my delight

Or remanez anuit od mei!

Now stay tonight with me

Jo vus metrai par dreite fei

I you shall-set by right faith

sur la muele mult a aaise;

on the millstone very at ease

n'i avrez rien ki vus desplaise;

not-there you-will-have anything that you displeases

asez avrez farine e greins

25

plenty you-will-have flour and grains

del ble ki remeint as vileins.'

of-the corn which remains to-the villeins

La reine i va par sa preiere.

The frog there goes at her prayer

Amdous s'asieent sur la pierre:

Both themselves-sit on the stone

mult i troverent a mangier

much there they-found to eat

senz cuntredit e senz dangier.

30

without gainsaying and without hindrance

La suriz par amur demande

The mouse by love asks

a la reine de sa viande

of the frog of her food

que l'en semble, verté l'en die.

how to-her-thereof it-seems truth to-her-thereof she-may-tell

'N'en mentirai', fet ele, 'mie.

Not-thereof I-shall-lie says she at-all

Mult par fust bien apareilliee,

35

Very much would-be well prepared

s'en ewe eüst esté muilliee.

if-in water it-had been soaked

En mi cel pre en un guascel

In middle-of that meadow in a marsh

fussuns ore ambesdous mult bel;

we-should-be now both very well

la est la meie mansiuns.

there is the mine dwelling

- 40 Bele amie, kar i aluns!
Fair friend now there let-us-go
 Tant i avrez joie e deduit,
So-much there you-will-have joy and delight
 ja mes n'avrez talent, ceo quit,
ever more not-you-will-have desire that I-think
 de repairier a cest mulin.'
for to-return to this mill
 Tant li premet par sun engin
So-much to-her promises by her device
- 45 e la blandist par sa parole,
and her cajoles with her words
 qu'ele la creit, si fist que fole.
that-she her believes so did like fool
 Ensemble od li s'en est alee.
Together with her herself-thence is gone
 Li prez fu si pleins de rusee
The meadow was so full of dew
 que tute est la suriz muilliee;
that all is the mouse soaked
- 50 dunc quida bien estre neiee.
then she-thought well to-be drowned
 Ariere voleit returner,
Back she-wished to-turn
 kar ne poeit avant aler.
for not she-could forward to-go
 Mes la reine l'a apelee,
But the frog her-has called

ki a force l'en a menee

who by force her-thence has led

tant par amur tant par preiere,

now by love now by prayer

tant qu'ele vint a la riviere.

so-far that-she came to the river

Dunc ne pot la suriz avant.

Then not could the mouse forward

A la reine dist en plurant:

To the frog said in weeping

'Ci ne puis jeo niënt passer,

Here not can I at-all to-cross

kar jeo ne soi unkes noër.'

for I not knew ever to-swim

'Pren', fet la reine, 'cest filet,

Take says the frog this thread

sil lie ferm a tun garet,

so-it bind fast to thy leg

e jeo l'atacherai al mien:

and I it-shall-fasten to-the mine

la riviere passerum bien.'

the river we-shall-cross well

La suriz s'est del fil liëe,

The mouse herself-is with-the thread bound

a la reine s'est atachiee;

to the frog herself-she-is fastened

el gué se metent, si s'en vunt.

into-the ford themselves they-put so themselves-thence go

Quant eles vindrent el parfunt,

When they came into-the deep

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si la volt la reine neier;

so her wished the frog to-drown

70 od li se cumence a plungier.

with her herself she-begins to plunge

La suriz pipe en halt e crie,

The mouse squeaks on high and cries

ki quida tute estre perie.

who thought wholly to-be perished

Uns escufles i vint roant,

A kite thither came wheeling

vit la suriz ki vait pipant.

saw the mouse who goes squeaking

75 Les eles clot, a val descent;

The wings he-closes to below he-descends

li e la reine ensemble prent

her and the frog together he-takes

(amdous furent al fil pendanz).

both were to-the thread hanging

La reine fu corsue e granz:

The frog was stout and big

li escufles par cuveitise

the kite out-of greed

80 la suriz lait, la reine a prise.

the mouse he-leaves the frog he-has taken

Mangiee l'a e devoree,

Eaten her-has and devoured

e la suriz est delivree.

and the mouse is freed

Si est des veziëz feluns:

So is of-the cunning felons

ja n'avrunt si bons compaignuns,

ever not-they-will-have such good companions

tant lur facent bien ne honur,

however-much to-them they-may-do good or honor

se rien lur deit custer del lur,

if anything to-them must to-cost of-the theirs

que durement ne seient lié,

that greatly not they-be glad

se par els seient engignié.

if through them they-be tricked

Mes il ravient asez sovent

But it happens-in-turn quite often

que de meïsmes le turment,

that of same the torment

qu'as altres quident purchacier,

that-to-the others they-think to-procure

avient lur cors a perillier.

happens their bodies to be-imperiled

85

90

De cane et ove

IV · THE DOG AND THE SHEEP

A lying dog sues a sheep for a loaf he says he lent her, and the kite and the wolf swear for him, hoping for a share. Ordered to repay, she sells her wool in winter and dies of cold, and the three divide her flesh. So liars with false witnesses drag the poor into court and pay the witnesses from the poor man's goods.

Ci cunte d'un chien menteür,

Here he-tells of-a dog lying

de males guisches, tricheür,

of evil tricks cheat

ki une berbiz enplaida.

who a sheep sued

Devant justise la mena,

Before justice her he-led

5 si li a un pain demandé,

so from-her he-has a loaf demanded

qu'il li aveit, ceo dist, presté.

that-he to-her had that said lent

La berbiz tut li rencia

The sheep all to-him denied

e dist que nul ne l'en presta.

and said that any not to-her-thereof he-lent

Li juges al chien demanda

The judge of-the dog asked

10 se il nul testimoine en a.

if he any witness thereof has

Il li respunt qu'il en a dous,

He to-him answers that-he thereof has two

c'est li escuffles e li lous.

that-is the kite and the wolf

Cil furent avant amené.

These were forward brought

Par sairement unt afermé

By oath they-have affirmed

que ceo fu veirs que li chiens dist.

that that was true which the dog said

Savez pur quei chescuns le fist?

You-know for what each it did

Qu'il en atendeient partie,

That-they thereof awaited share

se la berbiz perdist la vie.

if the sheep should-lose the life

Li jugiere dunc demanda

The judge then asked

a la berbiz qu'il apela,

of the sheep whom-he summoned

pur quei ot le pain reneié

for what she-had the loaf denied

que li chiens li aveit baillié,

that the dog to-her had handed

menti en ot pur poi de pris;

lied thereof she-had for little of worth

or li rendist, einz qu'il fust pis!

now to-him she-should-render before that-it were worse

La chaitive ne l'ot dunt rendre:

The wretch not it-had wherewith to-render

dunc li covint sa leine vendre.

then her behooved her wool to-sell

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Yvers esteit, de freit fu morte.

Winter it-was of cold she-was dead

Li chiens i vient, sa part en porte,

The dog thither comes his part thereof carries

e li escufles d'altre part,

and the kite on-the-other side

30 e puis li lous, trop li est tart

and then the wolf exceedingly to-him is late

que la chars fust entre els detraite,

that the flesh were among them torn

kar de viande orent suffraite;

for of food they-bad want

ne la berbiz plus ne vesqui:

nor the sheep more not lived

sis sire del tut la perdi.

her lord of-the all her lost

35 Cest essample vus vueil mustrer:

This example to-you I-wish to-show

de meint hume le puis pruver,

of many-a man it I-can to-prove

ki par mentir e par trichier

who by lying and by cheating

funt les povres suvent plaidier;

make the poor often to-plead

fals testimoines avant traient,

false witnesses forward they-draw

40 de l'aveir as povres les paient;

from the-wealth of-the poor them they-pay

ne lur chalt que li las devienge,

not to-them matters what the wretch may-become

mes que chescuns sa part en tienge.

but that each his share thereof may-hold

De cane et umbra

V · THE DOG AND THE SHADOW

A dog crossing a bridge with a cheese in his mouth sees its reflection in the water and wants both. He leaps in, opens his mouth, and loses the cheese. Whoever covets more than his right deceives himself and often loses what he has.

A une feiz, ceo vos recunt,

At one time this to-you I-tell

passot uns chiens desur un punt;

was-passing a dog over a bridge

un furmage en sa buche tint.

a cheese in his mouth he-held

Quant en mi le puncel parvint,

When in middle-of the little-bridge he-arrived

5 el gué vit l'umbre del furmage.

in-the ford he-saw the-shadow of-the cheese

Purpensa sei en sun curage

He-bethought himself in his heart

qu'aveir les voleit ambedous.

that-to-have them he-wished both

Iluec fu il trop coveitous:

There was he too covetous

en l'ewe salt, la buche ovri,

into the-water he-leaps the mouth he-opened

10 e li furmages li chaï;

and the cheese from-bim fell

e umbre vit, e umbre fu,
and shadow he-saw and shadow it-was

e sun furmage ot il perdu.
and his cheese had he lost

Pur ceo se deivent chastiër
For that themselves ought to-take-warning

cil ki trop vuelent coveitier.
those who too wish to-covet

Ki plus coveite que sun dreit,
Who more covets than his right

par sei meïsmes se deceit;
by himself same himself deceives

kar ceo qu'il a pert il sovent,
for that which-he has loses he often

e de l'altrui n'a il niënt.
and of the-other's not-has he anything

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De sole nubente

VI · THE MARRIAGE OF THE SUN

The sun wishes to take a wife, and the creatures go to Fate for counsel. The wisest of them explains that the sun is already so hot in summer that nothing can grow, and that with a wife and company at his will no creature could live beneath him. Fate agrees to leave things as they are. People should not strengthen evil lords or ally them with anyone stronger, but hinder them as they can, since the stronger such a lord grows, the worse he treats them.

Par essample fet ci entendre

By example he-makes here to-understand

que li soleiz volt femme prendre.

that the sun wished wife to-take

A tute creature dist

To every creature he-said

que chescune se purveïst.

that each herself should-provide

5 Les creatures s'assemblerent;

The creatures themselves-assembled

a la destinee en alerent,

to the fate thence they-went

si li mustrent del soleil

so to-her they-showed of-the sun

que de femme requiert conseil.

that of wife he-seeks counsel

La destinee lur cumande

The fate to-them commands

que veir diënt de la demande

that truth they-may-tell of the request

e ceo qu'a vis lur en esteit.

and that which-to seeming to-them thereof was

Cele parla ki mielz saveit.

She spoke who best knew

'Quant li soleiz', fet ele, 'est halz

When the sun says she is high

el tens d'esté, si est si chalz

in-the time of-summer so is so hot

qu'il ne lest rien fructifiër

that-be not lets anything to-bear-fruit

e terre e herbe fet sechier,

and earth and grass makes to-dry

e se il a esforcement

and if he has increase-of-strength

e compaignie a sun talent,

and company at his will

nule riens nel purra souffrir,

any thing not-him will-be-able to-endure

desuz lui vivre ne guarir.'

beneath him to-live nor to-survive

La destinee respondi:

The fate answered

'Veir avez dit. Laissum l'issi,

Truth you-have said Let-us-leave it-thus

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cum il a esté, grant tens a,

as it has been great time ago

kar ja par mei n'esforcera.'

for ever by me not-he-will-grow-stronger

25 Ici chastie les plusurs

Here he-warns the many

ki sur els unt les mals seignurs,

who over them have the evil lords

que pas nes deivent esforcier

that at-all not-them they-ought to-strengthen

n'a plus fort d'els acumpaignier

nor-with more strong than-them to-ally

par lur sens ne par lur avoir,

by their wit nor by their wealth

30 mes desturber a lur poeir.

but to-binder to their power

Cum plus esforce, pis lur fet;

As more he-grows-strong worse to-them he-does

tuz jurs lur est en mal aguet.

all days to-them he-is in evil ambush

De lupo et grue

VII · THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A wolf with a bone in his throat asks the beasts and birds for help. The crane draws it out with her long neck and asks for the reward he promised. The wolf says her reward was taking her head out of his mouth alive. So the poor man who serves an evil lord gets only ill will, and should thank him for his life.

Issi avint qu'uns lous runja

Thus it-happened that-a wolf gnawed

un os, ki el col li vola;

a bone which in-the neck to-him flew

e quant el col li fu entrez,

and when in-the neck to-him it-was entered

mult durement en fu grevez.

very sorely thereby he-was aggrieved

Tutes les bestes asembla

All the beasts he-assembled

e les oisels a sei manda.

and the birds to himself summoned

Puis a fet a tuz demander

Then he-has made of all to-ask

se nuls le set mediciner.

if any it knows to-beal

Entre els en unt lur conseil pris;

Among them thereof they-have their counsel taken

chescuns en dist le suen avis.

each thereof said the his opinion

Fors la grue, ceo diënt bien,

Except the crane that they-say well

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n'i a nul d'els ki'n sace rien;
not-there is any of-them who-thereof may-know anything

le col a lung e le bec gros:
the neck she-has long and the beak thick

ele en purreit bien traire l'os.
she thence could well to-draw the-bone

- 15 Li lous li pramist grant luier
The wolf to-her promised great reward
 pur ceo que l'en volsist aidier.
for that that him-thereof she-would to-help

La grue lance bec avant
The crane thrusts beak forward

dedenz la gule al malfaisant:
within the throat of-the evildoer
 l'os en a trait. Puis li requist
the-bone thence she-has drawn Then of-him she-asked

- 20 que sa pramesse li rendist.
that his promise to-her he-should-render

Li lous li dist par maltalent
The wolf to-her said in ill-will

e aferma par sairement,
and affirmed by oath

que li semblot e vertez fu
that to-him it-seemed and truth it-was

que bon luier aveit eü,
that good reward she-had had

- 25 quant sa teste en sa buche mist,
when her head into his mouth she-put
 qu'il ne l'estrangla e oscist.
that-he not her-strangled and killed

‘Tu iés’, fet il, ‘fole pruvee,

Thou art says he fool proven

quant de mei iés vive eschapee,

since from me thou-art alive escaped

que tu requiers altre luier.

that thou askest other reward

De ta char ai grant desirier:

Of thy flesh I-have great desire

mei, ki sui lous, tieng jeo pur fol,

me who am wolf hold I for fool

qu’od mes denz ne trenchai tun col.’

that-with my teeth not I-cut thy neck

Altresi est del mal seignur:

Likewise it-is of-the evil lord

se povres huem li fet honor

if poor man to-him does honor

e puis demant sun gueredun,

and then he-may-ask his reward

ja n’en avra se mal gre nun;

ever not-thereof he-will-have except ill thanks not

pur ceo qu’il seit en sa baillie,

for that that-be is in his keeping

merciër le deit de sa vie.

to-thank him he-ought for his life

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De cane parturiente
VIII · THE BITCH IN WHELP

A bitch about to whelp begs another for shelter until her pups are born. When the pups do damage and the owner bids them leave, she pleads that she would die of cold in winter, and is allowed to stay until summer. When fine weather returns, she swears that her whelps will tear the owner apart if she hears another word, and since the strength in the house is theirs, they put her out of her own home. Many a worthy man loses his inheritance through kindness to a felon.

D'une lisse vus vueil cunter,

Of-a bitch to-you I-wish to-tell

ki preste esteit de chaeler;

who ready was to whelp

mes ne sot u estre peüst

but not she-knew where to-be she-might

n'u ses chaels avoir deüst.

nor-where her whelps to-have she-ought

5 A une altre lisse requist

Of an other bitch she-asked

qu'en sun ostelet la suffrist,

that-in her little-lodging her she-would-suffer

tant que ele eüst chaelé;

until that she bad whelped

mult l'en savreit, ceo dist, bon gre.

much to-her-thereof she-would-know that she-said good thanks

Tant l'en a requise e preice

So-much her-thereof she-has asked and prayed

10 que cele od li l'a herbergiee.

that that-one with her her-has lodged

Puis, quant ele ot eü chaels

Then when she had had whelps

(e espeldri furent e bels),

and grown [?] they-were and fair

cele qui li ostels esteit

she whose the lodging was

par els sovent damage aveit.

through them often harm had

De sa maisun les rueve eissir,

From her house them she-bids to-go-out

nes i vult mes plus cunsentir.

not-them there she-wishes more longer to-allow

L'autre se prist a dementer

The-other herself took to lament

e dist qu'el ne set u aler;

and said that-she not knows where to-go

yvers esteit, pur la freidur

winter it-was for the cold

murreit la fors a grant dolor;

she-would-die there outside in great pain

dunc li requist par charité

then of-her she-asked for charity

qu'el la herbert desqu'a l'esté.

that-she her should-lodge until-to the-summer

Cele ot de li mult grant pitié,

She had of her very great pity

si li a issi otrié.

so to-her she-has thus granted

Quant le bel tens vit revenir,

When the fair weather she-saw to-return

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dunc les en rueve fors eissir.

then them thence she-bids out to-go

L'altre comença a jurer,

The-other began to swear

se ja mes l'en oeit parler,

if ever more her-thereof she-heard to-speak

que si chael la detraireient

that her whelps her would-tear-apart

30 e hors a l'us la butereient.

and out at the-door her would-thrust

La force ert lur en la maisun:

The force was theirs in the house

fors l'en unt mise senz raisun.

out her-thence they-have put without reason

Cest essample poëz saveir

This example you-can to-know

e par meint produme veeir,

and by many-a worthy-man to-see

35 ki par bunté de sun curage

who through goodness of his heart

est chaciez de sun heritage.

is driven from his inheritance

Ki felun hume od lui acuel,

Who felon man with him receives

ne s'en part mie, quant il vuel.

not himself-thence parts at-all when he wishes

De mure urbano et mure silvestri

IX · THE TOWN MOUSE AND THE COUNTRY MOUSE

A town mouse on a journey spends the night with a wood mouse, then calls her home poor and invites her to the town's rich halls, cellars, flour, and honey. When the butlers come in, the mice flee into their holes, and the wood mouse is terrified. She tells her friend she would rather live safely in the wood than in great halls among people, cats, birds, and traps. Each should love his own small goods in peace more than another's wealth with fear.

Ci dit d'une suriz vilaine,

Here he-tells of-a mouse town-dwelling

ki a une vile proceine

who to a town near

voleit aler pur deporter;

wished to-go for to-amuse-herself

par mi un bois l'estut passer.

through middle-of a wood her-behooved to-pass

Dedenz le bois li anuita.

Within the wood on-her night-fell

Une hulete iluec trova,

A little-but there she-found

qu'une suriz de bois ot faite

that-a mouse of wood had made

e sa viande i ot atraite.

and her food there had gathered

La suriz de vile demande

The mouse of town asks

s'ele ot iluec point de viande.

if-she had there any of food

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Cele respunt: 'J'en ai asez.

She answers I-thereof have plenty

Venez avant e si veez!

Come forward and so see

Se plus eüssiez cumpaignie,

If more you-had company

s'en seriëz vus bien servie.'

so-thereby would-be you well served

15 Quant ele ot piece iluec esté,

When she had a-while there been

a sa cumpaigne en a parlé;

to her companion thereof she-has spoken

dit que sis estres est malvais

she-says that her dwelling is bad

e qu'el n'i vult demurer mais:

and that-she not-there wishes to-stay more

od li s'en vienge, si avra

with her herself-thence let-her-come so she-will-have

20 riches sales, qu'el li durra,

rich halls that-she to-her will-give

beles despenses, beals celiers

fair pantries fair cellars

e bons beivres e bons mangiers.

and good drinks and good foods

Cele la creit; od li s'en va.

She her believes with her herself-thence goes

En riches sales la mena,

Into rich halls her she-led

25 si li a mustré ses soliers,

so to-her she-has shown her lofts

ses despenses e ses celiers,
her pantries and her cellars
 plenté de farine e de miel.
plenty of flour and of honey
 Cele quida bien estre el ciel.

She thought well to-be in-the heaven

Mes or vindrent li buteillier,

But now came the butlers

ki entrer durent el celier.

who to-enter were-to into-the cellar

Si tost cum il ovrirent l'us,

So soon as they opened the-door

les suriz fuient as pertus.

the mice flee to-the holes

La boscage fu esbaïe,

The woodland-one was dismayed

ki lur estre ne saveit mie.

who their ways not knew at-all

Quant cil eissirent del celier,

When those went-out of-the cellar

les suriz revindrent mangier.

the mice came-back to-eat

Cele fu murne e en doloür,

She was gloomy and in grief

ki ot eü de mort poür.

who had had of death fear

Sa cumpaigne la reguarda.

Her companion her looked-at

Par grant dulçur li demanda:

With great sweetness of-her she-asked

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‘Quel semblant fet ma dulce amie?’

What look makes my sweet friend

‘Jeo sui’, fet ele, ‘mal baillie

I am says she ill served

pur la poür que j’ai eüe.

for the fear that I-have had

Mult me repent que t’ai creüe!

Much me I-repent that thee-I-have believed

45 Tu me cuntoues tut tun bien,

Thou to-me didst-tell all thy good

mes de tun mal ne deïs rien.

but of thy ill not thou-saidst anything

Ore as tu poür de la gent,

Now hast thou fear of the people

de chaz, d’oisels tut ensement

of cats of-birds all likewise

e des engins qu’um fet pur tei.

and of-the devices that-one makes for thee

50 Mielz aim a estre el bois par mei

Better I-love to be in-the wood by myself

a seürté e senz destresce

in safety and without distress

qu’en tes granz sales od tristesce.’

than-in thy great halls with sadness

Ceste fable dit pur respit:

This fable says for proverb

chescuns aint mielz le suen petit

each should-love better the his small

qu'il a en pes e senz dutance

that-be has in peace and without fear

qu'altrui richesce od mesestance!

than-another's wealth with discomfort

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De vulpe et aquila

X · THE FOX AND THE EAGLE

An eagle carries off a fox's cub and ignores the fox's pleas. The fox piles dry wood and a burning brand around the eagle's oak, and the eagle, seeing the fire, begs him to put it out and returns the cub. So the proud rich man spurns the poor man's complaint, but would soon bow if the poor man could avenge himself.

D'un gupil cunte la maniere,

Of-a fox he-tells the manner

ki ert eissuz de sa tesniere;

who was gone-out of his den

od ses enfanz devant jua.

with his children before-it he-played

Uns aigles vint, l'un en porta.

An eagle came the-one thence carried

5 Li gupiz vet après criant

The fox goes after crying

que il li rende sun enfant;

that he to-him should-render his child

mes il nel volt mie escuter,

but he not-him wished at-all to-hear

si l'en cuvint a retourner.

so him-thence behooved to return

Un tisun prist de feu ardant

A brand he-took of fire burning

10 e seche busche vet cuillant:

and dry wood he-goes gathering

entur le chesne le meteit,

around the oak it he-put

u li aigles sun ni aveit.

where the eagle his nest had

Li aigles vit le feu espris;

The eagle saw the fire kindled

al gupil prie e dit: 'Amis,

to-the fox he-prays and says Friend

estein le feu! Pren tun chael!

quench the fire Take thy cub

Ja serunt ars tuit mi oisel.'

Soon will-be burned all my birds

Par cest essample entendum nus

By this example understand we

que si est del riche orguillus:

that so it-is of-the rich proud-one

ja del povre n'avra merci

ever of-the poor not-he-will-have mercy

pur sa pleinte ne pur sun cri;

for his complaint nor for his cry

mes se cil s'en peüst vengier,

but if that-one himself-thereof could to-avenge

dunc le verreit l'um suzpleier.

then him would-see one to-bow-down

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De leone venante
XI · THE LION HUNTING

The lion, king of the beasts, hunts with the wild ox and the wolf, and when they kill a stag he claims it all: a part as king, a part as their third companion, and a part because he killed it, threatening any beast who takes it. Hunting another time with the goat and the sheep, he claims all four parts, and his companions flee. A poor man who joins a stronger one gets nothing of the gain, for the rich man wants the honor and all the profit.

Jadis esteit custume e leis
Formerly was custom and law
que li leüns dut estre reis
that the lion was-to to-be king
sur tutes les bestes ki sunt
over all the beasts which are
e ki conversent en cest munt.
and who dwell in this world

- 5 Del bugle ot fet sun seneschal,
Of-the wild-ox he-had made his seneschal
qu'a pru le tint e a leial;
for-as worthy him he-held and as loyal
al lou bailla sa provosté.
to-the wolf he-banded his provostship
Tuit trei s'en sunt al bois alé.
All three themselves-thence are to-the wood gone
Un cerf troverent e chacierent;
A stag they-found and chased
- 10 quant pris l'orent, si l'escorchierent.
when taken him-they-had so him-they-flayed

Li lous al bugle demanda

The wolf of-the wild-ox asked

coment le cerf departira.

how the stag he-will-divide

‘Ceo est’, fet il, ‘en mun seignur,

That is says he for my lord

qui nus devum porter honur.’

to-whom we ought to-bear honor

Li leüns a dit e juré

The lion has said and sworn

que tuit sevent par verité

that all know by truth

que la premiere part avreit

that the first part he-would-have

pur ceo qu’ert reis e dreiz esteit;

for that that-be-was king and right it-was

e l’altre part pur le guaaïn,

and the-other part for the gain

qu’il ot esté li tierz cumpain;

that-be had been the thirde companion

l’altre partie avra, ceo dist,

the-other part he-will-have that he-said

raisuns esteit, kar il l’ocist:

reason it-was for he it-killed

se nule beste la perneit,

if any beast it should-take

sis enemis mortels serreit.

his enemy mortal he-would-be

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25 Dunc n'i osa nuls atuchier:

Then not-there dared any to-touch

tut lur estut le cerf lessier.

all them behooved the stag to-leave

Une altre feiz ot li leüns

An other time had the lion

el bois od lui plus cumpaignuns;

in-the wood with him more companions

la chievre e la berbiz i fu.

the goat and the sheep there was

30 Un cerf unt pris e retenu.

A stag they-have taken and held

En quatre parz vuelent partir.

In four parts they-wish to-divide

Li leüns dit: 'Jeol vueil saisir.

The lion says I-it wish to-seize

La greindre parz deit estre meie,

The greater part ought to-be mine

kar jeo sui reis, la curz l'otreie.

for I am king the court it-grants

35 L'autre avrai, kar jeo i curui,

The-other I-shall-have for I there ran

e la tierce, kar plus forz sui.

and the third for more strong I-am

La quarte ai jeo si divisee

The fourth have I so divided

que nuls ne l'avra senz meslee.'

that any not it-will-have without scuffle

Si cumpaignun, quant il l'oïrent,

His companions when they it-heard

tut li laissierent, si fuïrent.

all to-him left so they-fled

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Altresi est, n'en dutez mie,

Likewise it-is not-thereof doubt at-all

se povres huem prent cumpaignie

if poor man takes company

a plus fort hume qu'il ne seit:

with more strong man than-he — may-be

ja del guaain n'avra espleit.

ever of-the gain not-he-will-have profit

Li riches vult avoir l'onur,

The rich-one wishes to-have the-honor

u li povres perdra s'amur;

or the poor-one will-lose his-love

se nul guaain deivent partir,

if any gain they-ought to-divide

li riches vult tut retenir.

the rich-one wishes all to-keep

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De aquila et testudine

XII · THE EAGLE AND THE WHELK

An eagle finds a whelk but cannot break its shell. A crow, asking a share, tells him to drop it from on high onto rock; when he does, she waits below, pecks a hole in the shell, eats the fish, and is gone before he arrives. So a felon misadvises his neighbor by craft and steals what the other won by toil.

Ci dit qu'uns aigles vint volant

Here he-tells that-an eagle came flying

juste la mer, peissun querant.

beside the sea fish seeking

Une welke truva entiere;

A whelk he-found whole

mes il ne sot en quel maniere

but he not knew in what manner

5 peüst l'eschale depescier.

he-could the-shell to-break

Quant a sun ni dut repairier,

When to his nest he-was-to to-return

une corneille l'encuntra,

a crow him-met

si dist qu'el li enseignera

so said that-she him will-teach

cum l'eschale purra ovrir,

how the-shell he-will-be-able to-open

10 s'ele al peissun peüst partir.

if-she in-the fish could to-share

Puis li rova a munt voler

Then him she-bade to above to-fly

tant halt cum plus purreit munter;

so high as most he-could to-mount

quant il sera muntez la sus,

when he will-be mounted there above

si lest la welke chaïr jus

so let the welk to-fall down

sur dure terre u sur rochier:

on hard ground or on rock

si la purra bien depescier.

so it he-will-be-able well to-break

Li aigles a grant desirier

The eagle has great desire

de la welke qu'il tint mangier:

of the welk that-he held to-eat

halt la porta, chaïr la lait.

high it he-carried to-fall it lets

La corneille fu en aguait:

The crow was in ambush

avant ala, del bec feri,

forward she-went with-the beak struck

si que l'eschale un poi ovri.

so that the-shell a little opened

Le peissunet dedenz manja;

The little-fish within she-ate

l'eschale lait, si s'en ala,

the-shell she-leaves so herself-thence went

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- 25 einz que li aigles fust venuz
before that the eagle was come
 ne qu'il se fust aparceüz.
nor that-he himself were aware
 Le pertuset ot fet petit,
The little-hole she-had made small
 si que li aigles pas nel vit.
so that the eagle at-all not-it saw
 Par ceste fable del peissun
 By this fable of-the fish
- 30 nus mustre essample del felun,
to-us he-shows example of-the felon
 ki par aguait e par engin
who by ambush and by device
 mescunseille sun bon voisin;
misadvises his good neighbor
 tel chose li cunseille a faire,
such thing to-him counsels to do
 dunt cil ne puet a nul chief traire.
whereof he not can to any end to-draw
- 35 Quant il unkes sunt mielz ensemble,
When they ever are best together
 par traïsun li tolt e emble
by treason from-him he-takes and steals
 l'aveir que cil a purchacié
the-wealth that he has procured
 par grant travail e guaaignié.
by great toil and gained

De corvo et vulpe

XIII · THE RAVEN AND THE FOX

A raven steals a cheese, and a fox who wants it praises his beauty and says that if his song matched his body he would be worth more than gold. The raven opens his beak to sing, drops the cheese, and the fox takes it. So the proud, greedy for esteem, are served by flattery and spend their goods foolishly for false praise.

Issi avint e bien puet estre

Thus it-happened and well may be

que par devant une fenestre,

that by before a window

ki en une despense fu,

which in a pantry was

vola uns cors, si a veü

flew a raven so has seen

furmages ki dedenz esteient

cheeses which within were

e sur une cleie giseient.

and on a burdle lay

Un en a pris, od tut s'en va.

One thereof he-has taken with all himself-thence goes

Uns gupiz vint, si l'encuntra.

A fox came so him-met

Del furmage ot grant desirier

Of-the cheese he-had great desire

qu'il en peüst sa part mangier;

that-he thereof might his part to-eat

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par engin voldra essayer

by device he-will-wish to-try

se le corp purra engignier.

if the raven he-will-be-able to-trick

'A, Deus sire!' fet li gupiz,

Ab God lord says the fox

'tant par est cist oisels gentiz!

so much is this bird noble

15 El monde nen a tel oisel!

In-the world not there-is such bird

Unc de mes uiz ne vi si bel!

Ever with my eyes not I-saw so fair

Fust tels sis chanz cum est sis cors,

Were such his song as is his body

il valdreit mielz que nuls fins ors.'

he would-be-worth more than any fine gold

Li cors s'oï si bien loër

The raven himself-heard so well to-praise

20 qu'en tut le monde n'ot sun per.

that-in all the world not-he-had his peer

Purpensez s'est qu'il chantera:

Bethought himself-be-is that-he will-sing

ja pur chanter los ne perdra.

ever for to-sing praise not he-will-lose

Le bec ovri, si comença:

The beak he-opened so began

li furmages li eschapa,

the cheese from-him escaped

25 a la terre l'estut chaïr,

to the earth it-behooved to-fall

e li gupiz le vet saisir.

and the fox it goes to-seize

Puis n'ot il cure de sun chant,

Then not-had he care of his song

que del furmage ot sun talant.

for of-the cheese he-had his desire

C'est essamples des orguillus

That-is example of-the proud

ki de grant pris sunt desirus:

who of great esteem are desirous

par losengier e par mentir

by flattering and by lying

les puet hum bien a gre servir;

them can one well to liking to-serve

le lur despendent folement

the theirs they-spend foolishly

pur false losenge de gent.

for false flattery of people

30

De leone aegroto

XIV · THE SICK LION

An old lion lies sick, and the beasts come to court: the ox butts him, the ass kicks him, and the fox bites his ears. The lion laments that those he honored now insult him, which hurts more than wrongs from those he harmed. Whoever loses strength and wealth is despised even by those who loved him.

D'un leün cunte li escriz,

Of-a lion tells the writing

ki fu defraiz e enveilliz;

who was broken and grown-old

malades jut mult lungement,

sick he-lay very long

del relever n'i ot niënt.

of-the recovering not-there was anything

5 Tutes les bestes s'asemblerent;

All the beasts themselves-assembled

pur lui veeir, a curt alerent.

for him to-see to court they-went

Li plusur sunt pur lui dolent,

The most are for him sorrowful

e as alquanz n'en chalt niënt,

and to-the some not-thereof it-matters at-all

e tels i a ki vunt pur dun

and such there are who go for gift

10 a la devise del leün,

at the bequest of-the lion

e saveir vuelent li plusur

and to-know wish the most

se en lui a mes nul retur.

if in him there-is more any return

Li bués de ses cornes le bute;

The ox with his horns him butts

e li asnes, ki pas nel dute,

and the ass who at-all not-him fears

od le pié le fiert sur le piz;

with the foot him strikes on the breast

de l'autre part vient li gupiz,

from the-other side comes the fox

as denz le mort par les oreilles.

with-the teeth him bites by the ears

Dit li leüns: 'Jeo vei merveilles!

Says the lion I see marvels

Bien me sovient, en mun eé

Well me remembers in my age

quant juefnes fui e en santé,

when young I-was and in health

que tutes bestes me dutouent

that all beasts me feared

cume seignur e honouroent:

as lord and honored

quant j'ere liez, haitié esteient;

when I-was glad cheerful they-were

quant j'ere iriez, mult se cremeient.

when I-was angry much themselves they-feared

Or me veient afebleié:

Now me they-see enfeebled

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defulé m'unt e avillié.

trampled me-they-have and debased

Mult me semble greignur vilté

Much to-me seems greater baseness

de cels ki furent mi privé,

of those who were my intimates

a qui jeo fis honur e bien,

to whom I did honor and good

30 ki n'en remembrent nule rien,

who not-thereof remember any thing

que des altres, qui jeo mesfis:

than of-the others whom I wronged

li nunpuissanz a poi amis.'

the powerless-one has few friends

Par meïsmes ceste raisun

By same this reason

pernum essample del leün!

let-us-take example of-the lion

35 Ki qu'unkes chiece en nunpoeir,

Who that-ever falls into powerlessness

se pert sa force e sun avoir,

if he-loses his strength and his wealth

mult le tienent en grant vilté

much him they-bold in great baseness

nis li plusur ki l'unt amé.

even the most who him-have loved

De asino adulante

XV · THE ASS WHO FAWNED

A rich man plays with his little dog, and his ass, seeing how the dog is loved, thinks he could play better and cry louder. One day he rushes at his lord braying, strikes him, and knocks him down, and would have crushed him had the lord not cried for help. The servants beat the ass until he lies stretched out and barely reaches his stable. So it happens to people who try to raise themselves to a place that suits neither their person nor their rank.

D'un riche hume truvum escrit,

Of-a rich man we-find written

ki aveit un chenet petit.

who had a little-dog small

Suventes feiz a lui jua,

Oft times with it be-played

e uns suens asnes l'esguarda.

and a his-own ass it-looked-at

En sun curage entendi bien

In his heart he-understood well

que tuit li altre aiment le chien

that all the others love the dog

pur le seignur kil cherisseit

for the lord who-it cherished

e ki od lui se dedueit;

and who with it himself amused

suz sun mantel le fist muscier,

under his mantle it be-made to-hide

si fist les altres abaier.

so be-made the others to-bark

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Mult s'est li asnes purpensez

Much himself-is the ass bethought

que mielz del chien valt il asez

that better than-the dog is-worth he much

e de belté e de grandur;

both in beauty and in size

mielz savreit il a sun seignur

better would-know he with his lord

15 juër que li chenez petiz,

to-play than the little-dog small

e mielz sereit oïz sis criz,

and better would-be heard his cry

mielz savreit il sur lui saillir,

better would-know he on him to-leap

mielz le savreit des piez ferir;

better him would-know with-the feet to-strike

pur fol se tient qu'a lui ne vait

for fool himself he-holds that-to him not he-goes

20 e qu'od sa voiz ne crie e brait,

and that-with his voice not he-cries and brays

cum fet li chiens, sur sun seignur.

as does the dog on his lord

Issi avint que par un jur

Thus it-happened that on a day

s'alot li sire deduiant;

himself-was the lord amusing

od le chenet alot juant.

with the little-dog he-was playing

25 Ne pot li asnes plus souffrir:

Not could the ass more to-bear

vers le seignur prist a venir.

toward the lord he-took to come

Sur lui cumence a rechaner,

At him he-begins to bray

que tut le fet espoënter;

so-that all him he-makes to-be-frightened

des piez le fiert, sur lui sailli,

with-the feet him he-strikes on him he-leaped

si qu'a la terre l'abati.

so that-to the earth him-he-knocked

Pur un petit ne l'a crevé,

For a little not him-he-has burst

se li sire n'eüst crié:

if the lord not-had cried-out

'Haro, haro! Aidiez! A mei!'

Help help Help To me

Si hume i saillent a desrei;

His men thither leap in disorder

chescuns tient maque u bastun.

each holds club or staff

L'asne fierent tut environ

The-ass they-strike all around

(a grant martire e a dolor

with great torment and with pain

porent rescurre lur seignur),

they-could to-rescue their lord

de si que l'asne unt tant batu,

from there that the-ass they-have so-much beaten

30

35

40 qu'il le laissent tut estendu.
that-they him leave all stretched-out

A grant peine vint a s'estable.
With great pain he-came to his-stable

Saveir poëz par ceste fable
To-know you-can by this fable

la maniere de meinte gent
the manner of many folk

(mult le puet l'um veer sovent),
much it can one to-see often

45 ki tant se vuelent eshalcier
who so-much themselves wish to-exalt

e en tel liu aparagier,
and in such place to-put-on-a-par

ki n'avient pas a lur corsage,
which not-befits at-all to their person

ensurquetut a lur parage.
above-all to their rank

A meint en est si avenu
To many-a-one thereof it-is so happened

50 cum a l'asne ki fu batu.
as to the-ass who was beaten

De leone et mure
XVI • THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A mouse wakes a sleeping lion, who seizes her but lets her go when she pleads it was an accident, thinking he would gain little honor by killing her. Soon the lion falls into a pit dug by a man, and the mouse tells him to scratch the earth to steady himself while she and other mice cut the cords and nets, and he escapes. The rich should pardon the poor who wrong them unknowingly, for a poor man may serve better in need than the best of friends.

D'un leün dit ki se dormeit

Of-a lion he-tells who himself slept

en un boscage u il esteit.

in a grove where he was

Entur lui se vunt deduiant

Around him themselves go amusing

suriz petites e juant.

mice little and playing

L'une curut (ne s'en guarda)

The-one ran not herself-thereof guarded

sur le leün, si l'esveilla.

onto the lion so him-woke

Li leüns fu mult curuciez.

The lion was very angered

La suriz prist; tant fu iriez,

The mouse he-took so-much he-was angry

de li voleit faire justise.

on her he-wished to-do justice

5

- 10 Ele escundist qu'en nule guise
She pleaded that-in any wise
 a esciënt ne l'aveit fait.
with knowledge not it-had done
 E li leüns a tant la lait;
And the lion at that her lets
 petit d'onur, ceo dit, avreit
little of-honor that he-says he-would-have
 de la suriz, s'il l'ocieit.
from the mouse if-he her-killed
- 15 Guaires de tens ne demura
Much of time not it-lasting
 qu'uns huem, ceo dit, apareilla
that-a man that he-says made-ready
 une fosse cruese dedenz.
a pit hollow within
 La nuit fu pris li leüns enz.
The night was taken the lion in
 Grant poür a qu'um ne l'ocie:
Great fear he-has that-one — him-may-kill
- 20 dedenz la fosse brait e crie.
within the pit he-roars and cries
 La suriz vait al cri tut dreit,
The mouse goes to-the cry all straight
 mes ne saveit que ceo esteit
but not she-knew that that was
 cil qu'el bois aveit esveillie.
he whom-in-the wood she-had awakened
 Quant el le vit si engignié,
When she him saw so trapped

demanda li qu'il a la quis.

25

asked him what-be has there sought

Cil respunt que il esteit pris,

He answers that be was taken

ocis sereit a grant dolor.

killed he-would-be with great pain

Dit la suriz: 'N'aiez poür!

Says the mouse Not-have fear

Or vus rendrai le gueredun

Now to-you I-shall-render the reward

qu'a mei feïstes le pardun,

30

that-to me you-did the pardon

quant od mes piez vus oi marchié.

when with my feet you I-had trodden

Gratez la terre a vostre pié

Scratch the earth with your foot

tant qu'afermer vus i puissiez,

so-much that-to-steady yourself there you-can

e puis a munt bien vus sachiez;

and then to above well yourself pull

que si purrez ça hors eissir.

35

that so you-will-be-able hitber out to-go-out

E jeo ferai od mei venir

And I shall-make with me to-come

altres suriz pur mei aidier

other mice for me to-help

as cordes, ki ci sunt, trenchier,

to-the cords which here are to-cut

e as resels, ki sunt tenduz,

and to-the nets which are stretched

40 ne serez mie retenuz.'

not you-will-be at-all held

L'enseignement a la suriz

The-teaching of the mouse

fist li leüns, si fu guariz.

did the lion so he-was saved

De la fosse est bien eschapez:

From the pit he-is well escaped

la li valut humilitez.

there him availed humility

45 Par ceste fable nus assume

By this fable us he-teaches

qu'essample i prengent li riche hume

that-example therein may-take the rich men

ki sur les povres unt poeir,

who over the poor have power

s'il lur mesfunt par nunsaveir,

if-they them wrong by not-knowing

qu'il en aient bone merci.

that-they thereof may-have good mercy

50 Avenir puet tut altresì

Happen it-can all likewise

que cil li avra grant mestier

that he to-him will-have great use

e mielz le savra cunseillier

and better him will-know to-counsel

a sun busuin, s'il est suzpris,

in his need if-he is hard-pressed

que li mielldre de ses amis.

than the best of his friends

De hirundine et homine linum semente

XVII · THE SWALLOW AND THE MAN SOWING FLAX

When a man sows flax, the swallow foresees its nets and urges the birds to eat the seed. They refuse and tell the man, so she makes peace with him and nests in his house. He makes snares of the flax and catches birds great and small. When a fool will not believe the wise, repentance comes too late.

Par vieil essample en escrit truis,

By old example in writing I-find

quant huem sema primes linuis

when man sowed first linseed

e volt de lin le pru avoir,

and wished of flax the profit to-have

l'arunde fu de grant saveir;

the-swallow was of great wisdom

bien s'aparceut que par le lin

well herself-she-perceived that through the flax

serunt oisel mis a lur fin;

will-be birds put to their end

del lin puet hum la rei lacier,

of-the flax can one the net to-lace

dunt hum les puet tuz damagier.

whereby one them can all to-harm

Tuz les oisels fist asembler,

All the birds she-made to-assemble

si lur voleit conseil duner

so to-them she-wished counsel to-give

qu'il alassent le lin mangier,

that-they should-go the flax to-eat

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qu'il ne peüst fructifiër.

that-it not could to-bear-fruit

Li plusur nel voleient faire;

The most not-it wished to-do

al seignur alerent retraire

to-the lord they-went to-relate

15 le cunseil que lur ot doné.

the counsel which to-them she-had given

Quant l'arundele ot esculté

When the-swallow had heard

cum il l'aveient encusee,

how they her-bad accused

de ses parenz fist asemblee

of her kin she-made assembly

od les meillurs de sa ligniee,

with the best of her lineage

20 si s'est al vilein apaiee.

so herself-she-is with-the villein reconciled

En sa maisun suffri sun ni,

In his house he-allowed her nest

la furent si oisel nurri;

there were her birds nourished

ele duna a sun lin pais,

she gave to his flax peace

ja par nul d'els nel perdra mais.

ever by any of-them not-it he-will-lose more

25 Cil fist del lin enginz plusurs,

He made of-the flax devices many

dunt prist oisels granz e menurs;

whereby he-took birds great and smaller

n'eüssent pas cel mal eü,

not-they-would-have at-all that harm had

s'il eüssent conseil creü.

if-they had counsel believed

Ceste semblance est asez veire:

This likeness is very true

quant fols ne vult le sage creire,

when fool not wishes the wise-one to-believe

ki bon conseil li set duner

who good counsel to-him knows to-give

e de sun mal le vult garder,

and from his harm him wishes to-guard

se damages l'en deit venir,

if harm him-thereof must to-come

dunc est trop tart del repentir.

then is too late of-the repenting

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De ranarum rege

XVIII · THE FROGS WHO ASKED FOR A KING

The frogs beg Fate for a king, and she sends a log; when it never moves, they climb on it and foul it. They ask again and get a snake that devours them. When they beg for mercy, she says to keep the lord they sought, since they shamed a gentle one. So many trample good lords, submit to one who ruins them, then regret it.

Jadis avint qu'en un estanc

Formerly it-happened that-in a pond

entur les rives e el fanc

around the banks and in-the mud

ot de reines granz cumpaignies,

there-were of frogs great companies

ki de lung tens i sunt nurries.

which of long time there are nourished

5 La desdeignierent a rester:

There they-disdained to stay

a la terre voldrent aler.

to the land they-wished to-go

A lur destinee criërent;

To their fate they-cried

suventes feiz li demanderent

oft times of-her they-asked

que rei lur deüst enveier,

that king to-them she-should to-send

10 kar d'altre rien n'orent mestier.

for of-other thing not-they-had need

Quant meinte feiz orent preié,

When many-a time they-had prayed

la destinee a enveié

the fate has sent

en mi cele ewe un tronc le jur,

in middle-of that water a trunk the day

dunt eles orent grant poür.

whereof they had great fear

Cele ki pres del tronc estut,

She who near of-the trunk stood

quant ele vit qu'il ne se mut,

when she saw that-it not itself moved

ses cumpaignes a apelees,

her companions she-had called

si sunt ensemble al tronc alees.

so they-are together to-the trunk gone

Puis le saluënt cume rei,

Then it they-greet as king

e chescune li pramet fei;

and each to-it promises faith

tutes le tienent pur seignur,

all it hold for lord

si li portèrent grant honor.

so to-it they-bore great honor

Mes quant li truns ne se remut

But when the trunk not itself stirred

e eles virent qu'il estut

and they saw that-it stood

en mi cele ewe tut en pes,

in middle-of that water all in peace

sur lui munterent a un fes:

on it they-climbed at one burden [all-together]

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lur vileinie sur lui firent,

their baseness on it they-did

el funz de l'ewe l'embatirent.

into-the bottom of the-water it-they-thrust

A la destinee revunt:

To the fate they-go-back

30 rei demandent, car nul n'en unt;

king they-ask for any not-thereof they-have

malvais fu cil qu'el lur duna.

bad was that-one which-she to-them gave

La destinee i enveia

The fate there sent

une coluevre grant e fort,

a snake great and strong

ki les devore e trait a mort.

which them devours and draws to death

35 Tutes furent en grant turment.

All were in great torment

Dunc crièrent plus aigrement

Then they-cried more bitterly

a la destinee merci

to the fate mercy

qu'el lur ostast cel enemi.

that-she from-them should-remove that enemy

La destinee respondi:

The fate answered

40 'Nenil, nenil! Jeo vus suffri

No no I you allowed

tutes voz volentez a faire.

all your wills to do

Seignur eüstes de bon aire,

Lord you-had of good nature

vileinement le hunesistes:

basely bim you-shamed

or l'aiez tel cum vus quesistes!'

now him-have such as you sought

Issi avient, plusur le funt

Thus it-happens many it do

des bons seignurs, quant il les unt:

of-the good lords when they them have

tuzjurs les vuelent defuler

always them they-wish to-trample

ne lur sevent honur garder;

nor to-them they-know-how honor to-keep

s'il nes tient alkes en destreit,

if-he not-them holds somewhat in constraint

ne funt pur lui ne tort ne dreit.

not they-do for him neither wrong nor right

A tel se pernent, kis destruit;

To such themselves they-take who-them destroys

de lur avoir meine sun bruit:

of their wealth he-leads his noise [he-boasts]

lors regretent lur bon seignur,

then they-regret their good lord

qui il firent la deshonor.

to-whom they did the dishonor

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De columbarum rege

XIX · THE DOVES AND THEIR KING

The doves choose a goshawk as king, hoping he will protect them. Once in power, he devours every dove that comes near. One dove says it was folly: before, they feared only his ambush, and now he does openly what he did in secret. Whoever submits to a cruel and felonious lord will have only shame.

Colum demanderent seignur.

Doves asked-for lord

A rei choisirent un ostur,

As king they-chose a goshawk

pur ceo que meins mal lur fesist

for that that less harm to-them he-might-do

e vers altres les garantist.

and against others them might-protect

5 Mes quant il ot la seigneurie

But when he had the lordship

e tuit furent en sa baillie,

and all were in his keeping

n'i ot un sul ki l'aprist,

not-there was one single who him-approached

qu'il n'ocesist e devorast.

that-he not-killed and devoured

Pur ceo parla uns des coluns,

For that spoke one of-the doves

10 si apela ses compaignuns.

so he-called his companions

'Grant folie', fet il, 'fesimes,

Great folly says he we-did

quant nus l'ostur a rei choisimes,

when we the-goshawk as king chose

ki nus ocit de jur en jur.

who us kills from day to day

Mielz nus venist que senz seignur

Better to-us it-would-come that without lord

fussuns tut tens qu'aveir cestui.

we-were all time than-to-have this-one

Einz nus guardiüm nus de lui,

Before ourselves we-guarded we from him

ne dutiüm fors sun aguait;

nor we-feared except his ambush

puis que nus l'eümes atrait,

since that we him-had drawn-in

a il tut fet apertement

has he all done openly

ceo qu'il fist einz celeement.'

that which-he did before secretly

Cest essample dit a plusurs,

This example says to many

ki choisissent les mals seignurs.

who choose the evil lords

De grant folie s'entremet,

Of great folly himself-meddles

ki en subjectiün se met

who into subjection himself puts

a cruël hume e a felun:

to cruel man and to felon

ja n'en avra se hunte nun.

ever not-thereof he-will-have except shame not

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De fure et cane

XX · THE THIEF AND THE DOG

A thief brings a loaf to a villain's sheepfold for the watchdog. The dog refuses it: the thief wants to stop his mouth and steal the sheep, and he will not betray the lord who raised him. Then he barks. Every free man should refuse any reward offered to make him betray his lord.

D'un larrun cunte ki ala

Of-a thief he-tells who went

berbiz embler, qu'il espia

sheep to-steal that-he spied

dedenz la falde a un vilein.

within the fold of a villain

Ensemble od lui porta un pein;

Together with him he-carried a loaf

5 al chien voleit le pain baillier,

to-the dog he-wished the loaf to-hand

ki la falde deveit guaitier.

who the fold was-to to-guard

Li chiens li dist: 'Amis, pur quei

The dog to-him said Friend for what

prendreie jeo cest pain de tei?

would-take I this loaf from thee

Jeo nel te puis guereduner:

I not-it to-thee can to-repay

10 fai a tun ués le pain garder!'

make for thy use the loaf to-keep

Li lere dist: 'Jeo n'en quier rien.

The thief said I not-thereof seek anything

Manjue le peïn, sil retien!’

Eat the loaf so-it keep

Li chiens respunt: ‘N’en vueil niënt!

The dog answers Not-thereof I-wish anything

Jeo sai tresbien a esciënt

I know very-well with knowledge

que ma buche vuels estuper

that my mouth thou-wishest to-stop

que jeo ne puisse mot suner,

that I not may word to-sound

si emblereies noz berbiz;

so thou-wouldst-steal our sheep

kar li bergiers est endormiz.

for the shepherd is asleep

Traï avreie mun seignur,

Betrayed I-would-have my lord

ki m’a nurri desqu’a cest jur;

who me-has nourished until-to this day

malement avreit enpleié

badly he-would-have employed

qu’il m’a nurri e afaitié,

that-be me-has nourished and trained

se par ma garde avait perdu

if through my guard he-had lost

ceo dunt il m’a lung tens peü.

that whereby he me-has long time fed

E tu meïsmes m’en harreies

And thou thyself me-thereof wouldst-hate

e pur traïtur me tendreies.

and for traitor me wouldst-hold

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Ne vueil tun pain si guaaignier.'

Not I-wish thy loaf so to-earn

Dunc comença a abaier.

Then he-began to bark

Par essample nus mustre ci:

By example to-us he-shows here

30 chescuns frans huem face altresi!

each noble man should-do likewise

Se nuls li vuelt doner luier

If anyone to-him wishes to-give reward

ne par pramesse losengier

or by promise to-flatter

que sun seignur deie traïr,

that his lord he-should to-betray

nel vueille mie cunsentir;

not-it let-him-wish at-all to-consent

35 atendre en deit tel gueredun,

to-await thereof he-ought such reward

cume li chiens fist del larrun.

as the dog did of-the thief

De lupo et sue

XXI · THE WOLF AND THE SOW

A wolf offers a pregnant sow peace if she hurries to farrow, since he wants her piglets. She answers that she cannot give birth with a male so near, for females are ashamed at such a time. The wolf goes off to hide, and she escapes by her cunning. Women should never let their children perish to save only themselves.

Jadis avint qu'uns lous erra

Formerly it-happened that-a wolf wandered

par un chemin, si encontra

along a road so met

une truie ki preinz esteit.

a sow who pregnant was

Vers li ala a grant espleit

Toward her he-went at great speed

e dist que pes li vult duner,

and said that peace to-her he-wishes to-give

or se hastast de purcelier;

now herself she-should-hasten of farrowing

car ses purcels voleit avoir.

for her piglets he-wished to-have

Ele respunt par grant saveir:

She answers with great wisdom

'Sire, cument me hastereie?

Lord how myself would-I-hasten

Tant cum si pres de mei vus veie,

So-long as so near to me you I-see

ne me puis jeo pas delivrer;

not myself can I at-all to-deliver

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10

tel hunte ai de vus esgarder.

such shame I-have of you to-behold

Ne savez mie que ceo munte?

Not know-you at-all what that amounts

Tutes femeles unt grant hunte,

All females have great shame

15 se mains madle les deit tuchier

if hand male them should to-touch

a tel busuin ne aprismier.'

at such need or to-approach

Adunc s'en va li lous mucier,

Then himself-thence goes the wolf to-hide

ki les purcels voleit mangier,

who the piglets wished to-eat

e la truie s'en est alee,

and the sow herself-thence is gone

20 ki par engin s'est delivree.

who by device herself-is delivered

Cest essample deivent oïr

This example ought to-bear

tutes femmes e retenir;

all women and to-retain

pur sulement lur cors guarir

for only their bodies to-save

ne laissent lur enfanz perir!

not let-them-leave their children to-perish

De leporibus et ranis

XXII • THE HARES AND THE FROGS

Weary of fearing men and dogs, the hares decide to leave their grove for another land, though the wise among them call it folly. At a pool they see frogs plunge into the water in fear of them. One hare points out that the frogs live in fear too, and that there is no land where one fears nothing, so they return home. Those who would abandon their ancient place should consider what may follow, for no realm is free of fear, toil, or grief.

Ci dit que lievre s'assemblerent

Here he-tells that hares themselves-assembled

a parlement, si esgarderent

at parliament so decided

qu'en altre terre s'en ireient

that-into other land themselves-thence they-would-go

hors de la grave u il esteient.

out of the grove where they were

Kar trop furent en grant dolor,

For exceedingly they-were in great grief

d'umes, de chiens orent poür;

of-men of dogs they-had fear

si nel voleient mes souffrir:

so not-it they-wished more to-bear

pur ceo s'en vuelent fors eissir.

for that themselves-thence they-wish out to-go

5

Li sage lievre lur diseient

The wise hares to-them said

10 que folie ert que il quereient

that folly it-was what they sought

a eissir de lur cunissance,

to go-out from their acquaintance

u il furent nurri d'enfance;

where they were nourished from-childhood

li altre nes en voldrent creire:

the others not-them thereof wished to-believe

tuit ensemble tindrent lur eire.

all together held their way

15 A une mare sunt venu.

To a pool they-are come

Guardent el tai, si unt veü

They-look into-the mud so they-have seen

u reines erent asemblees.

where frogs were assembled

De poür d'els sunt esfreees;

From fear of-them they-are frightened

dedenz l'ewe se vunt plungier,

within the-water themselves they-go to-plunge

20 des que les virent aprismier.

from that them they-saw to-approach

Uns lievres les a apelez.

A hare them has called

'Seignur', fet il, 'kar esgardez!

Lords says he now behold

Par les reines que nus veüns,

By the frogs that we see

ki poür unt, nus purpensuns

which fear have we reflect

que nus alum querant folie,

that we go seeking folly

ki nostre grave avum guerpie

who our grove have abandoned

pur estre aillurs asseürez.

for to-be elsewhere assured

Ja mes terre ne troverez,

Ever more land not you-will-find

u l'um ne dut aucune rien.

where one not fears any thing

Ralum nus en! Si ferum bien.'

Let-us-go-back ourselves thence So we-shall-do well

A tant li lievre returnerent;

At that the hares turned-back

en lur cuntree s'en ralerent.

into their country themselves-thence went-back

De ceo se deivent purpenser

Of that themselves ought to-bethink

cil ki se vuelent remuër

those who themselves wish to-move

e lur anciën liu guerpier,

and their ancient place to-abandon

que lur en puet après venir.

what to-them thereof can after to-come

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Ja mes regne ne troverunt

Ever more realm not they-will-find

n'en cele terre ne vendrunt

nor-into that land not they-will-come

que tut i seient senz poür

that wholly there they-may-be without fear

40 u senz travail u senz dolor.

or without toil or without grief

De vespertilione

XXIII · THE BAT

When the lion's beasts and the eagle's birds prepare for battle, the bat watches from a tree and, judging the lion stronger, joins the beasts among the other mice. When the birds prove numerous, she hides her feet and spreads her wings, and all see her treachery. The Creator curses her never to be seen by day and has her stripped of her feathers. So the traitor who deserts his lord in need loses honor and wealth and is shamed forever, and may no longer speak at court.

D'un liün dit ki assembla
Of-a lion he-tells who assembled
tutes les bestes e manda,
all the beasts and summoned
ki aloënt sur quatre piez,
who went on four feet
e li aigles ra purchaciez
and the eagle in-turn-has gathered
tuz les oisels ki eles unt
all the birds which wings have
e ki volent en l'air a munt:
and who fly in the-air to above
bataille deveient tenir.
battle they-were-to to-hold
Quant ensemble durent venir
When together they-were-to to-come
e la chalve suriz les vit,
and the bald mouse them saw

5

- 10 en sun quer a pensé e dit
in her heart has thought and said
 que mult redutout cel afaire.
that much she-dreaded that affair
 Ne sot as quels se deüst traire;
Not she-knew to-the which herself she-should to-draw
 od cels vult estre ki veintrunt
with those she-wishes to-be who will-conquer
 e ki la greignur force avrunt.
and who the greater force will-have
- 15 Sur un halt fust s'en est muntée
Onto a high tree herself-thence she-is climbed
 pur esguarder cele assemblee.
for to-behold that assembly
 Ceo li fu vis sun escient
That to-her was seeming her knowledge
 que li liüns aveit plus gent
that the lion had more people
 e qu'il ert de greignur justise:
and that-he was of greater power
- 20 od les altres suriz s'est mise.
with the other mice herself-she-is put
 Li aigles fu a munt volez
The eagle was to above flown
 od les oisels qu'il ot mandez;
with the birds that-he had summoned
 tant en i ot, tant en i vindrent
so-many thereof there were so-many thereof there came
 que les bestes poi de liu tindrent.
that the beasts little of place held

Quant la chalve suriz les veit,

When the bald mouse them sees

mult li pesa qu'od els n'esteit:

much to-her it-weighed that-with them not-she-was

des bestes se rest departie.

from-the beasts herself in-turn-is departed

Ses piez musça (si fist folie);

Her feet she-bid so she-did folly

mes quant les eles entrovri,

but when the wings she-opened

par devant tuz les descovri:

by before all them she-uncovered

dunc fu sa felunie aperte

then was her felony plain

e sa traïsans descuverte.

and her treason discovered

Oisel e bestes la huèrent.

Birds and beasts her hooted

A lur sepande se clamerent:

To their creator themselves they-complained

de la chalve suriz se pleignent;

of the bald mouse themselves they-complain

mult la hunissent e blasteignent

much her they-shame and revile

e mustrent li sa felunie

and show to-her her felony

e cum ele a sa fei mentie.

and how she has her faith belied

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La sepande lur a juré

The creator to-them has sworn

40 qu'ele en fera lur volenté

that-she thereof will-do their will

e que mult tost les vengera.

and that very soon them she-will-avenge

Puis la maldist e si ura

Then her she-cursed and so prayed

que ja mes en liu ne venist

that ever more into place not she-should-come

qu'oisels ne beste la veïst;

that-bird nor beast her should-see

45 tute clarté li a tolue,

all brightness from-her she-has taken

ja mes nen iert par jur veüe.

ever more not she-will-be by day seen

Aprés ruva, pur li hunir,

Afterward she-bade for her to-shame

sa plume oster, li descovrir.

her plumage to-remove her to-uncover

Altresi est del traïtur

Likewise it-is of-the traitor

50 ki meseire vers sun seignur,

who misacts toward his lord

a qui il deit honur porter

to whom he ought honor to-bear

e leialté e fei garder.

and loyalty and faith to-keep

Se sis sire a de lui mestier

If his lord has of him need

e il le veie afebleier,

and he him may-see to-weaken

a sun busuin li vult faillir,

at his need him he-wishes to-fail

od les altres se vult tenir;

with the others himself he-wishes to-hold

se sis sire vient al desus,

if his lord comes to-the upper-hand

ne puet laisser sun malvais us,

not he-can to-leave his evil custom

dunc voldreit a lui returner:

then he-would-wish to him to-return

de tutes parz vult meserrer.

on all sides he-wishes to-misact

Partut en est al dei mustrez

Everywhere thereof he-is at-the finger shown

e avilliez e vergundez;

and debased and shamed

s'onur en pert e sun avoir,

his-honor thereby he-loses and his wealth

e reprovier en unt si heir;

and reproach thereof have his heirs

a tuzjurs en est si huniz,

for always thereof he-is so shamed

55

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65

cume fu la chalve suriz

as was the bald mouse

ki ne deit mes par jur voler,

who not ought more by day to-fly

ne il ne deit en curt parler.

nor he not ought in court to-speak

De cervo ad fontem

XXIV · THE STAG AT THE SPRING

A stag drinking at a spring admires his horns in the water and thinks no beast his equal. Hounds and a huntsman come after him; he flees into the wood, his horns catch in a bush, and the dogs reach him. Many praise what they ought to blame and neglect what they ought to praise.

Issi avint qu'uns cers beveit

Thus it-happened that-a stag was-drinking

a une ewe, kar sei aveit.

at a water for thirst he-had

Guarda dedenz, ses cornes vit.

He-looked within his horns he-saw

A sei meïsmes a dunc dit

To himself same he-has then said

que nule beste nel valeit

that any beast not-him equaled

ne si beles cornes n'aveit.

nor so fair horns not-had

Tant entendi a sei loër

So-much he-attended to himself to-praise

e a ses cornes esguarder,

and to his horns to-behold

que il vit venir chiens curant

that he saw to-come dogs running

e lur mestre, ki vient cornant;

and their master who comes horn-blowing

après lui viennent, sil quereient,

after him they-come so-him they-sought

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pur ceo que prendre le voleient.

for that that to-take him they-wished

El bois se met tuz esmaiez.

Into-the wood himself he-puts all dismayed

Par ses cornes est atachiez,

By his horns he-is caught

15 en un buissun est retenuz.

in a bush he-is held

Dunc sunt li chien a lui venuz.

Then are the dogs to him come

Quant il les vit si aprismier,

When he them saw so to-approach

si se cumence a desraisnier.

so himself he-begins to argue

‘Veirs est’, fet il, ‘que li huem dit

True it-is says he what the man says

20 e par essample e par respit:

both by example and by proverb

li plusur vuelent ceo loër

the most wish that to-praise

qu’il devreient suvent blasmer,

which-they ought often to-blame

e iço laissent qu’il devreient

and that they-leave which-they ought

forment loër, se il saveient.’

greatly to-praise if they knew

De vidua

XXV • THE WIDOW

A wife mourns day and night on her husband's tomb. Nearby, a knight has taken down and buried a hanged thief, his kinsman, and will be hanged himself if caught. He goes to the cemetery and courts the widow, who agrees to love him. When he explains his danger, she proposes that they dig up her husband and hang him in the thief's place. The fable shows how little trust the dead can place in the living, so false and wanton is the world.

D'un hume cunte li escriz,

Of-a man tells the writing

ki esteit morz e enfüiz;

who was dead and buried

sa femme meine grant dolor

his wife leads great grief

desur sa tumber nuit e jur.

on his tomb night and day

Pres d'iluec aveit un larrun,

Near thence there-was a thief

ki ert penduz pur mesprisun.

who was hanged for misdeed

Uns chevaliers le despendi

A knight him unhanged

(sis parenz ert), si l'enfüi.

his kinsman he-was so him-buried

Par la cuntree fu crië:

Through the country was cried

ki le larrun aveit osté,

who the thief had removed

5

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sun jugement meïisme avreit;
his judgment same he-would-have

s'il ert ateinz, penduz sereit.
if-be was caught hanged he-would-be

Dunc ne sot il conseil trover
Then not knew he counsel to-find

cum il se peüst delivrer;
how he himself could to-deliver

15 kar seü ert de mainte gent
for known it-was by many folk

qu'il le teneit pur sun parent.
that-be him held for his kinsman

Al cimitiere vet tut dreit
To-the cemetery he-goes all straight

la u la prude femme esteit,
there where the worthy woman was

ki sun seignur ot tant pluré.
who her lord had so-much wept

20 Cuintement a a li parlé;
Cunningly he-has with her spoken

dit li qu'ele se cunfortast,
he-tells her that-she herself should-comfort

mult sereit liez, s'ele l'amast.
very he-would-be glad if-she him-loved

La prude femme l'esguarda;
The worthy woman him-looked-at

grant joie fist, si otria
great joy she-made so she-granted

25 qu'ele fera sa volenté.
that-she will-do his will

Li chevaliers li a cunté

The knight to-her has told

que mult li ert mesavenu

that much to-him was befallen-ill

del larrun qu'il ot despendu;

from-the thief that-he had unbanged

s'el ne l'en set conseil doner,

if-she not him-thereof knows counsel to-give

hors del païs l'estuet aler.

out of-the country him-bebooves to-go

La prude femme respondi:

The worthy woman answered

'Desfuum mun barun de ci,

Let-us-dig-up my husband from here

puis sil pendum la u cil fu:

then so-him let-us-hang there where that-one was

si n'iert ja mes aparceü.

so not-it-will-be ever more perceived

Delivrer deit hum par le mort

To-deliver ought one by the dead

le vif dunt l'em atent cunfort.'

the living whereby one awaits comfort

Par iceste signefiance

By this signification

poum entendre quel creance

we-can to-understand what trust

deivent avoir li mort es vis.

ought to-have the dead in-the living

Tant est li munz fals e jolis.

So-much is the world false and wanton

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De lupo et cane

XXVI · THE WOLF AND THE DOG

A wolf meets a sleek dog, who eats well at his lord's feet and invites him to share the life. On the way the wolf sees the dog's chain, worn so that he will not bite, and would rather be a free wolf than live richly in chains; the chain parts their friendship.

Uns lous e uns chiens s'encuntrent

A wolf and a dog themselves-met

par mi un bois, u il alerent.

through middle-of a wood where they went

Li lous a le chien esguardé,

The wolf has the dog looked-at

e puis si a a lui parlé.

and then so has to him spoken

5 'Frere', fet il, 'mult estes beals,

Brother says he very you-are fair

e mult est luisanz vostre peals.'

and very is shining your skin

Li chiens respunt: 'C'est veritez.

The dog answers That-is truth

Jeo manju bien, si ai asez,

I eat well so I-have plenty

e suëf gis, quant pluet le jur.

and softly I-lie when it-rains the day

10 Par devant les piez mun seignur

By before the feet (of-)my lord

puis chescun jur rungier les os,

I-can each day to-gnaw the bones

dunt jeo me faz e gras e gros.

whereby I myself make both fat and big

Se vus volez od mei venir

If you wish with me to-come

e vus li vueilliez obeïr,

and you to-him wish to-obey

si cum jeo faz, asez avrez

so as I do plenty you-will-have

plus viande que ne voldrez.'

more food than — you-will-wish

'Si ferai, veirs', li lous respunt.

So I-will-do truly the wolf answers

Dunc s'acumpaignent, si s'en vunt.

Then themselves-accompany so themselves-thence go

Einz qu'a vile fussent venu,

Before that-to town they-were come

guarda li lous, si a veü

looked the wolf so has seen

cum li chiens porte sun coler;

how the dog bears his collar

sa chaeine vit traïner.

his chain he-saw to-drag

'Frere', fet il, 'merveilles vei

Brother says he marvels I-see

en tur tun col, mes ne sai quei.'

in round thy neck but not I-know what

Li chiens respunt: 'C'est ma chaeine,

The dog answers That-is my chain

dunt hum me lie la semaine.

wherewith one me binds the week

15

20

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Kar mult suventes feiz mordreie

For very oft times I-would-bite

e a plusurs riens mesfereie,

and to many things I-would-do-harm

que mis sire vult garantir:

which my lord wishes to-protect

30 pur ceo me fet li^e tenir.

for that me he-makes bound to-keep

La nuit vois entur la maisun,

The night I-go around the house

que n'i aprisment li larrun.'

that not-there may-approach the thieves

'Quei!' fet li lous, 'est il issi

What says the wolf is it thus

qu'aler ne puez fors par merci?

that-to-go not thou-canst except by leave

35 Tu remeindras, jeo m'en irai:

Thou wilt-remain I myself-thence shall-go

ja chaeine ne choisirai.

ever chain not I-shall-choose

Mielz vueil estre lous a delivre

Better I-wish to-be wolf at liberty

qu'enchaenez richement vivre,

than-chained richly to-live

quant uncore puis estre a chois.

while still I-can to-be at choice

40 Va a la vile, e jeo al bois!'

Go to the town and I to-the wood

Par la chaeine est departie

By the chain is parted

leur amurs e leur cumpaignie.

their love and their company

De ventre et membris

XXVII · THE BELLY AND THE MEMBERS

A man's hands, feet, and head resent the belly for consuming what they earn, and stop feeding it. The belly weakens, and they with it; when they offer it food again it is too late, and all fail together. No free man has honor who shames his lord, nor a lord who shames his people.

D'un hume vueil ici cunter

Of-a man I-wish here to-tell

e par essample remembrer

and by example to-recall

(de ses meins cunte e de ses piez

of his hands he-tells and of his feet

e de sun chief), ki ert iriez

and of his head which was angry

5 vers sun ventre, que il porta,

toward his belly which he carried

pur le guaaïn que il guasta.

for the gain which it wasted

Dunc ne voldrent mes travailler,

Then not they-wished more to-toil

si li tolirent le mangier.

so from-it they-took the food

Mes quant li ventres jeüna,

But when the belly fasted

hastivement afeblia

10

hastily it-weakened

e meins e piez qu'il ne poeient

and hands and feet that-they not could

si travaillier cum il suleient.

so to-toil as they were-wont

Quant la grant fiebleté sentirent,

When the great feebleness they-felt

mangier e beivre al ventre offrirent

food and drink to-the belly they-offered

mes trop l'orent fet jeüner,

15

but too it-they-had made to-fast

si que il ne pot rien guster.

so that it not could anything to-taste

Li ventres revet a niënt

The belly goes-in-turn to nothing

e meins e pié tut ensement.

and hands and feet all likewise

Cest essample puet hum veoir,

This example can one to-see

chescuns frans huem le deit savoir:

20

each noble man it ought to-know

nuls ne puet mie avoir honur,

any not can at-all to-have honor

ki hunte fet a sun seignur,

who shame does to his lord

ne li sire tut ensement,

nor the lord all likewise

pur qu'il vueille hunir sa gent;

for that-he may-wish to-shame his people

25 se li uns a l'autre est failliz,
if the one to the-other is failed
ambur en ierent mal bailliz.
both thereby will-be ill served

De simia et vulpe

XXVIII · THE APE AND THE FOX

An ape asks a fox for part of his tail, since the fox's is too long and the ape's children have none. The fox refuses, even if his tail grew too heavy to drag. So the miser who has more than he needs will not let another profit from it, and would rather lose it every day.

D'un singe dit ki demanda

Of-an ape he-tells who asked

a un gupil, qu'il encuntra,

of a fox that-he met

que de sa cue li prestat,

that of his tail to-him he-should-lend

se lui pleüst, u l'en dunast;

if him it-pleased or him-thereof he-should-give

a vis li fu que trop l'ot grant,

to seeming to-him it-was that too it-he-had big

tut senz cue sunt si enfant.

all without tail are his children

Li gupiz demande que deit

The fox asks what it-means

que sa cue li requereit.

that his tail of-him he-sought

Li singes dist: 'Ceo m'est a vis,

The ape said That to-me-is to seeming

ne vus en iert niënt de pis,

not to-you thereof will-be at-all the worse

se m'en volez un poi duner;

if me-thereof you-wish a little to-give

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qu'ele vus nuist a tost aler.'

for-it you binders to quickly to-go

Dist li gupiz: 'Ne vus en chalt!

Said the fox Not to-you thereof matters

Ceste requeste poi vus valt.

This request little you avails

15 Ja de ma cue, ki est granz,

Ever with my tail which is big

n'aleverez les voz enfanz

not-you-will-rear the your children

en altre regné n'entre gent

in other realm nor-among folk

(jeo vus di bien apertement),

I to-you tell well openly

mes qu'ele fust de tel afaire

though that-it were of such kind

20 que jeo ne la peüsse traire.'

that I not it could to-draw

Cest essample pur ceo vus di,

This example for that to-you I-tell

de l'aver hume est altresì:

of the-miserly man it-is likewise

se il a plus que lui n'estuet,

if he has more than to-him bebooves

ne vult souffrir (kar il ne puet)

not he-wishes to-allow for he not can

25 qu'altre en ait aise ne honur;

that-another thereof may-have ease nor honor

mielz le vult perdre chascun jur.

better it he-wishes to-lose each day

De lupo regnante

XXIX · THE WOLF WHO WAS KING

A departing lion has the beasts choose a king, and they choose the wolf, who swears on relics never to eat flesh. The wolf asks a roebuck how his own breath smells, has him condemned for saying it stinks, and eats him, then eats a second beast for lying that it is sweet. The ape answers that it is between the two, so the wolf feigns sickness until his barons tell him no oath binds him against his desire, and eats the ape. A felon should never be made a lord, for he keeps faith with no one.

D'un leon dit ki volt aler

Of-a lion he-tells who wished to-go

en altre terre converser.

into other land to-dwell

Tutes les bestes assembla

All the beasts be-assembled

e tut sun eire lur mustra

and all his journey to-them be-showed

e qu'il deüssent rei choisir;

and that-they ought king to-choose

kar ne quidot mes revenir.

for not he-thought more to-return

N'i ot beste ne li preiaist

Not-there was beast not him might-pray

qu'un altre leün lur baillast.

that-an other lion to-them be-should-band

Il lur respunt que il ne l'a,

He to-them answers that he not it-has

n'en nurri nul, kar il n'osa;

nor-thereof nourished any for he not-dared

5

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d'els meïsmes deivent garder

from-them same they-ought to-look

ki mierz les puisse gouverner.

who best them may to-govern

Dunc aveient le lou choisi;

Then they-had the wolf chosen

kar il n'i ot nul si hardi

for it not-there was any so bold

15 ki osast prendre se lui nun:

who dared to-take except him not

tant le teneient a felun,

so-much him they-held for felon

e as plusurs aveit premis

and to-the many be-had promised

que mierz les amereit tuzdis.

that better them he-would-love always

Al liün vunt, si li unt dit

To-the lion they-go so to-him they-have said

20 qu'il aveient le lou eslit.

that-they had the wolf elected

Il lur respunt, 'n'en dutent mie,

He to-them answers not-thereof let-them-doubt at-all

que cuinte beste i unt choisie,

that clever beast there they-have chosen

preste e ignele e enpernant,

ready and swift and enterprising

se de curage e de talant

if in heart and in disposition

25 esteit si frans cum il devreit.

he-was so noble as he ought

Mes d'une chose se cremeit,

But of-one thing himself he-feared

qu'il ne presist a cunseillier

that-be — might-take as counselor

le gupil ki mult set trichier;

the fox who much knows to-cheat

amdui sunt felun e engrés.

both are felonious and fierce

Se del lou vuelent avoir pes,

If of-the wolf they-wish to-have peace

si li facent sur sainz jurer

so him let-them-make on relics to-swear

qu'il ne deie beste adesper

that-be not should beast to-touch

ne que ja mes a sun vivant

nor that ever more in his living

ne manjut char ne tant ne quant.'

not he-may-eat flesh neither so-much nor how-much

Li lous a volentiers juré

The wolf has willingly sworn

plus asez qu'il n'unt demandé.

more much than-they have asked

Mes quant il fu asseürez

But when he was assured

e li leüns s'en fu alez,

and the lion himself-thence was gone

grant talent ot de char mangier.

great desire he-had of flesh to-eat

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- 40 Par engin voldra purchacier
By device he-will-wish to-procure
 que les bestes otriërunt
that the beasts will-grant
 sa volenté e jugerunt.
his will and will-judge
 Dunc a un chevruel apelé.
Then he-has a roebuck called
 En cunseil li a demandé
In private of-him he-has asked
- 45 que par amur veir li desist
that for love truth to-him he-should-tell
 de s'aleine s'ele puïst.
of his-breath if-it stank
 Cil li respunt que si pueit
He to-him answers that so it-stank
 qu'a peine souffrir la poeit.
that-with pain to-bear it he-could
 Li lous se fist mult curucié.
The wolf himself made very angered
- 50 Pur ses humes a enveïé;
For his men he-has sent
 a tuz ensemble demanda
of all together he-asked
 quel jugement chescuns fera
what judgment each will-make
 de celui ki dit sun seignur
of him who says to-his lord
 hunte e leidesce e deshonor.
shame and insult and dishonor

Cil li diënt qu'il deit murir.

They to-him say that-he ought to-die

Li lous vet le chevruel saisir,

The wolf goes the roebuck to-seize

si l'a ocis par lur esguart.

so him-he-has killed by their judgment

Puis en manja la meillur part;

Then thereof he-ate the best part

pur sa felunie covrir,

for his felony to-cover

en fet as altres departir.

thereof he-makes to-the others to-share

Aprés icele saülee

After that fill

une altre beste a apelee.

an other beast he-has called

Tut altretel li demanda

All the-same of-her he-asked

de s'aleine que li sembla.

of his-breath how to-her it-seemed

La dolente volt mielz mentir

The wretched-one wished better to-lie

que pur veir dire mort souffrir;

than for truth to-say death to-suffer

dist li que plus suëf odor

she-said to-him that more sweet odor

ne senti unkes a nul jur.

not she-smelled ever on any day

Li lous a concile assemblé;

The wolf has council assembled

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70 a ses baruns a demandé
of his barons he-has asked
 qu'il deit faire par jugement
what-he ought to-do by judgment
 de celui ki li triche e ment.

of him who to-him cheats and lies

Tuit jugent qu'ele seit ocise.

All judge that-she be killed

Dunc a li lous la beste prise,

Then has the wolf the beast taken

75 si l'a ocise e depesciee

so her-be-has killed and torn-apart

e devant els tute mangiee.

and before them all eaten

Guaires après ne demura

Much after not it-delayed

que li lous vit e esguarda

that the wolf saw and looked-at

un singe gras e bien peü.

an ape fat and well fed

80 De lui a grant talent eü;

Of him he-has great desire had

mangier le volt e devorer.

to-eat him he-wished and to-devour

Un jur li ala demander

One day of-him he-went to-ask

de s'aleine s'ele ert puanz

of his-breath if-it was stinking

u s'ele esteit suëf ulanz.

or if-it was sweet smelling

Li singes fu mult veziëz,

The ape was very cunning

ne voleit mie estre jugiez:

not he-wished at-all to-be judged

entre dous ert, itant li dist.

between two it-was so-much to-him he-said

Ne sot li lous que il fesist;

Not knew the wolf what he should-do

kar il nel poeit traire a mort,

for he not-him could to-draw to death

s'il ne li volsist faire tort.

if-he not to-him wished to-do wrong

En sun lit malade se feint.

In his bed sick himself he-feigns

A tutes les bestes se pleint,

To all the beasts himself he-complains

ki l'alouent revisiter,

who him-went to-visit

qu'il ne puet mie respasser.

that-he not can at-all to-recover

Cil li firent mires venir

They to-him made physicians to-come

pur saveir s'il purreit guarir.

for to-know if-he could to-recover

Li mire sunt tuit esguaré,

The physicians are all bewildered

n'unt niënt veü, ne trové

not-they-have anything seen nor found

qu'il eüst mal ki li neüst,

that-he bad ill which him might-harm

85

90

95

- 100 se mangier a talent eüst.
if food at will he-bad
 'Jeo n'ai', fet il, 'nul desirier
I not-have says he any desire
 fors de char de singe mangier.
except of flesh of ape to-eat
 Mes jeo ne vueil beste adeser;
But I not wish beast to-touch
 mun sairement m'estuet garder,
my oath me-bebooves to-keep
- 105 se jeo n'eüsse tel raisun
if I not-had such reason
 que l'otriassent mi barun.'
that it-might-grant my barons
 Dunc li loënt comunement
Then to-him they-advise in-common
 qu'il le face seürement;
that-he it may-do surely
 ja ne deit garder sairement
ever not he-ought to-keep oath
- 110 cuntre sun cuer e sun talent;
against his heart and his desire
 cuntre sun cors de mal guarir
against his body from ill to-save
 ne pueent il nul garantir.
not can they any to-warrant
 Quant il oï qu'em li loa,
When he heard that-one him advised
 le singe ocist e sil manja.
the ape he-killed and so-him ate

Puis orent tuit lur jugement,

Then had all their judgment

ne tint vers els nul sairement.

not he-held toward them any oath

Pur ceo mustre li sages bien

For that shows the wise-one well

qu'um ne deüst pur nule rien

that-one not ought for any thing

felun hume faire seignur

felon man to-make lord

ne traire lë a nule honur:

nor to-draw him to any honor

ja ne guardera leialté

ever not he-will-keep loyalty

plus a l'estrange qu'al privé;

more to the-stranger than-to-the intimate

si se demeine vers sa gent,

so himself he-conducts toward his people

cum fist li lous del sairement.

as did the wolf with-the oath

115

120

De lupo et pastore

XXX · THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD

A wolf fleeing a huntsman begs a shepherd to hide him. The shepherd hides him in his fold, and when the huntsman comes, points him away with his hand while his eyes keep turning to the wolf. Afterward the wolf thanks the shepherd's tongue and hands, but would have his eyes put out, for they nearly betrayed him.

D'un veneür nus cunte ici,

Of-a huntsman to-us he-tells here

ki un lou aveit acuilli.

who a wolf had chased

Par mi un champ fui li lous,

Through middle-of a field fled the wolf

u uns bergiers seeit tuz sous.

where a shepherd sat all alone

5 Par sa franchise li requist

By his nobleness of-him he-asked

qu'il le muscast, e si desist

that-he him should-bide and so should-say

al veneür, kil pursiweit,

to-the huntsman who-him pursued

qu'al bois en ert alez tut dreit.

that-to-the wood thence he-was gone all straight

Li pastre dist que si fera;

The shepherd said that so he-will-do

10 desuz sa falde le musça.

under his fold him he-bid

Li venere veneit crient,

The huntsman came crying

d'ures en altres demandant

from-hours to others asking

se cil avait le lou veü.

if he had the wolf seen

Il li respunt, ne sot u fu;

He to-him answers not he-knew where he-was

od sa mein li vet enseignant

with his hand to-him he-goes pointing

qu'aillurs le deit aler querant.

that-elsewhere him he-ought to-go seeking

Dementiers qu'il li enseignot,

Meanwhile that-he to-him pointed

vers le lou tuzjurs esguardot,

toward the wolf always he-looked

n'en poeit ses uiz remuër;

not-thence he-could his eyes to-move

mes nepurquant l'en fist aler.

but nevertheless him-thence he-made to-go

Quant il le vit bien esluignié,

When he him saw well gone-far

si dist al lou, qu'il ot muscié:

so said to-the wolf that-he had bidden

'Ne me sez tu ore bon gre

Not me knowest thou now good thanks

que jeo t'ai issi delivré?

that I thee-have thus delivered

Li lous respondi cuintement.

The wolf answered cunningly

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'Ta langue e tes meins veirement

Thy tongue and thy hands truly

dei jeo', fet il, 'bon gre saveir;

ought I says he good thanks to-know

mes une rien te di pur veir:

but one thing to-thee I-tell for truth

s'il alast a ma volenté,

if-it went at my will

30 ti ueil sereient ja crevé!

thy eyes would-be now put-out

Ta langue e tes meins me guarirent,

Thy tongue and thy hands me saved

ti ueil pur poi me descovrirent.'

thy eyes for little me uncovered

De pavone et Junone

XXXI · THE PEACOCK AND THE GODDESS

A peacock complains to the goddess that he has no voice to match his beauty. She asks whether the beauty she gave him, finer than any other bird's, is not enough. He says it is not: he fears he is the basest of birds, since even the little nightingale has a better voice than he.

Uns poüins fu forment iriez

A peacock was greatly angry

vers sei meïsme e curuciez

toward himself same and vexed

de ceo que tel voiz nen aveit

of that that such voice not he-had

cum a lui, ceo dist, avendreit.

as to him that he-said would-befit

A la deuesse le mustra,

To the goddess it he-showed

e la dame li demanda

and the lady of-him asked

s'il n'ot asez en la bealté

if-he not-had enough in the beauty

dunt el l'aveit si aürné;

wherewith she him-had so adorned

de pennes l'aveit fet plus bel

with feathers him-she-had made more fair

que ne veeit nul altre oisel.

than — she-saw any other bird

Li poüins dist qu'il se cremeit,

The peacock said that-he himself feared

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de tuz oisels plus vils esteit

of all birds most base he-was

pur ceo que ne sot bien chanter.

for that that not he-knew well to-sing

Ele respunt: 'Lai mei ester!

She answers Let me to-be

15 Bien te deit ta bealtez suffire.'

Well thee ought thy beauty to-suffice

'Nenil', fet il, 'bien le puis dire:

No says he well it I-can to-say

quant li russignolez petiz

since the nightingale little

a meillur voiz, jeo sui huniz.'

has better voice I am shamed

De agno et capra

XXXII · THE LAMB AND THE GOAT

A shepherd takes a newborn lamb from its mother and gives it to a goat, who nurses it in the wood. When it is grown, she tells it to go back to its mother the sheep and its father the ram. The lamb answers wisely that the one who fed it has a better claim to be its mother than the one who bore it and parted from it.

Une berbiz ot aignelé,

A sheep had lambed

e li bergiers li a osté

and the shepherd from-her has taken

sun aignelet, si l'en porta.

her little-lamb so it-thence carried

A une chievre le bailla,

To a goat it be-banded

ki de sun lait l'a bien nurri;

who with her milk it-has well nourished

el bois l'en meine ensemble od li.

into-the wood it-thence leads together with her

Quant el le vit creü e grant,

When she it saw grown and big

puis l'apela, si li dist tant:

then it-she-called so to-it said so-much

'Va t'en a la berbiz, ta mere,

Go thee-away to the sheep thy mother

e al multun, ki est tis pere!

and to-the ram who is thy father

Asez t'ai nurri lungement.'

Enough thee-I-have nourished long

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E cil respondi sagement:

And he answered wisely

'Mei est a vis que bien deit estre

To-me it-is to seeming that well ought to-be

ma mere ki me soleit pestre

my mother who me was-wont to-feed

15 mielz que cele ki me porta

better than she who me bore

e ki de li me deseavra.'

and who from her me separated

De fure et ove

XXXIII · THE ROGUE AND THE SHEEP

A rogue finds a flock of unguarded sheep and every day kills one and carries it off. The sheep agree not to defend themselves, until only one ram is left, who laments that while they were many they never stood up to the man killing them. Many fail to resist their enemies until the worst has been done.

Issi avint qu'en un pastiz

Thus it-happened that-in a pasture

ot grant cumpaigne de berbiz.

there-was great company of sheep

Uns bris s'alot od sa muillier

A rogue himself-went with his wife

par mi le champ esbaneier.

through middle-of the field to-take-his-pleasure

Les berbiz senz garde trova;

5

The sheep without guard he-found

une en ocist, si l'en porta.

one thereof he-killed so it-thence carried

Chescun jur el champ reveineit,

Each day to-the field he-came-back

sis en portot e ocieit.

so-them thence he-carried and killed

Les berbiz mult s'en curucierent.

The sheep much themselves-thereat vexed

Entre els distrent e conseillierent

10

Among them they-said and counseled

que ne se vuelent pas defendre;

that not themselves they-wish at-all to-defend

par dreite ire se larrunt prendre,

by sheer anger themselves they-will-let to-take

ne ja ne se desturnerunt,

nor ever not themselves they-will-turn-aside

ne pur murir mot ne dirrunt.

nor for dying word not they-will-say

15 Tant atendent le bricun

So-long they-awaited the rogue

qu'il n'i remest fors un multun.

that-it not-there remained except one ram

Quant sul se vit en la champaigne,

When alone himself he-saw in the countryside

ne pot muër qu'il ne se pleigne.

not he-could to-help that-be — himself complain

'Grant laschesce', fet il, 'fesimes

Great cowardice says he we-did

20 e trop malvais cunseil creïmes,

and too bad counsel we-believed

quant granz cumpaignie estiüns,

when great company we-were

que nus ne nus defendiüns

that we not ourselves defended

vers cest hume, ki a grant tort

against this man who with great wrong

nus a tuz pris e traiz a mort.'

us has all taken and drawn to death

Pur ceo dit hum en reprovier:

For that says one in proverb

plusur ne sevent damagier

many not know-how to-harm

ne cuntrester lur enemis

nor to-withstand their enemies

qu'il ne facent a els le pis.

that-they not may-do to them the worst

De simiarum imperatore

XXXIV · THE EMPEROR OF THE APES

An ape raised at an emperor's court imitates what he sees and makes himself king in the forest, with knights, counselors, a wife, and children. Two men, one loyal and one a cheat, stray into his court. Asked about the king and his family, the loyal man calls them ugly, hideous apes, and he is torn apart for the truth; the cheat praises them as an emperor and empress and is honored. A loyal man cannot win honor in a court ruled by lies.

Uns emperere nurri ja

An emperor nourished once

un singe, que forment ama,

an ape which greatly he-loved

e li singes bien entendeit

and the ape well understood

quan qu'as humes faire veeit,

whatever that-to-the men to-do he-saw

5 cum l'empereür vit servir,

how the-emperor he-saw to-serve

e ses festes li vit tenir,

and his feasts him he-saw to-hold

cum tuit le tindrent a seignur.

how all him held for lord

En la forest se mist un jur;

Into the forest himself he-put one day

tuz les singes fist asembler,

all the apes he-made to-assemble

10 petiz e granz, qu'il pot trover.

small and great that-he could to-find

Sur tuz se fist lever a rei,

Over all himself he-made to-raise as king

puis sis retint ensemble od sei.

then so-them he-retained together with himself

Des plusurs fist ses chevaliers

Of-the many he-made his knights

e des alquanz ses cunseilliers,

and of-the some his counselors

e les serjanz de sa maisun

and the sergeants of his house

establi il chescun par nun.

established he each by name

Dunc prist femme, si ot enfanz,

Then he-took wife so had children

e tint festes riches e granz.

and held feasts rich and great

Dui hume erent el bois alé;

Two men were into-the wood gone

mes il esteient esguaré

but they were lost

la u li singe converserent.

there where the apes dwelt

Ultre lur volenté alerent

Beyond their will they-went

la u il erent assemblé;

there where they were assembled

nel firent mie de lur gre.

not-it they-did at-all of their liking

Li uns esteit forment leials,

The one was greatly loyal

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e li altre trichiere e fals.

and the other cheat and false

Quant en lur curt furent entré,

When into their court they-were entered

des singes sunt bien apelé.

by-the apes they-are well called

Li leials huem les esguarda.

The loyal man them looked-at

30 L'emperere li demanda

The-emperor of-him asked

que li semblot de sa maisniee,

how to-him seemed of his household

s'ele esteit bele e enseigniee.

if-it was fair and well-taught

Li leials huem dunc li respunt

The loyal man then to-him answers

qu'a vis li ert que singe sunt.

that-to seeming to-him it-was that apes they-are

35 'De mei e de ma femme di

Of me and of my wife tell

e de mun fiz, que tu veiz ci,

and of my son whom thou seest here

que t'en semble! Nel me celer!'

how to-thee-thereof it-seems Not-it from-me hide

'Ceo que m'en deit', fet il, 'sembler:

That which to-me-thereof ought says he to-seem

tu iés singes, ele est singesse

thou art ape she is she-ape

40 laide e hisduse e felunesse.

ugly and hideous and felonious

Par tei poez saveir de tun fiz

By thee you-can to-know of thy son

que c'est uns singetels petiz.

that that-is an ape-let little

Al tricheür, sun cumpaignun,

To-the cheat his companion

tute meïsme la raisun

all same the speech

demandèrent de mot a mot.

they-asked from word to word

E il lur dist que li semblot

And he to-them said that to-him it-seemed

qu'unkes ne vit plus bele gent

that-ever not he-saw more fair folk

ne mielz fussent a sun talent.

nor better were to his liking

Aprés lur dist de lur seignur

Afterward to-them he-said of their lord

que bien semblot empereür,

that well he-seemed emperor

e bien puet estre reis sis fiz,

and well may be king his son

sa femme semble empereriz.

his wife seems empress

Dunc l'unt entre els si honuré,

Then him-they-have among them so honored

de tutes parz l'unt encliné.

on all sides him-they-have bowed-to

Le leial hume aveient pris,

The loyal man they-had taken

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si l'unt desiré e mal mis;

so him-they-have torn-apart and ill set

pur sun veir dit li firent hunte.

for his true saying to-him they-did shame

Oëz l'essample de cest cunte:

Hear the-example of this tale

ne puet mie od le tricheür

not can at-all with the cheat

60 li leials huem aveir honor

the loyal man to-have honor

en curt u l'em vueille trichier

in court where one may-wish to-cheat

e par mençunge forsjugier.

and by lying to-misjudge

De asino et leone

XXXV · THE ASS AND THE LION

An ass greets a lion as his brother and boasts that the beasts fear him as much. On a hilltop he brays so hideously that they all flee. The lion says they fear not his prowess but his cry, taking him for a devil. So the proud felon frightens fools with threats and thinks no one dares resist him.

D'un asne dit ki encontra

Of-an ass he-tells who met

un leün fier, sil salua:

a lion fierce so-him greeted

‘Deus te salt, frere! Deus te salt!’

God thee save brother God thee save

Li leüns vit l’asne si balt,

The lion saw the-ass so bold

si li respunt hastivement:

so to-him he-answers hastily

‘Des quant sumes si pres parent?’

From when are-we so near kin

Dist li asnes: ‘Merveilles oi!’

Said the ass Marvels I-bear

Mult prises altres bestes poi;

Very thou-prizest other beasts little

tu quides bien, e si est faille,

thou thinkest well and so it-is false

que nule ne te cuntrevaille.

that any not thee may-equal

Vien ore od mei en sum cel munt,

Come now with me on top-of that mountain

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u les bestes ensemble sunt,

where the beasts together are

e jeo te ferai ja veeir

and I thee shall-make now to-see

e si purras aparceveir

and so thou-wilt-be-able to-perceive

15 qu'eles avrunt poür de mei

that-they will-have fear of me

altresi grant cume de tei.'

likewise great as of thee

Li leüns est alez od lui;

The lion is gone with him

sur le munt muntent ambedui.

on the mountain climb both

Desuz le munt en la valec

Below the mountain in the valley

20 ot de bestes grant assemblee.

there-was of beasts great assembly

Li asnes prist a rechaner

The ass took to bray

e si laidement a criër

and so hideously to cry

que les bestes se departirent,

that the beasts themselves parted

tel poür orent, si fuïrent.

such fear they-had so they-fled

25 Li asnes dist: 'Veiz tu, amis,

The ass said Seest thou friend

ceo que jeo t'aveie pramis?'

that which I to-thee-had promised

Li liuns li a respundu:

The lion to-him has answered

‘Ceo n’est mie pur ta vertu

That not-is at-all for thy prowess

ne pur fierté (kar tu ne l’as),

nor for fierceness for thou not it-hast

mes pur le cri que tu crias,

but for the cry which thou criedst

ki tant lur semble espoëntable

which so-much to-them seems frightful

que tuit te tienent pur diable.’

that all thee hold for devil

Si est de l’orguillus felun,

So it-is of the-proud felon

ki par manace e par tençon

who by threat and by quarreling

espoënte la fole gent

frightens the foolish folk

e quide bien a esciënt

and thinks well with knowledge

que nuls nel deie cuntrester,

that any not-him should to-withstand

des qu’il l’orrunt en halt parler.

from that-they him-will-bear on high to-speak

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De leone et vulpe
XXXVI · THE LION AND THE FOX

A lion, claiming to be sick, summons the beasts one by one to his grove and eats each. The fox stops outside to hear the news, and when the lion asks why he will not come in, answers that none who went in has come back. So at a king's court many enter lightly; one does better to stand aside and listen.

Uns liüns fu mult travailliez

A lion was very wearied

e de curre tuz ennuiez.

and of running all worn

En une grave fist sun lit;

In a grove he-made his bed

mult fu malades a sun dit.

very he-was sick at his saying

5 Les bestes fist a sei venir;

The beasts he-made to himself to-come

kar il voleit, ceo dist, choisir

for he wished that he-said to-choose

ki mielz purreit en bois chacier

who best could in wood to-hunt

e sa viande purchacier.

and his food to-procure

Unes e unes les mandot,

One and one them he-summoned

10 sis ocieit e devurot;

so-them he-killed and devoured

mielz les voleit issi mangier

better them he-wished thus to-eat

qu'après curre ne travailler.

than-after to-run or to-toil

Li gupiz fu od els alez.

The fox was with them gone

Hors de la grave est arestez;

Outside of the grove he-is stopped

des noveles voleit oïr,

of-the news he-wished to-hear

ainz qu'il volsist avant venir.

before that-he wished forward to-come

Li liüns sist, si l'esguarda.

The lion sat so him-looked-at

Irieement li demanda

Angrily of-him he-asked

pur quei ne vult venir avant,

for what not he-wishes to-come forward

e li gupiz li respunt tant:

and the fox to-him answers so-much

'Sire', fet il, 'n'i os aler;

Lord says he not-there I-dare to-go

kar n'en vei nule returner

for not-thence I-see any to-return

des bestes ki einz i entrerent

of-the beasts who before there entered

e pur vus veeir i alerent.'

and for you to-see there went

15

20

25 De curt a rei est ensement:
 Of court of king it-is likewise
 tels i entre legierement,
such-a-one there enters lightly
 mielz li vendreit en sus ester
better to-him it-would-come off away to-stand
 pur les nuveles esculter.
for the news to-bear

De leone et homine

XXXVII · THE LION AND THE VILLEIN

A lion and a villein argue over their lineage. The villein shows a painting of a man killing a lion; the lion answers that men can paint and lions cannot. Then they see an emperor's lion kill a traitor, and later the lion saves the villein from another lion. Believe the works one sees, not fables and paintings.

Ci nus recunte d'un liün,

Here to-us he-tells of-a lion

qu'uns vilains prist a compaignun.

whom-a villein took as companion

Entre els cunterent lur parage,

Among them they-told their rank

si parlerent de lur lignage.

so they-spoke of their lineage

Li liüns dist: 'Fiz sui a rei.'

5

The lion said Son I-am of king

Dist li vileins: 'Va ore od mei!'

Said the villein Go now with me

A un mur sunt amdui venu.

To a wall are both come

Iluec a li leüns veü

There has the lion seen

desur la pierre une peinture

on the stone a painting

cum uns vileins par aventure

10

how a villein by chance

od sa hache oscist un leün,

with his axe killed a lion

si apela sun cumpaignun:

so he-called his companion

'Ki fist ceste semblance ici,

Who made this likeness here

huem u liüns? Itant me di!

man or lion So-much to-me tell

15 'Ceo fist uns huem', dist li vileins,

That made a man said the villain

'od ses engins e od ses meins.'

with his devices and with his hands

Dunc a li liüns respundu:

Then has the lion answered

'C'est a tut pueple coneü

That-is to all people known

qu'um set entaillier e purtraire,

that-one knows to-carve and to-portray

20 mes li leüns nel set pas faire.

but the lion not-it knows at-all to-do

Ore en iruns ensemble ça!

Now thence we-shall-go together hither

Li vileins vait; cil l'en mena

The villain goes he him-thence led

a un chastel l'empereür.

to a castle (of-)the-emperor

Issi avint qu'en icel jur

Thus it-happened that-on that day

25 aveient il jugié en plet

had they judged in suit

un barun, ki li ot mesfet;

a baron who to-him had wronged

pruvez esteit de traïsun,

proven he-was of treason

sil fist geter a sun liün,

so-him he-made to-throw to his lion

ki lung tens ot esté guardez

who long time had been guarded

dedenz sa curt enchaenez,

within his court chained

e il l'ocist ignelepaz;

and he him-killed at-once

ainz n'i guarda armes ne dras.

ever not-there he-regarded arms nor clothes

Li liüns a tant s'en depart

The lion at that himself-thence departs

e li vileins, qui mult fu tart

and the villein to-whom very it-was late

qu'il s'en fussent d'iluec turné.

that-they themselves-thence were from-there turned

En la guastine sunt alé;

Into the wasteland they-are gone

par mi les landes trespasserent.

through middle-of the moors they-passed

Un altre liün encuntrenterent.

An other lion they-met

A celui dist qu'il fet desrei

To that-one he-said that-he does wrong

qu'il meine le vilein od sei,

that-he leads the villein with himself

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ki set la fosse apareillier

who knows the pit to-prepare

u il purreient trebuchier;

where they could to-stumble

altresi sevent si parent:

likewise know his kin

ja l'ocira, s'il li cunsent.

soon him-he-will-kill if-he him allows

45 Li liüns dist qu'il l'escharnist;

The lion said that-he him-mocked

ne sufferreit qu'il l'ocesist

not he-would-suffer that-he him-should-kill

pur nule rien; ne l'en peist ja!

for any thing not him-thereof let-it-grieve ever

Li vileins l'ot, sil mercia;

The villain it-bears so-him thanked

mult par l'en set, ço dist, bon gre.

very much him-thereof he-knows that he-said good will

50 Li liüns li a demandé

The lion of-him has asked

se li semblot cum einz ot fet.

if to-him it-seemed as before it-had done

Dist li vileins: 'Altrement vet!'

Said the villain Otherwise it-goes

'Jol vus dis einz', fet li liüns.

I-it to-you said before says the lion

Ainz que nus fussuns cumpaignuns,

Before that we were companions

me mustras tu une peinture

to-me showedst thou a painting

sur une pierre d'aventure;

on a stone of-chance

mes jeo t'ai puis uevre mustree,

but I thee-have since work shown

a descuvert l'as esguardée.'

in open it-thou-hast beheld

Par essample nus vuelt aprendre

By example to-us he-wishes to-teach

que nuls ne deit niënt entendre

that any not ought at-all to-attend

a fable, ki est de mençunge,

to fable which is of lying

n'a peinture, ki semble sunge;

nor-to painting which seems dream

c'est a creire dunt hum veit l'uevre,

that-is to believe whereof one sees the-work

ki la verité en descuevre.

which the truth thereof uncovers

55

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De pulice et camelo

XXXVIII · THE FLEA AND THE CAMEL

A flea rides in a camel's hair to another country, then thanks him and offers to repay his toil. The camel answers that he never felt her weight, nor knew she was there, nor that she troubled him. So poor people who come near the rich think they can greatly vex, harm, and annoy them.

Une pulce, ceo dit, munta

A flea that he-says climbed

sur un chameil, sil chevalcha

on a camel so-him rode

des i qu'en une altre cuntree.

from there that-into an other country

Dunc s'est la pulce purpensee,

Then herself-is the flea bethought

5 si a mercié le chameil,

so she-has thanked the camel

ki si suëf dedenz sun peil

who so softly within his hair

l'aveit ensemble od lui portee;

her-had together with him carried

ja mes par sei n'i fust alee:

ever more by herself not-there she-would-have gone

pur sun travail le servireit

for his toil him she-would-serve

10 mult volentiers, s'ele poeit.

very willingly if-she could

Li chameiz li a respundu,

The camel to-her has answered

qu'unkes de li chargiez ne fu

that-ever by her burdened not be-was

ne ne sot qu'ele fust sur lui

nor not he-knew that-she was on him

ne qu'el li fesist nul ennui.

nor that-she to-him did any trouble

Issi vet de la povre gent:

Thus it-goes of the poor folk

s'as riches unt aprismement,

if-to-the rich they-have approach

forment les quident curucier,

greatly them they-think to-vex

damage faire e ennuier.

harm to-do and to-annoy

15

De formica et cicada

XXXIX · THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

In winter a cricket comes to an anthill begging food, having nothing in his house. The ant asks what he did in August, when he should have gathered, and he says he sang for other creatures but finds no one to repay him. The ant tells him to sing now: better to have provided in August than to die of cold at the ant's door. No one should live in idleness; each should work to provide for himself rather than depend on others.

D'un criket cunte la maniere,

Of-a cricket he-tells the manner

ki desqu'a une furmière

who as-far-as an ant-hill

el tens d'yver esteit alez.

in-the time of-winter was gone

Par aventure est enz entrez.

By chance he-is in entered

5 Viande demanda e quist;

Food he-asked and sought

kar n'en aveit niënt, ceo dist,

for not-thereof he-had anything that he-said

en sa maisun n'en sun recet.

in his house nor-in his refuge

Dist li furmis: 'Qu'as tu dunc fet,

Said the ant What-hast thou then done

quant tu deüsses guaaignier

when thou oughtest to-gain

10 e en aüst tei purchacier?'

and in August thee to-provide

'Jeo chantai', fet il, 'e deduis

I sang says he and made-merry

a altres bestes, mes ne truis

to other beasts but not I-find

ki me vueille guereduner:

who me may-wish to-repay

pur ceo m'estuet issi aler.'

for that me-behooves thus to-go

Dist li furmis: 'Chante ore a mei!

Said the ant Sing now to me

Par cele fei que jeo te dei,

By that faith which I thee owe

mielz fust que tu te purchaçasses

better were-it that thou thee provided

el meis d'aüst e guaaïgnasses,

in-the month of-August and gained

que tu fusses de freit muranz

than thou wert of cold dying

a mun us viande queranz!

at my door food seeking

Pur quei te durreie a mangier,

For what thee would-I-give to eat

quant tu a mei ne puez aidier?'

since thou to me not canst to-help

Pur ceo defent que nuls ne vive

For that he-forbids that any — may-live

en nunchaleir ne en oisdive.

in heedlessness nor in idleness

15

20

25 Sulunc ceo que chescuns deit faire

According-to that which each ought to-do

se deit pener de bien atraire;

himself he-ought to-take-pains of good to-gather

plus en est chiers s'il a que prendre,

more thereof be-is dear if-he has what to-take

que s'a l'altrui se deit atendre.

than if-to the-other's himself he-must to-wait

De cornice et ove
XL · THE CROW AND THE SHEEP

A crow sits on a sheep's back, pecks her, and pulls out her wool. The sheep asks why she does not sit on the dog instead. The crow answers that she knows well whom she can sit on in safety. The proverb is true that the cat knows whose beard he licks, and the cunning know whom they can keep underfoot.

Issi avint qu'une corneille

Thus it-happened that-a crow

s'asist sur le dos d'une oeille.

herself-sat on the back of-a sheep

Od le bec la fiert durement,

With the beak her she-strikes hard

sa leine li oste asprement.

her wool from-her she-takes roughly

La berbiz li a dit: 'Pur quei

The sheep to-her has said For what

chevalches tu issi sur mei?

ridest thou thus on me

Remue tei! Si feras bien!

Move thyself So thou-wilt-do well

Sié une piece sur le chien,

Sit a while on the dog

si fai a lui cum fez a mei!

so do to him as thou-dost to me

Dist la corneille: 'Par ma fei,

Said the crow By my faith

5

10

ne t'estuet mie travailler

not thee-behooves at-all to-trouble

que tu me deies enseigner;

that thou me shouldst to-teach

jeo sui pieç'a tute enseignee.

I am long-since wholly taught

Tant sui jo sage e veziëe,

So-much am I wise and cunning

15 bien sai sur qui jeo puis seoir

well I-know on whom I can to-sit

e a seür puis remaneir.'

and in safety can to-remain

Pur ceo nus mustre par respit

For that to-us he-shows by proverb

que ceo est veirs que li huem dit

that that is true which the man says

par grant essample e par reprueche:

by great example and by proverb

20 qu'assez set chaz qui barbe il leche.

that-well knows cat whose beard he licks

Bien s'aparceit li veziëz

Well himself-perceives the cunning-one

les quels il puet avoir suz piez.

the which he can to-have under feet

De homine divite et servis

XLI · THE RICH MAN AND THE SERFS

A rich man riding through a field sees two serfs whispering closely, though no one is near enough to overhear, and asks why. One answers that they fear nothing but think it clever to talk that way. The ignorant often make such a show to outwit others, when it does them no good.

Uns riches huem chevalchot ja

A rich man rode once

par mi un champ, si esguarda

through middle-of a field so looked

u dui serf ensemble parloënt.

where two serfs together were-talking

Si estreitement conseilhoënt,

So closely they-conferred

cum s'il fussent entre grant gent.

as if-they were among great crowd

Vers els turna delivrement.

Toward them he-turned quickly

Demanda lur pur quel mestier

Asked them for what need

il voleient si conseilhier,

they wished so to-confer

quant nul hume pres d'els n'aveit

when any man near them not-there-was

ne nuls lur parole n'oeit.

nor any their word not-heard

5

10

Li uns respundi al seignur

The one answered to-the lord

qu'il n'aveient nule poür,

that-they not-had any fear

einz lur semblot veziëüre

rather to-them it-seemed cunning

qu'il parloënt en tel mesure.

that-they spoke in such measure

15 Ceo funt suvent li nunsachant:

That do often the ignorant

de tel chose mustrent semblant,

of such thing they-show semblance

pur altre gent surveziër,

for other folk to-outwit

ki ne lur puet avoir mestier.

which not to-them can to-have use

De homine divite, qui sanguinem minuit

XLII · THE RICH MAN WHO WAS BLED

A physician bleeds a sick rich man and gives the blood to the man's daughter to keep. She spills it and bleeds herself to replace it. The physician declares that the one it came from is pregnant, and the rich man believes he is with child until she confesses. So cheats are caught by their own deeds when least on guard.

D'un mire cunte, ki seigna

Of-a physician he-tells who bled

un riche hume, que il guarda

a rich man whom he tended

en une grant enfermeté.

in a great sickness

Puis aveit le sanc comandé

Then he-had the blood entrusted

a sa fille, qu'el le guardast

to his daughter that-she it should-guard

que nule riens n'i adesast;

that any thing not-there should-touch

par le sanc, ceo dist, conuistreit

by the blood that he-said he-would-know

quel enferté sis pere aveit.

what sickness her father had

La meschine porta le sanc

The maiden carried the blood

en sa chambre desuz un banc.

into her chamber under a bench

Mes mult li est mesavenu,

But much to-her is befallen-ill

5

10

que tut le sanc a espandu.

that all the blood she-has spilled

Ne l'osa dire ne mustrer;

Not it-she-dared to-say nor to-show

n'altre conseil ne sot trover,

nor-other counsel not she-knew to-find

15 mes sei meïsmes fist seignier.

but herself same she-made to-bleed

Icel sanc lessa refreidier,

That blood she-let to-cool

tant que li mires l'ot veü:

so-long that the physician it-had seen

par le sanc a aparceü

by the blood he-has perceived

que cil ert preinz qui l'ot lessié.

that he was pregnant who it-had let

20 Le riche hume a si esmaïé

The rich man he-has so dismayed

qu'il quidot bien avoir enfant.

that-he thought well to-have child

Sa fille fist venir avant;

His daughter he-made to-come forward

tant par destreit tant par amur

now by constraint now by love

li fist cunuistre la verur:

her he-made to-confess the truth

25 del sanc li dist qu'el l'espandi

of-the blood to-him she-said that-she it-spilled

e que li altre esteit de li.

and that the other was from her

Altresi vet des tricheürs,

Likewise it-goes of-the cheats

des larruns e des boiseürs,

of-the thieves and of-the deceivers

en qui la felunie meint:

in whom the felony dwells

par els meïsmes sunt ataint;

by themselves same they-are caught

quant meins se guardent d'estre pris,

when least themselves they-guard from-being taken

si sunt encumbré e ocis.

so they-are encumbered and killed

30

De rustico et scarabaeo

XLIII · THE VILLEIN AND THE BEETLE

A villain sleeps uncovered in the sun, and a beetle crawls into his body. A physician says he is pregnant, and he and the foolish people believe it and fear great evils, until the beetle comes out the way it went in. So the ignorant believe what cannot be, drawn and moved by vanity.

D'un vilein dit ki se giseit

Of-a villain he-tells who himself lay

cuntre soleil, si se dormeit.

against sun so himself slept

A denz s'ert mis tuz discoverz,

On teeth [face-down] himself-be-was put all uncovered

e sis pertus esteit overz.

and his hole was open

5 Uns escharboz dedenz entra,

A beetle within entered

e li vileins s'en esveilla.

and the villain himself-thereat awoke

Grant mal li fist, tant qu'a un mire

Great harm to-him it-did so-much that-to a physician

l'esteit alez cunter e dire.

it-be-was gone to-tell and to-say

Li mires dist qu'il esteit preinz.

The physician said that-be was pregnant

10 Or fu mult pis qu'il ne fu einz;

Now it-was much worse than-it — was before

kar li vileins bien le creï,

for the villain well it believed

e li fols pueples, ki l'öi,

and the foolish people who it-heard

diënt que c'est signefiance.

say that that-is portent

En poür sunt e en dutance;

In fear they-are and in doubt

n'i a celui ki bien ne creie

not-there is one who well not may-believe

que granz mals avenir lur deie.

that great ills to-happen to-them should

Tant est li fols pueples muables,

So-much is the foolish people fickle

qu'en veines choses nunverables

that-in vain things incredible

unt lur creance e lur espoir.

they-have their belief and their hope

Le vilein guaitent pur saveir

The villein they-watch for to-know

par unt cil enfes deveit nestre.

by where that child was-to to-be-born

Li escharboz par la fenestre,

The beetle through the window

u il entra, s'en est eissuz:

where it entered itself-thence is gone-out

dunc furent il tuz deceüz.

then were they all deceived

Par cest essample le vus di:

By this example it to-you I-tell

des nunsachanz est altresì,

of-the ignorant it-is likewise

15

20

25

ki creient ceo qu'estre ne puet,

who believe that which-to-be not can

u vanitez les trait e muet.

where vanity them draws and moves

De muliere et proco eius

XLIV · THE WOMAN AND HER LOVER

A villein sees through his door another man in bed with his wife. She calls it his old folly and leads him to a tub of water, where he sees his own reflection. He is not in the tub, she says, so he should not trust his eyes. He repents. So cleverness helps many people more than wealth or kin.

D'un vilein cunte ki guaita

Of-a villein he-tells who watched

dedenz sun us, si espia.

within his door so spied

Un altre hume vit sur sun lit,

An other man he-saw on his bed

od sa femme fist sun delit.

with his wife he-did his pleasure

‘A, las’, fet il, ‘qu’ai jeo veü!’

Ab alas says he what-have I seen

Dunc l’a la femme respundu:

Then him-has the wife answered

‘Que veez vus, beals sire, amis?’

What see you fair lord friend

‘Un altre hume; ceo m’est a vis,

An other man that to-me-is to seeming

sur mun lit te tint embraciee.’

on my bed thee held embraced

Ceo dist la femme curuciee:

That said the wife angered

‘Bien sai’, fet ele, ‘n’en dut mie,

Well I-know says she not-thereof I-doubt at-all

5

10

que c'est vostre vieille folie:

that that-is your old folly

tu vuels tenir mençunge a veire.'

thou wishest to-bold lie for true

'Jel vi', fet il, 'sil dei bien creire.'

I-it saw says he so-it I-ought well to-believe

15 'Fols iés', fet ele, 'se tu creiz

Fool thou-art says she if thou believe

pur verité quan que tu veiz.'

for truth whatever that thou seest

As mains le prent, od li l'en meine

By-the hands him she-takes with her him-thence leads

a une cuve d'ewe pleine;

to a vat of-water full

dedenz l'ewe le fist garder.

within the-water him she-made to-look

20 Puis li cumence a demander

Then him she-begins to ask

qu'il veit dedenz, e il li dit

what-he sees within and he to-her says

que s'image meïsme vit.

that his-image same he-saw

'Pur ceo' dist ele, 'n'ies tu pas

For that said she not-art thou at-all

dedenz la cuve od tuz tes dras,

within the vat with all thy clothes

25 se tu i veiz une semblance.

if thou there seest a likeness

Tu ne deiz pas avoir creance

Thou not oughtest at-all to-have trust

en tes uiz, ki mentent sovent.'

in thy eyes which lie often

Dist li vileins: 'Jeo me repent!

Said the villain I myself repent

Chescuns deit mielz creire e saveir

Each ought better to-believe and to-know

ceo que sa femme dit pur veir

that which his wife says for truth

que ceo que si malvais ueil veient,

than that which his bad eyes see

ki par veüe le foleient.'

which by sight him fool

Par cest essample nus devise

By this example to-us be-sets-out

que mult valt mielz sens e quointise

that much is-worth more sense and cleverness

e plus aïde a meinte gent

and more helps to many folk

que sis aveirs ne si parent.

than his wealth or his kin

30

35

Iterum de muliere et proco eius

XLV · THE WOMAN AND HER LOVER AGAIN

A villain sees his wife go toward the forest with her lover, who flees into the wood, and reproaches her. She laments that she is dying, as her grandmother and mother died soon after a young man was seen escorting them where none was, and says she will enter an abbey. He begs her to stay and admits that what he saw was a lie, and she makes him swear at a church, before their kin, that he saw no man with her and will never speak of it again. Women, the proverb says, have one art more than the devil.

D'un vilein vueil ici cunter,

Of-a vilein I-wish here to-tell

ki od sa femme vit aler

who with his wife saw to-go

vers la forest sun dru od li.

toward the forest her beloved with her

Après curut; cil s'en fuï,

After he-ran that-one himself-thence fled

5 si s'est dedenz le bois musciez,

so himself-be-is within the wood hidden

e il retourne tuz iriez.

and he returns all angry

Sa femme laidì e blasma;

His wife he-reviled and blamed

e la dame li demanda

and the lady of-him asked

pur quei parlot issi vers li,

for what he-spoke thus toward her

e sis baruns li respondi

10

and her husband to-her answered

qu'il ot veü sun lecheür,

that-he had seen her lecher

ki li fist hunte e deshonur,

who to-him did shame and dishonor

aler od li vers la forest.

to-go with her toward the forest

'Sire', fet ele, 'se vus plest,

Lord says she if you it-pleases

pur amur Deu, dites mei veir!

15

for love (of-)God tell me truth

Quidastes vus hume veeir

Thought you man to-see

aler od mei? Nel me celer!

to-go with me Not-it from-me hide

'Jel vi', fet il, 'el bois entrer.'

I-it saw says he into-the wood to-enter

'Lasse', fet ele, 'morte sui!

Wretched says she dead I-am

Demain murray u uncore hui!

20

Tomorrow I-shall-die or yet today

A m'aiuele avint altresì

To my-grandmother it-happened likewise

e a ma mere, kar jel vi:

and to my mother for I-it saw

un poi devant lur finement,

a little before their end

ceo fu seü apertement,

that was known openly

25 qu'uns bachelers les cunduieit,
that-a young-man them escorted
 la u od eles rien n'aveit.
there where with them anything not-there-was
 Or sai jeo bien, pres est ma fins.
Now know I well near is my end
 Mandez, sire, tuz mes cusins,
Summon lord all my cousins
 si departiruns nostre avoir!
so we-shall-divide our wealth

30 N'os el siecle plus remaneir:
Not-I-dare in-the world more to-remain
 od tute la meie partie
with all the mine part
 me metrai en une abeie.'
myself I-shall-put in an abbey
 Li vileins l'ot, merci li crie.
The villain it-bears mercy to-her cries
 'Lessiez ester', fet il, 'amie!
Let-it be says he friend

35 Ne departez de mei ainsi!
Not part from me thus
 Mençunge fu quan que jeo vi.'
Lie was whatever that I saw
 'N'i os', fet ele, 'mes ester,
Not-there I-dare says she more to-stay
 kar de m'alme m'estuet penser,
for of my-soul me-behooves to-think
 ensurquetut pur la grant hunte,
above-all for the great shame

dunt vus avez fet si grant cunte.

40

whereof you have made so great tale

Tuz jurs me sereit reprüvé

All days to-me it-would-be reproached

que malement avreie erré,

that badly I-would-have done

se vus ne jurez sairement,

if you not swear oath

si quel veient nostre parent,

so that-it may-see our kin

que ne veïstes hume od mei.

45

that not you-saw man with me

Puis afiëz la vostre fei

Then pledge the your faith

que ja mes mot n'en sunerez

that ever more word not-thereof you-will-sound

ne ja nel me reprüverez.'

nor ever not-it to-me you-will-reproach

'Voluntiers, dame', il li respunt.

Willingly lady he to-her answers

A un mustier ensemble vunt:

50

To a minster together they-go

la li jura ceo qu'ele quist

there to-her he-swore that which-she sought

e plus asez qu'el ne li dist.

and more much than-she — to-him said

Pur ceo dit hum en reprüvier

For that says one in proverb

que femmes sevent engignier:

that women know-how to-trick

55 les veziëes nunverables

the cunning-ones untruthful

unt un art plus que li diables.

have one art more than the devil

De volucris et rege eorum

XLVI • THE BIRDS AND THEIR KING

The birds, choosing a king, consider the cuckoo for his loud cry. The titmouse tests him: she fouls his back, and he says not a word. A bird who dares not answer the least of birds, she says, would avenge himself poorly on a great one, so they choose the eagle. One should not make a lord of a chatterer who has only words.

Des oiseals dit ki s'assemblerent

Of-the birds he-tells who themselves-assembled

a parlement, si esguarderent

at parliament so decided

qu'entre els deüssent avoir rei,

that-among them they-ought to-have king

kis governast par dreite fei.

who-them should-govern by right faith

Chescuns duta de mesprisun

Each feared of mistake

a faire cele electiun;

at to-make that election

tuit en esteient esbaï,

all thereof were dismayed

quant del cuccu oënt le cri.

when of-the cuckoo they-bear the cry

Ne sorent quels oisels ceo fu,

Not they-knew what bird that was

mes que tuz tens disoit cuccu;

but that all time it-said cuckoo

mult le pot l'um de loinz oïr,

much it could one from afar to-bear

5

10

kar tut le bois fist retentir.

for all the wood it-made to-resound

Tuit diseient en lur gargun

All said in their jargon

e afermoënt par raisun

and affirmed by reason

15 que cil oisels, ki si chantout

that that bird which so sang

e si grant noise demenout,

and so great noise made

deveit bien estre reis e sire

ought well to-be king and lord

de gouverner un grant empire.

of to-govern a great empire

S'il fust si pruz e si vaillant

If-he were so worthy and so valiant

20 en ses uevres cum en ses chanz,

in his works as in his songs

a seignur le vuelent avoir;

as lord him they-wish to-have

mes il vuelent primes saveir

but they wish first to-know

sun estre e sun cuntenement.

his being and his bearing

Pur c'esguardent comunement

For that-they-decide in-common

25 ki deit aler en lur message.

who ought to-go on their errand

La mesenge, ki mult est sage,

The titmouse who very is wise

aparcevanz e veziëe,

perceptive and cunning

unt d'ici qu'a lui enveiee.

they-have from-here that-to him sent

La mesenge vola tut dreit

The titmouse flew all straight

d'ici a l'arbre, u il esteit.

from-here to the-tree where he was

Mult s'esteit pres de lui asise,

Very herself-she-was near to him seated

si l'esguarda par grant quointise.

so him-looked-at with great cleverness

Ne preisa guaires sa maniere,

Not she-prized much his manner

kar il faiseit malvaise chiere.

for he made bad face

Uncor voldra plus halt munter,

Yet she-will-wish more high to-climb

sun curage volt espruver:

his heart she-wished to-test

sur une branche en halt sailli,

on a branch on high she-leaped

desur le dos li esmelti.

upon the back to-him she-dunged

Unkes li cuccus mot ne dist

Ever the cuckoo word not said

ne peiur semblant ne l'en fist.

nor worse look not to-her-thereof made

Ariere s'en vet la mesenge.

Back herself-thence goes the titmouse

30

35

40

Le cuccu laidist e blastenge:

The cuckoo she-reviles and blames

ja de lui ne ferunt seignur.

ever of him not they-will-make lord

As altres dist la deshonor

To-the others she-told the dishonor

45 e la hunte qu'el li fist grant:

and the shame that-she to-him did great

'Unc n'en mustra peiur semblant.

Ever not-thereof he-showed worse look

S'uns granz oisels li mesfaiseit,

If-a great bird to-him should-do-wrong

malvaisement s'en vengereit,

basely himself-thereof he-would-avenge

quant envers li ne s'osa prendre,

when toward her not himself-be-dared to-take

50 ki est de tuz oisels li mendre.

who is of all birds the least

Eslisent tel ki seit vaillanz,

Let-them-elect such who may-be valiant

pruz e sages e enpernaz!

worthy and wise and enterprising

Reis deit estre mult dreituriers,

King ought to-be very righteous

en justise reides e fiers.'

in justice stiff and fierce

55 A cel conseil se sunt tenu,

To that counsel themselves they-are held

si unt esguardé e veü
so they-have decided and seen
 que de l'aigle ferunt lur rei;
that of the-eagle they-will-make their king
 si vus sai bien dire pur quei:
so to-you I-know well to-say for what
 li aigles a bele grandur,
the eagle has fair size
 si est assez de grant valor;
so he-is quite of great worth
 mult est sobres e atemprez;
very he-is sober and temperate
 s'une feiz est bien saülez,
if-one time he-is well sated
 bien repuet jeüner après,
well he-can-in-turn to-fast after
 qu'il n'est de preie trop engrés.
that-he not-is for prey too eager
 Princes se deit bien reposer,
Prince himself ought well to-rest
 ne deit mie tuz jurs pener,
not he-ought at-all all days to-toil
 lui ne sun regne travailler
himself nor his realm to-torment
 ne la povre gent eissillier.
nor the poor folk to-ruin
 Issi l'unt fet cum jeo vus di.
Thus it-they-have done as I to-you say

60

65

70 Par cest essample mustre ici

By this example he-shows here

qu'um ne deit pas faire seignur

that-one not ought at-all to-make lord

de malvais hume jangleür,

of bad man chatterer

u il n'a se parole nun.

where there not-is except speech not

Tels se nobleie par tençun

Such-a-one himself ennobles by quarreling

75 e vult manacier e parler,

and wishes to-threaten and to-speak

ki mult petit fet a duter.

who very little makes to fear

De equo vendito

XLVII • THE HORSE FOR SALE

A villen asks twenty shillings for a horse, and his neighbor offers less. They agree to accept the price named by the first man they meet at market, and a one-eyed man says ten. The villen refuses, and the neighbor takes him to court, where he argues that a man who saw one side of the horse valued it at half. Everyone laughs, and he leaves with his horse. Whoever stands alone before a court should speak cleverly, for a wise man often turns his wrong to right.

D'un vilein nus racunte ci,

Of-a villen to-us he-tells here

ki aveit un cheval nurri.

who had a horse nourished

Tant l'ot guardé, qu'il le volt vendre,

So-long it-he-had kept that-he it wished to-sell

deniers en volt avoir e prendre;

pennies thereof he-wished to-have and to-take

pur vint solz, ceo dist, le durra.

for twenty shillings that he-said it he-will-give

Uns suens veisins le bargaigna,

A his-own neighbor it bargained-for

mes n'i volt mie tant doner;

but not-there he-wished at-all so-much to-give

al marchié les covint aler.

to-the market them behooved to-go

Icil, qui li chevaux esteit,

He whose the horse was

5

- 10 li otria qu'il li larreit
to-him granted that-he to-him would-let
 al pris que li huem i metreit
at-the price which the man thereon would-put
 ki encuntre els primes vendreit,
who toward them first should-come
 des qu'il vendreient al marchié.
from that-they should-come to-the market
 De tutes parz l'unt otrié.
On all sides it-they-have granted
- 15 Quant el marchié furent entré,
When into-the market they-were entered
 un hume borgne unt encuntré,
a man one-eyed they-have met
 ki le destre ueil aveit perdu.
who the right eye had lost
 Ensemble od els l'unt retenu,
Together with them him-they-have held
 si li demandent sun avis
so of-him they-ask his opinion
- 20 que del cheval die le pris.
that of-the horse he-may-tell the price
 Il lur respunt que dis solz valt,
He to-them answers that ten shillings it-is-worth
 s'il est ignels e suëf alt.
if-it is swift and gently goes
 Cil, ki le cheval bargaigna,
He who the horse bargained-for
 de la sue part l'otria;
for the his-own part it-granted

mes li altre le cuntredit,

25

but the other it gainsays

kar trop l'aveit preisié petit.

for too it-he-bad prized little

Tant l'en a cil dit e hasté,

So-much him-thereof has that-one told and pressed

qu'a la justise l'a mené,

that-to the justice him-he-has led

si li mustra cument il fu;

so to-him he-showed how it was

e li vileins a respundu,

30

and the villein has answered

ja sun cheval n'avra pur tant

ever his horse not-he-will-have for so-much

ne ne tendra le covenant.

nor not he-will-hold the covenant

Cil volt mustrer raisnablement

He wished to-show reasonably

que bien li deit tenir covent,

that well to-him he-ought to-hold covenant

quant pur lui ne fu mespreisiez

35

since by him not it-was misprized

ne pur l'autre plus avilliez;

nor by the-other more debased

unc nel cunut ne nel vit mes.

ever not-him he-knew nor not-him he-saw before

Li vileins li a dit après

The villein to-him has said after

qu'il ne deit tenir sun esguart,

that-he not ought to-hold his judgment

- 40 kar il ne vit fors d'une part:
for he not saw except from-one side
 pur ceo l'aveit demi preisié,
for that it-be-had half prized
 qu'il n'en veeit fors la meitié;
that-be not-thereof saw except the half
 ne pot mie d'un ueil veoir
not he-could at-all with-one eye to-see
 que li chevaux devait valoir.
what the horse ought to-be-worth
- 45 Icil, ki entur els esteient
Those who around them were
 e le vilein parler oïent,
and the villain to-speak heard
 le turnerent a gaberie;
it turned to mockery
 n'i a celui ki ne s'en rie.
not-there is one who not himself-thereat may-laugh
 Od sun cheval s'en est alez:
With his horse himself-thence he-is gone
- 50 par bel parler s'est delivrez.
by fair speaking himself-be-is delivered
 Pur ceo nus vult ici mustrer
For that to-us he-wishes here to-show
 e enseigner e doctriener:
and to-teach and to-instruct

ki qu'unkes seit si entrepris

who that-ever may-be so hard-pressed

e n'ait od sei ses bons amis

and not-may-have with himself his good friends

ki li sacent conseil doner,

who to-him may-know counsel to-give

que bien se deit cuntreguarder,

that well himself he-ought to-guard

se parler deit devant justise,

if to-speak he-must before justice

qu'en sa parole ait tel cointise,

that-in his speech he-may-have such cleverness

par mi tute sa mesprisun

through middle-of all his misdeed

qu'i seit semblance de raisun.

that-there may-be semblance of reason

Li sages huem en grant destreit

The wise man in great strait

turne suvent sun tort a dreit.

turns often his wrong to right

55

60

De fure et sortilega

XLVIII · THE THIEF AND THE WITCH

A witch finds a thief asleep and promises to help him whenever he calls on her. Caught stealing and led to the gallows, he calls on her three times, and she answers that she will help him no more. No one should believe in augury or sorcery: God forbids it, the body goes into exile, and the soul into peril.

D'un larrun cunte ki giseit

Of-a thief he-tells who lay

suz un buissun, si se dormeit.

under a bush so himself slept

Une sorciere le trova,

A witch him found

lez lui s'asist, si l'esveilla;

beside him herself-she-sat so him-she-woke

5 sil cumença a conseilhier

so-him she-began to counsel

que tuz jurs tienge sun mestier:

that all days he-should-hold his trade

ele par tut li aidera

she by all him will-help

en tuz les lius u il irra;

in all the places where he will-go

ne li estuet niënt duter,

not him it-bebooves at-all to-fear

10 pur qu'il la vueille reclamer.

for [provided] that-be her may-wish to-invoke

Dunc fu li lere senz poür.

Then was the thief without fear

Eissi avint que par un jur

Thus it-happened that on a day

fu entrepris a larrecin,

he-was caught in theft

si l'i troverent si veisin,

so him-there found his neighbors

si li diënt qu'il iert penduz,

so to-him they-say that-he will-be hanged

kar malement s'est cuntenuz.

for badly himself-be-is conducted

Il a la sorciere mandee,

He has the witch summoned

si l'a a conseil apelee,

so her-be-has to counsel called

si li prie que li aidast.

so of-her he-prays that him she-should-belp

Cele li dist qu'il ne dutast,

She to-him said that-he not should-fear

a seür fust e tut en pes!

in safety he-should-be and all in peace

Quant des furches esteient pres,

When to-the gallows they-were near

si l'apela li lere a sei.

so her-called the thief to himself

'Dame', fet il, 'delivrez mei!'

Lady says he deliver me

'Va', fet ele, 'ne dute rien!'

Go says she not fear anything

Jeo te deliverrai tresbien.'

I thee shall-deliver very-well

15

20

25

Quant el col li mistrent la hart,

When on-the neck to-him they-put the halter

e il cria de l'altre part

and he cried from the-other side

la tierce feiz a la sorciere

the third time to the witch

30 que li membrast en quel maniere

that to-her should-remember in what manner

l'aseüra suz le buissun.

him-she-assured under the bush

El li respunt par fals sermun:

She to-him answers with false speech

'Puis cele hure t'ai bien aidie

Since that hour thee-I-have well helped

e meintenu e conseillié:

and maintained and counseled

35 mes or te vei si demener,

but now thee I-see so to-behave

que ne te sai conseil duner.

that not thee I-know counsel to-give

Purpense tei que tu feras!

Bethink thee what thou wilt-do

Kar ja par mei conseil n'avras.'

For ever by me counsel not-thou-wilt-have

Pur ceo chastie tute gent

For that he-warns all folk

40 qu'il ne creient, Deus le defent,

that-they not believe God it forbids

en augure n'en sorcerie;

in augury nor-in sorcery

kar traïz est ki s'i afie:

for betrayed is who himself-therein trusts

li cors en est mis en eissil,

the body thereby is put in exile

e l'alme vet en grant peril.

and the-soul goes into great peril

De fabro et securi

XLIX · THE SMITH AND THE AXE

A smith forges an axe but cannot use it until it has a helve. He asks the trees which wood to use, and they advise the blackthorn, whose bark and root are hard to break. With the finished axe he cuts down the thorn. So the wicked, once a worthy man has raised them to wealth, repay him with shame and harm.

Uns fevre fist une cuigniee

A smith made an axe

dure e trenchant e bien forgiee;

hard and cutting and well forged

mes ne s'en pot niënt aidier

but not himself-thereby he-could at-all to-help

ne od li ne pot rien trenchier,

nor with it not he-could anything to-cut

5 de ci qu'ele fust enmanchiee

from here that-it were helved

e d'alcun fust apareilliee.

and with-some wood fitted

Al bois ala pur demander

To-the wood he-went for to-ask

a chescun fust qu'il pot trover,

of each tree that-he could to-find

al quel il li loënt entendre,

to-the which they him advise to-attend

10 del quel il puisse manche prendre.

from-the which he may helve to-take

Quant ensemble en orent parlé,

When together thereof they-had spoken

comunement li unt loé
in-common to-him they-have advised

qu'il prenge de la neire espine;
that-he should-take of the black thorn

neïs l'escorce e la racine
even the-bark and the root

en est mult dure a depescier:
thereof is very hard to break

15

de cel la puet bien enmanchier.
of that it he-can well to-belve

Li fevre a lur conseil creü,
The smith has their counsel believed

kar ne l'unt mie deceü.
for not him-they-have at-all deceived

De l'espine a le manche pris,
Of the-thorn he-has the belve taken

si l'a en sa cuigniee asis.
so it-he-has in his axe set

20

Od meïsmes cele cuigniee
With same that axe

a puis l'espine detrenchiee;
he-has then the-thorn cut-down

mal gueredun li a rendu,
evil reward to-it he-has rendered

que de li ot sun manche eü.
that from it he-had his belve had

Tut altresì est des malvais,
All likewise it-is of-the wicked

25

des tresfeluns e des engrés:
of-the very-felonious and of-the fierce

quant uns prozdum les met avant

when a worthy-man them puts forward

e par lui sunt riche e manant,

and by him they-are rich and wealthy

s'il se surpueent mielz de lui,

if-they themselves may-become-stronger better than him

30 tuz jurs li funt hunte e ennui;

all days to-him they-do shame and trouble

a celui funt il tut le pis,

to him do they all the worst

ki plus les a al desus mis.

who most them has to-the top put

De lupo et ariete

L · THE WOLF AND THE RAM

A wolf vows to eat no flesh during the forty days of Lent. In a wood he finds a fat ram and argues with himself that if he leaves it someone else will take it, and that he can eat the ram and call it a salmon, which is better and dearer. So a man of bad heart cannot give up his excess, gluttony, or lechery, and keeps no vow or promise.

Jadis avint qu'uns lous pramist

Formerly it-happened that-a wolf promised

que char ne mangereit, ceo dist,

that flesh not he-would-eat that he-said

les quarante jurs de quaresme;

the forty days of lent

a tant en aveit mis sun esme.

at so-much thereof he-had put his reckoning

En un bois trova un multun

In a wood he-found a ram

cras e refait, senz la tuisun.

fat and well-fed without the shearing

A sei meïsme demanda:

To himself same he-asked

‘Qu’est ceo’, fet il, ‘que jeo vei la?’

What-is that says he which I see there

C’est uns multuns, ceo m’est a vis!

That-is a ram that to-me-is to seeming

Se pur ceo nun que j’ai pramis

Except for that not that I-have promised

que nule char ne mangereie,

that any flesh not I-would-eat

5

10

de sun costé me refereie.

of his side myself I-would-refresh

Ore ai', fet il, 'parlé folie!

Now I-have says he spoken folly

Jeol vei tut sul senz cumpaignie;

I-him see all alone without company

15 ceo m'est a vis, se jeo nel guar,

that to-me-is to seeming if I not-him guard

tels i vendra d'alcune part,

such-a-one there will-come from-some part

ki l'en merra ensemble od sei,

who him-thence will-lead together with himself

si nel larra niënt pur mei.

so not-him will-leave at-all for me

Jeo puis bien prendre le multun,

I can well to-take the ram

20 sil mangerai pur un salmun;

so-him I-shall-eat for a salmon

mielz valt li salmons a mangier,

better is-worth the salmon to eat

e sil puet l'um vendre plus chier.'

and so-it can one to-sell more dear

Si vet d'ume de malvais quer:

So it-goes of-man of bad heart

il ne puet lessier a nul fuer

he not can to-leave at any price

25 sun surfet ne sa glutunie;

his excess nor his gluttony

ja encuntre sa lecherie

ever against his lechery

ne huem ne femme lecheresse

neither man nor woman lecherous

ne guardera vou ne pramesse.

not will-keep vow nor promise

De simia et prole eius

LI · THE APE AND HER CHILD

A she-ape shows her child to all the beasts, who think her a fool, and the lion tells her he never saw an uglier beast and bids her carry it home, for every fox prizes his own tail. Going home in sorrow, she meets a bear, who cleverly asks to see the child all the beasts call so fair, and when she hands it over, he eats it at once. No one should reveal his private affairs or thoughts: great harm comes of disclosure, and the world is not all loyal.

Une singesse ala mustrant

A she-ape went showing

a tutes bestes sun enfant

to all beasts her child

(e il la teneient pur fole

and they her held for fool

e par semblant e par parole),

both by look and by word

5 tant qu'al liün l'ala mustrer,

so-far that-to-the lion him-she-went to-show

si li comence a demander

so of-him she-begins to ask

s'il fu mult bels, e il li dit

if-he was very fair and he to-her says

qu'unc plus laide beste ne vit;

that-ever more ugly beast not he-saw

porter li rueve a sa maisun,

to-carry to-her he-bids to her house

10 e si recort ceste raisun:

and so she-should-recall this saying

chescuns gupiz prise sa cue,

each fox prizes his tail

si s'esmerveille qu'ele est sue.

so himself-marvels that-it is his

Cele s'en va triste e dolente.

She herself-thence goes sad and sorrowful

Un urs encuntre en mi la sente.

A bear she-meets in middle-of the path

Li urs estut, si l'esguarda;

The bear stood so her-looked-at

par quointise l'araisuna.

with cleverness her-be-addressed

'Vei jeo', fet il, 'iluec l'enfant,

See I says he there the-child

dunt les bestes parolent tant,

of-which the beasts speak so-much

ki tant par est bels e gentiz?'

who so very is fair and noble

'Oïl', fet ele, 'c'est mis fiz.'

Yes says she that-is my son

'Bailliez le ça, tant que jol bes;

Hand him hitber so-long that I-bim kiss

kar jeol vueil veoir de plus pres.'

for I-bim wish to-see from more near

Cele li baille, e il le prent,

She to-bim hands and he it takes

si l'a mangié hastivement.

so it-be-has eaten hastily

15

20

25 Pur ceo ne devreit nuls mustrer

For that not ought any to-show

sa priveté ne sun penser.

his private-affairs nor his thought

De tel chose puet hum joïr,

Of such thing can one to-enjoy

ki ne puet mie a tuz plaisir;

which not can at-all to all to-please

par descovrance vient granz mals,

through uncovering comes great ill

30 n'est pas li siecles tuz leials.

not-is at-all the world all loyal

De dracone et homine

LII · THE DRAGON AND THE VILLEIN

A dragon, testing a villein who promises loyalty, gives him an egg to keep, saying his life lies in it. The villein breaks it, hoping to kill the dragon and take his gold. The dragon returns, sees the shell, and ends their companionship. No one should entrust gold or treasure to a cheat, a felon, or a miser.

Or nus recunte d'un dragun,

Now to-us he-tells of-a dragon

qu'uns vileins prist a compaignun,

whom-a villein took as companion

e cil suvent li premeteit

and he often to-him promised

que leialment le servireit.

that loyally him he-would-serve

Li draguns le volt esprover,

The dragon him wished to-test

cum il se pot en lui fiër:

how he himself could in him to-trust

un oef li cumande a garder,

an egg to-him he-commands to keep

si li dist qu'il voleit errer,

so to-him said that-he wished to-journey

de l'oef garder mult li preia.

of the-egg to-keep much him he-prayed

E li vileins li demanda,

And the villein of-him asked

pur quei li cumandot ainsi;

for what to-him he-commanded thus

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e li draguns li respundi

and the dragon to-him answered

que dedenz l'oef ot enbatu

that within the-egg he-had driven

trestut sun fiu e sa vertu;

all his fief and his strength

15 tost sereit morz, s'il fust bruisiez.

soon he-would-be dead if-it were broken

Quant li draguns fu esloigniez,

When the dragon was gone-far

si s'est li vileins purpensez

so himself-is the villein bethought

que li oés n'iert pur lui gardez:

that the egg not-will-be by him kept

par l'oef ocira le dragun,

by the-egg he-will-kill the dragon

20 sun or avra tut a bandun.

his gold he-will-have all at will

Quant li oés esteit depesciez

When the egg was broken

e li draguns fu repairez,

and the dragon was returned

l'eschale vit gesir a terre,

the-shell he-saw to-lie on ground

si li cumença a enquerre

so him he-began to inquire

25 pur qu'il ot l'oef si mesguardé.

for what-he had the-egg so ill-kept

Or sot il bien sa volenté,

Now knew he well his will

bien aparçut sa tricherie:

well he-perceived his treachery

departie est lur cumpaignie.

parted is their company

Pur ceo nus dit en cest sermun,

For that to-us he-says in this sermon

qu'a tricheür ne a felun

that-to cheat nor to felon

ne deit l'um comander sun or

not ought one to-entrust his gold

n'abandoner son chier tresor.

nor-to-band-over his dear treasure

En coveitus ne en aver

In covetous-one nor in miser

ne se deit nuls trop afiër.

not himself ought any too to-trust

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De eremita

LIII · THE RECLUSE

A villein keeps asking a recluse why Adam ate the fruit. The recluse hides a mouse under a bowl and forbids him to look under it. The villein lifts the bowl and the mouse escapes; the recluse tells him to stop blaming Adam, whom the devil tempted through his wife. Each should reprove himself, not others.

D'un reclus cunte ki aveit

Of-a recluse he-tells who had

un vilein, ki od lui esteit.

a villein who with him was

Quant li reclus de deu parlot,

When the recluse of God spoke

e li vileins li demandot,

and the villein of-him asked

5 pur quei Adam manja le fruit,

for what Adam ate the fruit

par qu'umain pueple aveit destruit,

by which-human people he-had destroyed

e, quant il la pume manja,

and when he the apple ate

pur quei deus ne li parduna.

for what God not to-him forgave

Al reclus suvent en pesa,

To-the recluse often thereof it-weighed

tant qu'une feiz se purpensa

so-much that-one time himself he-bethought

que le vilein apaisereit

that the villein he-would-appease

de la demande qu'il faiseit.

of the question that-he made

Une grant gate demanda;

A great bowl he-asked-for

sur une table l'adenta;

on a table it-he-turned-over

une suriz ot desuz mise.

a mouse he-had beneath put

Puis defendi qu'en nule guise

Then he-forbade that-in any wise

al vilein qu'il n'i adesast

to-the villein that-he there should-touch

ne que desuz ne regardast;

nor that beneath — he-should-look

kar il ireit a un mustier

for he would-go to a minster

a ureisun pur deu preier.

at prayer for God to-pray

Quant li reclus s'en fu alez,

When the recluse himself-thence was gone

si s'est li vileins purpensez,

so himself-is the villein bethought

que grant merveille li sembla

that great marvel to-him it-seemed

de la gate que il guarda:

of the bowl which he guarded

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- 25 ne se pot mie detenir
not himself he-could at-all to-restrain
 qu'il ne la vueille descovrir
that-he not it may-wish to-uncover
 pur veeir ceo que desuz fu.
for to-see that which beneath was
 Quant il l'osta, si a veü
When he it-removed so has seen
 la suriz, ki li eschapa.
the mouse which from-him escaped
- 30 E quant sis sire repaire,
And when his lord returned
 mult s'en curuça durement,
much himself-thereat he-was-angered sternly
 si demanda par mal talent,
so he-asked in ill will
 pur quei il ot la gate ostee,
for what he had the bowl removed
 n'ot sa defense pru gardeee.
not-he-had his prohibition well kept
- 35 Li vileins li respunt après:
The villain to-him answers after
 'Sire', fet il, 'jeo n'en poi mes!
Lord says he I not-thereof could more
 U li quers me deüst partir,
Either the heart to-me should to-break
 u jeo l'alasse descovrir.'
or I it-should-go to-uncover
 'U est la suriz devenue?
Where is the mouse gone

Pur quei ne l'as tu detenue?

For what not it-hast thou held

Ta folie fust pardonee.'

Thy folly would-be pardoned

'Tost', fet il, 'me fu eschapee.'

Quickly says he from-me it-was escaped

'Amis', fet il, 'or lai ester!

Friend says he now leave be

Ne vueilles mes Adam blasmer,

Not wish more Adam to-blame

se le fruit de l'arbre manja,

if the fruit of the-tree he-ate

que nostre sire li vea:

which our lord to-him forbade

li diables li conseilla,

the devil him counseled

ki par sa femme l'engigna,

who by his wife him-tricked

e li pramist si grant honur,

and to-him promised so great honor

que pers sereit al creatur.'

that peer he-would-be to-the creator

Pur ceo ne deit nuls enculper

For that not ought any to-accuse

altrui faisance ne blasmer

another's deed nor to-blame

ne metre fame sur sun prisme;

nor to-put report on his neighbor

chescuns reprenge sei meïsmel

each let-him-reprove himself same

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55 Tels poet blasmer le fet d'altrui,

Such-a-one can to-blame the deed of-another

ki mielz devreit reprendre lui.

who better ought to-reprove himself

De rustico orante et equum petente
LIV · THE VILLEIN WHO PRAYED FOR A HORSE

A villen ties his dear horse outside a church and prays God for another like it. While he prays, thieves steal his horse, and he goes back to beg only for his own, since he will never have one so good. No one should pray for more than he needs, but keep in loyalty what God has given him.

D'un vilein cunte ki entra

Of-a villen he-tells who entered

en un mustier e si ura.

into a minster and so prayed

Un suen cheval aveit mult chier,

A his-own horse he-bad very dear

si l'atacha hors del mustier.

so it-he-tied outside of-the minster

A deu requist qu'il li aidast

Of God he-asked that-he him should-help

qu'un altel cheval li donast.

that-a such-another horse to-him he-should-give

Tant cum il fist ceste ureisun,

So-long as he made this prayer

sun cheval emblent li larrun.

his horse steal the thieves

Quant il fu del mustier eissuz,

When he was from-the minster gone-out

si esteit sis chevals perduz.

so was his horse lost

Ariere vet hastivement,

Back he-goes hastily

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si prie deu devotement

so he-prays God devoutly

qu'altre chose ne requereit

that-other thing not he-sought

n'altre cheval mar li durreit,

nor-other horse ill-starred to-him he-would-give

15 mes face li avoir le sien,

but let-him-make him to-have the his-own

kar il n'avra ja mes si buen.

for he not-will-have ever more so good

Pur ceo ne deit nuls huem preier

For that not ought any man to-pray

de plus avoir qu'il n'a mestier:

of more to-have than-he has need

ceo quart que deus li a doné,

that let-him-keep which God to-him has given

20 si li suffise en leialté!

so to-him let-it-suffice in loyalty

De rustico stulte orante

LV · THE VILLEIN WHO PRAYED FOOLISHLY

A villein prays aloud in church for God to help him, his wife, and his children, and nobody else. Another villein answers: God curse you, your wife, and your children, and nobody else! Each should pray so as to harm no one and please God.

Uns vileins ala al mustier

A villein went to-the minster

suventes feiz pur deu preier.

oft times for God to-pray

A deu requist qu'il li aidast

Of God he-asked that-be him should-help

e que sa femme cunseillast

and that his wife he-should-counsel

e ses enfanz e nului plus;

and his children and nobody more

ceste preiere aveit en us.

this prayer he-had in use

Sovent le dist od si halt cri

Often it he-said with so high cry

qu'uns altre vileins l'entendi,

that-an other villein it-heard

si li respunt hastivement:

so to-him he-answers hastily

'Deus te maldie omnipotent,

God thee curse almighty

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ta femme e tes enfanz petiz,

thy wife and thy children little

e nuls altre ne seit maldiz!

and any other not be cursed

Par cest essample vueil retraire:

By this example I-wish to-relate

chescuns deit tel preiere faire,

each ought such prayer to-make

15 ki a la gent ne seit nuisable

whiche to the folk not be harmful

e ki a deu seit acceptable.

and whiche to God be acceptable

De rustico et monedula eius

LVI • THE VILLEIN AND HIS JACKDAW

A villein's neighbor kills his talking jackdaw, and the villein sues. The neighbor bribes the judge with a cordovan bide under his mantle; the judge asks what the bird sang, and when the plaintiff cannot say, rules that he deserves no answer. No prince should put his laws in covetous hands, for justice then perishes.

D'un vilein cunte ki aveit

Of-a villein he-tells who had

une choe, qu'il nurrisset;

a jackdaw which-he nourished

tant la nurri qu'ele parla.

so-long her he-nourished that-she spoke

Uns suens veisins la li tua.

A his-own neighbor her to-him killed

Cil s'en clama a la justise,

He himself-thereof complained to the justice

e si li cunta en quel guise

and so to-him told in what wise

icil oisels suleit parler

that bird was-wont to-speak

les matinees e chanter.

the mornings and to-sing

Li juges dist qu'il ot mesfet;

The judge said that-he had done-wrong

celui a fet sumundre a plet.

him he-has made to-summon to suit

Al jur que cil esteit sumuns,

At-the day that he was summoned

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ki deveit faire sun respuns,

who was-to to-make his answer

de corduan prist une pel,

of cordovan he-took a skin

si l'a mise suz sun mantel.

so it-he-has put under his mantle

15 L'un des chiés laisse dehors pendre,

The-one of-the ends he-lets outside to-hang

que li juges deüst entendre

that the judge might to-understand

qu'il li aporte pur luier,

that-he to-him brings for reward

que de sun plet li deie aidier.

that with his suit him he-should to-help

Le mantel suvent entrovri,

The mantle often he-opened

20 tant que li juges la choisi.

until that the judge it perceived

L'autre vilein fist apeler,

The-other villein he-made to-call

ki s'ert venuz a lui clamer.

who himself-was come to him to-complain

De la choe li demanda,

Of the jackdaw of-him he-asked

que ceo esteit qu'ele chanta

what that was which-she sang

25 e quel parole ele diseit.

and what word she said

Il li respunt qu'il ne saveit.

He to-him answers that-he not knew

'Quant tu', fet il, 'rien ne saveies

Since thou says he anything not knewest

ne sa parole n'entendeies

nor her word not-understoodst

ne niënt n'esteit sa chançons,

nor anything not-was her song

tu n'en deiz ja avoir respuns.'

thou not-thereof oughtest ever to-have answer

Cil s'en ala senz sa dreiture

He himself-thence went without his right

pur le luier, dunt cil prist cure.

for the reward whereof that-one took care

Pur ceo ne deit princes ne reis

For that not ought prince nor king

ses cumandemenz ne ses leis

his commandments nor his laws

a coveitus metre en baillie;

to covetous-one to-put in keeping

kar sa dreiture en est perie.

for his right thereby is perished

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De rustico et nano

LVII · THE VILLEIN AND THE GOBLIN

A villein catches a goblin, who grants him three wishes, and he gives two to his wife. Longing for the marrow in a mutton bone, she wishes him a woodcock's beak, and he gets one; he wishes his face back, and two wishes are wasted. Many lose by believing others: the fool thinks the cunning advise him as themselves.

D'un vilein cunte ki prist ja

Of-a villein he-tells who caught once

un folet, que lung tens guaita.

a goblin which long time he-watched

Cil li dona treis uremenz,

He to-him gave three wishes

pur ceo qu'il nel mustrast as genz.

for that that-he not-him should-show to-the people

5 Li vileins fu joius e liez.

The villein was joyous and glad

Quant a sa femme est repaireiez,

When to his wife he-is returned

les dous uremenz li dona;

the two wishes to-her he-gave

un en retint, pru nel guarda.

one thereof he-kept well not-it be-guarded

Eissi furent bien lungement,

Thus they-were well long

10 qu'il ne firent nul urement,

that-they not made any wish

desqu'a un jur que il aveient

until-to a day that they had

a un mangier, u il esteient,

at a meal where they were

d'une berbiz l'eschine e l'os,

of-a sheep the-spine and the-bone

dunt la meole pareit fors.

whereof the marrow appeared outside

La femme en ot grant desirier,

The wife thereof had great desire

volentiers la volsist mangier;

willingly it she-would to-eat

mes ne la pot avoir as meins,

but not it could to-have in-the hands

si a uré que li vileins

so she-has wished that the villain

eüst tel bec; mult li plaireit,

might-have such beak very to-her it-would-please

cume li witecos aveit.

as the woodcock had

Eissi avint cum ele ura.

Thus it-happened as she wished

E li vileins s'esmerveilla,

And the villain himself-marveled

si a uré qu'en veie fust

so has wished that-on way it-were

e que sun vis meïme eüst.

and that his face same he-had

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25 Dous uremenz unt ja perduz,

Two wishes they-have now lost

que nuls n'en est a pru venuz.

that any not-thereof is to profit come

A plusurs est si avenu:

To many it-is so happened

suventes feiz i unt perdu,

oft times therein they-have lost

ki trop creient altrui parole,

who too believe another's word

30 ki tuz les deceit e afole.

which all them deceives and maddens

Li fols quide del vezié

The fool thinks of-the cunning-one

qu'il le vueille avoir conseillié

that-he him may-wish to-have counseled

si cume sei; mes il i falt,

so as himself but he therein fails

kar tant ne set ne tant ne valt.

for so-much not he-knows nor so-much not he-is-worth

De vulpe et umbra lunae

LVIII · THE FOX AND THE MOON'S REFLECTION

A fox passing a pool at night sees the moon's reflection and takes it for a great cheese. He laps up the water, thinking he can reach the cheese if the pool is lower, and drinks until he bursts. Many a man hopes beyond reason to have all his wishes, and is ruined by it.

D'un gupil dit ki une nuit

Of-a fox he-tells who one night

esteit alez en sun deduit.

was gone into his sport

Sur une mare trespasa.

Over a pool he-passed

Quant dedenz l'ewe regarda,

When within the-water he-looked

l'umbre de la lune a veü;

the-shadow of the moon he-has seen

mes ne sot mie que ceo fu.

but not he-knew at-all what that was

Puis a pensé en sun curage

Then he-has thought in his heart

qu'il ot veü un grant furmage.

that-he had seen a great cheese

L'ewe comença a laper;

The-water he-began to lap

tresbien quida en sun penser,

very-well he-thought in his thought

se l'ewe en la mare fust mendre,

if the-water in the pool were less

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que le furmage peüst prendre.

that the cheese he-could to-take

Tant a beü que il creva:

So-much he-has drunk that he burst

iluec chaï, puis n'en leva.

there he-fell after not-thence he-rose

15 Meinz huem espeire, ultre le dreit

Many-a man hopes beyond the right

e ultre ceo qu'il ne devreit,

and beyond that that-he — ought

aveir tutes ses volentez,

to-have all his wishes

dunt puis est morz e afolez.

whereby after he-is dead and ruined

De lupo et corvo

LIX · THE WOLF AND THE RAVEN

A wolf sees a raven on a sheep's back and calls it a marvel: the raven does as he pleases, while if the wolf sat there, all would cry that he meant to eat the sheep. So it is with the cheat: his conscience reproves him, he fears everyone knows his desires, and it grieves him that no one thinks ill of the loyal.

D'un lou cunte ki vit jadis

Of-a wolf he-tells who saw formerly

u uns corbels esteit asis

where a raven was seated

desur le dos d'une berbiz.

upon the back of-a sheep

Li lous parla od nobles diz:

The wolf spoke with noble words

'Jeo vei', fet il, 'mult grant merveille:

I see says he very great marvel

le corp sur le dos d'une oweille.

the raven on the back of-a sheep

Siet la u siet, dit ceo que dit,

He-sits there where he-sits says that which he-says

fet ceo que fet senz cuntredit:

does that which he-does without gainsaying

mal ne crient il de nule rien.

harm not fears he of any thing

Se j'i seïsse, jeo sai bien

If I-there sat I know well

que tute genz me huërient;

that all folk me would-boot

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de tutes parz m'escrièreient

from all sides at-me-would-cry-out

que jeo la voldreie mangier;

that I her would-wish to-eat

ne m'i larreient aprismier.'

not me-there they-would-let to-approach

15 Issi est il del tricheür:

Thus is it of-the cheat

en esfrei est e en poür

in alarm he-is and in fear

— sa cunsciënce le reprent —

his conscience him reproves

que tuit cunuissent sun talent.

that all know his desire

Forment li peise del leial,

Greatly to-him it-grieves of-the loyal-one

20 que hum ne tient ses fez a mal.

that one not holds his deeds for ill

De vulpe et gallo

LX · THE FOX AND THE COCK

A fox praises a cock's voice and tells him that his father sang even better with his eyes closed. The cock closes his eyes to sing, and the fox seizes him. As the shepherds and dogs give chase, the cock urges the fox to shout back that the cock is his, and when the fox opens his mouth, the cock leaps free and climbs a tall tree. The fox curses the mouth that speaks when it should be silent, the cock the eye that closes when it should watch. Fools talk when they should stop, and keep silent when they should speak.

D'un coc recunte ki estot

Of-a cock he-tells who stood

sur un femier e si chantot.

on a dunghill and so sang

Par de lez lui vint uns gupiz,

By from beside him came a fox

si l'apela par mult beals diz.

so him-called with very fair words

'Sire', fet il, 'mult te vei bel,

Lord says he very thee I-see fair

unkes ne vi si gent oisel.

ever not I-saw so noble bird

Clere voiz as sur tute rien:

Clear voice thou-hast above every thing

fors tun pere, que jeo vi bien,

except thy father whom I saw well

unkes oisels mielz ne chanta;

ever bird better not sang

mes il fist mielz, kar il cluigna.'

but he did better for he closed-his-eyes

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'Si puis jeo faire', dist li cos.

So can I to-do said the cock

Les eles bat, les uiz a clos;

The wings he-beats the eyes he-has closed

chanter quida plus clerement.

to-sing he-thought more clearly

Li gupiz salt avant, sil prent;

The fox leaps forward so-him takes

15 vers la forest od tut s'en va.

toward the forest with all himself-thence goes

Par mi un champ, u il passa,

Through middle-of a field where he passed

current après tuit li pastur;

run after all the shepherds

li chien li huënt tut en tur.

the dogs at-him hoot all in round

'Veiz le gupil, ki le coc tient!

See the fox who the cock holds

20 Mar l'engana, se par ci vient!

Ill-starred him-be-tricked if by here he-comes

'Va', fet li cos, 'si lur escrie

Go says the cock so to-them cry

que jeo sui tuens, ne m'i lai mie!

that I am thine not me-there leave at-all

Li gupiz volt parler en halt,

The fox wished to-speak on high

e li cos de sa buche salt;

and the cock from his mouth leaps

25 sur un halt fust s'en est muntez.

on a high tree himself-thence is climbed

Quant li gupiz s'est reguardez,

When the fox himself-is looked-about

mult par se tint a farcillié,

very much himself he-held for fooled

que li cos l'a si engignié.

that the cock him-has so tricked

De maltalent e de dreite ire

In ill-will and in sheer anger

la buche cumence a maldire,

the mouth he-begins to curse

ki parole quant devreit taire.

which speaks when it-ought to-be-silent

Li cos respunt: 'Si dei jeo faire:

The cock answers So ought I to-do

maldire l'ueil, ki vult cluignier,

to-curse the-eye which wishes to-close

quant il deit garder e guaitier,

when it ought to-guard and to-watch

que mals ne vienge a sun seignur.'

that ill not may-come to his lord

Ceo funt li fol: tuit li plusur

That do the fools all the most

parolent quant deivent cesser,

they-speak when they-ought to-cess

taisent, quant devreient parler.

they-are-silent when they-ought to-speak

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De vulpe et columba

LXI • THE FOX AND THE DOVE

A fox urges a dove on a cross to come down, since a writ from the king has proclaimed peace between beasts and birds. The dove says two knights are riding up with two dogs, and the fox makes for the grove, saying they may not have heard of the writ. So cunning felons deceive many by false speech.

D'un colum cunte ki jadis

Of-a dove he-tells who formerly

s'esteit sur une croiz asis.

himself-he-was on a cross seated

Uns gupiz vint desuz, sil vit.

A fox came below so-him saw

En halt parla, si li a dit:

On high he-spoke so to-him has said

5 'Pur quei siez tu', fet il, 'la sus

For what sittest thou says he there above

en si grant vent? Kar descent jus,

in so great wind Now come-down below

si sié lez mei en cest abri!'

so sit beside me in this shelter

'Jeo n'os, par fei', cil respundi.

I not-dare by faith he answered

'Pur niënt as poür de mei,

For nothing thou-hast fear of me

10 si te sai bien dire pur quei.

so to-thee I-know well to-say for what

Jeo fui ore ainz a un cunté,

I was now before at a county-court

u grant pueple aveit assemblé.

where great people had assembled

Uns briés i vint de part le rei,

A writ there came from part (of-)the king

ki comanda par dreite fei

which commanded by right faith

que beste a altre ne mesface

that beast to other not may-do-harm

n'a nul oisel; ja deu ne place

nor-to any bird ever God not may-please

qu'entre els ait mes si faite guerre!

that-among them there-be more such made war

Pes vult metre dedenz sa terre;

Peace he-wishes to-put within his land

ensemble purrunt mes aler

together they-will-be-able henceforth to-go

oisel e bestes, e juër.'

bird and beasts and to-play

'Dunc descendrai', fet li culuns.

Then I-shall-come-down says the dove

'Mes jeo vei la lez cez buissuns

But I see there beside these bushes

dous chevaliers mult tost aler,

two knights very quickly to-go

si funt dous chiens od els mener.'

so they-make two dogs with them to-lead

Dist li gupiz: 'Sunt il bien pres?'

Said the fox Are they well near

'Il chevalchent', fet il, 'adés.'

They ride says he continually

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'Mielz est qu'en cele grave voise

Better it-is that-into that grove I-go

que par els aie estrif ne noise.

than by them I-may-have strife or noise

Ne sai s'il unt le brief oï,

Not I-know if-they have the writ heard

30 ki vint del rei; jo vus afi:

which came from-the king I to-you assure

ne m'estuvreit pas remuër,

not me-would-behoove at-all to-move

s'il l'eüssent oï cunter.'

if-they it-had heard to-tell

Si vet des feluns veziëz:

So it-goes of-the felons cunning

par els sunt plusur engigniez

by them are many tricked

35 par parole e par fals sermun,

by word and by false speech

cum cil volt faire le colum.

as that-one wished to-do the dove

De aquila et accipitre et columbis

LXII · THE EAGLE, THE GOSHAWK, AND THE DOVES

The eagle is king of the birds and the goshawk his seneschal, though not wholly loyal. Vexed by doves playing below him, the goshawk tells them that if the king flew elsewhere, the game would change and he would punish them. A prince should not keep a covetous or lying seneschal unless he wants to make him his lord.

Li aigles est des oisels reis,

The eagle is of-the birds king

pur ceo qu'il est pruz e curteis,

for that that-be is worthy and courteous

e li osturs sis seneschals,

and the goshawk his seneschal

si n'est il mie tuz leials.

so not-is he at-all wholly loyal

Li aigles sist par un grant chalt

The eagle sat in a great heat

sur la branche d'un chesne en halt.

on the branch of-an oak on high

Li osturs sist plus bas de lui,

The goshawk sat more low than him

guarda a val, si ot ennui

he-looked to below so had trouble

des coluns, ki desuz voloënt,

of-the doves which below flew

jus a la terre entre els juoënt.

down to the earth among them they-played

'Vus juëz', fet il, 'desuz mei;

You play says he below me

5

10

veez ci l'aigle, nostre rei.

see here the-eagle our king

S'il se fust de ci remuëz

If-he himself were from here moved

e sur un altre fust volez,

and on an other tree flown

15 li gius ireit en altre guise:

the game would-go in other wise

jeo ferieie de vus justise!

I would-do on you justice

Pur ceo ne deit princes voleir

For that not ought prince to-wish

seneschal en sun regne avoir

seneschal in his realm to-have

ne coveitus ne menteür,

neither covetous nor liar

20 s'il nel vuelt faire sun seignur.

if-he not-him wishes to-make his lord

De equo et agro
LXIII · THE HORSE AND THE HEDGE

A horse sees grass in a meadow but does not notice the hedge around it, and is wounded leaping in. Many covet their desires so much that they do not see the hard fortune that follows.

Uns chevaux vit u herbe crut

A horse saw where grass grew

dedenz un pre, mes n'aparçut

within a meadow but not-he-perceived

la haie dunt fu clos li prez:

the hedge wherewith was enclosed the meadow

al saillir enz s'est astelez.

at-the leaping in himself-he-is staked

Ceo funt plusur, bien le savez:

5

That do many well it you-know

tant coveitent lur volentez,

so-much they-covet their wills

ne veient pas quel aventure

not they-see at-all what chance

en vient après pesanz e dure.

thence comes after heavy and hard

De homine et equo et hirco

LXIV · THE MAN, THE HORSE, AND THE GOAT

A rich man prices a horse and a goat at twenty shillings each. A merchant wants only the horse, since the goat is worthless, but the rich man insists that he buy both or neither. So the ignorant prize their bad habits as much as their good ones and cannot give up their foolish desires.

Uns riches huem, ceo dit, aveit

A rich man that he-says had

un cheval, que vendre voleit

a horse which to-sell he-wished

e un suen buc tut a un pris.

and a his-own goat all at one price

Pur vint solz dist a ses amis

For twenty shillings he-said to his friends

5 que chescun d'els voleit duner,

that each of-them he-wished to-give

se nuls les volsist achater.

if any them wished to-buy

Uns marcheanz les bargaigna;

A merchant them bargained-for

le cheval dit qu'il retendra,

the horse he-says that-he will-keep

mes li bus ne valeit niënt.

but the goat not was-worth anything

Li riches huem par maltalent

10

The rich man in ill-will

dist qu'ambedous achatereit

said that-both he-would-buy

u ambedous les i larreit.

or both them there he-would-leave

Veeir poëz del nunsachant,

To-see you-can of-the ignorant-one

ki sun mal us prise altretant

who his bad custom prizes as-much

cume sun bon tut oëlmēt:

15

as his good all equally

ne poet lessier sun fol talent.

not he-can to-leave his foolish desire

De lupo et scarabaeo

LXV · THE WOLF AND THE BEETLE

A beetle crawls into a wolf lying alone in a grove. The wolf leaps about until it comes out, insults it, and is challenged to battle. The wolf gathers the beasts; the beetle brings bees, hornets, flies, gadflies, wasps, and gnats. On the stag's advice the beasts bind their tails, but a wasp stings the stag, who fouls himself and bursts his band, and the wolf orders a retreat. Those who belittle their inferiors are shamed in their great need, and the lesser help themselves better.

Ci nus recunte cum uns lous

Here to-us he-tells how a wolf

en une grave jut tuz sous.

in a grove lay all alone

Desuz la cue a val li entre

Under the tail to below into-him enters

uns escharboz de ci el ventre.

a beetle from here into-the belly

5 Li lous salt sus, si s'esveilla;

The wolf leaps up so himself-woke

mult anguissusement cria.

very anguishedly he-cried

Tant se vultra e tant sailli

So-much himself he-rolled and so-much leaped

que li escharboz s'en eissi.

that the beetle himself-thence went-out

Quant li lous l'esguarda e vit,

When the wolf him-looked-at and saw

10 mult par li sembla grant despit.

very much to-him seemed great insult

‘A, las’, fet il, ‘dolenz, chaitis,

Ab alas says he sorrowful wretch

ki dedenz mei t’esteies mis!’

who within me thyself-wert put

Li escharboz a respundu:

The beetle has answered

‘Certes’, fet il, ‘bien est seü

Surely says he well is known

que jeo vail asez mierz de tei,

that I am-worth much better than thee

quant tu demeines tel buffei.

since thou makest such boast

Ore asemble ta compaignie

Now assemble thy company

e cels ki te sunt en aïe,

and those who to-thee are in aid

e jeo rassemblerai mes genz

and I shall-assemble-in-turn my people

e mes amis e mes parenz:

and my friends and my kin

demain tenum une bataille!

tomorrow let-us-bold a battle

En mi cel champ seium senz faille!’

In middle-of that field let-us-be without fail

Li lous l’a issi otrié.

The wolf it-has thus granted

Pur ses aidanz a enveié.

For his helpers he-has sent

Li escharboz manda les es;

The beetle summoned the bees

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n'i aveit nul frelun remés

not-there was any hornet left

ne grosse musche ne cornet

nor big fly nor gadfly

ne bone wespe ne wibet.

nor good wasp nor gnat

Quant il deveient aprismier,

When they were-to to-approach

30 li lous volt les suens enseignier;

the wolf wished the his-own to-teach

cunseil, ceo dist, lur estuet prendre:

counsel that he-said them it-behooves to-take

s'il se vuelent vers els defendre,

if-they themselves wish against them to-defend

chescun estuet garder sa coue,

each it-behooves to-guard his tail

u il irra a male voue.

or he will-go to ill sight

35 Li cers lur dist: 'Nus nus benduns;

The stag to-them said We ourselves let-us-bind

de cele part nus estupuns,

on that side ourselves let-us-stop-up

qu'il ne puissent de la entrer:

that-they not may from there to-enter

dunc purrum plus seür aler!'

then we-shall-be-able more safe to-go

Issi l'unt fet comunement;

Thus it-they-have done in-common

40 bendé se sunt mult fermement.

bound themselves they-are very firmly

Mes quant ceo vint a l'assemblee,

But when that came to the-assembly

une wespe s'est desreee,

a wasp herself-is broken-ranks

si puint le cerf par les costez,

so stings the stag by the sides

e il sailli tuz esfreez,

and he leaped all frightened

qu'il se mesfist vileinement

that-be himself misbehaved basely

e la bende desrunt e fent.

and the band bursts and splits

Ceo dist li lous, ki esteit pres:

That said the wolf who was near

'Seignur, pur deu, n'i estum mes!

Lords for God not-there let-us-stay more

Mult par nus est mesavenu,

Very much to-us it-is befallen-til

quant li liën sunt desrumpu.

since the bonds are burst

Fuium nus en hastivement!

Let-us-flee ourselves thence hastily

Se nus i demurum neient,

If we there stay at-all

n'i avra ja un sul de nus,

not-there will-be ever one single of us

ki suz la cue n'en ait dous.'

who under the tail not-thereof may-have two

45

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- 55 Cest essample nus dit de cels
 This example to-us says of those
 ki despisent les menurs d'els:
 who despise the lesser than-them
 tant les avillent de lur diz
 so-much them they-debase with their words
 qu'al grant busuin en sunt honiz,
 that-at-the great need thereby they-are shamed
 e mielz se sevent cil aidier
 and better themselves know-how those to-help
 60 la u il unt greignur mestier.
 there where they have greater need

De lupis
LXVb · THE WOLVES

Wolves grow old in the skin they were born in and stay in it all their lives. Even if someone set a good master over a wolf to teach him to be a priest, he would still be a gray wolf all his days, wicked and fierce, ugly and hideous.

Par cest essample cunte ci
By this example he-tells here
que tuit li lou sunt enveilli
that all the wolves are grown-old
en cele pel, u il sunt ne;
in that skin where they are born
la remainent tut lur eé.
there they-remain all their age
Ki sur le lou metreit bon mestre,
Who over the wolf would-put good master
kil doctrinast a estre prestre,
who-him might-teach to be priest
si sereit il tuz dis gris lous,
so would-be he all days gray wolf
fel e engrés, laiz e hisdous.
felonious and fierce ugly and hideous

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De accipitre et philomena

LXVI · THE GOSHAWK AND THE NIGHTINGALE

A goshawk perches in the tree where a nightingale nests and orders him to sing. The nightingale says he cannot sing while the goshawk is so near, but would sing far better if he moved to another tree. So many people cannot speak freely where they are afraid, as they can where there is nothing to fear.

Ci nus recunte d'un ostur,

Here to-us he-tells of-a goshawk

ki sur le fust s'asist un jur,

who on the tree himself-sat one day

u li russignols ot sun ni

where the nightingale had his nest

e u ses oiselez nurri.

and where his little-birds he-nourished

5 A sei le prist a apeler,

To himself him he-took to call

si li cumanda a chanter.

so to-him commanded to sing

'Sire', fet il, 'jo ne purreie,

Lord says he I not could

tant cum si pres de mei vus veie.

so-long as so near to me you I-see

Se vus plaiseit a remuër

If you it-pleased to move

10 e sur un altre fust voler,

and on an other tree to-fly

jeo chantereie mult plus bel;

I would-sing much more fair

ceo sevent tuit cil altre oisel.'

that know all those other birds

Altresi vet de meinte gent:

Likewise it-goes of many folk

ne pueent pas seürement,

not they-can at-all safely

la u il dutent, bien parler,

there where they fear well to-speak

si cum la u n'estuet duter.

so as there where not-behooves to-fear

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De corvo pennas pavonis inveniente

LXVII · THE RAVEN AND THE PEACOCK'S FEATHERS

A raven finds a peacock's feathers, tears out his own, and adorns himself with them. He joins the peacocks, who beat him away, and when he returns to the ravens they no longer know him and drive him off. Many who have wealth and honors want more than they can keep, and lose their own through folly.

D'un corbel cunte ki trova

Of-a raven he-tells who found

par un chemin, u il ala,

along a road where he went

plumes e pennes d'un poün;

plumes and feathers of-a peacock

si s'esguarda tut environ:

so himself-looked-at all around

5 plus vil se tint que nul oisel,

more base himself he-held than any bird

pur ceo qu'il ne se vit si bel.

for that that-he not himself saw so fair

Tutes ses plumes esracha

All his plumes he-tore-out

qu'une sule n'en i laissa;

that-one single not-thereof there he-left

des pennes al poün s'aturne,

with-the feathers of-the peacock himself-he-adorns

10 trestut sun cors bien en aürne.

all-entire his body well therewith he-decks

Puis s'asembla od les poüins.

Then himself-he-joined with the peacocks

Ne sembla pas lur compaignuns;

Not he-seemed at-all their companions

od les eles le debatirent,

with the wings him they-beat

e, se pis porent, pis li firent.

and if worse they-could worse to-him they-did

Dunc s'en revolt as cors aler,

Then himself-thence he-wished-back to-the ravens to-go

si cum einz fist, corp ressembler.

so as before he-did raven to-resemble

Mes il l'unt tut descuneü,

But they him-have all disowned

si l'unt chacié e debatu.

so him-they-have chased and beaten

Ceo puet hum veeir de plusurs,

That can one to-see of many

ki avoir unt e granz honors:

who wealth have and great honors

uncor voldreient plus cuillir

yet they-would-wish more to-gather

ceo qu'il ne pueent retenir;

that which-they not can to-keep

ceo qu'il coveitent n'unt il mie,

that which-they covet not-have they at-all

e le lur perdent par folie.

and the theirs they-lose by folly

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De leone infirmo

LXVIII · THE SICK LION AND THE FOX

When a lion falls sick, the beasts send for the fox to seek medicine, but he hides, and the wolf, the lion's provost, urges the lion to have him hanged. The fox arrives and says he has been to Salerno, where the physicians prescribed a wolf flayed alive and his skin laid on the lion's breast. The wolf is flayed, and flies and gadflies torment him while the fox mocks his torn gloves. Whoever seeks another's harm finds it falling on himself, as the wolf did who wished to ruin the fox.

Uns liüns fu mult deshaitiez,

A lion was very unwell

de mal suzpris e empeiriez.

by illness seized and worsened

Tutes les bestes i alerent.

All the beasts thither went

Entre els distrent e esguarderent

Among them they-said and decided

5 qu'um le deüst mediciner,

that-one him should to-treat

se nuls seüst conseil trover.

if anyone knew counsel to-find

Al gupil se tindrent plusur,

To-the fox themselves held many

ki des bestes set le retur

who of-the beasts knows the recourse

e as oisels reset parler,

and to-the birds knows-too to-speak

10 mecine querre e demander.

medicine to-seek and to-ask

Par message le funt somundre;

By messenger him they-make to-summon

e li gupiz s'ala repundre,

and the fox himself-went to-hide

lez la sale s'esteit muciez;

beside the hall himself-be-was hidden

kar quointes ert e veziëz.

for clever he-was and cunning

Li leüns mult se curuça.

The lion very himself angered

Le lou, sun provost, apela;

The wolf his provost he-called

demanda lui pur quei ne vient.

asked him for what not he-comes

Li lous respunt: 'Riens nel detient

The wolf answers Anything not-him holds-back

fors l'engresté de sun curage;

except the-arrogance of his heart

kar j'i enveiai mun message.

for I-there sent my messenger

Amener le ferai e prendre;

To-bring him I-shall-make and to-take

vus le faites desfaire u pendre,

you him make to-destroy or to-hang

sil chastiëz sifaitement

so-him punish in-such-wise

qu'essample i prengent si parent.'

that-example therein may-take his kin

Li gupiz ot qu'il fu jugiez;

The fox bears that-he was judged

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mult durement s'est esmaiez.

very sorely himself-be-is dismayed

Pas pur pas est avant venuz,

Step for step he-is forward come

que des bestes fu bien veüz.

that by-the beasts he-was well seen

'Que quiers tu ci?' fet li leüs,

What seekest thou here says the lion

30 e il li dist en sun respuns:

and he to-him said in his answer

'Si m'aït deus, bels sire reis,

So me-may-help God fair lord king

ne sai que j'i fesisse anceis

not I-know what I-there should-have-done before

que mescine eüsse trovee.

that medicine I-had found

Puis ai erré meinte jurnee,

Since I-have journeyed many-a day

35 que j'oï vostre mandement:

that I-heard your summons

en Salerne fui veirement;

in Salerno I-was truly

si vus unt li mire mandé,

so to-you have the physicians sent-word

ki oïrent vostre enferté,

who heard your sickness

qu'uns lous seit escorchiez tuz vis,

that-a wolf be flayed all alive

si seit li sans en la pel mis

so be the blood in the skin put

sur vostre piz desqu'a demain:

on your breast until-to tomorrow

de vostre mal vus rendra sain.'

of your ill you it-will-render healthy

Le lou pernent, ki iluec fu;

The wolf they-take who there was

vif l'escorchent, tant l'unt tenu.

alive him-they-flay so-long him-they-have held

Al liün unt la pel bailliee,

To-the lion they-have the skin banded

e cil s'en vet a grant haschiee.

and he himself-thence goes in great torment

A l'eissir fors de la maisun

At the-going out of the house

la vindrent musches e taün,

there came flies and gadflies

sil depuinstrent mult malement.

so-him stung very badly

Li gupiz vient tut quointement,

The fox comes all cleverly

si li demande que il fist

so of-him asks what he did

que senz sa pel iluec s'asist.

that without his skin there himself-he-sat

'Tes guanz', fet il, 'vei depesciez.

Thy gloves says he I-see torn

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Altre feiz seies chastiëz

Another time be warned

55 qu'altrui ne deies mal tenir,

that-to-another not thou-shouldst harm to-hold

ki sur tei deie revertir!

which on thee should to-turn-back

Tels purchace le mal d'altrui,

Such-a-one procures the harm of-another

que cil meïsme vient sur lui,

that that same comes on him

si cum li lous fist del gupil,

so as the wolf did of-the fox

60 que il voleit metre a eissil.

whom he wisbed to-put to ruin

De vulpe et ursa

LXIX · THE FOX AND THE BEAR

A fox begs a she-bear to let him have his way with her, and she threatens him with her staff. He lures her into a thorn thicket that holds her fast and leaps on her from behind. A worthy man's word should stand, but the cunning think their words carry the weight of the stratagems by which many win.

D'un gupil nus recunte e dit,

Of-a fox to-us he-tells and says

ki une urse trova e vit.

who a she-bear found and saw

Forment li preia e requist

Greatly her he-prayed and asked

qu'ele suffrist qu'il li fesist.

that-she should-allow that-he to-her should-do

'Tais', fet ele, 'malvais gupiz,

Husb says she bad fox

ki tant par iés chaitis e viz!

who so much art wretched and vile

'Jeo sui', fet il, 'tels cum jeo sueil,

I am says he such as I am-wont

sil te ferai estre tun vueil.'

so-it to-thee I-shall-do against thy will

'Fui', fet ele, 'laisse m'ester!

Away says she let me-be

Se jeo t'en oi ja mes parler,

If I thee-thereof hear ever more to-speak

tenir te purras pur bricun:

to-bold thyself thou-wilt-be-able for rogue

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jeo te batrai od mun bastun!’

I thee shall-beat with my staff

Tant l’a li gupiz enchalciee,

So-much her-has the fox pursued

que l’urse s’est mult curuciee.

that the-bear herself-is very angered

15 Après curut pur lui ferir,

After she-ran for him to-strike

e il fûi, pur li traïr,

and he fled for her to-betray

tant qu’il la meine en un buissun.

so-far that-he her leads into a bush

Les espines tut environ

The thorns all around

l’unt atachiee e encumbree

her-have caught and entangled

20 e par la pel l’unt detiree,

and by the skin her-have torn

si qu’el ne pot avant aler

so that-she not could forward to-go

pur nule rien ne returner.

for any thing nor to-return

Dunc revint li gupiz ariere;

Then came-back the fox back

sur li sailli par de deriere.

on her he-leaped by from behind

25 L’urse cumença a criër;

The-bear began to cry

puis si li prist a demander:

then so of-him she-took to ask

‘Malvais gupiz, que feras tu?’

Bad fox what wilt-do thou

E li gupiz a respundu:

And the fox has answered

‘Ceo que jeo t’oi’, fet il, ‘preié,

That which I thee-had says he prayed

dunt tu m’aveies manacié.’

30

whereof thou me-hadst threatened

Ceo deit ester e remaneir,

That ought to-stand and to-remain

que pruzdume dira pur veir:

which worthy-man will-say for truth

as veziëz est bien a vis,

to-the cunning is well to seeming

que lur parole est en tel pris

that their word is in such esteem

cum li engins de meinte gent,

35

as the device of many folk

ki par conseil venquent suvent.

who by counsel conquer often

De leone aegrotante

LXX · THE SICK LION AND THE STAG

A sick lion is told that only a stag's heart can cure him. The first time the stag is summoned he stays away, the second he barely escapes, and the third he comes and is killed; while he is being flayed, the fox steals the heart and eats it. Accused, the fox swears he never ate it and argues that the stag can have had no heart, or he would never have come back a third time, and the lion agrees. When fool and wise man share anything, the wise keeps the best and deceives the other with words.

Uns liüns fu de mal grevez,

A lion was with illness grieved

si a tuz ses baruns mandez:

so he-has all bis barons summoned

mires voleit qu'il li quesissent,

physicians he-wished that-they for-him should-seek

ki de sun mal le guaresissent.

who of his ill him might-cure

5 Tuit li diënt, ja ne guarra,

All to-him say ever not he-will-recover

se quer de cerf mangié nen a.

if heart of stag eaten not he-has

Dunc assemblent lur parlement.

Then they-assemble their parliament

Mandez i fu, n'i vint niënt;

Summoned there he-was not-there he-came at-all

kar si parent e si ami

for his kin and bis friends

10 l'en aveient devant guarni.

him-thereof had before warned

Une altre feiz i fu mandez,

An other time there he-was summoned

e il i vint tuz esfreez.

and he there came all frightened

Dunc li distrent que il voleient

Then to-him they-said that they wished

sun quer avoir, si l'ocireient.

his heart to-have so him-they-would-kill

Li cers l'oï, si s'en ala;

The stag it-heard so himself-thence went

a grant peine lur eschapa.

with great pain from-them escaped

La tierce feiz le remanderent,

The third time him they-summoned-again

e il i vint: dunc le tuèrent.

and he there came then him they-killed

Einz qu'il fust bien parescorchiez,

Before that-he were well flayed

s'est li gupiz tant aprismiez,

himself-is the fox so-much approached

qu'il lur avait le quer emblé,

that-he from-them had the heart stolen

si l'a mangié e devoré.

so it-has eaten and devoured

Quant il l'en voleient porter,

When they it-thence wished to-carry

si nel porent mie trover.

so not-it they-could at-all to-find

Entre els en tienent mult grant plait,

Among them thereof they-bold very great dispute

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si demandent ki ceo a fait:

so they-ask who that has done

ki le quer lur aveit emblé,

who the heart from-them had stolen

a tuz ot fait hunte e vilté.

to all he-had done shame and baseness

Les bestes, ki esteient pres,

The beasts who were near

30 sorent le gupil a engrés,

knew the fox for fierce

a felun e a vezié:

for felon and for cunning

diënt qu'il a le quer mangié.

they-say that-he has the heart eaten

Dunc unt le gupil apelé,

Then they-have the fox called

si li unt le quer demandé.

so of-him they-have the heart demanded

35 Il lur jura par sairement

He to-them swore by oath

qu'il ne l'aveit emblé niënt.

that-he not it-had stolen at-all

'Seignur', fet il, 'j'afiërai

Lords says he I-shall-pledge

que unkes le quer ne manjai.

that ever the heart not I-ate

Pire sereie d'altre beste;

Worse I-would-be than-other beast

40 hum me devrait trenchier la teste,

one to-me ought to-cut the head

s'encuntre le mal mun seignur

if-against the illness (of-)my lord

eüsse fet tel deshonor.

I-had done such dishonor

Ore en irum devant le rei!

Now thence let-us-go before the king

Venez! Seiez ensemble od mei!

Come Be together with me

Jeo me desraisnerai tresbien,

I myself shall-clear very-well

qu'il ne me mescrerra de rien.'

that-be not me will-disbelieve in anything

Dunc en vunt devant le leün,

Then thence they-go before the lion

si li mustrerent la raisun;

so to-him they-showed the matter

del quer diënt qu'il l'unt perdu.

of-the heart they-say that-they it-have lost

Dunc a li gupiz respundu:

Then has the fox answered

'Sire', fet il, 'ceo m'est a vis,

Lord says he that to-me-is to seeming

il vuelent metre en cest païs

they wish to-put in this country

ceo que ja n'iert, ne unc ne fu,

that which ever not-will-be nor ever not was

ne que ja mes n'i ert veü.

nor that ever more not-there will-be seen

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55 Quant li cers fu a curt mandez

When the stag was to court summoned

e pur ocire araisunez,

and for to-kill arraigned

a grant peine s'en eschapa.

with great pain himself-thence he-escaped

Quant tierce feiz i repaira,

When third time there he-returned

saciez qu'il n'aveit point de quer;

know that-he not-had a-whit of heart

60 kar il n'i venist a nul fuer.

for he not-there would-have-come at any price

Senz quer fu e senz remembrance:

Without heart he-was and without memory

pur ceo revint par ubliance.

for that he-came-back through forgetfulness

Mult par sereie desleials,

Very much I-would-be disloyal

trop sereie malvais e fals,

exceedingly I-would-be bad and false

65 se j'encuntre vostre santé

if I-against your health

lur eüsse le quer emblé.'

from-them bad the heart stolen

Li liüns respunt que veir dist:

The lion answers that truth he-said

s'il eüst quer, ja n'i venist.

if-he had heart ever not-there he-would-have-come

‘Bien devum le gupil laissier,

Well we-ought the fox to-let

que seins s'en puisse repairier.’

that sound himself-thence he-may to-return

70

Par meïsmes ceste raisun,

By same this reason

quant fols prent sage a cumpaignun,

when fool takes wise-one as companion

se nule rien deivent partir,

if any thing they-must to-divide

li sages set le mielz tenir,

the wise-one knows the best to-keep

par parole l'altre deceit;

by word the-other he-deceives

75

sa mençunge pur verté creit.

his lie for truth he-believes

De lupo et ericio

LXXI · THE WOLF AND THE HEDGEHOG

A wolf and a hedgehog agree to help each other against dogs. Chased for a stolen lamb, the wolf abandons the hedgehog, who asks a farewell kiss and clings to his lips with his spines, so the wolf must carry him into the wood; there he climbs an oak and leaves the wolf to the dogs. The traitor is caught himself.

Del lou dit e del heriçun,

Of-the wolf he-tells and of-the hedgehog

ki jadis furent cumpaignun.

who formerly were companions

Li heriçuns deveit ester

The hedgehog was-to to-stand

cuntre les chiens e desturber;

against the dogs and to-hinder

5 a lui les deveit faire entendre,

to him them he-was-to to-make to-attend

quant li lous ireit preie prendre;

when the wolf would-go prey to-take

e li lous deveit lui aidier,

and the wolf was-to him to-help

quant il en verreit le mestier.

when he thereof should-see the need

Un aignel prist li lous un jur,

A lamb took the wolf one day

10 si l'escrïèrent li pastur.

so at-him-cried-out the shepherds

Li chien li vunt après huant,

The dogs him go after booting

e il s'en vet al bois fuiant:

and he himself-thence goes to-the wood fleeing

le heriçun lait entrepris.

the bedgebog he-leaves hard-pressed

Quant il l'apele e dit: 'Amis,

When he him-calls and says Friend

pur amur deu, vien mei aidier,

for love (of-)God come me to-help

tu ne me deiz mie laissier',

thou not me oughtest at-all to-leave

li lous respunt: 'Aïe tei!

the wolf answers Help thyself

Kar ja conseil n'avras par mei.'

For ever counsel not-thou-wilt-have by me

Li heriçuns li a crié:

The bedgebog to-him has cried

'Baise mei veals, par charité!

Kiss me at-least for charity

A mes enfanz purras cunter

To my children thou-wilt-be-able to-tell

e par enseignes remembrer

and by tokens to-recall

que or sunt povre e orphanin,

that now they-are poor and orphaned

que sul me laissas el chemin.'

that alone me thou-leftest on-the road

Li lous baisa le heriçun,

The wolf kissed the bedgebog

e il s'aert a sun mentun;

and he himself-grips to his chin

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a ses levres s'est atachiez

to his lips himself-he-is fastened

e od ses broches afchiez.

and with his spines fixed

U il volsist u ne deignast,

Whether he would or not deigned

30 al lou estut qu'il l'en portast.

to-the wolf it-behooved that-he him-thence should-carry

Quant el bois fu od lui venuz,

When into-the wood he-was with him come

li heriçuns est descenduz;

the hedgehog is got-down

sur un halt chesne en est muntez.

on a high oak thereon he-is climbed

Dunc s'esteit li lous recordez,

Then himself-was the wolf recollected

35 si li preia qu'il descendist

so of-him prayed that-he should-come-down

devant les chiens, sil defendist.

before the dogs so-him should-defend

Li heriçuns li respunt tant:

The hedgehog to-him answers so-much

'Amis', fet il, 'va t'en avant,

Friend says he go thee-away forward

si t'esjoïs de tun aignel!

so thyself-rejoice of thy lamb

40 La char en aies e la pel,

The flesh thereof mayest-thou-have and the skin

se tu te puez des chiens guarir;

if thou thyself canst from-the dogs to-save

kar jo n'i quier niënt partir.

for I not-there seek at-all to-share

Sul m'eüsses ore einz laissié,

Alone me-thou-hadst now before left

mes jo t'ai bien survezié.'

but I thee-have well outwitted

Ceo puet hum veeir del felun,

That can one to-see of-the felon

ki vult traïr sun cumpaignun:

who wishes to-betray his companion

il meïsmes est encumbrez

he himself is entangled

la u li altre est delivrez.

there where the other is delivered

De homine et serpente

LXXII · THE VILLEIN AND THE SERPENT

A serpent makes a villein rich for milk twice a day, warning him not to wrong her. On his wife's advice he strikes at her with an axe and misses, and she kills his sheep and his child. When he begs forgiveness, she grants a friendship at a distance, without trust. A wise man should not take a foolish woman's counsel.

Del vilein e de la serpent

Of-the villein and of the serpent

nus mustre ci, cumfaitement

to-us he-shows here how

orent ensemble cumpaignie

they-had together company

e leialté e fei plevie.

and loyalty and faith pledged

5 La serpenz al vilein preia

The serpent of-the villein prayed

e par amur li comanda

and by love to-him commanded

que lait li aportast suvent

that milk to-her he-should-bring often

dous feiz le jur par tel covent

two times the day on such covenant

que grant sens li enseignereit

that great sense him she-would-teach

10 e que riche hume le fereit;

and that rich man him she-would-make

si li mostra u ele fu

so to-him showed where she was

e u lung tens aveit jeü:

and where long time she-had lain

dedenz une piere cavee

within a stone hollowed

u ele s'esteit arestee.

where she herself-was stopped

Li vileins n'a pas ublié

The villein not-has at-all forgotten

qu'il ne li ait le lait porté;

that-be — to-her may-have the milk brought

e el li duna mult grant or,

and she to-him gave very great gold

si li enseigna un tresor,

so to-him she-showed a treasure

sa terre li fist bien arer,

his land for-him she-made well to-plow

si li enseigna a semer,

so him she-taught to sow

tant li duna or e argent

so-much to-him she-gave gold and silver

que merveille fu a la gent.

that marvel it-was to the folk

Mes bien li dist qu'il le perdreit,

But well to-him she-said that-be it would-lose

de quel hure qu'ele voldreit,

from what hour that-she would-wish

se de niënt li mesfaisait;

if in anything to-her he-did-wrong

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kar bien e mal faire poeit.

for good and ill to-do she-could

Li vileins ala en maisun;

The villain went into house

sa femme cunta la raisun,

to-his wife told the matter

qu'il ot oï de la serpent.

that-he had heard from the serpent

30 Ele respunt hastivement,

She answers hastily

s'il en voleit sun conseil faire,

if-he thereof wished her counsel to-do

qu'il en purreit a bon chief traire:

that-he thereof could to good end to-draw

ocie la, si fera bien,

let-him-kill her so he-will-do well

puis ne la cremira de rien;

then not her he-will-fear in anything

35 en dute en est e en merci,

in fear thereof he-is and at mercy

bien se deit delivrer de li;

well himself he-ought to-deliver from her

n'avra dute de sun mesfet;

not-he-will-have fear of his misdeed

le buket li port plein de lait,

the bucket to-her let-him-carry full of milk

puis si l'asiece a terre jus,

then so it-let-him-set on ground down

40 e si se traie un poi en sus;

and so himself let-him-draw a little off away

quant la serpenz vendra avant,

when the serpent will-come forward

sa hache tienge bien trenchant,

his axe let-him-hold well cutting

si la fierge si durement

so her let-him-strike so bard

que n'i ait mes recouvrement.

that not-there be more recovery

Li vileins dist que si fera.

The villain said that so he-will-do

Le lait a pris, od tut s'en va;

The milk he-has taken with all himself-thence goes

le buket mist devant la pierre,

the bucket he-put before the stone

puis si se traist un poi ariere.

then so himself drew a little back

La serpenz vint, si voleit beivre,

The serpent came so wished to-drink

e li vileins la volt deceivre:

and the villain her wished to-deceive

la hache halce pur ferir.

the axe he-raises for to-strike

E ele oï le colp venir:

And she heard the blow to-come

en la pierre se met dedenz,

into the stone herself she-puts within

e li vileins s'en va dolenz.

and the villain himself-thence goes sorrowful

45

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55 Ne demura mes qu'al demein,

Not it-lasting more than-to-the morrow

tutes les berbiz al vilein

all the sheep of-the villein

furent en la falde trovees:

were in the fold found

la serpenz les ot acurees.

the serpent them had killed

Sun enfant ocist el berçuel,

His child she-killed in-the cradle

60 dunt li vileins ot mult grant doel.

whereof the villein had very great grief

Par maltalent e par dreite ire

In ill-will and in sheer anger

a sa femme cumence a dire:

to his wife he-begins to say

'Femme', fet il, 'cunseille mei!

Wife says he counsel me

Cist mals m'est avenuz par tei;

This ill to-me-is come through thee

65 tu me donas conseil de mal,

thou me gavest counsel of ill

fol e felun e desleial.'

foolish and felonious and disloyal

Ele respunt a sun barun:

She answers to her husband

'Jeo ne sai conseil ne raisun

I not know counsel nor reason

fors tant que tu vois a li,

except so-much that thou mayest-go to her

si li crie pur deu merci.'

70

so to-her cry for God mercy

Al vilein est tart qu'il i alt.

To-the villein it-is late [eager] that-be there may-go

Plein buket prist de lait tut chalt;

Full bucket he-took of milk all bot

devant la pierre a la serpent

before the stone of the serpent

en est venuz dutusement.

thence he-is come fearfully

Sa culpe bat, merci cria,

75

His guilt he-beats [confesses] mercy he-cried

e la serpenz li demanda

and the serpent of-him asked

qu'il quereit la a tut sun lait.

what-be sought there with all his milk

'Merci', fet il, 'de mun mesfait,

Mercy says he for my misdeed

que nus seium issi amis,

that we may-be thus friends

cum nus avuns esté jadis.'

80

as we have been formerly

'Nenil, nenil', fet ele, 'mestre,

No no says she master

ceo ne purreit en nul sens estre.

that not could in any sense to-be

Altrement nus poüm amer:

Otherwise we can to-love

se tu me voels lait apporter

if thou me wishest milk to-bring

85 issi cum tu anceis fesis,

thus as thou before didst

bien t'iert rendu, jol te plevi.

well to-thee-will-be repaid I-it to-thee pledge

Le lait metras devant mun us,

The milk thou-wilt-put before my door

e puis si te trairas en sus.

and then so thyself thou-wilt-draw off away

Ne te vueil pas veeir si pres;

Not thee I-wish at-all to-see so near

90 kar jeo ne te crerrai ja mes:

for I not thee shall-trust ever more

ne sai cument jeo te crerreie,

not I-know how I thee could-trust

tant cum en ceste pierre veie

so-long as in this stone I-may-see

le colp que ta hache i feri.

the blow which thy axe there struck

E jeo resai tresbien de fi,

And I know-too very-well of surety

95 quant le berz verras devant tei,

when the cradle thou-wilt-see before thee

u tis enfes fu morz par mei,

where thy child was dead through me

que de mei t'estuet remembrer;

that of me thee-behooves to-remember

tu ne me puez mie ubliër

thou not me canst at-all to-forget

sulunc iceste mesestance.

according-to this distress

Tel amur e tel bienvoillance,

Such love and such goodwill

cum entre nus devum aveir,

as between us we-ought to-have

senz mal faire e senz mal voleir,

without ill doing and without ill willing

icest otrei que nus aiuns,

this I-grant that we may-have

si que ja mes ne nus creüins.'

so that ever more not each-other we-may-trust

Issi est suvent avenu:

Thus it-is often happened

de plusurs femmes est seü,

of many women it-is known

que si conseillent lur seignur

that so they-counsel their lord

qu'il lur revert a deshonor;

that-it on-them turns-back to dishonor

meinte femme conseille a faire

many-a woman counsels to do

ceo dunt a plusurs nest cuntraire.

that whereby to many arises harm

Sages huem n'i deit pas entendre

Wise man not-there ought at-all to-attend

n'a fole femme conseil prendre,

nor-of foolish woman counsel to-take

100

105

110

cum fist icil par sa vileine,

as did he through his churlish-wife

dunt il ot puis travail e peine.

whereof he had after toil and pain

115 Mult eüst aveir guaaigné,

Much he-would-have wealth gained

s'el ne l'eüst forscunseillié.

if-she not him-had misadvised

De mure uxorem petente

LXXIII · THE FIELD MOUSE SEEKING A WIFE

A proud field mouse seeks the daughter of the highest element. The sun sends him to the cloud, the cloud to the wind, the wind to the tower it cannot shake, and the tower to the mouse, who tunnels through it. The mouse is his own kin, and he must go back to his nature. So the proud come back where they would not wish to be.

Jadis fu si enorguilliz

Formerly was so grown-proud

li mulez, ki semble suriz,

the field-mouse who resembles mouse

qu'il ne voleit en sun parage

that-he not wished in his rank

n'en sun semblant n'en sun lignage

nor-in his likeness nor-in his lineage

femme truver, que il presist;

wife to-find whom he should-take

ja mes n'avra femme, ceo dist,

ever more not-he-will-have wife that he-said

s'il ne la trueve a sun talent.

if-he not her finds to his liking

La fille al plus halt element

The daughter of-the most high element

voldra li mulez demander.

will-wish the field-mouse to-ask

Al soleil en ala parler;

To-the sun thence he-went to-speak

5

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pur ceo qu'il esteit li plus halz

for that that-be was the most high

e en esté puissanz e chalz,

and in summer powerful and hot

li requiert sa fille a muillier;

of-him he-asks his daughter as wife

kar ne se set el plus halcier.

for not himself he-knows otherwise more to-raise

15 Li soleiz dist qu'il voist avant,

The sun said that-be should-go forward

si trovera un plus puissant:

so he-will-find a more powerful

la nue, ki l'aümbre e cuevre;

the cloud which him-shades and covers

ne puet pareir, quant sur lui uevre.

not he-can to-appear when over him it-works

Li mulez a la nue vint

The field-mouse to the cloud came

20 e dist qu'a si puissant la tint

and said that-for so powerful her he-beld

que sa fille volt demander.

that her daughter he-wished to-ask

El li rova avant aler;

She him bade forward to-go

par raisun li voldra mustrer

by reason to-him she-will-wish to-show

que plus puissant purra trover:

that more powerful he-will-be-able to-find

25 ceo est li venz, bien i esguart,

that is the wind well there let-him-look

que, quant il vente, la depart.

that when he blows her he-scatters

Fet li mulez: 'A lui irai;

Says the field-mouse To him I-shall-go

ja mes ta fille ne prendrai.'

ever more thy daughter not I-shall-take

Idunc en est alez al vent,

Then thence he-is gone to-the wind

si li a dit, cumfaitement

so to-him he-has said how

la nue l'i ot enveié;

the cloud him-there had sent

si li ot dit e enseignié

so to-him she-had said and shown

qu'il ert la plus forz creature;

that-he was the most strong creature

qu'en sa force n'aveit mesure:

that-in his strength not-there-was measure

tutes altres riens departeit,

all other things he-scattered

quant il ventot, e destrueit:

when he blew and destroyed

pur ceo voleit sa fille prendre;

for that he-wished his daughter to-take

ne voleit mes aillurs entendre,

not he-wished more elsewhere to-attend

pur ceo qu'il ot oï cunter

for that that-he had heard to-tell

que riens ne li puet cuntrester.

that anything not him can to-withstand

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Li venz respunt: 'Tu as failli;

The wind answers Thou hast failed

femme n'avras tu pas ici.

wife not-wilt-have thou at-all here

Plus fort i a que jeo ne sui,

More strong there is than I — am

ki mult sovent me fet ennui;

who very often to-me does trouble

45 encuntre mei si forz estait,

against me so strong it-stands

ne li chalt riens de mun forfait.

not to-it matters anything of my assault

Ceo est une granz turs de pierre,

That is a great tower of stone

ki tuz jurs est ferme e entiere.

which all days is firm and whole

Unkes ne la poi depescier

Ever not it I-could to-break

50 ne par venter afebleier,

nor by blowing to-weaken

ainz me rebute si ariere

rather me it-thrusts so back

que n'ai talent que la requiere.'

that not-I-have desire that it I-should-assail

Li mulez li respondi tant:

The field-mouse to-him answered so-much

'De ta fille n'ai dunc talant;

Of thy daughter not-I-have then desire

55 ne dei plus bas femme choisir,

not I-ought more low wife to-choose

qu'a mei ne deit appartenir;

which-to me not ought to-belong

femme prendrai a grant honor.

wife I-shall-take with great honor

Or m'en irai desqu'a la tur!'

Now myself-thence I-shall-go as-far-as the tower

Alez i est, sa fille quist.

Gone there he-is her daughter he-sought

La turs l'esgarde, si li dist:

The tower him-looks-at so to-him said

'Tu as', fet ele, 'meserré,

Thou hast says she erred

si n'as mie bien esguardé.

so not-hast at-all well considered

Ki pur force ça t'enveia,

Who for strength hither thee-sent

ceo m'est a vis, qu'il te gaba.

that to-me-is to seeming that-he thee mocked

Plus fort troveras uncor hui,

More strong thou-wilt-find yet today

a qui unkes ne cuntrestui.'

to whom ever not I-resisted

'Ki est ceo dunc?' li muls respunt,

Who is that then the field-mouse answers

'a dunc plus fort en tut le mund?'

is-there then more strong in all the world

'Oïl', fet ele, 'la suriz.

Yés says she the mouse

Dedenz mei gist e fet ses niz;

Within me she-lies and makes her nests

60

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il n'a en mei si fort mortier

there not-is in me so strong mortar

qu'ele ne puisse trespercier;

that-she not may to-pierce-through

desuz mei fuet, par mi mei vient,

beneath me she-digs through middle-of me she-comes

nule chose ne la detient.'

any thing not her holds-back

75 Li mulez dist: 'Coment? Chaeles!

The field-mouse said How Alas [?]

Ore ai oï dures noveles!

Now I-have heard hard news

Ja est la suriz ma parente:

Now is the mouse my kinswoman

ore ai perdu tute m'entente.

now I-have lost all my-aim

Jeo quidou e si halt munter:

I thought so high to-climb

80 or me covient a returner

now me behooves to return

e rencliner a ma nature.'

and to-bow-again to my nature

'Tels est', dist la turs, 't'aventure.

Such is says the tower thy-fortune

Va a maisun, e si retien

Go to house and so remember

que ne vueilles pur nule rien

that not thou-mayest-wish for any thing

85 ta nature mes desprisier.

thy nature more to-despise

Tels se quide mult eshalcier

Such-a-one himself thinks much to-exalt

ultre sun dreit e alever,

beyond his right and to-raise

qui plus bas estuet returner;

whom more low it-behooves to-return

mespreisier ne deit nuls sun dreit,

to-misprize not ought any his right

se ceo n'est mals, quei que il seit.

if that not-is evil whatever that it may-be

Ja ne savras si luinz aler

Ever not thou-wilt-know so far to-go

que tu puisses femme trover,

that thou mayest wife to-find

ki mielz seit a tun ués eslite

who better may-be for thy use chosen

que la suricete petite.'

than the little-mouse small

Issi avient as orguillus,

Thus it-happens to-the proud

as surquidiez, as enviüs,

to-the presumptuous to-the envious

ki ceo quierent qu'il ne devreient:

who that seek which-they not ought

la revertent, u ne voldreient.

there they-turn-back where not they-would-wish

90

95

De scarabaeo
LXXIV · THE BEETLE

A beetle that has eaten its fill in a dunghill envies the eagle, complaining that their Creator has wronged the beetles, though the eagle's voice is no higher than his and his body shines no brighter. Vowing never to enter a dunghill again, he sings hideously and leaps after the eagle, but is soon dazed and stunned, can neither climb nor find his dunghill, and, starving, longs only for the horse dung. The presumptuous undertake what they cannot do, and must draw back.

D'un escharbot nus cunte e dit,

Of-a beetle to-us he-tells and says

e jeo l'ai trové en escrit,

and I it-have found in writing

ki ot jeü en un femier.

who had lain in a dunghill

Quant il fu saüls de mangier,

When he was sated with eating

5 hors s'en eissi; a munt guarda

out himself-thence he-went to above he-looked

e vit l'aigle cum il vola.

and he-saw the-eagle how he flew

Mult par le tint a orguillus;

Very much him he-beld for proud

en sun quer fu mult enviüs.

in his heart he-was very envious

As altres escharboz le dist

To-the other beetles it he-said

10 que lur sepande lur mesfist:

that their creator to-them did-wrong

l'aigle aveit fait curteis e bel,

the-eagle she-had made courteous and fair

il n'esteient ver ne oisel;

they not-were worm nor bird

saül ne poeient voler,

sated not they-could to-fly

jeün ne poeient aler.

fasting not they-could to-go

'L'aigle ai esguardé tutejur,

The-eagle I-have watched all-day

15

que nus tenuns tuit a seignur:

whom we hold all for lord

si halt vola que nel vi pas,

so high he-flew that not-him I-saw at-all

e quant il volt, si revint bas;

and when he wished so he-came-back low

si est sa voiz e basse e queie,

so is his voice both low and quiet

n'est pas plus halte que la meie;

not-is at-all more high than the mine

20

altresi est mis cors luisanz

likewise is my body shining

cum est li suens, tut seit il granz.

as is the his-own although be he great

Une chose ai en mun pensé:

One thing I-have in my thought

ne en yver ne en esté

neither in winter nor in summer

ne vueil mes en femier entrer;

not I-wish more into dunghill to-enter

25

od altres oisels vueil voler,

with other birds I-wish to-fly

si vivrai si cum il vivrunt

so I-shall-live so as they will-live

e irai la u il irunt.'

and I-shall-go there where they will-go

Idunc cumença a chanter

Then he-began to sing

30 mult laidement e a criër.

very hideously and to cry

Deriere l'aigle prist un salt;

Behind the-eagle he-took a leap

car il quida voler plus halt.

for he thought to-fly more high

Ainz qu'il fust guaires luinz alez,

Before that-he were much far gone

esturdiz fu e estunez:

dazed he-was and stunned

35 ne poeit mie halt munter

not he-could at-all high to-climb

n'a sun femier puis asener.

nor-to his dunghill afterward to-reach

Feim aveit grant, mangier voleit.

Hunger he-bad great to-eat he-wished

Par grant destresce se pleigneit;

In great distress himself he-complained

ne li chaleit s'oisels l'oïst

not to-him mattered if-bird him-beard

40 ne se nuls d'els l'escharnesist,

nor if any of-them him-mocked

niënt plus qu'il fet al gupil,

not-at-all more than-it does to-the fox

quant les bestes le tienent vil.

when the beasts him hold vile

'Or ne me chalt que hum me tienge

Now not to-me matters what one me may-hold

ver u oisel, mes que jo vienge

worm or bird provided that I may-come

dedenz la fiente del cheval;

within the dung of-the horse

kar de feim ai dolur e mal.'

for of hunger I-have pain and ill

Issi avient des surquidiez:

Thus it-happens of-the presumptuous

par els meïsmes sunt jugiez;

by themselves same they-are judged

c'enpernent que ne pueent faire,

that-they-undertake which not they-can to-do

dunc les covient ariere traire.

then them behooves back to-draw

45

50

De apro et asino

LXXV · THE BOAR AND THE ASS

A boar meets an ass who neither moves aside nor bows to him, and shoulders into him, saying he knows what he would do if he cared to whet his tusks. So the proud man trusts so much in his prowess that he only hurts and wounds himself.

D'un sengler dit, ki encuntra

Of-a boar he-tells who met

par un chemin, u il ala,

along a road where he went

un asne, ki iluec estut.

an ass who there stood

Merveilla sei qu'il ne se mut

He-marveled himself that-he not himself moved

5 e qu'il ne li laissa la veie

and that-he not to-him left the way

e que vers lui ne s'asupleie.

and that toward him not himself-bowed

A lui se hurte malement.

Against him himself he-knocks badly

Dunc l'apela par maltalent:

Then him-be-called in ill-will

'Bien sai', fet il, 'que jeo fereie,

Well I-know says he what I would-do

10 se mes denz aguisier voleie.'

if my teeth to-sharpen I-wished

Par cest essample nus assume

By this example us he-teaches

qu'issi est de l'orguillus hume,

that-thus it-is of the-proud man

ki quide bien en sun penser

who thinks well in his thought

que nuls nel deie cuntrester;

that any not-him should to-withstand

tant par se fie en sa pruësce

so much himself he-trusts in his prowess

qu'il meïsmes se hurte e blesce.

that-be himself himself knocks and wounds

15

De taxo et purcellis

LXXVI · THE BADGER AND THE PIGS

In a year of plentiful acorns the pigs are driven into the wood, and a badger joins them, claiming to be a pig. When they come home and the slaughter begins, the badger swears he is a badger. The cunning who take on others' customs to get ahead are trusted less once they are found out.

Issi avint que par un an

Thus it-happened that in a year

ot en un bois plenté de glan.

there-was in a wood plenty of acorns

Les pors i unt mis e chaciez.

The pigs therein they-have put and driven

Li taissuns s'est acumpaigniez

The badger himself-is associated

5 ensemble od els, si recunut

together with them so he-acknowledged

que pors esteit e estre dut.

that pig he-was and to-be ought

Quant li porc vindent a maisun

When the pigs came to house

e vit faire l'occisiün

and he-saw to-make the-slaughter

li taissuns, comence a criër,

the badger begins to cry

a reneier e a jurer

10

to deny and to swear

que taissuns fu: ses piez musça,

that badger he-was his feet he-bid

quant od les pors el bois ala.

when with the pigs into-the wood he-went

Sovent avient des veziëz:

Often it-happens of-the cunning

quant il cuident estre avanciez,

when they think to-be advanced

altres custumes vuelent prendre,

15

other customs they-wish to-take

dunt plusurs funt a els entendre;

whereby many they-make to them to-attend

mes, quant il sunt aparceü,

but when they are perceived

tuz jurs en sunt plus mescreü.

all days thereby they-are more mistrusted

De lupo et ericio

LXXVII · THE WOLF IN THE TRAP AND THE HEDGEHOG

A wolf, caught in a trap, begs his companion the hedgehog for help. The hedgehog answers that he must first pray at the shrine that bound him and fulfill the vow he failed to keep. So the rogue who relies on his companion is tricked himself and never gets help from him.

Uns lous s'esteit acumpaigniez

A wolf himself-was associated

al heriçun e acuintiez.

with-the hedgehog and acquainted

Or avint que li lous fu pris.

Now it-happened that the wolf was caught

Al heriçun a dit: 'Amis,

To-the hedgehog he-has said Friend

5 aïe mei, si deus t'aît!

help me so God thee-may-help

Li heriçuns respunt e dit:

The hedgehog answers and says

'Jo ne te puis niënt aidier.

I not thee can at-all to-help

Al saintuaire va preier:

To-the shrine go to-pray

par qui tu iés pris e liëz,

by which thou art taken and bound

10 que tu par lui seies aidiez;

that thou by it mayest-be helped

jo cuit que tu li promeïs

I think that thou to-it promisedst

tel chose que pas ne fesis.

such thing as at-all not thou-didst

Tun vou t'estuet ainz aquiter,

Thy vow thee-bebooves before to-discharge

que nuls te puisse delivrer;

that anyone thee may to-deliver

ja ne t'en aiderai anceis:

ever not thee-thereof I-shall-help before

tels est la custume e la leis.'

such is the custom and the law

Ceo veit hum suvent del bricun:

That sees one often of-the rogue

tant s'atent a sun compaignun

so-much himself-be-relies on his companion

qu'il meïsmes est engigniez

that-be himself is tricked

e ja par lui nen iert aidiez.

and ever by him not be-will-be helped

15

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De lupo et nauta

LXXVIII · THE WOLF AND THE VILLEIN

A wolf asks a villein to ferry him over a river, and the villein asks three words of wisdom. On the way he offers two: he does well who does well, and worse who does not. On land he gives the third, which he dared not say sooner: all is lost that is done for the wicked. Worthy men who keep company with felons are badly rewarded.

Uns lous vint a une riviere,

A wolf came to a river

mes il ne sot en quel maniere

but he not knew in what manner

ultre l'ewe peüst passer.

across the-water he-could to-pass

Un vilein vit iluec ester

A villein he-saw there to-stand

5 en un batel, si l'apela;

in a boat so him-he-called

qu'ultre le past, ceo li preia.

that-across him he-should-pass that him he-prayed

Li vileins dist que nun fereit,

The villein said that not he-would-do

se bon luier de lui n'aveit.

if good reward from him not-be-had

'Jo l'otrei bien', ceo dist li lous.

I it-grant well that said the wolf

10 El batel entrent ambedous;

Into-the boat enter both

de la terre sunt esluignié.

from the land they-are gone-far

Li lous a le vilein preié

The wolf has the villain prayed

qu'il li desist que il fera.

that-he to-him should-tell what he will-do

E li vileins li cumanda

And the villain to-him commanded

que treis paroles de saveir

that three words of wisdom

li deüst dire a sun espoir.

to-him he-should to-tell to his hope

'Jeo volentiers', li lous respunt.

I willingly the wolf answers

Idunc dresça la teste a munt;

Then he-raised the head to above

'Bien fet, ki bien fet, ceo savez.'

Well does who well does that you-know

Dist li vileins: 'C'est veritez.'

Said the villain That-is truth

Quant il furent un poi alé,

When they were a little gone

si li a li vileins rové

so to-him has the villain bidden

que veir deüst, e il retrait

that truth he-should-say and he related

que mult fet pis, ki si ne fait.

that much does worse who so not does

Fet li vileins: 'Or di le tierz!'

Says the villain Now tell the third

Li lous esteit mult veziëz;

The wolf was very cunning

15

20

25

ne voleit mie dire plus,

not he-wished at-all to-say more

ainz qu'il venist a terre sus.

before that-he should-come to land up

Quant li lous esteit arivez,

When the wolf was arrived

30 al vilein dist: 'Ore entendez!

to-the villein he-said Now hear

Tut est perdu e luinz e pres

All is lost both far and near

quan que l'em fet pur le malvais.'

whatever that one does for the wicked

Fet li vileins: 'Si deus m'aït,

Says the villein So God me-may-help

de treis choses m'avez veir dit.

of three things me-you-have truth told

35 Pur quei nel volsis tu ainz dire?'

For what not-it wouldst thou before to-say

Dunc comença li lous a rire:

Then began the wolf to laugh

'N'osai', fet il, 'kar jeo cremeie

Not-I-dared says he for I feared

que de la nef getez sereie.'

that from the ship thrown I-would-be

As pruzdumes e as leials

To-the worthy-men and to-the loyal

avient suvent damage e mals

happens often harm and ills

de la cumpaignie as feluns;

from the company of-the felons

malvais en est lur guereduns.

bad thereof is their reward

40

De accipitre et noctua

LXXIX · THE GOSHAWK AND THE OWL

A goshawk and an owl share a nest, and the goshawk hatches the owl's eggs with his own. The owlets foul the nest, and he admits he could hatch them but not change their nature. As an apple from a sweet tree fallen onto a bitter one is known at the bite, one can dodge one's nature but never escape it.

D'un ostur vuel t recunter ci,

Of-a goshawk he-wishes to-tell here

ki sur un fust aveit sun ni

who on a tree had his nest

e li huans ensemble od lui.

and the owl together with him

Tant s'entramerent ambedui

So-much each-other-loved both

5 qu'en un ni ensemble puneient

that-in one nest together they-laid

e lur oisels ensemble aveient.

and their birds together they-had

Ore avint si que en un an

Now it-happened so that in a year

li osturs les ués al huan

the goshawk the eggs of-the owl

aveit cuvez e eschapiz

had brooded and hatched

10 od les suens oiselez petiz.

with the his-own little-birds small

Puis lur ala querre viande,

Then for-them he-went to-seek food

si cum nature le demande.

so as nature it demands

Mes quant a els fu repairez,

But when to them he-was returned

esteit sis niz orz e suilliez:

was his nest filthy and soiled

li huan l'aveient malmis.

the owls it-had spoiled

Quant li osturs se fu asis,

When the goshawk himself was seated

ses oisels laidi e blasma;

his birds he-reviled and blamed

par maltalent lur repruva

in ill-will to-them he-reproached

que vint anz ot aire tenue,

that twenty years he-had eyrie held

unkes si grant descuvenue

ever so great mishap

si oisel ne li firent mes.

his birds not to-him did more

Cil li respundirent après

They to-him answered after

qu'il nes en deit mie blasmer,

that-be not-them thereof ought at-all to-blame

lui meïsmes deit enculper:

him same he-ought to-accuse

kar lur deriere unt eü foire,

for their rear have had flux

pur ceo est dreiz qu'en sun ni paire.

for that it-is right that-in his nest it-appears

15

20

25

Il lur respunt: 'Vus dites veir.

He to-them answers You say truth

Legiere chose est a saveir:

Light thing it-is to know

de l'oef les poi jeo bien geter

from the-egg them could I well to-cast

30 e par chalur e par cover,

both by warmth and by brooding

mais niënt fors de lur nature.

but not-at-all out of their nature

Maldite seit tels nurreture!

Cursed be such nurture

Pur ceo dit hum en repruvier

For that says one in proverb

de la pume del dulz pumier,

of the apple of-the sweet apple-tree

35 s'ele chiet sur un fust amer,

if-it falls on a tree bitter

ja ne savra tant ruëler,

ever not it-will-know so-much to-roll

qu'al mordre ne seit cuneüe,

that-at-the biting not it-be known

desur quel arbre ele est creüe.

upon what tree it is grown

Sa nature puet hum guenchir,

His nature can one to-dodge

40 mes nuls n'en puet del tut eissir.

but any not-thereof can of-the all to-go-out

De aquila et accipitre et ardua

LXXX · THE EAGLE, THE GOSHAWK, AND THE CRANE

An eagle sends all the birds after a goshawk, who takes refuge in a hollow of a rock. They send in the crane for her long neck; the goshawk seizes her by the head, and in her fright she fouls herself and the birds around her. Ashamed, she sets out across the sea, but a gull asks whether she has come without the tool that shamed her, and hearing that she has it with her, advises her to go home. Those who do wrong in their own country should change their wicked hearts, not their country.

Uns aigles fu forment iriez

An eagle was greatly angry

vers un ostur e curuciez.

toward a goshawk and vexed

Tuz les oisels fist asembler;

All the birds he-made to-assemble

après l'ostur les fist voler,

after the-goshawk them he-made to-fly

saveir s'il le purreient prendre.

to-know if-they him could to-take

Mes il nes volt niënt atendre:

But he not-them wished at-all to-await

el crués d'un rochier s'esteit mis.

in-the hollow of-a rock himself-he-was put

Li oisel l'unt en tur asis.

The birds him-have in round besieged

Puis esguardent ki l'assaldra

Then they-decide who him-will-assail

e ki avenir i purra.

and who to-reach there will-be-able

5

10

Dunc i unt la grue enveiee,

Then there they-have the crane sent

pur le lung col l'en unt preiee.

for the long neck her-thereof they-have prayed

La grue lance bec avant,

The crane thrusts beak forward

e li osturs demeintenant

and the goshawk at-once

15 l'aveit par la teste saisie.

her-had by the head seized

La grue fu si esbaïe,

The crane was so dismayed

qu'il li mesavint par deriere.

that-it to-her befell-ill from behind

Tuz les oisels fist traire ariere,

All the birds she-made to-draw back

ki en tur li venu esteient

who in round to-her come were

20 e ki aidier a li voleient;

and who to-help to her wished

tuz les orda e mal bailli,

all them she-fouled and ill served

e il s'en fuient desur li.

and they themselves-thence flee from her

Quant ele ot sa teste fors mise,

When she had her head out put

purpensa sei qu'en nule guise

she-bethought herself that-in any wise

25 ne vuelt el païs arester,

not she-wishes in-the country to-stay

ainz passera, ço dist, la mer

rather she-will-cross that she-said the sea

pur la hunte qu'ele aveit faite,

for the shame that-she had done

ki li sereit tuz jurs retraite.

which to-her would-be all days recounted

Quant ele fu en mer entree,

When she was on sea entered

si a une maue encuntree,

so she-has a gull met

si li demanda e enquist

so of-her she-asked and inquired

u ele alot. Cele li dist

where she went She to-her said

que de sun país ert fuïe,

that from her country she-was fled

si li cunta sa vileinie.

so to-her she-told her baseness

Dunc l'a la maue respundue,

Then her-has the gull answered

demanda li s'ele est venue

she-asked her if-she is come

senz cel ustil ki la huni.

without that tool which her shamed

E la grue li respondi:

And the crane to-her answered

‘Einz l'ai’, fet ele, ‘ensemble od mei.’

Rather it-I-have says she together with me

30

35

40 'Dunc te lo jeo par dreite fei

Then thee advise I by right faith

que revoises en ta cuntree,

that thou-mayest-go-back into thy country

quant de celui n'ies delivree;

since from that-one not-thou-art delivered

greignur mal puet il aillurs faire.'

greater ill can it elsewhere to-do

La grue se mist el repaire.

The crane herself put on-the return

45 Cest essample ai pur ceo traitié:

This example I-have for that treated

cil ki sunt plein de malvaistié

those who are full of wickedness

e en lur cuntree mesfunt,

and in their country do-wrong

puis la guerpissent, si s'en vunt,

then it they-abandon so themselves-thence go

pur niënt laissent lur païs,

for nothing they-leave their country

50 aillurs funt il altel u pis;

elsewhere do they the-same or worse

lur malvais quer deivent changier,

their bad heart they-ought to-change

ne mie lur païs laissier.

not at-all their country to-leave

De presbytero et lupo

LXXXI · THE PRIEST AND THE WOLF

A priest teaches a wolf his letters, A, B, and C. Asked to spell a word by himself, the wolf answers: Lamb, lamb. The priest says the truth is out: what is in the thought is in the mouth. The mouth shows the thought, even when it ought to be speaking of something else.

Uns prestre volt jadis aprendre

A priest wished formerly to-teach

un lou a letres faire entendre.

a wolf to letters to-make to-understand

‘A’, dist li prestre, ‘a’ dist li lous,

A said the priest A said the wolf

ki mult ert fel e engignous.

who very was felonious and crafty

‘B’, dist li prestre, ‘di od mei!’

B said the priest say with me

‘B’, dist li lous, ‘la letre vei.’

B said the wolf the letter I-see

‘C’, dist li prestre, ‘di avant!’

C said the priest say forward

‘C’, dist li lous, ‘a i dunc tant?’

C said the wolf has there then so-many

Respunt li prestre: ‘Or di par tei!’

Answers the priest Now say by thyself

Li lous li dist: ‘Jeo ne sai quei.’

The wolf to-him said I not know what

‘Di que te semble, si espel!’

Say what to-thee seems so spell

5

10

Respunt li lous: 'Aignel, aignel!'

Answers the wolf Lamb lamb

Li prestre dist que verté tuche:

The priest said that truth it-touches

tel en pensé, tel en la buche.

such in thought such in the mouth

15 De plusurs le veit hum sovent:

Of many it sees one often

cel dunt il pensent durement

that whereof they think intently

est par lur buche cuneü,

is by their mouth known

anceis que d'altre seit seü;

before that by-another it-be known

la buche mustre le penser,

the mouth shows the thought

20 tut deië ele d'el parler.

although should it of-other-thing to-speak

De vipera et campo

LXXXII · THE VIPER AND THE FIELD

A serpent darts across a field, and the field tells her to take note: she carries away nothing of it. So the cunning, when they join together, watch each other so closely that neither takes anything from the other, no more than the field from the serpent.

Une serpenz trespasot ja

A serpent was-passing once

par mi un champ se treslança.

through middle-of a field herself she-darted

Li chans li dist: 'Reguarde tei,

The field to-her said Look-at thyself

tu n'en portes niënt de mei!'

thou not-thence carriest anything of me

Altresi est des veziëz:

5

Likewise it-is of-the cunning

quant il se sunt acumpaigniez,

when they themselves are associated

entre els se vuelent si guaitier,

among them themselves they-wish so to-watch

tant se quident surveziër,

so-much themselves they-think to-outwit

que li uns par l'autre ne perde

that the one by the-other not may-lose

ne tels surfaiz sur els n'aerde,

10

nor such excess on them not-may-cling

dunt entre els seient encumbré

whereby among them they-may-be hindered

li uns par l'altre ne blasmé.

the one by the-other nor blamed

Li uns de l'altre rien ne prent

The one from the-other anything not takes

plus que li chans de la serpent.

more than the field from the serpent

De hirundine et passeribus

LXXXIII · THE SWALLOW AND THE SPARROWS

The swallow lures the sparrows into a villain's barn, then warns them when he swears to trap them. He declares, where she can hear, that he will never harm birds; she leads them back, and he catches them. He lied to her and she to them: many a man lies to a liar. A wise man believes only what is true.

Uns huem, ceo dit, entassot ble,

A man that he-says was-stacking corn

e l'arundele a esguardé

and the-swallow has watched

cum li muissun defors estoënt,

how the sparrows outside stood

ki al ble aprismier n'osoënt.

who to-the corn to-approach not-dared

L'arundele les apela;

The-swallow them called

qu'avant venissent, lur rova.

that-forward they-should-come them she-bade

Tant les aveit aseürez

So-much them she-had assured

qu'en la grange esteient entrez.

that-into the barn they-were entered

Del ble mangierent durement,

Of-the corn they-ate hard

dunt le vilein firent dolent.

whereby the villain they-made sorrowful

5

10

Idunc jura qu'il les prendreit

Then he-swore that-he them would-take

e que les us estupereit.

and that the doors he-would-stop

L'arundele les en guarni,

The-swallow them thereof warned

ki le conseil celui oï;

who the counsel of-him heard

15 li muissun s'en sunt desturné,

the sparrows themselves-thence are turned-away

dous jurs entiers n'i sunt entré.

two days whole not-there they-are entered

Li vileins dist a sun serjant

The villain said to his sergeant

que merveille li semlot grant,

that marvel to-him seemed great

que li muissun sunt devenu.

what the sparrows are become

20 Li bachelers a respundu,

The young-man has answered

que l'arundele l'aveit fet

that the-swallow it-had done

qu'il s'esteient issi retret;

that-they themselves-were thus withdrawn

mes s'il voleit sun conseil creire,

but if-he wished his counsel to-believe

tel parole direit pur veire,

such word he-would-say for true

dunt l'arundele decevreit

25

whereby the-swallow he-would-deceive

e les muissuns li remerreit:

and the sparrows to-him would-bring-back

en halt parlast qu'ele l'oïst,

on high let-him-speak that-she him-might-hear

s'aseürast e promesist

let-him-pledge-himself and promise

que ja mes oisels ne prendreit

that ever more birds not he-would-take

ne que ja mal ne lur fereit.

30

nor that ever harm not to-them he-would-do

Li vileins dist ceste parole,

The villain said this word

e l'arundele, ki fu fole,

and the-swallow who was foolish

as muissuns l'ala recunter,

to-the sparrows it-went to-tell

sis refist en la grange entrer.

so-them made-again into the barn to-enter

Li vileins a ses engins fez,

35

The villain has his devices made

les muissuns pris e a mort trez.

the sparrows taken and to death drawn

Dunc crièrent a l'arundele

Then they-cried to the-swallow

qu'el lur ot dit male novele.

that-she to-them had told evil news

El lur respunt: 'Cil me menti,

She to-them answers He to-me lied

40 e jeo menti vus altresî;

and I lied to-you likewise

quant me dist veir, e jeo a vus.

when to-me be-told truth and I to you

Ore est li mals turnez sur vus.'

Now is the ill turned on you

Pur ceo nus mustre par escrit,

For that to-us he-shows by writing

meinte feiz est trové e dit:

many-a time it-is found and said

45 meint hume i a, ki mentir vult

many-a man there is who to-lie wishes

a celui ki mentir li suelt.

to him who to-lie to-him is-wont

Nuls sages huem ne devreit creire

Any wise man not ought to-believe

parole, s'ele ne fust veire;

word if-it not were true

tels creit mençunge en sun curage,

such-a-one believes lie in his heart

50 ki li aturne a grant damage;

which to-him turns to great harm

si fist l'arunde le vilein,

so did the-swallow the villein

ki les muissuns prist l'endemain.

who the sparrows took the-next-day

De homine et bobus

LXXXIV · THE VILLEIN AND THE OXEN

A villein makes his oxen haul the dung out of their stable, and they reproach him with the ale and bread their labor has earned him. He answers that since they made the dung, it is right that they carry it out. So the bad servant who reproaches his lord with his service forgets his own misdeeds.

Ci nus recunte en ceste fable,

Here to-us he-tells in this fable

qu'uns vileins traist hors de s'estable

that-a villein drew out of his-stable

od ses bués le fiens que il firent.

with his oxen the dung which they made

Li buef par tençun l'asailirent,

The oxen in quarrel him-assailed

si repruverent al vilein

so they-reproached to-the villein

la bone cerweise e le pein,

the good ale and the bread

que par lur travail ot eü;

which through their toil he-had had

mes malement lur a rendu:

but badly to-them he-has rendered

qu'a grant hunte les demena.

for-with great shame them he-treated

E li vileins lur demanda

And the villein of-them asked

que ceo esteit qu'il lur fist faire.

what that was which-he them made to-do

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'Le fiens fors de l'estable traire.'

The dung out of the-stable to-draw

Dist li vileins: 'Vus le femastes

Said the villain You it dunged

e la maisun en encumbrastes.'

and the house therewith encumbered

15 Li buef diënt: 'C'est veritez.'

The oxen say That-is truth

Dunc s'est li vileins purpensez,

Then himself-is the villain bethought

si lur respunt que hors le traient:

so to-them answers that out it they-may-draw

bien est dreiz que la peine en aient.

well it-is right that the pain thereof they-may-have

Issi va del malvais serjant,

Thus it-goes of-the bad sergeant

20 ki tutejur va repruchant

who all-day goes reproaching

sun grant servise a sun seignur:

his great service to his lord

ne se prent garde de l'onur

not himself he-takes heed of the-honor

ne del bien ne del gueredun

nor of-the good nor of-the reward

qu'il a eü en sa maisun.

that-he has had in his house

25 De ceo qu'il mesfet e mesprent

Of that which-he misdoes and errs

ne li puet suvenir niënt:

not to-him can to-remember at-all

quant sun travail vult repruver,

when his toil he-wishes to-reproach

de sun mesfet li deit membrer.

of his misdeed him ought to-remind

De ape et musca

LXXXV · THE BEE AND THE FLY

A fly boasts to a bee that she is worth more and can go where the bee dare not, even sit on the king, and that she eats the honey the bee works for all year, while the bee is robbed, killed, and thrown out of her house. The bee answers that the fly is viler and a nuisance everywhere, while the bee is loved and guarded for her work. So the base felon grown rich puffs himself up against his betters and scorns them; but anyone who tells the truth about him in open court will silence him.

Une musche e une es tencierent

A fly and a bee quarreled

e ensemble se curucierent.

and together themselves vexed

La musche dist que mielz valeit

The fly said that more she-was-worth

e qu'en tel liu aler poeit,

and that-into such place to-go she-could

5 u cele ne s'osot veoir:

where that-one not herself-dared to-see

desur le rei poeit seeir;

on the king she-could to-sit

quan que l'es tut l'an purchaçot

whatever that the-bee all the-year procured

e atraeit e travailloit,

and gathered and toiled-for

li ert toleit, si ert tuëe

from-her was taken so she-was killed

10 e de sa maisun fors getee.

and from her house out thrown

'Jeo e mes cumpaignes manjuns

I and my companions eat

de tun miel tant cum nus voluns.'

of thy honey so-much as we wish

L'es li respunt: 'Vus dites veir.

The-bee to-her answers You say truth

Mes il est legier a saveir

But it is easy to know

que plus iés vils que jeo ne sui;

that more thou-art vile than I — am

kar en tuz lius fez tu ennui.

for in all places makest thou trouble

Sié la u siez, va la u vas,

Sit there where thou-sittest go there where thou-goest

ja par tun fet honur n'avras;

ever by thy deed honor not-thou-wilt-have

jeo sui pur le mien fet amee

I am for the mine deed loved

e mult cherie e bien gardeee.'

and much cherished and well guarded

Issi va del natre felun,

Thus it-goes of-the base felon

quant il a bien en abandon,

when he has goods at will

vers les meillurs trop se nobleie

toward the best too himself he-ennobles

e de parole se richeie;

and with word himself he-enriches

par grant desdein les cuntrialie.

with great disdain them he-contradicts

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Mais se nuls est, ki bien li die

But if any-one there-is who well to-him may-tell

la verité de sun afaire

the truth of his affair

en pleine curt, le fera taire.

in full court him he-will-make to-be-silent

De milvo

LXXXVI · THE KITE

A sick kite asks his mother to ask the jay, whom he has often troubled, to pray for him. She answers that she cannot, since he has so often fouled the jay's nest and birds. Foolish people ask for mercy where they have often done wrong, before they will make amends.

Uns escufles jut en sun lit;

A kite lay in his bed

malades est, si cum il dit.

sick he-is so as he says

Uns jais ot sun ni pres de lui,

A jay had his nest near to him

a qui il fist suvent ennui.

to whom he did often trouble

Li escufles se purpensa

The kite himself bethought

que sa mere i enveiera,

that his mother there he-will-send

si fera requerre pardun

so he-will-make to-ask pardon

e que pur lui face oreisun.

and that for him she-may-make prayer

‘Mere’, fet il, ‘kar i alez!

Mother says he now there go

Qu’il prit pur mei, li requerez!’

That-he may-pray for me of-him ask

‘Jeo’, fet ele, ‘cument irai?

I says she how shall-I-go

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Ne sai cument li prierai:

Not I-know how him I-shall-pray

meinte feiz as suillié sun ni

many-a time thou-hast soiled his nest

e sur ses oisels esmelti.'

and on his birds dunged

15 Issi est de la fole gent:

Thus it-is of the foolish folk

la, u il unt mesfet suvent,

there where they have misdome often

vuelent aler merci criër,

they-wish to-go mercy to-cry

ainz qu'il le vueillent amender.

before that-they it may-wish to-amend

De duobus lupis
LXXXVII · THE TWO WOLVES

Two wolves decide to do some good so that people will stop fearing them, and help reapers carry their sheaves. The men cry out against them, so they go back to the woods and swear never to do good again. The felon abandons the good he has begun on the slightest pretext if he does not see his reward at once.

Dui lou hors del bois s'encuntrentent.

Two wolves out of-the wood themselves-met

La s'aresturent, si parlerent

There themselves-they-stopped so they-spoke

que nuls huem nes osot atendre,

that any man not-them dared to-await

tut ne volsissent il rien prendre.

although not might-wish they anything to-take

Ceo dist li uns: 'Kar assaiuns

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That said the one Now let-us-try

bien a faire, se nus poïns,

good to do if we can

par quei nus eüssum honur

by which we might-have honor

e que nuls n'ait de nus poür.'

and that any not-may-have of us fear

Li altre dist: 'Or oi merveilles,

The other said Now I-hear marvels

quant tu tel chose nus conseilles.

10

when thou such thing us counselest

Di dunc, u nus poüm aler!'

Tell then where we can to-go

‘Jeol te sai bien’, fet il, ‘mustrer.

I-it thee know well says he to-show

Veiz la cel champ, u la genz siënt

See there that field where the people reap

u lur jarbes cuillent e liënt:

where their sheaves they-gather and bind

15 aluns i, e si lur aiduns,

let-us-go there and so them let-us-help

lur jarbes ensemble portuns!’

their sheaves together let-us-carry

‘Bien avez dit’, cil li respunt.

Well you-have said that-one to-him answers

D’ici el champ venu en sunt.

From-here into-the field come thence they-are

Le ble cuillirent e porterent,

The corn they-gathered and carried

20 mes li hume les escriërent.

but the men at-them cried-out

Li uns des lous a dunc parlé,

The one of-the wolves has then spoken

sun cumpaidun a apelé.

his companion he-has called

‘Veiz’, fet il, ‘cum cil nus escriënt:

See says he how those at-us cry

mal nus vuelent e pis nus diënt.

ill to-us they-wish and worse to-us they-say

25 Nostre bienfez ne valt niënt

Our good-deed not is-worth anything

plus que li mals vers ceste gent.

more than the ill toward this folk

Hastivement al bois aluns,

Hastily to-the wood let-us-go

si seium si cum nus suluns.'

so let-us-be so as we are-wont

Iluec jurerent e pramistrent,

There they-swore and promised

ja mes bien ne ferunt, ceo distrent.

ever more good not they-will-do that they-said

Ceo veit hum suvent del felun,

That sees one often of-the felon

ki a mult petit d'achaisun

who for very little of-occasion

laisse le bien que il comence;

leaves the good which he begins

se il ne veit en sa presence

if he not sees in his presence

le luier, qu'il en vult avoir,

the reward that-he thereof wishes to-have

a mal en turne sun espeir.

to ill thence he-turns his hope

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De lupo et vulpe

LXXXVIII · THE WOLF AND THE FOX

A fox and a wolf take their quarrel to the lion. He judges that the fox is in the right, but since the wolf's lie is more plausible, neither should be burdened. A good lord judging angry vassals should not favor one so as to wound the other, but settle the matter and calm the anger.

Uns gupiz e uns lous s'irierent

A fox and a wolf themselves-angered

e ensemble se curucierent,

and together themselves vexed

si que nuls nes pot acorder

so that any not-them could to-reconcile

ne lur raisun a bien turner.

nor their dispute to good to-turn

5 Nepurquant pur ceste achaisun

Nevertheless for this occasion

alerent devant le leün;

they-went before the lion

la parole li unt mustree

the matter to-him they-have shown

e l'uevre tute recordere.

and the-affair all recounted

Li liüns dist, qu'a vis li fu

The lion said that-to seeming to-him it-was

10 que li lous aveit tort eü

that the wolf had wrong had

e li gupiz aveit raisun;

and the fox had right

mes tant i ot de mesprisun

but so-much there was of misdeed

(issi cum li esteit a vis),

thus as to-him was to seeming

tut ait issi li lous mespris,

although has thus the wolf misdane

sa mençunge est plus covenable

his lie is more fitting

e mielz resemble chose estable

and better resembles thing stable

que del gupil la veritez:

than of-the fox the truth

nuls d'els n'en deit estre encumbrez.'

any of-them not-thereby ought to-be encumbered

Issi deit faire li bons sire:

Thus ought to-do the good lord

il ne deit pas jugier ne dire,

he not ought at-all to-judge nor to-say

se si hume, ki de lui tienent,

if his men who from him hold

irieement en sa curt viennent;

angrily into his court come

ne deit si devers l'un parler,

not he-ought so toward the-one to-speak

qu'a l'altre en deie mult peser,

that-to the-other thereof it-should much to-grieve

mes adrescier a sun poeir

but to-set-right to his power

e l'ire faire remaneir.

and the-anger to-make to-cease

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De lupo et capra

LXXXIX · THE WOLF AND THE SHE-GOAT

A goat going to pasture forbids her kid to let in any beast, whatever it says, until she comes back. The wolf, who has watched her go, asks the kid in her voice to open the door; the kid hears his mother's voice but does not see her body, and sends the wolf away. Had he let him in, he would have been eaten. So the sensible should not believe bad counsel or take a lie for truth: everyone knows how to give counsel, but not all counsel is useful, and the wicked and disloyal always counsel ill.

Une chievre voleit aler

A goat wished to-go

la u pasture pot trover.

there where pasture she-could to-find

Sun chevruel apela a li,

Her kid she-called to her

si li preia e defendi,

so him she-prayed and forbade

5 que il ne laissast pur murir

that he not should-let for dying

ensemble od els beste venir

together with them beast to-come

pur parole ne pur preiere,

for word nor for prayer

desi qu'ele revienge ariere.

until that-she may-come back

Quant ele fu el bois venue

When she was into-the wood come

10 e li lous l'ot dedenz veüe,

and the wolf her-had within seen

al chevruel vet, si li rova

to-the kid he-goes so to-him he-bade

que l'us ovrist; ceo li preia

that the-door he-should-open that him he-prayed

od tel voiz cum la chievre aveit.

with such voice as the goat had

E li chevruels li respundeit,

And the kid to-him answered

que la voiz de sa mere oï,

that the voice of his mother he-beard

mes sun cors niënt ne choisi.

but her body at-all not he-saw

'Va t'en ariere', fet il, 'lere!

Go thee-away back says he thief

Bien sai que tu n'ies pas ma mere.'

Well I-know that thou not-art at-all my mother

Se li chevruels l'eüst cuilli

If the kid him-had received

en la maisun ensemble od li,

in the house together with him

mangié l'eüst e devoré.

eaten him-he-would-have and devoured

Pur ceo chastie le sené,

For that warns the sensible-one

qu'il ne deie mal conseil creire

that-he not should evil counsel to-believe

ne mençunge tenir pur veire.

nor lie to-hold for true

Tute genz sevent conseillier;

All folk know-how to-counsel

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mes tuit conseil n'unt pas mestier:

but all counsels not-have at-all use

li felun e li desleial

the felons and the disloyal

dunent tuz jurs conseil de mal.

give all days counsel of ill

De homine et mensura
XC · THE SURVEYOR AND HIS ROD

A surveyor curses his measuring rod because he cannot measure straight. The rod answers that it does nothing on its own: he throws it, and his own cheating is at fault. So the unrighteous blame others for their misdeeds.

Ci cunte d'un mesureür,

Here he-tells of-a measurer

ki terre mesurot un jur.

who land measured one day

Durement maldist la mesure;

Sternly he-cursed the measure

kar ne pot par nule aventure

for not he-could by any chance

od li, ceo dist, dreit mesurer.

with it that he-said right to-measure

La perche dist: 'Lai mei ester!

The rod said Let me be

Jeo ne faz par mei nule rien:

I not do by myself any thing

tu me getes, ceo veit hum bien.

thou me throwest that sees one well

Mes tu iés pleins de tricherie:

But thou art full of cheating

sur mei turnes ta felunie.'

on me thou-turnest thy felony

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Issi funt li nundreiturier:

Thus do the unrighteous

quant hum aparceit lur mestier,

when one perceives their trade

les altres vuelent enculper

the others they-wish to-accuse

e lur mesfet sur els turner.

and their misdeed on them to-turn

De cerva hinnulum instruente
XCI · THE HIND TEACHING HER FAWN

A hind teaches her fawn to beware of dogs, hunters, and wolves, and most of all a man with a bow. The fawn thinks the man is hiding behind his horse in fear; she warns that he is readying his weapon, and still the fawn will not flee before he shoots. A fool fears only when caught, and often loses by his rashness.

Une bisse chastiot ja

A hind taught once

un suen feon, qu'ele mena,

a her-own fawn which-she led

cum il se dut des chiens garder

how he himself ought from-the dogs to-guard

e des veneürs desturner

and from-the hunters to-turn-aside

e del lou qu'il ne l'encunstrast,

and from-the wolf that-he not him-should-meet

qu'il ne l'ocesist e manjast.

that-he not him-should-kill and eat

Quant il aloënt si parlant,

When they went so talking

si unt veü un hume errant;

so they-have seen a man wandering

arc portot, saiete e bulzuns.

bow he-carried arrow and bolts

Sa mere apela li feüns;

His mother called the fawn

demanda li, ki cil huem fu.

asked her who that man was

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E la bisse l'a respundu:

And the bind him-has answered

'C'est cil, dunt plus te deiz cremeir

That-is he of-whom most thyself thou-oughtest to-fear

e greignur poür puez avoir.

and greater fear thou-canst to-have

15 Mes or l'esgarde bien de pres,

But now him-behold well from near

se tu l'encuntroes ja mes,

if thou him-shouldst-meet ever more

que de lui te saces garder.'

that from him thyself thou-mayest-know to-guard

'Mei n'estuet pas', fet il, 'duter.

Me not-behooves at-all says he to-fear

Il ne nus vult faire nul mal;

He not us wishes to-do any harm

20 de l'autre part de sun cheval

on the-other side of his horse

est descenduz, si est muciez:

he-is got-down so is bidden

de nus veir est esmaiez.'

from us seeing he-is dismayed

'Nenil, bels fiz, n'i a niënt;

No fair son not-there is anything

einz esgarde hardiement,

rather he-looks boldly

25 si vait sun fust apareillant,

so he-goes his shaft preparing

u a grant mal el chief devant:

where there-is great harm in-the head before

se il le fet vers nus venir,

if he it makes toward us to-come

bien en purrum le mal sentir.

well thereof we-shall-be-able the harm to-feel

Mielz est que nus nus en fuiuns.'

Better it-is that we ourselves thence flee

Dunc li respundi li feüns:

Then to-her answered the fawn

'Ne fuirai pas, desi qu'il traie,

Not I-shall-flee at-all until that-he may-shoot

quel aventure que j'en aie.'

what chance that I-thereof may-have

En reprueche dit hum suvent,

In proverb says one often

que fols ne crient, desi qu'il prent.

that fool not fears until that-he takes

Quant fols ne vult creire le sage,

When fool not wishes to-believe the wise-one

suvent i pert par sun ultrage.

often therein he-loses through his outrage

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De corvo et pullo eius
XCII · THE RAVEN AND HIS YOUNG

A raven teaches his young to fly away from any man who stoops for a stick or a stone. The young one asks whether he must flee even if he does not see the man stoop, and the raven, satisfied that he is wise, leaves him to his own counsel. When a child is raised wise, the parent may leave him to himself and help the others.

Ci nus recunte d'un corbel,

Here to-us he-tells of-a raven

ki enseignot un suen oisel,

who taught a his-own bird

qu'il ne deüst nul hume atendre,

that-he not ought any man to-await

kil volsist encumbrer ne prendre;

who-him might-wish to-binder or to-take

5 s'ume veïst baissier a terre,

if-man he-should-see to-stoop to ground

prendre bastun u piere querre,

to-take stick or stone to-see

dunc s'en deüst aillurs voler,

then himself-thence he-ought elsewhere to-fly

que cil nel poïst encumbrer.

that he not-him could to-binder

'Se jeo nel vei', fet il, 'baissier

If I not-him see says he to-stoop

10 ne en ses meins rien maniër,

nor in his hands anything to-handle

me dei jeo dunkes remuër?'

me ought I then to-move

Li cors respunt: 'Laisse m'ester!

The raven answers Let me-be

Jeo ne te dei mais enseigner;

I not thee ought more to-teach

car tu n'en as niënt mestier.

for thou not-thereof hast at-all need

Vole par tei, e si t'äie!

Fly by thyself and so thyself-help

Or sui senz dute de ta vie;

Now I-am without fear of thy life

a mes altres oisels irai,

to my other birds I-shall-go

a mun poeir lur aiderai.'

to my power them I-shall-help

Par cest essample nus dit tant:

By this example to-us he-says so-much

quant hum a nurri sun enfant,

when one has nourished his child

qu'il le veit sage e vezié,

that-he him sees wise and cunning

le quer en a joius e lié;

the heart thereby he-has joyous and glad

a sun conseil le deit laisser

to his counsel him he-ought to-leave

e puis les altres avancier.

and then the others to-advance

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De lupo et capro

XCIII · THE WOLF AND THE HE-GOAT

A goat cornered by a wolf on a heath asks leave to sing a mass on a hilltop before he dies, and cries so loudly that shepherds and dogs come and tear the wolf. The goat says he prayed for the wolf as the wolf meant to for him. Those who send another to speak for them find that he speaks mostly for himself.

Par vieil essample truis escrit

By old example I-find written

e Esopes le cunte e dit,

and Aesop it tells and says

qu'uns bus entra en une lande,

that-a goat entered into a heath

si alot querre sa viande.

so he-went to-seek his food

5 Guarda, si vit un lou venir;

He-looked so saw a wolf to-come

ne pot desturner ne guenchir:

not he-could to-turn-aside nor to-dodge

en mi la lande s'arestut.

in middle-of the heath himself-he-stopped

Li lous demanda, que ceo dut

The wolf asked what that meant

qu'il s'ert en cele lande mis

that-he himself-was in that heath put

10 e que il avait dedenz quis.

and what he had therein sought

Li bus respunt: 'Jeo vus fui,

The goat answers I you fled

tant cum jeo poi; or sai de fi,

so-long as I could now I-know of surety

que ne puis mais fuïr avant:

that not I-can more to-flee forward

pur ceo vus sui alez querant.'

for that you I-am gone seeking

Li lous respunt: 'Jeo te rai quis

The wolf answers I thee in-turn-have sought

par tuz les bois de cest païs,

through all the woods of this country

ceo m'est a vis, un an entier.

that to-me-is to seeming a year whole

Mult aveie grant desirier

Very I-had great desire

de mangier ta char, ki est saine,

of to-eat thy flesh which is healthy

si n'ies mie chargiez de laine.'

so not-thou-art at-all burdened with wool

'Or m'avez', fet li bus, 'trové,

Now me-you-have says the goat found

si vus requier par charité

so you I-ask for charity

qu'alcune merci e pardun

that-some mercy and pardon

faciez cest vostre cumpaignun.'

you-may-do to-this your companion

Li lous li dist, quant il l'oi:

The wolf to-him said when he it-heard

'Tu n'avras ja de mei merci;

Thou not-wilt-have ever from me mercy

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kar ne te puis terme doner,

for not thee I-can term to-give

que jeo t'en veie vif aler.'

that I thee-thence may-see alive to-go

'Jeo ne quier terme', dist li bus,

I not seek term said the goat

30 'fors tant que jeo die pur vus

except so-much that I may-say for you

une messe e altre pur mei

a mass and another for me

sur cel halt tertre, que la vei.

on that high hill which there I-see

Tutes les bestes ki l'orrunt,

All the beasts who it-will-hear

ki es bois e es viles sunt,

who in-the woods and in-the towns are

35 ferunt pur nus a deu preiere.'

will-make for us to God prayer

Li lous l'otreie en tel maniere.

The wolf it-grants in such manner

Hors de la lande amdui en vunt,

Out of the heath both thence go

ensemble vienent tresqu'al munt.

together they-come up-to-the mountain

Li bus esteit desus muntez;

The goat was above climbed

40 li lous fu tuz aseürez,

the wolf was all assured

desuz remest, si atendi.

below he-remained so waited

Li bus leva en halt sun cri;

The goat raised on high his cry

si durement aveit crié,

so hard he-had cried

que li pastur sunt hors alé

that the shepherds are out gone

e cil, ki pres del munt esteient

and those who near of-the mountain were

e es viles en tur maneient.

and in-the towns in round dwelt

Le lou virent, si l'escrîèrent,

The wolf they-saw so at-him-cried-out

de tutes parz les chiens huèrent.

from all sides the dogs they-set-on

Le lou unt pris e deciré.

The wolf they-have taken and torn

E il a le buc apelé:

And he has the goat called

'Frere', fet il, 'bien sai e vei,

Brother says he well I-know and see

malement as preié pur mei;

badly thou-hast prayed for me

bien poi entendre par le cri,

well I-could to-understand by the cry

que c'ert preiere d'enemi.

that that-was prayer of-enemy

Mult est malvaïse ta pramesse,

Very is bad thy promise

unkes mes n'oï peiur messe.'

ever before not-I-heard worse mass

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'Par ma fei, sire', dist li bus,

By my faith lord said the goat

'tut altresì preiai pur vus,

all likewise I-prayed for you

cum vus volsistes pur mei faire;

as you wished for me to-do

60 kar fel estes e de put aire.

for felonious you-are and of base nature

Ja ne poi jeo merci avoir,

Ever not could I mercy to-have

que jeo vesquisse tresqu'al seir:

that I might-live until-the evening

pur ceo m'estut de mei penser

for that me-behooved of me to-think

e vus laissier e ubliër.'

and you to-leave and to-forget

65 Suvent veit hum de meinte gent,

Often sees one of many folk

ki quident tut a esciënt

who think all with knowledge

qu'altre deie pur els parler

that-another should for them to-speak

e lur message bien porter,

and their message well to-carry

si parolent le plus pur els

so they-speak the most for themselves

70 e laissent e ubliënt cels.

and leave and forget those

De homine et uxore litigiosa

XCIV · THE VILLEIN AND HIS CONTRARY WIFE

A villein and his contrary wife walk through a meadow and argue whether it was mown with a scythe or cut with shears. Angry, he knocks her down and cuts out her tongue, but when he asks again she still signs with her fingers that it was shears. So a fool will not accept good sense from another, but grows angry and, even knowing he is in the wrong, puts his own lie forward, and no one can make him keep quiet about it.

Uns vileins ot femme a espuse,

A villein had wife in marriage

ki mult esteit cuntrariüse.

who very was contrary

Un jur furent ensemble alé

One day they-were together gone

pur els deduire par un pre.

for themselves to-amuse through a meadow

Li vileins a sa femme dit,

The villein has to-his wife said

qu'unkes mes de ses uiz ne vit

that-ever before with his eyes not he-saw

nul pre falchié si uëlment.

any meadow mown so evenly

El li respunt hastivement:

She to-him answers hastily

‘Ainz fu od les forces trenchiez.’

Rather it-was with the shears cut

Dit li vileins: ‘Einz fu falchiez.’

Says the villein Rather it-was mown

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'Einz est', fet la femme, 'tunduz.'

Rather it-is says the wife shorn

Dunc s'est li vileins irascuz.

Then himself-is the villain angered

'Tu iés', fet il, 'fole pruee:

Thou art says he fool proven

ceste herbe fu od falz colpee.

this grass was with scythe cut

15 Mes tu iés si engresse e fole,

But thou art so obstinate and foolish

qu'avant vuels metre ta parole;

that-forward thou-wishest to-put thy word

la meie vuels faire remeindre,

the mine thou-wishest to-make to-remain

par engresté me vuels ateindre.'

by obstinacy me thou-wishest to-overcome

Li vileins l'a a val getee,

The villain her-has to below thrown

20 si li a langue colpee.

so to-her he-has tongue cut

Puis demande qu'a vis li fu

Then he-asks what-to seeming to-her it-was

e qu'ele en aveit entendu,

and what-she thereof had understood

se li prez fu od falz falchiez

if the meadow was with scythe mown

u od forces esteit trenchiez.

or with shears was cut

25 La u ele ne pot parler,

There where she not could to-speak

od ses deiz li prist a mustrer

with her fingers to-him she-took to show

que forces l'aveient trenchié

that shears it-had cut

e que falz ne l'ot pas seié.

and that scythe not it-had at-all reaped

Par cest essample vult mustrer,

By this example he-wishes to-show

bien le puet hum suvent pruver:

well it can one often to-prove

se fols parole une folie

if fool speaks a folly

e altre vient, ki sens li die,

and other comes who sense to-him may-tell

ne l'en creit pas, einz s'en aïre;

not him-thereof he-believes at-all rather himself-thereat he-angers

la u il set qu'il en est pire,

there where he knows that-he thereby is worse

vult sa mençunge metre avant:

he-wishes his lie to-put forward

nuls nel fereit de ceo taisant.

any not-him would-make of that silent

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De uxore mala et marito eius

XCV · THE BAD WIFE AND HER HUSBAND

A villain who fears his quarrelsome wife sends his men to her for food; told that he forbids it, she brings plenty. Seeing him glad at the meal, she backs away until she falls into the river and drowns. He has his men search upstream, since she went against everything. Those who quarrel with their lord pay for it at last.

D'un vilein cunte, ki aveit

Of-a villein he-tells who bad

une femme, qu'il mult cremeit;

a wife whom-he much feared

kar ele esteit mult felunesse,

for she was very felonious

de male part e tenceresse.

of evil side and quarrelsome

5 Eissi avint que par un jur

Thus it-happened that on a day

menot ses humes en labur.

he-led his men to labor

Dunc preierent cil al vilein

Then prayed those to-the villain

qu'il lur dunast cerveise e pein,

that-he to-them should-give ale and bread

si en purreient mielz ovrer.

so thereby they-could better to-work

10 A sa femme les rueve aler

To his wife them he-bids to-go

e li preier qu'el lur dunast;

and her to-pray that-she to-them should-give

kar pis sereit, s'il i alast.

for worse it-would-be if-he there went

Cil unt a la femme preié;

They have to the wife prayed

puis li unt dit e cunseillié

then to-her they-have said and advised

que sis sire pas nel voleit.

that her lord at-all not-it wished

Dunc respondi qu'el lur durreit;

Then she-answered that-she to-them would-give

mes guardassent qu'il n'en eüst

but let-them-take-care that-he not-thereof might-have

ne n'en manjast ne n'en beüst;

nor not-thereof might-eat nor not-thereof might-drink

ore alassent falchier les prez:

now let-them-go to-mow the meadows

ele lur portereit asez.

she to-them would-carry plenty

Cil s'en alerent lieement.

They themselves-thence went gladly

El les siwi hastivement;

She them followed hastily

viande e beivre lur porta;

food and drink to-them she-carried

que haitié fussent, lur preia.

that glad they-should-be them she-prayed

Ensemble asistrent al mangier.

Together they-sat at-the eating

'Pensez', fet ele, 'del haitier!'

Think says she of-the being-glad

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'Si feruns nus', fet sis baruns,

So shall-do we says her husband

'e granz merciz que nus l'avuns.'

and great thanks that we it-have

Quant ele vit sun seignur lié,

When she saw her lord glad

30 mult ot le quer triste e irié.

very she-had the heart sad and angry

De sun barun se traist ariere;

From her husband herself she-drew back

il la siwi vers la riviere.

he her followed toward the river

Tant cum ele se traist en sus,

So-long as she herself drew off away

e il la siut e plus e plus,

and he her follows both more and more

35 tant que li piez li eschapa:

until that the foot from-her escaped

en l'ewe chiet, si enfundra.

into the-water she-falls so she-sank

Li serjant saillirent après;

The sergeants leaped after

a val l'ewe current adés

to below the-water they-run at-once

pur li tenir, qu'el ne passast

for her to-bold that-she not should-pass

40 e que li floz ne l'en portast.

and that the stream not her-thence should-carry

Li vileins lur a escrië

The villain to-them has cried

qu'il ne sunt mie bien alé;

that-they not are at-all well gone

cuntre l'ewe la deient querre:

against the-water her they-ought to-seek

la la purrunt trover a terre,

there her they-will-be-able to-find on ground

la la quergent, si ferunt bien:

there her let-them-seek so they-will-do well

tant ert encuntre tute rien,

so-much she-was against every thing

qu'a val l'ewe n'est pas alee,

that-to below the-water not-she-is at-all gone

cuntre la radur est turnee;

against the current she-is turned

en sa mort ne fist ele mie

in her death not did she at-all

ceo que ne volt faire en sa vie.

that which not she-wished to-do in her life

Issi avient: plusur estrivent

Thus it-happens many quarrel

vers lur seignur, tant cum il vivent,

toward their lord so-long as they live

ne vuelent saveir ne sentir,

not they-wish to-know nor to-feel

quels mals lur en puet avenir:

what ills to-them thereof can to-happen

lur riote tienent avant.

their contention they-bold forward

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Quant il le va aparcevant,

When he it goes perceiving

e il le turne a maltalent,

and he it turns to ill-will

si s'en venge plus asprement.

so himself-thereof he-avenges more harshly

De lepore et cervo
XCVI · THE HARE AND THE STAG

A hare, admiring a stag's horns, asks the Creator why he was not given such horns. Told he could not manage them, he insists and receives them, but cannot carry them or move with them. The covetous and miserly who try to raise themselves beyond their size find their honors turn to harm.

Uns lievres vit un cerf ester;

A hare saw a stag to-stand

ses cornes prist a reguarder,

his horns he-took to look-at

mult li sembla bele sa teste.

very to-him seemed fair his head

Plus se tint vil que nule beste,

More himself he-held vile than any beast

quant altresì n'esteit cornuz

since likewise not-he-was horned

e qu'il esteit si poi creüz.

and that-he was so little grown

A la sepande ala parler,

To the creator he-went to-speak

si li cumence a demander,

so of-her he-begins to ask

pur quei ne l'ot si honuré

for what not him-she-had so honored

e de cornes si aürné

and with horns so adorned

cume le cerf, qu'il ot veü.

as the stag whom-he had seen

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La deuesse l'a respundu:

The goddess him-has answered

'Tais, fols', fet ele, 'lai ester:

Hush fool says she leave be

tu nes purreies gouverner.'

thou not-them couldst to-govern

15 'Si ferai bien', il li respunt.

So I-shall-do well he to-her answers

Dunc ot cornes el chief a munt.

Then he-had horns on-the head to above

Mes nes poeit mie porter,

But not-them he-could at-all to-carry

kar ne saveit od tut aler;

for not he-knew with all to-go

car plus aveit qu'il ne deüst

for more he-had than-be — ought

20 ne qu'a sa grandur n'esteüst.

nor than-to his size bebooved

Par cest essample vult mustrer:

By this example he-wishes to-show

li coveitus e li aver

the covetous and the miser

vuelent tuz jurs tant cuveitier,

wish all days so-much to-covet

e si se vuelent eshalcier,

and so themselves they-wish to-exalt

25 tant enpernent par lur ultrage,

so-much they-undertake through their outrage

que lur honors turne a damage.

that their honors turns to harm

De lupo et columba

XCVII · THE WOLF AND THE DOVE

A wolf mocks a dove for toiling to gather twigs for a nest that will never be better. The dove answers that the wolf gathers sheep, lambs, and rams and is none the richer or more esteemed. Robbers and thieves who steal another's goods are seldom bettered and always live in poverty.

Uns lous esguarda un colum,

A wolf watched a dove

ki cuilleit desuz un buissun

who gathered beneath a bush

ramels, dunt sun ni voleit faire.

twigs whereof his nest he-wished to-make

Li lous parla, ne se pot taire.

The wolf spoke not himself he-could to-be-silent

‘Mult te vei’, fet il, ‘travaillier,

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Much thee I-see says he to-toil

cuillir mairien e purchacier:

to-gather timber and to-procure

ja n’en iert mieldre ta maisuns.’

ever not-thereby will-be better thy house

Dunc li respundi li culuns:

Then to-him answered the dove

‘E jeo te vei berbiz cuillir,

And I thee see sheep to-gather

aignels e multuns retenir,

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lambs and rams to-keep

si n'en iés niënt avanciez

so not-thereby thou-art at-all advanced

ne plus riches ne plus preisiez.'

nor more rich nor more prized

Issi vet il des robeürs,

Thus goes it of-the robbers

des larruns e des tricheürs:

of-the thieves and of-the cheats

15 quant il emblent altrui aveir,

when they steal another's wealth

mult le puet hum sovent veoir,

much it can one often to-see

qu'il n'en sunt guaires amendé;

that-they not-thereby are much bettered

tuz jurs vivent en poverté.

all days they-live in poverty

De catto et vulpe

XCVIII • THE CAT AND THE FOX

A fox tells a cat that he has two tricks and a pouch full of others, while the cat knows only one. When two dogs come running, the cat tells the fox to help himself and leaps onto a thornbush, and the dogs seize the fox. The cat asks why he does not open his pouch, and the fox admits he would rather have the cat's one trick than all of his. A liar is often caught by a wise man who listens to his words, and one word from a loyal man does more good in a lawsuit than all the liar does.

Uns gupiz e uns chaz alerent

A fox and a cat went

par mi un champ, si purparlerent

through middle-of a field so agreed

que il sereient cumpaignun.

that they would-be companions

Dunc s'asemblent suz un buissun.

Then themselves-assemble under a bush

Li chaz al gupil demanda,

The cat of-the fox asked

par quel engin se defendra

by what device himself he-will-defend

la u il ierent entrepris.

there where they will-be hard-pressed

E li gupiz li dist: 'Amis,

And the fox to-him said Friend

dous engins sai, u mult me crei,

two devices I-know where much myself I-trust

e pleine puche en ai od mei.

and full pouch thereof I-have with me

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Mes jo ne vueil la puche ovrir,

But I not wish the pouch to-open

desi que cil deient faillir.'

until that those must to-fail

Li chaz respunt par brief raisun:

The cat answers in brief speech

'Nus n'iermes mie compaignun;

We not-shall-be at-all companions

15 kar jeo ne sai fors un engin,

for I not know except one device

ceo sevent bien tuit mi veisin.'

that know well all my neighbors

La u il vunt issi parlant,

There where they go thus talking

dous chiens virent venir curant.

two dogs they-saw to-come running

Li gupiz vers le chat escrie:

The fox toward the cat cries

20 'Ore ai jeo mestier de t'äie.'

Now have I need of thy-help

Li chaz respunt: 'Äie tei!

The cat answers Help thyself

N'ai qu'un engin: cil iert od mei.'

Not-I-have but-one device that-one will-be with me

Dunc sailli li chaz sur l'espine.

Then leaped the cat onto the-thorn

Li chien saisissent par l'eschine

The dogs seize by the-spine

25 le gupil, sil vunt detirant,

the fox so-him they-go tearing

e li chaz li escrie tant:

and the cat to-him cries so-much

‘Cumpain’, fet il, ‘pur quei t’ublies,

Companion says he for what thyself-forgettest

que ta puchete ne deslies?

that thy little-pouch not thou-untiest

Tu l’espargnes trop lungement!

Thou it-sparest too long

Li chien te hastent durement:

The dogs thee press hard

pur quei n’as tun sac deslié?’

for what not-thou-hast thy sack untied

‘Jeo l’ai’, fet il, ‘trop espargnié.

I it-have says he too spared

Or te di bien, mierz amereie

Now to-thee I-tell well better I-would-love

tun sul engin, se jeo l’aveie,

thy single device if I it-had

que cels dunt ai ma puche pleine:

than those whereof I-have my pouch full

jeo te vei delivre de peine.’

I thee see free of pain

‘Bien me deit’, fet li chaz, ‘membrer

Well me ought says the cat to-remember

de ceo que j’ai oï cunter:

of that which I-have heard to-tell

suvent est ateinz li gupiz,

often is caught the fox

tut seit il quointes par ses diz.’

although be he clever by his words

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Del menteür avient suvent,

Of-the liar it-happens often

tut parolt il raisnablement,

although speaks he reasonably

sil puet li sages entreprendre,

so-him can the wise-one to-catch

s'il vuelte a sa parole entendre.

if-he wishes to his word to-attend

45 Del leial hume est mielz creüe

Of-the loyal man is better believed

une parole e entendue

one word and understood

e plus purfite en un grant plait,

and more profits in a great suit

que quan que li mentere fait.

than whatever that the liar does

De homine in nave

XCIX · THE MAN IN THE SHIP

A rich man prays for a safe crossing and a safe return, but his ship is driven out to sea; the harder he prays for land, the farther it goes, until he asks God to do his pleasure, and he soon arrives. The wise should pray God to do his will, for God knows better than a changing heart what a man needs.

Uns riches huem voleit aler

A rich man wished to-go

ultre une mer pur converser.

across a sea for to-dwell

A deu preia qu'il l'i menast

To God he-prayed that-he him-there should-lead

a salveté, qu'il ne dutast.

in safety that-he not should-fear

Ne voleit guaires demurer.

Not he-wished much to-stay

Quant ariere volt returner,

When back he-wished to-return

a deu preia del revenir,

to God he-prayed of-the coming-back

qu'il nel laissast niënt perir.

that-he not-him should-let at-all to-perish

Einz qu'il se fust aparceüz,

Before that-he himself were aware

dedenz la mer s'est enbatuz.

within the sea himself-he-is driven

Lors prie a deu quel meint a terre;

Then he-prays to God that-him he-may-lead to land

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ne li volt altre chose querre.

not of-him he-wished other thing to-seek

Cum plus comença a criër,

As more he-began to cry

e plus ala sa nes par mer.

and more went his ship over sea

15 Quant il vit que deus ne faiseit

When he saw that God not did

la preiere qu'il requereit

the prayer which-he asked

e qu'a terre ne pot venir,

and that-to land not he-could to-come

dist li qu'il face sun plaisir.

he-said to-him that-he may-do his pleasure

Après cel mot tost ariva

After that word soon he-arrived

20 la u il volt e desira.

there where he wished and desired

Li sages deit raisnablement

The wise-one ought reasonably

preier a deu omnipotent,

to-pray to God almighty

que de lui face sun plaisir:

that with him he-may-do his pleasure

de ceo li puet granz biens venir.

from that to-him can great goods to-come

25 Kar mielz set deus qu'il li estuet

For better knows God what-it to-him behooves

que sis quers, ki li change e muet.

than his heart which him changes and moves

De sene et equite

C · THE OLD MAN AND THE KNIGHT

A knight asks an old man where to live. The old man answers: where people love you; failing that, where they fear you; failing that, where no one fears you; and failing that, where no one knows where you are. So a fool who talks more than he should often hears what he would rather not.

D'un chevalier vueil ci cunter

Of-a knight I-wish here to-tell

e par essample remembrer,

and by example to-recall

ki un vieil hume encuntra ja.

who an old man met once

Ensemble od lui s'acumpaigna.

Together with him himself-be-joined

Pur ceo que mult le vit membré,

For that that much him he-saw wise

e en meint liu aveit esté,

and in many-a place be-had been

li voleit conseil demander,

of-him be-wished counsel to-ask

en quel terre purreit aler;

into what land he-could to-go

kar il meïsmes n'en aveit.

for he himself not-thereof had

E li vielz huem li respundeit

And the old man to-him answered

qu'en la terre voist cunverser,

that-into the land he-should-go to-dwell

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u la genz le vueillent amer.

where the people him may-wish to-love

'E se jeo', fet il 'ne la truis,

And if I says he not it find

cunseilliez mei, quel part jeo puis

counsel me what part I can

15 aler e sujourner lung tens.'

to-go and to-sojourn long time

Cil li respundi par grant sens:

He to-him answered with great sense

'Va la', fet il, 'e si me crei,

Go there says he and so me believe

u genz aient poür de tei.'

where people may-have fear of thee

'Se jeo terre ne puis trover,

If I land not can to-find

20 u la genz me vueillent duter?'

where the people me may-wish to-fear

Dunc li respundi li vielz huem:

Then to-him answered the old man

'Va la, u pas ne te dut l'em.'

Go there where at-all not thee fears one

'E se jo la ne puis venir,

And if I there not can to-come

quel part irai terre tenir?'

what part shall-I-go land to-hold

25 'Va la, u nul hume ne veies,

Go there where any man not thou-mayest-see

e que nuls ne sace, u tu seies.'

and that any not may-know where thou mayest-be

Par essample nus vult sumundre,

By example us he-wishes to-admonish

que si deit hum a fol respundre,

that so ought one to fool to-answer

ki plus parole qu'il ne deit;

who more speaks than-he — ought

si ot suvent qu'il ne voldreit.

so he-hears often what-he not would-wish

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De catto infulato
CI • THE CAT IN A MITER

A cat on an oven calls to the field mouse and the mouse, claiming to be their bishop and saying they are wrong to lack his blessing. They flee into the wall, preferring to die rather than come under his claws, for they know him for a felon. No one should put himself in the power of one who wishes him harm, but go elsewhere.

Uns chaz seeit desur un fur,

A cat sat upon an oven

u aguaitié ot tutejur.

where lain-in-wait he-had all-day

Vit le mulet e la suriz,

He-saw the field-mouse and the mouse

sis apela par mult bels diz

so-them he-called with very fair words

5 e dist que lur evesques fu

and said that their bishop he-was

e que mal conseil unt eü

and that ill counsel they-have had

que sa beneïçun n'aveient.

that his blessing not-they-had

E les suriz li respundeient

And the mice to-him answered

qu'asez voleient mielz murir

that-much they-wished better to-die

10 que desuz ses ungles venir.

than under his claws to-come

Les suriz s'en turnent fuiant,

The mice themselves-thence turn fleeing

e li chaz les vet enchalçant.

and the cat them goes pursuing

En la parei se sunt fichiees:

Into the wall themselves they-are thrust

mielz i vuelent estre muciees,

better there they-wish to-be hidden

si que ne puissent jur veoir,

so that not they-may day to-see

qu'od lur evesque remaneir;

than-with their bishop to-remain

mult criement sa beneïçun,

much they-fear his blessing

kar els le sevent a felun.

for they him know for felon

Par cest essample nus devise:

By this example to-us he-sets-out

nuls ne se deit metre en justise

any not himself ought to-put in power

de celui ki mal li vult querre,

of him who ill to-him wishes to-seek

mes desturner en altre terre.

but to-turn-away into other land

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De femina et gallina

CII · THE WOMAN AND THE HEN

A woman watching her hen scratch for food all day offers her a barn full of wheat if she will stop. The hen answers that even with the measure always full before her, she would never stop seeking more, as her nature and habit require. Many can find the means they need, but cannot change their nature, which lives always in their hearts.

Une femme se seeit ja

A woman herself sat once

devant sun us, si esguarda,

before her door so watched

cume sa geline gratot

how her hen scratched

e sa viande purchaȝot;

and her food procured

5 mult se travailot tutejur.

much herself she-toiled all-day

A li parla par grant amur:

To her she-spoke with great love

‘Bele’, fet ele, ‘lai ester

Fair-one says she leave be

que tu ne vueilles si grater!

that thou not mayest-wish so to-scratch

Chescun jur te durrai furment

Each day to-thee I-shall-give wheat

10 pleine une grange a tun talent.’

full a barn at thy liking

La geline li respondi:

The hen to-her answered

'Que diz tu? Va! Qu'ai jeo oï?

What sayest thou Go What-have I heard

Quides tu que j'aim mienz tun ble

Thinkest thou that I-love better thy corn

que ceo que ai tut tens usé?

than that which I-have all time used

Nenil, nenil', fet la geline,

No no says the hen

'se devant mei esteit la mine

if before me were the measure

tuz jurs pleine, pas ne lenneie

all days full at-all not I-would-leave

ne pur ceo ne me targereie

nor for that not myself I-would-delay

que ne quesisse tuz jurs plus

that — I-should-see all days more

sulunc ma nature e mun us.'

according-to my nature and my custom

Par cest essample vult mustrer,

By this example he-wishes to-show

que plusurs genz pueent trover

that many folk can to-find

manaie e ceo qu'il unt mestier;

means and that which-they have need

mes il ne pueent pas changier

but they not can at-all to-change

lur nature ne lur usage:

their nature nor their usage

tuz jurs avive en lur curage.

all days it-lives in their heart

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Epilogus

EPILOGUE

At the end of the book the poet names herself. Her name is Marie, and she is from France, so that no clerk may claim her labor. She wrote it for love of Count William, the most valiant of the realm, turning it from English into French. The book is called Aesop, who translated it from Greek into Latin; King Alfred, who loved it, put it into English, and she has rhymed it in French. She prays God to let her so labor that she may render her soul to him.

Al finement de cest escrit,

At-the end of this writing

qu'en Romanz ai traitié e dit,

which-in French I-have treated and told

me numerai pur remembrance:

myself I-shall-name for remembrance

Marie ai num, si sui de France.

Marie I-have name so I-am of France

5 Puet cel estre, cil clerc plusur

Can that to-be those clerks many

prendreient sur els mun labur:

would-take on themselves my labor

ne vueil que nuls sur lui le die;

not I-wish that any on himself it may-say

cil uevre mal ki sei ublie.

he works ill who himself forgets

Pur amur le cunte Willalme,

For love (of-)the count William

10 le plus vaillant de cest reialme,

the most valiant of this realm

m'entremis de cest livre faire

myself-I-undertook of this book to-make

e de l'Engleis en Romanz traire.

and from the-English into French to-draw

Esope apelë um cest livre,

Aesop calls one this book

kil translata e fist escriivre,

who-it translated and made to-write

de Griu en Latin le turna.

from Greek into Latin it be-turned

Li reis Alvrez, ki mult l'ama,

The king Alfred who much it-loved

le translata puis en Engleis,

it translated then into English

e jeo l'ai rimé en Franceis,

and I it-have rhymed in French

si cum jol truvai, proprement.

so as I-it found properly

Or pri a deu omnipotent

Now I-pray to God almighty

qu'a tel uevre me doinst entendre,

that-to such work me be-may-grant to-attend

que jeo li puisse m'alme rendre.

that I to-him may my-soul to-render

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