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THE TWELFTH-CENTURY FRENCH POEM OF RICHEUT:
A STUDY IN HISTORY, FORM AND CONTENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Donald Eugene Ker, B. S., M. A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1976

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the many teachers it has been my privilege to know who have helped nurture in me a love of good learning. A special thanks is owed to the French Faculty at the Ohio State University, whose courses during my tenure here have been at once excellent in content and enjoyable in style.

I owe a very particular debt to Professor Hans-Erich Keller, my adviser, whose vast knowledge and erudition have been constantly at my disposition in an atmosphere of friendly, patient encouragement.
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INTRODUCTION

The tale of the prostitute Richeut and her son Samson stands out against the background of Old French literature as a unique work. The object of this study is to examine Richeut in detail. Before proceeding, however, it seems appropriate to provide a résumé of the plot for those who may not be familiar with the work.

Exposition (vv. 1-85)

The narrator calls for quiet so that he can recount a tale about Richeut, whose adventures have often been heard before. She is a whore, as are all women by their very nature, but she is the master of them all; and what they are by nature she perfects by teaching. She once took the habit of a nun and turned the whole convent of nuns into Nanas and seduced the priest and had him killed. She ruins even the rich and powerful, for example, the noble Lord William and the priest; for Richeut brings low all classes of men. Now a tale is announced, which is much better than all the others. In it one will hear about the clever and handsome son of Richeut; he takes after his mother and his father is unknown. Through this son Richeut reaps much gold and silver. We shall hear how he was conceived, born, raised and educated, as well as for what kind of life he is destined and what his name is.

Vengeance (vv. 86-397)

With a fire for warmth, Richeut and Hersent are chatting before an abundance of good food and wine. Richeut is angry because the priest promised her clothing and food in order to go to bed with her, and he has not kept his word. She wonders how to get revenge, and Hersent suggests magic. But Richeut takes Mandragora and makes love with everybody until she becomes pregnant. She then goes to the priest and threatens to expose him if he refuses to give her money. He acquiesces and promises to give her more when the child is born. On the same pretext she also extorts money from a knight and a bourgeois, and from every other man she finds. With her female lures and treachery she makes more money than any other kind of bandit.

Prosperity, Education, Impoverishment (vv. 398-614)

The heroine endures the pain of childbirth and Samson is born. The event brings in a new harvest of goods and money, as the three amis
of Richeut keep their pledge. The mother's confinement turns into a continuous celebration amidst plenty. The whore now wears rich clothing, and she becomes very proud. She commands a high price for her caresses, to the discomfiture of the lecheors. She takes good care of Samson, who is the cause of so much prosperity. Samson goes to school and becomes better than all his classmates in all disciplines. He is also an intrepid horseman and excels in arithmatic. When his talents are effectively displayed to each of the "fathers," their paternal pride at having such an extraordinary son, and one who is "just like" each of them respectively, drives them all to financial ruin as each gave more and more of his wealth to Richeut for the benefit of his "son."

Conflict (vv. 615-755)

Samson has completed his school education and is now a dialecticiens. Following the dictates of his mother's nature, he soon is an expert in deception. He can never be bested in dice; he knows how to use magic; and he has become a veritable plague on womankind, seducing and turning more than a thousand of them into whores. Richeut wants to know what kind of life Samson is going to lead and offers him the estate of any one of his three putative fathers. After being assured that there is no way to tell who his real father is, since Richeut coupled with all three and a thousand others besides, Samson rejects all three estates and declares his intention to travel all over the world from court to court, corrupting and living off of the most beautiful and sophisticated ladies; for he knows the ways and nature of women from having read good authors, particularly Ovid. At this point Richeut tries to tell him that he knows little of such matters and that books give a dangerously unrealistic view of love. She fails to convince him, so she chastie him, just as the noble mother of any would-be knight errant must. She gives him the benefit of her exceptional experience in one crash course on how a lover should talk to ladies and conduct himself in bed. Armed with his handsome person, his consummate rhetorical education, and his mother's precepts and nature, Samson sets out to conquer the world.

Samson's Geste (vv. 756-984)

Samson goes from court to court, where his grace, wit and beautiful speech make him welcome. His words ensnare everybody; he knows how to talk cortoisemant before counts and kings. It is too bad that such a perfectly accomplished man does not find honor in the service of Rome, but he cannot. His mother's nature and the delights of the world keep him enslaved. He dominates the scene wherever he goes. He knows tales, amusing stories and songs of all kinds. His voice is so beautiful in song and speech that he could teach his art in school. No man can best him, and he so dominates all the lecheors that they make him their lord. He knows everything about lecherie. There is no woman, however beautiful, knowledgeable or sophisticated, with whom he does not have his way. He sleeps with them all, makes them suffer and then takes
their wealth. He has a weapon with which to skin them—flattery. It is Samson who avenges us all on those wenches who are too proud to have us. He wages his triumphant war on women everywhere in the world, even to the Indies. Nobody abuses female flesh like Samson. Then he takes orders in every monastery, even as far as the River Jordan, breaks his vows and steals from the community in each. He becomes a priest at Winchester, turns the novices into whores and gets an abbess pregnant. He beguiles all women. It does not even matter if they are related: he takes the niece, then the aunt and the sisters, the daughter, then the cousins. He takes them on their back, with their knees pressed against their breasts, backwards, forwards, etc. He even makes their bones crack. When he is through, they are despoiled, bereft of wealth, reputation and self-esteem, unable to show themselves in the street. Samson is his mother's son.

The Final Joust and Richeut's Victory (vv. 985-1318)

Hear now how Samson is beaten by his mother, Richeut the courtisane. After twelve years of wandering, Samson returns from Sicily in search of his mother. He arrives in Beauvais and is recognized by Richeut, who greets him, but he does not recognize her. The meretriz decides to find out who is more cunning, Samson, the cruellest plague toward women, or Richeut, the cruellest toward men. Richeut bathes and grooms Hersent, dresses her in beautiful clothes and applies make-up with consummate skill to make her withered ugliness appear as beauty. She then posts her meschine at the window of the upper room of a bourgeois's house. She has Samson notice this vision from afar, and to his inquiries she answers that it is the young daughter of a noble family who is learning weaving in gold with the daughter of the house. Samson is on fire with lust, and at his insistence Richeut manages to "win" from the maid a meeting with Samson. The atmosphere is prepared by food and wine in abundance, and, in the demi-obscurity of candlelight, Hersent's make-up does its office. As Samson presses the matter in his excitement, the hag plays the trembling virgin. Samson persists and at the critical moment finds neither fonz nor rive. Samson's humiliation is completed by a band of lecheors who burst into the room, threaten him with death, strip and beat him. Then all in the house are merry.
CHAPTER I

THE PHENOMENON OF RICHEUT

The purpose of this chapter is to assemble as completely as possible the ascertainable facts which bear upon the existence, scope and vitality of this peculiar French tale. This part of the examination of Richeut will treat 1) the manuscript and its history; 2) the extent to which the literature of the Middle Ages is conscious of this work and its principal personages; 3) the question of the typology of the latter; and 4) the hypothesis and evidence of a Richeut cycle. Moreover, the questions of 5) the geographic location of the poem's composition, 6) the history of its stanza form, and 7) its date of composition will be examined. It is of great importance to attempt to settle the latter question because so many of the features of Richeut appear to escape classification into any traditional genre. Once satisfactorily dated, the work may shed much light on French literature of the time or on a particular milieu or mentality not well represented by better-known or more traditional works. This problem has been used, therefore, as the overall organizing principle of the chapter.

In approaching these problems, an attempt has been made to keep in focus both literary and cultural history, as well as past scholarship relevant to the study of Richeut. It is hoped that not only the facts regarding this text will be established, but that in the process the critical history regarding the questions raised will be synthesized. When this exercise in research and literary history is successfully completed, the way will be cleared for the interpretive phase of this study. The interpretive phase will deal with the work as an individual artistic creation, an original facture of the cultural fabric of its time, rather than a phenomenon viewed mainly from the outside. It is this view of Richeut as an historical cultural object which is to be treated below.

The Manuscript

The tale of Richeut is contained in MS 354 of the Municipal Library at Bern. This tale runs from folio 125 verso, column 1 to folio 135 verso, column 1. Hermann Hagen's catalog describes it as a quarto parchment of 274 folia of the fourteenth century, though most scholars

\[1\] Hermann Hagen, Catalogus Codicum Bernensium (Bern, 1875), p. 338.
have since placed it in the second half of the thirteenth century. Hagen also notes the information supplied by Achille Jubinal that the manuscipt bears the signatures of Henri Estienne, Goldast von Heiminsfeld, and a certain Bongars, showing that it had been in their possession.¹ The manuscript, along with many others, passed from Bongars to the Bern Library.

Jubinal gives the following singular account of this manuscript. While lauding the competence, zeal and affability of the head librarian of the Bern Library, he notes that he was able to have access to the Library only from three until five o’clock and that the lending of manuscripts was strictly prohibited because of the misadventure which befell the Bern MS 354. In 1809, Dominique Martin Mêon requested the MS 354 in order to make his edition of fabliaux more complete. He addressed himself to the Foreign Minister, and shortly thereafter the French Ambassador to Switzerland, Talleyrand, received the document through the good offices of the city of Bern. He sent it on to the Duke of Otrante, then Minister of the Interior. The latter, intrigued by the precious document, showed it to a number of people and delayed sending it on to Mêon. The manuscript disappeared from the Minister’s chambers, and, in spite of appeals made by the Library in 1814, 1818, 1820 and 1824, no trace of it was found until 1836. At this point, M. Louis de Sinner was informed that it was in the possession of M. Crozet, librarian of the Bibliothèque du Roi, who had just acquired it from the orator Manuel, a rival of Benjamin Constant and Foy. The Bern Library, rather than risk losing its own manuscript, paid the purchase price of 1,000 francs. Although Sinner allowed Jubinal to copy several pieces treating various trades of the thirteenth century (published with Jubinal’s Lettre au Directeur de "L'Artiste"²) before the manuscript left Paris, the original itself was returned to the Bern Library, where it has been carefully conserved ever since.

It should be noted that, although the manuscript itself cannot leave its secure shelter, the Swiss continue their long-standing tradition of courteous help to scholars. The Library furnished me with a microfilm copy of good quality of the tale of Richeut. For this I should like to acknowledge my sincere and deep gratitude.

Most of the approximately 1,100 manuscripts in the Bern Library in 1836 came from a collection belonging to the aforementioned Bongars,


²Achille Jubinal, Lettre au Directeur de "L'Artiste" [Dec. 10, 1837] (Paris: Pannier, 1838); published separately and including several previously unpublished works on the métiers from Bern MS 354 and a complete inventory of the manuscript.
a life-long collector. In 1603 he bought the library of Pierre Daniel at Orléans, which contained manuscripts from the abbey of Fleury or Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire, one of the most active scientific centers of the Middle Ages. He acquired in Bourges the library of Cujas, his former teacher, and in Strasbourg he obtained some of the manuscripts of the cathedral of that city which had been dispersed in 1592 due to sectarian disorders which took place there. The manner in which this collection was acquired by Bern, to France's loss, was as follows: Bongars had the title of Résident pour le roy vers les princes d'Allemagne. His functions were a financial burden on him because Henry IV rarely paid him and owed him arrears of five quarters on his annual pension amounting to about 1,500 pounds, which he mentioned in a letter to the king. In these straitened circumstances, according to a document discovered by a professor at the Strasbourg Gymnasium, Bongars attempted to settle his debts owed to a friend, Baron de Graviseth, by trying to sell his collection to the city of Strasbourg. The offer was refused by the city fathers. To show his gratitude to his friend, Bongars willed the collection to Graviseth. The Baron died in 1614, and his son gave the whole manuscript collection, along with a portrait of the mother of Henry IV, said to be by Holbein, to the Bern Library. Bern MS 354 contains seventy-seven pieces which were inventoried by Jubinal in 1837 and published with selections on various trades in the separate publication of his Lettre.

Richeut was first published by Méon in his Nouveau receuil de fabliaux et contes. Unable to procure the original, as we have seen, Méon used a copy made for La Curne de Sainte-Palaye in the eighteenth century. Sainte-Palaye sold this copy to the Bibliothèque du Roi in return for a pension in 1763. From there it came to the Bibliothèque Nationale. Méon's first volume contains eighteen works of which the ultimate source is the Bern MS 354, edited from the Sainte-Palaye copy, which has since disappeared. As far as is known, the last time a scholar saw it was in the summer of 1909, when Raymond Thompson Hill examined it while preparing his edition of La Mule sanz frain. The Sainte-Palaye copy was not without defects, which inevitably found their way into Méon's edition. Méon himself gave expression to this difficulty: "Une partie de ces Contes ayant été prise sur des copies faites pour

1Ibid., pp. 7-12; and Jubinal, Rapport, p. 19.
M. de Sainte-Palaye, on y trouvera quelques mots évidemment mal copiés, et qu'il a été impossible de rectifier faute du manuscrit original.¹ Without consulting the original, Joseph Bédier, Adolph Tobler, and Gaston Paris have proposed many corrections to the Méon edition.² When Irville Lecompte brought out his edition in 1913, an improved basis of interpretation was provided.³ This basis produced a whole new harvest of conjectures as to the correct reading of numerous verses, notably on the part of Lucien Poulet, Alfred Jeanroy, and Mario Roques.⁴ We hope that a combination of these suggestions and a careful reading of the original manuscript may, as an ancillary exercise to this study, reduce to an absolute minimum the obscurities with which this important text is fraught.

The manuscript itself is relatively legible. Edward Armstrong says of it:

From folio 56 on [Richeut begins folio 125] there is a slight change in the handwriting noted by Armstrong during his examination of the MS in 1896: the strokes above the letter į no longer have the delicate reddish tint, the sign for et always has the transverse stroke, which up to that point it has had only when initial, g initial in a word has the same form as G, and the formation of z is frequently modified somewhat.⁵

It must be noted that the parchment used for Richeut has been scraped, leaving occasional traces of a previous text visible. The parchment is relatively unadorned, with no space left between words. The copy was perhaps commissioned by someone of limited wealth, such as a merchant, who was more interested in having a collection of tales for his diversion than a precious objet d'art with which to ornament his library and to impress his visitors.

My maître, Professor Hans-Erich Keller, who has had long experience with French manuscripts, feels that the writing betrays some

¹Méon, Nouveau recueil, p. i.
⁵Armstrong, Le Chevalier, p. 37.
evidence of a scripta suggesting the northeastern area of the Oise valley, perhaps the Vermandois or Vexin. M. Alain Berlincourt, who is currently in charge of a research department of the Swiss Département Militaire Fédéral and who has devoted himself more assiduously than anyone else to the problems posed by the Bern MS 354, assures me that the manuscript is in three distinct hands. Much precious information on the MS 354 may be expected when M. Berlincourt's health and professional responsibilities allow him the leisure to complete his study. The question of the history of the manuscript is a most important one which must await the results of this scholar's painstaking research.

Richeut in Literary History:
Dating, a Guiding Thread

The dating of the creation of Richeut has never been adequately assured. For nearly a century scholars have posited a number of possible dates, thus clouding and to some degree paralyzing discussion aimed at determining the place of this work in the history of French literature. It is true that most studies which have dated Richeut were not works of which the primary aim was to do so. Rather, the dating of Richeut has been a kind of secondary matter which was of interest to the primary goal of the critic. The results obtained in this way sometimes were distorted by the main thesis of the study. Nevertheless, the results of such studies are very useful, and together they reveal the astonishing degree to which Richeut has become entwined with problems related to other works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

As a point of departure, I intend to present a history of the scholarship which has touched upon this question, while dealing at the same time with the substantive issues involved. I shall then proceed to examine the echoes of Richeut as they are discernible in other works. The latter task includes looking at the names Hersent and Richeut themselves, analyzing their use within works other than Richeut, and identifying works which refer to it by title. This method plunges one directly into the question of the work within a literary tradition. I shall then add the factors of a linguistic nature and of external history and attempt to arrive at a date which will satisfy all the requirements of these methods in concert.

I recognize the debt that I owe a great many scholars who have gone before me for having done much of the difficult spadework on this question. If the problem of dating can be solved, many of the interesting questions which Richeut poses can be examined with more assurance.
The Starting Point: Joseph Bédier's Dating of the "fabliau" Richeut

It was Bédier's article on Richeut and his marvelous doctoral thesis on the fabliaux which established the date of 1159 for the composition of the work.1 Scholars have since offered suggestions which would place it at a more recent date. I intend to analyze every study relevant to this question, orchestrate them, and add my observations before proposing a solution to this question. I shall retain, for reasons of method, the hypothesis of 1159 unless and until convincing evidence alters this view. Bédier's argumentation can be reduced to three logical steps. Because of the importance of his pioneering efforts and their influence on scholarship, it is necessary to review them.2

First, he considers Richeut the first fabliau to have come down to us. Although the work manifests a number of traits which are atypical for the genre--its verse form, its plot type and length, and its character types to a certain degree--he classes it, nonetheless, as a fabliau and explains these characteristics in terms of its early date. It is for him an example of an early attempt of the genre which is groping for the mold which will be its characteristic form. As the fabliaux establish their generic canons in the course of the thirteenth century, Richeut appears quite distinct in some ways from the genre for which it is supposed to have played a germinating role. Bédier places special emphasis on the mentality which it exhibits. He states that this mentality is already identical with that of later works in the genre. Therefore, according to Bédier, Richeut is a fabliau.

Secondly, whatever their ultimate source, every society is responsible for the works with which it amuses itself at any given historical moment. This, one will remember, is one of the cornerstones of Bédier's thesis against the exaggerated practice of assigning oriental sources to the quasi-totality of popular literature. Therefore, what is there about twelfth-century French society which explains the creation of Richeut? Remembering that Richeut has been classed with the fabliaux, one finds the answer self-evident: the bourgeoisie has been born. There are two worlds, two mentalities, which stand in opposition to each other. For the idealism of nobiliary society there are the knightly

1Joseph Bédier, Les Fabliaux: études de littérature populaire et d'histoire littéraire du Moyen Age, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Études, fasc. 98, 3rd ed. (Paris: Bouillon, 1911). I treat Bédier as responsible for the 1159 date, as other scholars have done. However, Alexis Paulin Paris in Les Aventures de Maître Renart et d'Ysengrin son compère (Paris, 1861), pp. 349-50, gave the date as around 1160, based on the same interpretation of the allusion in vv. 991-92 that Bédier used.

2See Bédier, Les Fabliaux, pp. 304-9 and 371-76, and also his "Richeut" in its entirety.
epics, love lyrics and allegorical works; for the practical and **gaulois**
turn of mind, lack of culture and misogyny of the bourgeois, there are
the fabliaux. One may recall Bédier's own inimitable formulation of
this idea:

Ces deux classes d'œuvres littéraires correspondent à deux
publics distincts, et le contraste qui les oppose est le même qui
divise les classes sociales: d'une part le monde chevaleresque,
d'autre part le monde bourgeois et vilain. Ils sont bien, comme
les nomme un vieux texte, les **fabellae ignobilium**. Ils sont la
poésie des petites gens. Le réalisme terre à terre, la concep­
tion gaie et ironique de la vie, tous ces traits distincts des
fabliaux, du *Roman de la Rose*, du *Roman de Renart*, dessinent
aussi la physionomie des bourgeois. D'autre part, le culte de la
dame, les rêves féériques, l'idéalisme, tous ces traits qui
marquent la poésie lyrique et les romans de la Table Ronde,
tracent aussi la physionomie des chevaliers. Il y a d'un bour­
geois du XIIIᵉ siècle à un baron précisément la même distance
que d'un fabliau à une noble légende aventureuse. A chacun sa
littérature propre: ici la poésie des châteaux, là celle des
carrefours.¹

The fabliaux were born the day the middle class was really constituted,
he goes on, and they were created for and by this middle class.

Finally, Bédier founds his dating on a reference to external his­
tory in the text itself. The well-known verses 991-92, "Droit a Tolose /
Que li rois Henris tant golose," provided him with the evidence he needed
to assign the year 1159 to the poem. "Il faut donc que la date du
fabliau soit exactement celle de l'expédition entreprise contre Toulouse
par le roi Henri II Plantagenet: or, cette édate est 1159."² To this
argument he adds that the archaic character of the language would be
enough to grant *Richeut* the priority of being the oldest fabliau.³

The above is Bédier's essential argumentation for fixing the date
of composition of *Richeut* as 1159. His vast knowledge, pleasant and
enthusiastic style, and his powerful personality all play a role in con­
vincing a reader of the rightness of his case. Also, his evident talent
and intimate acquaintance with medieval literature produced a sure
instinct for the subject, a kind of well-honed intuition. All these
traits tend to make one trust his judgments. Let us examine, neverthe­
less, what is objective and solidly founded in the evidence he offers.
As we know, it was Bédier's thesis which established the distinction,
ever since a commonplace in literary manuals, between courtly literature

²Bédier, "*Richeut,*" p. 23, n. 2.
³Ibid., p. 23.
on the one hand and bourgeois literature on the other. Feeling Richeut
to be akin to the fabliaux and asserting that the fabliaux were the
product of bourgeois mentality and taste, he classed Richeut as a
fabliau and made the birth of the bourgeoisie coincide exactly with it.
I have no objection, at least for the moment, to the date which Bédier
assigned to the work; I am simply examining the solidity of his evidence
and argumentation. It should be noted that he was careful to delineate
features in Richeut which distinguish it from the fabliaux and to pro-
pose an explanation for them, to wit, that the work was so early that
the characteristic features of the genre had not yet been fixed.1

What seems weakest in his presentation is that the skeleton of
his thesis shows through the flesh of the objective evidence too plainly,
and one has the impression of being borne along too uncritically by the
neatness of a syllogism. It must certainly be clear that one cannot
assign a single year to the birth of a social class and even less to a
work which would be the product of that class. It is true, as Bédier
states, that the text presents some archaic features. These are veri-
fiable in the Bern MS 334 and in Lecompte's edition of the work. Foulet's
objection to their importance no longer seems valid. He imputes these
archaic features to defects in the Mèon edition,2 and he might have added
that this edition reposes on the Sainte-Palaye copy of the Bern manu-
script, which is known to be defective. But what Foulet pointed out
already in 1913 remains true: no critical study of the language of the
text has been done with a view to dating the work. Lecompte in his
edition did analyze many of its linguistic features for their dialectal
tendencies, but he prudently accepted Bédier's dating after rejecting the
objection that the Roman de Renard was supposed to have presented to this
solution. He, too, leaves open the possibility of redating the work on
the basis of a linguistic study: "Unless then, a study of the language
compels us to place the poem in a later period, we may take verses 991-
992 at their face value and retain the date of 1159, or so near this
date that the event mentioned was still fresh in the author's mind."3
Scholars who have touched on this subject have generally accepted 1159 as
the date of composition or have taken it as a terminus post quern. The
latter solution is at once prudent and unassailable, as will be seen
below.

1See Bédier, Les Fabliaux, p. 306. Bédier calls Richeut a model
of the surviving fabliaux except that the poet has not yet learned to
exploit the comic of situation and plot interest.

2Lucien Foulet, "Le Poème de Richeut et le roman de Renard,"
Romania 42 (1913):325. (Hereafter, Foulet, "Richeut et Renard.")

3Lecompte, "Richeut: Old French Poem," pp. 266-71 for the linguis-
tic features; pp. 262-64 for his discussion of this objection.
What remains of the evidence presented by Bédier for establishing the terminus ad quern for Richeut? The question of the genre of the work and the date of the rise of the bourgeoisie are of no help in solving this problem. Indeed, these matters had their greatest impact within the overall framework of Bédier's work on the fabliaux, where they helped to account for the difference of spirit in various literary works of the Middle Ages. There remains an irreducible residue of fact in this thesis, in spite of some solid studies which have somewhat altered Bédier's vision; but for an isolated work like Richeut such considerations have a chronological imprecision which renders them ineffective for dating.

What is left is the reference to external history in verses 991-92. These verses tell us that King Henry covets Toulouse. The trouble is that King Henry's coveting is not a historical "event"—as Lecompte calls it—which can be easily isolated in time. At most, it supposes an event. This intrinsic clue is at one and the same time precious and ambiguous. The first problem involves identifying the King Henry in question, and the second concerns the time span of his desire for Toulouse. Bédier exhibits no hesitation when faced with these problems, as we have seen above. He identifies "li rois Henri" as Henry II Plantagenet and the point in time as Henry's first siege of Toulouse. Perhaps it is so, but it would seem that both of these propositions are open to at least some doubt.

Foulet was the scholar who made the most systematic effort at casting doubt on the historical evidence supporting the 1159 date, affirmed by Bédier and perpetuated by scholars ever since. While Foulet reaffirms that in 1159 Henry II certainly did covet Toulouse as he launched the first of several military expeditions against that city, he points out that as late as 1186 Henry and Philippe Auguste were negotiating over the same city. Richard, Henry's son, had engaged in hostilities with Count Raymond, and the latter had lodged a complaint with his powerful vassal Henry over the matter. Foulet considers that the fact that the real aggressor was Richard and not Henry is insignificant since a jongleur could not necessarily be held accountable for

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1Ibid.


making such a distinction. This state of affairs eventually led to a
final break between Philippe and Henry and involved the whole of the
Angevin domains in the conflict. Still, according to Foulet, whatever
may have been the underlying causes for this struggle, the pretext was
the city of Toulouse. Therefore, as late as the year 1188 Henry II was
still coveting Toulouse. In this way, without denying the possibility
of the 1159 date, Foulet emphasizes the feasibility of a date which
might be as much as thirty years later.¹

In the Grundriss der romanischen Philologie, Gustav Gröber
places Richeut between 1159 and 1173 without explanation for the latter
date, and then he adds the conjecture: "On pourrait aussi penser à
l'année 1242 pendant laquelle Henri III, parent de Raymond VI de Tou-
louse, par la mère de celui-ci Jeanne, parut vouloir s'emparer du sud
de la France."² To sum up the position of those who would question that
the reference in verses 991-92 was necessarily to the 1159 campaign of

¹The following quotation comes from a letter of 1173 addressed
to Louis VII by Pons, Archbishop of Narbonne, and documents the fact
that Henry still had his eye on Toulouse at this late date: "Nous avons
beaucoup d'inquiétude au sujet des mouvements que le duc de Normandie
[Henry II, according to Foulet] se donne pour gagner les peuples à force
d'argent et pour s'emparer des extrémités de votre royaume, sous pré-
texte de Toulouse." During the same period the Countess of Narbonne,
also writing to Louis VII, echoes the Archbishop's warning: "Vos ennemis
ne prétendent pas seulement s'emparer de Toulouse, mais encore, comme
ils s'en vantent, de tous les pays situés depuis la Garonne jusqu'au
Rhône. . . . Nos prélats et nos princes défendront la ville de Toulouse
avec vous." Histoire générale de Languedoc 6:55-56, cited by Foulet,
"Richeut et Renard,“ p. 324, n. 4. For the historical facts relative
to the situation in 1186-1188, Foulet (p. 324) refers to Kate Norgate,
England under the Angevin Kings (London, 1887), 2:244, 250-54; see also

(Strasbourg: Trübner, 1888-1902), 2:706 and n. 6; Foulet ("Richeut et
Renard," p. 325, n. 3) adds: "Il est certain qu'à cette date tardive on
s'expliquerait mieux la versification de Richeut: des 15 poèmes narratifs
du moyen âge qui, d'après M. Naetebus, Die nicht-lyrischen Strophen-
formen des Altfranzösischen, Leipzig, p. 185-9 et 178, sont composés dans
la strophe si particulière de Richeut, il n'y en a en effet presque sûre-
ment aucun qui remonte à une période antérieure à 1250 (10 sont de
Rutebeuf, un de Jean de Condé, 3 datent du XIVe siècle)." This remark
seems gratuitous in a discussion of the dating of Richeut, and I wish to
comment on it lest at some future date a recollection of Foulet's remark
be used to weaken my system of establishing Richeut's date. What was
Foulet's purpose in bringing the question of stanza form into his dis-
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Henry II Plantagenet against Toulouse, one can do no better than to present Foulet's own formulation: "Jusqu'à nouvel ordre nous doutons qu'on ait le droit de placer Richeut en 1159."¹

What conclusions can, then, be reached about the reasons for Bédier's dating of Richeut? Without contesting the date itself, one must admit that the supporting evidence for the 1159 date is inconclusive. It is important to establish more solidly the date of what may be the first example of French narrative literature to have come down to us. Such dating may have consequences which cannot yet be foreseen, but it is certain that an assured date will clear up many misinterpretations and shed light on the real presence, scope and impact that this curious work had on a highly interesting and vital period of French thought and letters. As this study endeavors to pick up echoes of Richeut's presence, it shall be measuring simultaneously the importance of the work's impact and scope with what seem to be significant consequences. This study shall be limited essentially to works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, beginning with Richeut's relationship with the Roman de Renard, because it has given rise to the most speculation and because it involves two principal types from Richeut, Hersent and Richeut.

Hersent and Richeut in the Roman de Renard

It has long been noted that the names Hersent and Richeut appear both in Richeut and in the Roman de Renard. There are a number of possible conclusions to be drawn from this fact. The first is that it is a simple coincidence. This conclusion, however, can be rejected because the use of the onomastic Richeut to designate a type seems to require some kind of specific context in order to establish the well-defined denotations and connotations associated with it. Indeed, it is central to my demonstration to show where the use of the designation Richeut is a trope for entremetteuse. Moreover, a literary piece is an excellent medium for establishing such a type. The extensive diffusion of the if Richeut were from the middle of the thirteenth century? I think the tone and content of his article provide a clear enough answer: besides the intention of pointing out a problem for subsequent scholarship, he wanted to suggest one more reason, however slight, which would cast doubt on the accepted date for the composition of Richeut. I have followed his lead myself in pointing out the lack of solid evidence heretofore presented for the 1159 date. The HLF brought up the same point and may be the source for Foulet's statements: "Qu'il s'agisse d'Henri II ou d'Henri III d'Angleterre, on ne peut descendre plus bas que l'an 1272; et cette pièce [Richeut] s'accorde pour le rythme avec plusieurs de celles de Rutebeuf, écrites vers le même temps." Histoire littéraire de la France (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1733-), 23 (1895): 205.

¹Foulet, "Richeut et Renard," p. 325.
name-type, which will be demonstrated later, also argues for a literary medium, even if oral. Some scholars, notably Léopold Sudre, have pointed out similarities between a few rare episodes in the Renard and Richeut relative to the rape of Hersent in Branch II of the Martin edition (VIIa of the Roques edition).¹ These comparisons are not very convincing, and generally scholars have limited themselves to conjectures regarding the presence of the same two names in these two distinct works. It is undeniable that the Renard made use of Richeut material in some late branches, as did some fabliaux. These references come too late to be of interest for the chronological question being dealt with in this study.

If pure coincidence can be rejected for this phenomenon, there remain three possibilities: there was a common source from which the names were drawn, Richeut and/or Hersent were borrowed from the Renard, or the animal fable borrowed one or both of the names from Richeut (if not from our tale, from one that was part of a Richeut cycle, of which more later). Sudre is an advocate of the first solution:

Pas plus que ceux d'Isengrin et de Renart, les noms d'Hersent et de Richeut ne sont de l'invention de nos trouvères. Ils les ont trouvés existant avec eux et consacrés par un usage presque séculaire. Se rencontrant dans deux genres d'écrits distincts qui ne semblent pas avoir eu d'influence l'un sur l'autre, désignant ici et là des types identiques, il est à croire qu'ils avaient quelque chose d'universel et de populaire.²

The names seem to have produced no echo yet perceived in popular dialects, and one can be sure that there exist no baptismal records for twins named Hersent and Richeut, as was the case for Roland and Olivier, given their unsavory associations. We note, without attaching undue importance to it, that they have not been used for Christian names in France, and, of course, they are not current today. It would not be surprising if the aforementioned associations played their role in this regard. Lecompte indicates that Hersent was a common Old French name for a servant.³ He cites no evidence for it, however, and of the examples which I have discovered to date, all seem to betray some affiliation with the specialized kind of servant found in the prostitute's


²Sudre, Sources, p. 523.

tale. It would seem that this is yet another example of a supposition which is perpetuated as truth without being adequately demonstrated.

It would appear that Sudre's characterization of the names as both "popular" and "universal" betrays more rhetorical flourish than solid logic or evidence. "Popular" suggests local, ethno-linguistic, quasi-tribal traditions. If "learned" is taken to mean, as it usually is, a Latin tradition, then Germanic oral traditions may be considered popular. An examination of the geographical areas where the name Hersent first occurs suggests a region north and east of Paris. The fact that both names are of Germanic origin (Herisinth or Herisindis and Richilt give normally Hersent and Richeut according to Gallo-Romance phonological patterns) and that these regions are known to have had heavy concentrations of Germanic-speaking settlers, which constituted an important linguistic superstratum, suggests that, in this sense, the names may possibly belong to a popular tradition. That is to say, the names may have been localized in a region where vital Germanic oral tradition was not extinct. At least it is a possibility which would justify calling them popular. Were this true, of course, it would counter the argument for their universality. We are assuming that Richeut may have followed a pattern analogous to the one suggested for Hersent because both have Germanic etymons. In fact, evidence of the pairing of the two names before Richeut is found only in the Catalan ensenhamen Cabra Juglar by Guerau de Cabrera, and references to Richeut always reflect the traits with which she was endowed in our tale. I shall return to this question in the general conclusions to this chapter.

The notion that there is a rapport between the Renard and Richeut was initiated by Paulin Paris. He is the earliest representative of the view that the Renard borrowed the names from Richeut. He wanted to counter Grimm's opinion that the names in the Renard were drawn from the Germanic lexicon, and when he discovered two of them in the French tale in question, he felt that he had satisfactorily shown that the animal tale had drawn upon native French resources and had not had to rely upon "German" ones. P. Paris does not develop his affirmation, content to cite Richeut as the source for Hersent and Richeut in the Renard.


3Ibid.; the fact that the names had Germanic etymons seems to have presented no difficulty for nineteenth-century French cultural nationalism, nor should it have. What could be more "French" than France or français, Charles, Renaud, and a thousand other words and names which sound so typically "French," yet repose on Germanic etymons which have been perfectly gallicized and harmonized with vocabulary of Latin provenance?
For the viewpoint that the Renard bequeathed the names to Richeut, one may cite Ernest Martin's comments on the question in his edition of Renard and the statements of Hermann Suchier in his history of French literature. Both advance rather tentative opinions. Evidently troubled by the fact that the Renard as a whole, at least, came after the whore's tale, Martin suggests the hypothesis that Richeut may have been influenced by an earlier branch of the Renard that had subsequently been lost. Suchier notes that there is an undeniable link between the two works and considers it much more probable that the "fabliau" borrowed the names from the animal fable than vice-versa, given the immense popularity of the latter. He cites as a sign of this popularity the well-known fact that the normal goupil was displaced by the onomastic renard in the common language. On page 198 Suchier uses a much more attenuated statement of the relationship, more in agreement with the chronological evidence which Foulet and Roques have discovered for the Renard. He says that Richeut points towards (hinweisen) the Roman de Renard. There would seem to be a patent contradiction in terms if we took hinweisen to mean "anticipates."

At the time (1913) that Suchier wrote his literary history, the chronology of the Renard was extremely fluid, and it was generally assumed that, if there was any influence between the two works, it must have flowed in the direction of Richeut. An even more firmly entrenched opinion was that, from the inception of the Renard, Richeut (doubling Hermeline) was the fox's mate. Many scholars have perpetuated this notion, including Gaston Paris, Jules Cornu (in the glossary of the Martin edition of the Renard), Victor LeCler (in the HLF) and Hermann Suchier. Martin himself raises the possibility of such an

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1Ernest Martin, Observations sur le "Roman de Renart" (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1887), p. 48.


3This would not be the only apparent contradiction concerning Richeut in Suchier. On the preceding page he states, "Der Name Richeut war bereits damals für eine Dame dieser Art stereotyp." On the one hand, the author of Richeut is supposed to have borrowed the name from the Renard, and on the other, the name already designated an entremetteuse. It seems that this contradiction betrays a considerable hesitancy on the part of the critic, and the reason for this hesitancy is probably the lack of solid foundation for the chronology of the Renard before the publication of Foulet's Roman de Renard in 1914.

interpretation. The honor of questioning this accepted viewpoint and thereby stimulating a more critical examination of the facts goes to Georg Ebeling, who, in his 1895 edition of Auberee, presents an opposing view. He concludes that the use of the name Richeut in the animal fable is, like its use in Auberee, an onomastic meaning for entre­metteuse. Lecompte in his 1913 edition of Richeut accepts Ebeling's point of view. That same year Foulet attacks two problems relative to the Renard and Richeut. The first, we have already seen, involves the dating of 1159 for Richeut, and the second deals with the same problem that Ebeling initiated. The critic does not vacillate in his conclusion but declares unequivocally that the idea that Richeut is the name of Renard's mate from the outset of the fox cycle is a manifest error. The following analysis of this question follows Foulet's in its essential points.4

In the Martin edition, Richeut is mentioned once in Branch VII and three times in Branch XXIV (Roques, Br. III). In the episode of Branch VII called the "Confession of Renard," one finds Hubert l'Ecoffle (le milan, "the kite") giving a moral sermon to Renard, while the latter is occupied with his lust for Hersent and with trying to catch his sermoner for dinner. At the point of the text which interests us, Hubert is stigmatizing Hersent's vices, in particular her lubricity, much to the displeasure of Renard:

Onques Richel n'en sot neant
De nul barat envers Hersent
Qui saurait donc se Hersent non
Des le tens le roi Salomon
A ele itel mester mené?

(Martin, vv. 559-63)

6Even Richeut did not know anything / Nor the least trickery compared to Hersent. / Who would know if Hersent / From the times of King Solomon / Made such a master dance to her tune? (Translation mine)
The first thing to note is that this branch is dated between 1195 and 1200 by Foulet in his Roman de Renard.¹ There is no indication here that Richeut is identified with the wife of the fox. Renard's mate is not present as a personage in this branch at all. The only female present is Hersent, and she is for Hubert the representative of the vices that he and those of his century associate with all women; for Renard she is the prey for his passion. Indeed, there is a good deal of revenge for the unkind things said against Hersent, and perhaps for the "priest's" reforming zeal, in Renard's devouring of Hubert. Richeut appears at the point that Hubert is attacking Hersent's capacity for deceit. The main point is that it seems very clear indeed that the allusion here is not to the wife of Renard, but to Richeut the famous entremetteuse. Here I do but confirm the interpretations of Ebeling, Foulet, and Edmond Faral. I should like to add, however, what seems to me a significant nuance that every mention of Hersent and Richeut would appear to confirm. Although both can be characterized as deceitful whores, it is Richeut who possesses a special capacity for wily deceit, while Hersent is more the rutting female par excellence. The passage, then, can be interpreted in this sense: however great was the reputation of the famous entremetteuse for trickery, Hersent surpassed her. In other words, what we have in Branch VII is a hyperbolic, onomastic comparison with a term of reference, Richeut, which is not in the fabric of the text, but assumed to be part of the cultural consciousness of the public for which work is intended. This is not surprising because such references to Richeut are not rare in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, as shall be seen below. Moreover, since our working hypothesis for the dating of Richeut remains Bédier's 1159 and since Foulet dates this branch between 1195 and 1200, it seems persuasive that the origin of this reference is the tale of Richeut. One may conclude that the use of Richeut here as a term of comparison suggests three things: 1) that the two names are associated in the author's mind so that the mention of one tends to call forth the other, 2) that Richeut is apparently well known and endowed with certain traits which justify this comparison, and 3) that the salient characteristic of Richeut is her mastery of the art of deceit.

An additional problem develops from the manuscripts supporting Branch VII. The verses in question occur in only two out of ten of them. Four do not have the passage at all (such is the case for the Cangé manuscript, used for the Roques edition), and four replace Richeut with Renard. Only two betray any consciousness of Richeut, and these may not

¹Lucien Foulet, Le Roman de Renard, Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Études, fasc. 211 (Paris: Champion, 1968); John Flinn has made a synoptic chart for Foulet's dating of the branches of the Renard which is very useful and to which we have had frequent recourse. This chart is in his excellent work, "Le Roman de Renart" dans la littérature française et dans les littératures étrangères au Moyen Age (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1963), pp. 16-18.
reflect the original author, which vitiates any conclusions relative to the relationship between the original author of Branch VII and Richeut. The fact that four copyists substituted Renard where Richeut is also found shows that the reading was not clear, and the fact that no one tried to substitute a form of Hermeline (Herme and Erme, widely attested, would have fit the meter) suggests that for the copyists, at least, Richeut was not taken for the wife of Renard.\(^1\) There remains, if only theoretically, the remote possibility that some phenomenon occurred which caused Richeut to be removed from subsequent versions. Common sense and the lack of knowledge of what such a phenomenon might have been (censorship by the Church or its Orders, an inquisition?) prompt one to reject this speculation. Before leaving Branch VII, I should like to mention a point to which I shall have reason to return later. According to Foulet, the author of this branch lived in the dubious world of the goliards and their ways rubbed off on him.\(^2\)

Richeut again appears in Branch XXIV of Martin, III of Roques. There are three attestations from verses 119 to 129 in Martin, verses 3869 to 3879 in Roques (Roques numbers the verses continuously from 1 at the beginning of his first volume to 18874 at the end of Branch XIX of his sixth volume). This episode is called "The Creation of Isengrin and Renard." It is the strange and supernatural tale of how the wolf, the fox, and their mates got their names. It has elements of the conflict between the sexes grafted on the Christian myth of the Garden of Eden. When Adam strikes the sea with a rod, animals come forth which are beneficial to Man and which he domesticates—in particular, the dog and the lamb. When Eve smites the water, wild animals emerge which Adam cannot hold back and which are inimical to Man. These consist mainly of the wolf and the fox, which are duly named Isengrin and Renard and characterized by their rapacious thievery. They are also provided with bonds of kinship—Isengrin is the uncle of Renard. Next, these nefarious rascals are given mates to match:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dame Hersent resenefie} \\
\text{La leuve qui si est hafe.} \\
\text{Qui si par est aigre d'ambler} \\
\text{Bien puet cele Hersent sembler,} \\
\text{Cele Hersent la lentilleuse,} \\
\text{Qui fame ert Isengrin espeuse.} \\
\text{La gorpille le senefie,} \\
\text{Car mout set d'art et de murtrie:} \\
\text{Se l'une iert mestre abaeresse,}
\end{align*}
\]

\(^1\)Foulet, "Richeut et Renard," p. 560; Edmond Faral, "Le Conte de Richeut: ses rapports avec la tradition latine et quelques traits de son influence," Cinquantenaire de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes 230 (1921):254-55. (Hereafter, "Richeut et la tradition latine.")

\(^2\)Foulet, Renard, p. 566.
Et l'autre mestre lecharesse;
Mout furent bien les .II. d'un cuer,
L'une fu l'autre, ce cuit, suer.
Por Richout, la fame Renart,
Por le grant engin et por l'art,
Est la gorpille Richeut dite:
Se l'une est chate, l'autre est mite;
Mout a ci bone compaignie
Et l'une et l'autre senefie.
Cist .III. sont bien asanblé,
Einz ne furent mes tel trovê:
Se Isengrin est mestre lerre,
Ausl est li rous forz roberre;
Si Richeuz est abaiaresse.
La gorpille est fort lecharesse.

(Roques, vv. 3857-80;
cf. Martin, XXIV,
vv. 107-30)

Foulet dates this branch near 1250, and Roques calls this particular passage late (vol. 2, p. vii); he approves Foulet's analysis for its dating and refers to it (vol. 2, p. x). All the statements made about the presence of Richeut in the Martin Branch VII hold true here, except one: the vixen is here clearly given the name of Richeut.

We note again the way in which the two females are intimately associated. They are presented not one at a time, but now alternatively, now wedded into two parts of a single couplet or verse. They are associated by their attitudes and, like their male counterparts, by kinship, as it were: "Mout furent bien les .II. d'un cuer, / L'une fu l'autre, ce cuit, suer." They are even described by terms having the same meaning, though these terms may have had nuances which escape us today: "Se l'une est chate, l'autre est mite." (Mite means "female cat"; cf. modern chattemite.) Hersent is haie, read "detested," "scorned," méprisée. She is always the sexual object to be used, but she can command no respect for her other qualities, which are almost totally lacking. She is lentilleuse, full of lice and ticks, a detail which further deprecates and devalues her. Faral calls her, in a turn of felicitous phrasing, "la proie grossière des hommes, la femelle flétrie." Aigre d'ambler is an interesting phrase because, on its strict referential level, it simply means quick or eager to steal, but it certainly contains a suggestive connotation of sexual eagerness.

As the she-wolf and the vixen are compared in this passage, so are they distinguished. One is abaeresse, which combines the notions of greed and lust, while the other is lecharesse, which seems to denote only lust. The vixen is called Richeut "por le grant engin et por l'art" which she possesses. One can again underline Richeut's capacity for guile

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1Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 270.
and treachery. This emphasis is reinforced by: "Car mout set d'art et de murtrie" (but Martin gives ". . . et de mestrie"). Although this passage is supported by a single manuscript only, the two readings of it are suggestive. In Richeut, art is, at once, the art of deception, seduction and love, and it is associated with mestrie, which signifies dominance, power and authority, so that the pairing of the two terms in the Renard intimates a stylistic formula straight out of Richeut. At the same time, murtrie is suggestive, for Richeut threatens the knight with death in verses 276-77: "Si rai amis / Qui tost avroient ome ocis." In the introduction, too, she is said to have been responsible for the death of a priest. In verses 45-46 we read: "Car il fu pris / O li, desmanbree et ocis." The principal result of this examination is to show that again Richeut is synonymous with a type which is already known. It seems likely that the tale Richeut created this type. Though the vixen in the Renard is clearly given the name Richeut, it is because she is a "Richeut," a conniving whore.\(^1\)

\(^1\)That this passage presents problems was recognized by Foulet ("Richeut et Renard," p. 327), who chose not to get enmeshed in them, but rather to rely on Gaston Paris's interpretation in his review of Sudre's book on the Renard, in Mario Roques, ed., Mêlanges de littérature française du Moyen Age (Paris: Champion, 1912), p. 371. The text is doubtless corrupted and, as has been noted, reposes on the single Cangé manuscript (Bib. Nat. 371). It does not, therefore, permit any control through variant comparisons. The main problem starts with verses 3865-66 in the Roques edition: "Se l'une iert mestre abaieresse, / Et l'autre mestre lecharesse." After talking about Hersent, the author has just introduced the vixen, so it seems natural to see verse 3865 as characterizing the latter and verse 3866 the former. This interpretation is reinforced by lecharesse, which points only to sensuality, and abaieresse, which, although it is not widely attested, seems to suggest general avidity, including greed and sexual appetite. When the author talks of sisters, it is fresh in one's mind that Isengrin and Renard are also linked by kinship, which further reinforces the impression that the comparison is between the two female animals. However, in verses 3879-80, which echo verses 3865-66, we read: "Si Richeuz est abaiaresse, / La gorpille est fort lecharesse." Verse 3879 fits into the previous interpretation and bolsters it, but in verse 3880, where we expect an allusion to Hersent, we find: "La gorpille est fort lecharesse." At this point, we realize that we must have misinterpreted the text; verse 3880 obliges us to interpret verse 3866 as describing the gorpille, and, therefore, verse 3865 must refer to Richeut, the notorious whore. The result is unhappy confusion and disorder in a passage which, up to that point, had seemed to possess a remarkable degree of cohesion and artistic unity. It is very sad to realize that the carelessness of a copyist has marred a highly interesting text and that, except for conjecture, there is no way of rectifying the flaw. An analogous problem of confusing identity is caused by verses 3869-70, and there seems to be no way to resolve it. It bears only indirectly on this study, being essentially a matter for specialists of the Roman de Renard. I note it only to show
The only time the vixen is ever called Richeut is in the above passage, and even here it presupposes a type already well known. Everywhere else without exception she is known as Hermeline, or a form thereof, and the attestations are legion. Neither later nor earlier manuscripts call her anything else. Foulet places the branch around 1250, at a time when the original cycle is starting to be altered in spirit and content. The Cange manuscript (Bib. Nat. MS 371), the only one to support this passage, dates from the end of the thirteenth century or the beginning of the fourteenth. Hence, it is much more a possible indication of Richeut's virtues of endurance than a valid cause for all the conjecture which it has elicited. It is, therefore, incorrect to consider that in the Roman de Renard Renard's mate may also be called Richeut.

The source of this misunderstanding has been pointed out by Foulet. It developed from the Méon edition, which used the natural and logical order of placing the creation of the heroes of the fox saga before their life and adventures. This order became consecrated, and readers often forgot to question the chronological order of the manuscripts themselves. So if the vixen was called Richeut at the outset, i.e., in "The Creation of Isengrin and Renard," one assumed that she bore this name throughout.¹

Hersent's presence is pervasive in the fox tale. She appears in Branches I, II, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI, XIII, XVII, XXI, XXII, XXIV and XXVI of Martin; in I, II, III, VI, VIIa, VIIb, VIII, IX, X, XIII, XIV and XVII of Roques, according to his index of proper names. She is included in the earliest branches (Martin, II and Va; Roques, III, IIIa, VII, VIIa, VIIb), which were written by Pierre de Saint-Cloud and which Foulet dates between 1174 and 1177, Roques between 1176 and 1177. We note that she never contradicts the traits which she has in Richeut. She is gluttonous, scheming and libidinous, but especially the latter.

In the episode of her adulterous relationship with Renard (Martin, II, vv. 1100-13; Roques, vv. 5776-89), she encourages him and overcomes his fears of Isengrin. In the episode of her rape, presented with a raw realism, she is taxed as the lowliest slattern by Isengrin in verses 6070-71 of Roques: "Hai! fait il, pute orde vivre, / Pute serpant, pute coleuvre." And when Renard is to be brought to account for his crime (Martin, VI, vv. 925ff; Roques, vv. 8191ff), Hersent seems to bear him no grudge at all. Hersent's gross sensuality is again exhibited in the episode called "Renart teinturier" (Martin, I, vv. 2691ff; Roques, vv. 3053ff), which is dated 1179. There is a scene between the wronged Hermeline and Hersent in which they exchange insults. The confrontation

that my interpretation of the characterization of the she-wolf and the vixen in this passage is open to some degree of challenge based on a different reading of the passage.

provides an excellent opportunity for the latter to spew out her crude
invective and defend her slattern desires. This episode in turn provides
matter for the description of Hersent by Hubert in his sermon to Renard
in the "Confession of Renard," which has already been examined in con-
nection with the first use of Richeut in the Renard. These examples
show that the Hersent of the Renard is true to the character she has in
Richeut; more specifically, she exemplifies her primary trait of gross
lubricity unmitigated by any other qualities or values.

What Richeut's presence comes to and the importance and nature
of Hersent in the Roman de Renard have been demonstrated. It has been
established that Richeut's presence was probably the result of a con-
scious allusion to the tale of the same name, and the same conclusion,
hopefully, has been rendered probable for Hersent. If Pierre de Saint-
Cloud in his original version made a conscious reference to Richeut, one
is forced to wonder why he named his she-wolf Hersent instead of Richeut.
There already exists a theory to account for this discrepancy, and I
think that it has merit.

Faral has provided the essential parameters of the following
argument. As Foulet and others have shown, the Roman de Renard owes
much to the Latin culture of the schools and to the fact that its authors
were clercs of one stripe or another. Clercs, however much one might
want to distinguish between their different modes of being, their func-
tions and possible religious attachments, may all be assumed to possess
in common a knowledge of Latin and, frequently, of Latin literature.

One might bear in mind that the first significant version of what was to
become the incredibly popular Renard was in Latin. Almost anyone who had
been so trained and who looked at the feminine form of lupus would have
been aware of its ambiguous meaning. And, if he had a writer's itch, he
would also have seen its potential for literary exploitation. Here may
well lie the source of the she-wolf's character. The Latin lupa has two
distinct meanings: "she-wolf" and "prostitute." The treatise Synonymes,
normally attributed to Jean de Garlande, gives for meretrix ("prostitute")
the equivalents "scortum, Thaïs, lupa, capra, chimera." A clerc writing

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2Foulet, Renard, pp. 536-70.
3See Jacques LeGoff, Les Intellectuels au Moyen Age (Paris:
Editions du Seuil, 1957), especially pp. 3-4 and 10, on what a clerc is.
4Faral ("Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 269), who claims
that the Synonymes is in fact the work of either Mathieu de Vendôme or
Geoffroi de Vinsauf, cites the following: Leyser, ed., Historia poetarum
et poematum, p. 312; also the Corpus glossariorum by Goetz, the Glossaire
by Du Cange, and Godefroy's Dictionnaire (no publishing information given
for these sources); Sudre (Sources, p. 155) also makes the connection
between louve and lupa with this meaning. Thaïs was a famous courtisane
in Latin might choose the proper name Thaïs to designate a prostitute in much the same way that a modern writer might use a Croesus, a Rockefeller or a Rothschild as a synecdoche for a rich man. Were this same clerc writing in French, he might very likely search for an analogous term in his own native language and tradition. If the well-known tale of Richeut and Hersent, two notable whores, was already present in the consciousness of the author and his assumed public, these names would have imposed themselves almost necessarily as sobriquets for his louve (< LUPA). The author, being a clerc, could almost surely count on an audience of clercs to appreciate this enriching device which plays on the resources of two languages and two cultures. It was in this sort of milieu that the Roman de Renard and Richeut, too, most likely flourished.

Why Hersent rather than Richeut? Very likely because Hersent lends herself to a more unsympathetic treatment. Richeut is a very strong character. She possesses such "male" virtues as energy, savoir faire, and a sense of her own power. She even has a kind of professional pride in her competence. No man is her match. She deceives and ruins a clergyman, a knight, and a bourgeois, not to mention commoners. The latter suffer to see her lord it over them as she acquires wealth, its outward trappings and its contumely, and as her price goes up! I shall stop short of saying that she has a sense of her own value, that her prez is immediately translatable to cash on the barrelhead; but she is sage, i.e., she wins out, and this quality is the highest value in the moral world of Richeut, the Roman de Renard, and the fabliaux. She is the superior cheat in a world of cheaters; she knows how to avoid being on the losing side of the typical pattern of the dupeur dupé. She is the instrument which serves to gull all the other would-be swindlers in her world. She uses others while playing at being used, in their terms. Such a personage is more appropriate to a tale of vengeance (which Richeut is, in part) than one in which she would be the passive object taxed with all the negative epithets with which her century was, on occasion, so lavish in its enunciation of woman's nature. Richeut might indeed be envious, gluttonous, lying, cheating, quarrelsome, ill-tempered, cunning and libidinous; but she is also an expert, a survivor of the snares and vicissitudes of existence, and it would resemble impotent rage to excoriate her for these traits.

No, it is Hersent, a ribald of a different mold, who fits the bill. She carries all of the tares of her sisters and possesses none of Richeut's strengths. In the moral universe of the Roman de Renard, virtue is equivalent to cunning, and the quality of this "virtue" is measured by the results. One who comes through life's scrapes triumphant is recognized as sage. Hersent is not such a character. She is the passive object to be exploited and abused. She is by nature the all-consenting female, the woman in constant rut, humiliated by men, but of the fourth century, a mistress to Alexander and then to Ptolemy. She became known as the courtisane-type and was given literary notoriety by the playwright Terence.
but nearly oblivious to her humiliation. Thus it is that Hersent corre-
sponds much more closely to the view of women in the Renard than Richeut.

We might add that, since Hersent is the servant in Richeut, this
lower social station also allows her to be more easily invested with
negative traits. This kind of reflex toward devaluing servants is not
without currency even today, even though the social hierarchy is rad-
cally less rigid. Although much too little is known about life in
medieval France, there seems to be an intimate subterranean link between
domestic service and prostitution down through history, at least as far
as the pre-industrial age. One thinks of Moll Flanders in England, and
the pattern must have been similar in France long before the eighteenth
century. A study of this link might provide a revealing angle for dia-
chronic and comparative studies of social structures and attitudes.

Richeut in the Tristan by Thomas

The fragment of the Tristan by Thomas contains 3,150 verses, and
in verse 1322 of the Bédier edition there is an allusion to Richeut in
the same sense that we have seen in the Renard, to wit, meaning an
entremetteuse. The passage is supported by both the Douce manuscript,
which is given below, and the second fragment from Turin (Bédier T2), in
which the form is Richot. In volume 1, page 346, one reads:

Or me dites, reîne Ysolt,
Des quant aves âcté Richolt?
U aprexstes sun mester
De Malveis hume si preiser
Et d'une caitive trair?

We note that this allusion is accompanied by justifying details: the pre-
sence of mestier, which is of such high frequency in Richeut, the appre-
ciation of a corrupt man, and the theme of deception—une caitive trair.
Although impressionistically this passage suggests Richeut, there is
nothing specific which would justify concluding that the allusion is
necessarily to it. In Richeut there is no caitive deceived by our
heroine, for example. We must conclude then, with Bédier, that the ref-
ference is not necessarily to the work which has come down to us, but
possibly to a body of literature in which the heroine is endowed with the
same kind of character traits which are reflected in Richeut rather than
initiated by it.

The problems of dating the Thomas Tristan are extremely complex.
Bédier places the work between 1155 and 1170. Bartina Wind is inclined
to place it between 1150 and 1160; Rita Lejeune puts it between 1154 and

1Joseph Bédier, ed., Le Roman du Tristan de Thomas, poème du XIIe
siècle, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion,
1902-5).
1158. As Wind states, however, these hypotheses are unverifiable and the question remains an open one. The most prudent conclusion is to assign 1155 as a post quern date based on Thomas's borrowings from the Brut of Wace and an ante quern date of 1210 based on Gottfried von Strassburg's version of the material. The difficulty in dating the Thomas fragments and the probability that Richeut was known before our work saw the light of day (see below) render this allusion ineffective for dating Richeut.

Richeut in Le Livre des manières

Etienne de Fougères was Bishop of Rennes when he wrote this work in his declining years. Since he died in 1178, the work is generally placed around 1170, and Raphael Levy dates it as late as 1176. The first part of the work contains the theme of the vanity of existence and is followed by a review of the estates of French society, all of which are found sorely wanting. In the last section of the work (vv. 973-1308), he passes in review all the traditional failings of women before recalling the good women, like the Countess of Hereford, to whom he dedicates his work; he ends by invoking the saints to come to the aid of our misery. Le Livre des manières contains many of the themes found in Richeut: the downfall of Sanson Fortin through the wiles and machinations of women, the application of make-up which allows even the ugly women to appear beautiful and even the whore to appear a maid, the use of magic charms against men, the criminality of women, the allusions to Ovid, the cruelty of women, etc. This thematic nexus places us in the same moral climate as that of Richeut, but the themes are also the clichés of the times in regard to women. There is no specific allusion which would suggest a direct borrowing from Richeut, nor is there any stylistic formula which would link the two works. The text does provide some tantalizing resonances which are highly suggestive. In a description of the various failings of a woman and a litany of her petty feminine tricks we read:

Richeut li vient qui li conseille
Que porter se face a la veille.
A la veille se fet voer
Non pour preier, mais pour joer,

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For a succinct résumé of the positions of the scholars mentioned on the chronology of the Tristan by Thomas, see Bartina H. Wind, ed., Les Fragments du roman de Tristan, poème du XIIe siècle (Geneva: Droz; Paris: Minard, 1960), pp. 16-17.


See Godefroy, Dictionnaire, s.v. "Sanson Fortin."
Richeut suggests to her that she should go out at night not to pray, which would be her pretext, but to joer, to go to someone who would have her disavow God. She is so committed to men that, if there is no way she can get to one, she does not know what to do with herself. In addition to the theme of Richeut's corrupting other women, which is explicit in the first page of our tale, the Bishop of Fougères makes very interesting use of the allusion to her here. On the surface she is, as before, simply a trope for entremetteuse, but she becomes in this passage almost an allegorical figure for woman's nature. It is this nature which counsels a woman to stray from the straight and narrow and which dictates stratagems by which she can deceive her husband. As a Christian priest, Etienne is very much concerned with the woman's place within the institution of marriage, and he is evidently very weary of witnessing the continual straying of these creatures. In Richeut the perspective is obviously quite different, and there is never any question of the woman's place in marriage, but only of her nature. This allusion to Richeut is, nonetheless, similar to those previously analyzed. It proves that no later than 1176, Richeut could be used with the sense of whore, and one could assume that this simple reference was sufficient to evoke a whole complex of associations for the audience and reader. It does not, however, necessarily demonstrate that such an allusion is to our tale.

Richeut in Auberee

The eventual unraveling of the confusion of Richeut with Hermeline of the Renard is owed to the perspicacity of Georg Ebeling in his edition of Auberee. This work is one of the most successful of the fabliaux. The heroine of the title is precisely an entremetteuse in the literal, professional sense. In MS D of Ebeling's edition Richeut appears six times with the sense of entremetteuse.

The first time is on the occasion of Auberee's leaving a sorcot under the bed to compromise the young bourgeois:

"O uoeil ie ueoir uistre lit
L'autre [the first wife] auoit mout de son delit
Dont saurai ie bien apertement
Se tu gis ausi belement
Com fesoit la premiere fame."
Maintenant se lieue la dame
Et la richiaus aubree apres
Endeuz ensemble s'en entrerent
De maintes choses i parlerent,
Et aubree la sert de lobes.

(MS D, vv. 185-94)

After the ruse takes its effect and the jealous husband throws his young wife out into the street after nightfall, Auberee is there to meet her and to convince her to come and have food and wine rather than to linger all night long in the deserted street. She is told that she can have everything she wants (the young man she wanted to marry but could not because of her parents is hidden there), she will be well sheltered, and no one will know where she is or what she is doing. There she can stay until her lord's anger is passed:

Maintenant la dame s'adrece,
La richiaus aubree l'en maine.
"Dame," fet ele, "une semaine
Uous chaiens auoec moi estre,
Que ia nus ne saura uostre estre."

(MS D, vv. 304-8)

In order to mend things between the bourgeois and his wife, Auberee comes to his house and asks if he has not seen a sorcet that she believes she may have left behind on her last visit with his wife. She claims the coat and then asks the man why his wife has been crying and praying in the church for the last week. Predictably, the man is seized with remorse for having treated so harshly his "innocent" and "pious" young wife, whom, moreover, he misses very much. With Auberee pulling the strings, the reconciliation which she had obviously planned from the beginning is effected, and the partially innocent girl is returned to her legal mate.

Missing from the base manuscript but developed in MS D is the leave-taking of the vallez and Auberee. He thanks her heartily (one can imagine) and prepares to return to his father's house:

Atant s'est de l'ostel partis
De dame aubree la pichaise
Et li ualles qui mout fu aise
Ua en maison si s'arestut
Car a s'amie auoit geut
Et li bougois uint en maison
Sa famme fait .I. candeillon
Et li fait humer tout caut  
Bien est de chus par le richaut.  

(MS D, vv. 538-46)

After the first night of reconciliation, the bourgeois issues forth into the street, where he finds Auberee selling la ueraie croiz for thirty sous. Her comedy is introduced by: "Or escoutes de le richiaut / Comme elle a bien trouue flohaut" (MS D, vv. 558-59). The good man gives her the petitet that he has on him, for he sees her only as the instrument of his reconciliation with his wife, whose absence had caused him much suffering and anguish. While the vallez observes, dying with laughter, the bourgeois shows his generosity to Auberee again: "Sire ce responct li richiaus / Vous m'avés fait mout boine estrine" (MS D, vv. 655-56).

At the end of the tale MS D adds:

De dame aubree de compiengne  
S'en dites tout mauz auiengne  
Et li et toutes les richiaus  
Qui se mellent d'estre pies (?) haus.  

(MS D, vv. 670-73)

In the first two instances Richeut is used as an epithet preceding the proper noun Auberee, and in instances three, four and five Richeut is a trope meaning entremetteuse and referring to Auberee. The latter are, in other words, synecdoches where the individual is designated for a whole class or type. Finally, Richeut designates all the others of her sort. We can see here very clearly that in all cases the type is the same as the heroine of Richeut. The mentality, the bold stratagems, the cunning, the desire for gain—all are of a piece with Richeut. On the other hand, there is little stylistic echo which would suggest that our particular tale served as the literary model for Auberee. Except for lobe (v. 195), none of the words which the character usually attracts to her are present, i.e., sage, tripot, art, trair, afoier, deçoivre, etc. We note that, although Auberee does not herself engage in sexual activity in the story, the type is assumed to do so, for at the end in MS D the narrator excoriates "li et toutes les richiaus / Qui se mellent d'estre pies haus." Though Ebeling puts a question mark after pies to indicate difficulty in reading the manuscript, the expression pies haus doubtless has the meaning of the more modern cuisses-en-l'air, i.e., round-heeled. Our Richeut did not shun this activity to get what she wanted; on the contrary. The composition of Auberee is usually placed around 1200, and the manuscript which contains all six allusions to Richeut (missing in the other seven manuscripts) is, according to Ebeling, from the beginning of the fourteenth century and in the Picardian dialect. It should be noted that the protagonist is called aubree de compiengne.

What is most striking about comparing the two characters, Richeut and Auberee, is that the latter represents a very decided progression in
subtlety. Richeut uses ruses, principally that of making each man believe that he is the father of her child and of maintaining each in this belief as the young Samson goes through school. She knows each man's particular weak point and how to exploit it: pride of class and profession, desire for a son, etc. But she also uses threats which range from that of having the priest brought before the bishop's court to more violent ones, such as burning down the knight's manor, to death itself. When she confronts her male adversaries, there is a winner and a loser, and equilibrium returns only when the issue is decided. Both works have the same explicit low view of womankind. In Richeut this view results in the ruin of men, in the general disorder in the social scheme, and in a generally tragic view of the conflict between the sexes. One of the most remarkable features in Auberee is that, in addition to being endowed with a more complex and perspicacious character, the heroine is seen to create with care just the degree of disorder necessary to work her will. In the end she restores discord to harmony, and everyone appears to have gained, except perhaps the husband; but then the author has been careful to create an unsympathetic view of him in the beginning so that the reader does not dwell too much on him. Our sympathies are directed in other directions. Of course, he, too, has learned something valuable from his experience. He has learned to esteem his wife more highly and to treat her accordingly.

It is worth noting that MS F of Ebeling's edition is found in the same Bern MS 354 as Richeut, even though it contains no allusion to our heroine.

Richeut in Les Tresses by Guérin

This tale is considered to be very old and to have originated in the Orient. Many writers, including such eminent ones as Boccaccio and La Fontaine, have tried their hand at it. It has the typical elements of so many tales and fabliaux. There is the lover, the libidinous and unfaithful wife, and the brutal and jealous husband. The lover lives some six to seven leagues from the couple's city. In the beginning of the tale the narrator comments on the necessity for discretion on the part of the lover:

Bien ot parler de son affaire
Ne il n'en ose noise faire
A nului qui soit de sa vile,
Et di qui chevaliers s'aville
Et de ses amors ne li chaut,
Qui se fie et croit en Richaut:
Poe ce n'en volt faire mesaige.

The use of Richeut is once again with the basic meaning of entremetteuse. The chevalier does not want to establish himself in marriage because he trusts and believes in Richeut. The word is used here metaphorically.
with the apparent meaning of "the lubrious nature of women" or simply "sensual love outside of marriage."¹

Richeut in Le Boucher d'Abbeville
by Eustache d'Amiens

The MS C (Bibl. de Pavie, MS 130)² of this tale gives an interesting twist to the allusion to Richeut. The butcher, after having been refused hospitality in the home of the priest, manages to steal the priest's fattest sheep, to have a feast at the priest's expense, to sleep with his servant, then with the prêtresse, and to sell the skin of his own sheep to the priest. As his servant and his mistress quarrel over the sheepskin which our gallant has promised to both of them in exchange for his pleasure, the priest realizes what has transpired and the extent to which he has been abused by the butcher:

Nostre ostes jut en no meson
Sor ma coute, sor mas linceus;
Maugré en ait sainte Richeus
Si voiez ore tout savoir.

(RG, 3:241)

The evocation of such an unlikely saint is in itself amusing. It has no precise motivation except that both women in the tale give in to pleasure to satisfy their cupidity (which is then frustrated). That the priest should have thought of "Saint Richeut" (after all, a priest should know his saints) was apparently dictated by his reflection on the fickleness of women. Referring to facetious saints is not at all rare in the Middle Ages, and it may even be a more satisfying explanation for the verse "Qui se fie et croit en Richaut" from Les Tresses. The style, at least, fits the interpretation of Richeut as a "saint," which in turn suggests the real meaning furnished by the context, namely, illicit love.

Richeut in Gerbert de Mez

La Geste des Lohereins, a chanson de geste of the twelfth century, contains an allusion to Richeut in one of its four branches,


²Ibid., 3:227-46.
Gerbert de Mez. Gerbert and his cousins have been well received at the court of Pépin, which infuriates Fromondin, who accuses the empress of illicit relations with two of the cousins. He even calls Pépin himself a cuckold and taxes Hernaut, Gerbert's brother, with being a richeut:

"Girbers la tient, et la sert Gerins
S'en est richous Hernaudes li petis,
Si en est cous l'empereres Pepins."²

(MS B, vv. 13-15)

Of the seven manuscripts which Stengel uses in his edition, four contain this reference. They are: D (Bibl. Nat. MS 1461), E (Bibl. Nat. MS 19160, the base manuscript), P (Bibl. Nat. MS 1442), and X (Bibl. Nat. MS 2179). In the Taylor edition (p. xxii) we see that E and P are listed as being from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries. Charles Livingston states that three of the manuscripts are from the twelfth century.³ The other three manuscripts used by Stengel are: F (Bibl. Nat. MS 1582), G (Bibl. Nat. MS 19161), and M (Bibl. Nat. MS 1622). The first of these Taylor places in the twelfth or fourteenth century and the last two in the thirteenth. Presumably Livingston, writing in 1962, accepted the dating done by Stengel in 1875 rather than that by Taylor in 1952. In general, Taylor places the manuscripts at a later period than Stengel.

The group of manuscripts called the Lorraine group contains E, M and P. E and P both show the allusion to Richeut, while the other does not. Taylor lists both of these as being from the thirteenth century.

Herein is the first example we have seen which uses Richeut to designate a man. The meaning, otherwise, is the familiar one. Here the word means a man who engages in illicit love or simply a pander. In the text by Philippe de Vigneulles, which will be examined below, an analogous phenomenon occurs. The word richeut could be taken as masculine or feminine. It is obvious that the form of the word plays a role in this confusion. One can compare Wagner's changing of Isolt, which he must have felt a masculine form, to Isolde. The use of Richeut in two Lorraine manuscripts of the thirteenth century to designate a man, plus Vigneulles's use of it in the same way, suggests that this usage is more


²Stengel, "Girbert de Metz," p. 516.

a phenomenon of the French dialects of the east than one of semantic degradation over a period of time.

Richeut in the works of Philippe de Vigneulles

Livingston unearthed other examples of the use of richeut. He shows that the term means "entremetteuse" in Gerbert de Mez (Godefroy suggests "qui possède (?)") and that in the sixteenth-century usage of the region around Metz it could be used as masculine. Livingston also cites the use of richous in the works of Philippe de Vigneulles (1471-1528) from Metz. It is used in an episode which can be found both in his Mémoires and in La Chronique de Philippe de Vigneulles edited by Charles Bruneau. H. Michelant defines rescheus as "receleur, entremetteur" in the Mémoires, and Bruneau suggests "racheus, teigneux, galeux, terme d'injure" for rechous in the Chronique. In this episode, a tailor and his wife make their home available to the Duke of Norfolk and the wife of a goldsmith for their rendez-vous: "Et pour ce fait le dit Maugenat [the tailor] en escheut en grant hayne de ses voisins, lesquels disoient tout pleinement que lui et sa femme en estoient rescheus et macreaulx." In the Chronique in the same episode the form rechous is given. The meaning is evidently the same as that seen before, reinforced this time by the parallel construction with macreaulx.

In his Cent nouvelles nouvelles (no. 82), Vigneulles tells the story of a horsetrader from Metz who comes to the fair at Saint Denis and sends his servant on to Paris to buy some macreaulx. On the way the servant gets confused and ends up asking for richous, which no one understands. Upon returning to his master, the servant gives him a good laugh instead of the mackerel which he ordered. The humor of this anecdote turns on two confusions: the homonymy of macreaulx, "mackerel," and maquereau, "pimp," and the acceptation of richous in the dialect of the servant to mean "entremetteur/entremetteuse."

What can one conclude on the basis of Richeut's presence in Gerbert de Mez and in the works of Philippe de Vigneulles? Since two of the manuscripts of Gerbert show features of the Lorraine dialect (see Romania 3 (1874):234-35) and since Vigneulles is called le Messin, Livingston concludes that the word richeut with the meaning of "entremetteur" survived in this dialect into the sixteenth century. This


4Ibid., p. 249.
conclusion appears reasonable. The word seems not to have survived in modern Lorraine dialects since it is not found in the Dictionnaire des patois romans de la Moselle by L. Zeligzon (Strasbourg, 1924). We note that when the servant arrives in Paris and asks for richous, he is not understood. Apparently the word had completely disappeared from usage in the Parisian region.

Richeut in Les deux trouvères ribauds

This work, also called Les deux bordeors, is from the twelfth century according to Le Grand d'Aussy, from the first half of the thirteenth according to Caylus, and from the end of the thirteenth according to LeClerc. It is a kind of burlesque tension in which two trouvères try to top each other with the extent of their respective repertories. The second bordeor brags that he knows, among other illustrious works: "Si sai Richalt, si sai Renard / Et sai tant d'enging et d'art" (RG, 1:11, vv. 299-300). It should be pointed out that the words enging and art are significant stylistic echoes of both the Renard and Richeut, but what is obviously of major significance is that Richeut was considered sufficiently important to be counted a plus in one's repertory along side of the Renard, whose popularity and importance have never been doubted. In other words, Richeut was esteemed a "classic" by the trouvère.

Richeut and Hersent in the Cabra Juglar

by Guerau de Cabrera

One finds here a highly significant use of Richeut and Hersent, as well as of Maheut, which suggests that Richeut, at least, was considered a work of sufficient importance that any self-respecting troubadour of the twelfth century ought to know it. It is a didactic, not to say pedantic, poem in Provençal by Guerau de Cabrera. He takes his pupil to

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1 RG, 1:1-12.

2 HLF, 23 (1895):97.

task for his ignorance of the literary classics. He imputes his pupil's ignorance to his never having left his own country to travel. The poem consists of 216 verses in which Cabrera lists all the classics of the day, preceded by the accusation addressed to Cabra, the pupil, of "you don't know." In verses 208-10 Cabrera accuses Cabra of having no knowledge of:

Ni de Riqueut
Ni de Mareut
Ni d'Arselot la contencon.

As early as 1878 (Romania 7:458), Gaston Paris was able to identify Riqueut and Arselot as Richeut and Hersent, who he believed came from our tale of Richeut because of two factors. The first is that Paris felt that the ensenhamen Cabra Juglar could not be any older than the last twenty years of the twelfth century. More recent scholarship has placed the work at a substantially earlier time (see below). Secondly, Paris believed that Richeut was incomplete. The ensenhamen shows a Mareut between Riqueut and Arselot, and Paris explains her absence from Richeut with the conjecture that the part of the tale which contained her was lost; in particular, he felt that substantial material had been cut off from the end of the tale. What was for me the most troublesome in identifying the characters in Cabrera's poem with those of Richeut was the presence of Mareut between Riqueut and Arselot, coupled with my strong disinclination to admit that any significant amount of material was missing from the Richeut text. The key to the enigma may have been provided by the discovery by Alberto Vàrvaro of the three names linked together in a work by Philippe de Beaumanoir called Folle Largesse, where they designate three cronies analogous to the types seen in Richeut, who are engaged in scheming intimacy to satisfy their cupidity.  

Richeut, Hersent and Maheut in Folle Largesse

In Folle Largesse, a salt-seller goes off to work each day for his hard-earned provision while his scatter-brained wife gives the salt away to neighbor women who come and beg her for it. There are, especially, three harpy commères who distinguish themselves by their avidity to take advantage of the guilelessness of the salt-seller's wife:

Celes qui mestier avoient,
Furent lies quant eles oient
Que la sanniere est si courtoise.
"Alons i tost sans faire noise!"

\(^1\)Gaston Paris, Mélanges de littérature française, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1912), p. 221, n. 3.

Dist Mehaut, Richaus et Hersens.
"Mais ouvrer nous convient par sens."

(RG, 6:57, vv. 135-40)

So they arrange to go on successive days to take maximum advantage of the wife's folle largesse, and in this they succeed handsomely indeed. It is difficult to see why Ebeling (p. 181) feels that there is nothing pejorative in the characterization of these three rapacious cronies. Like Vàvaro, I can see them only in negative terms, even though, quite evidently, it is the indiscriminate generosity on the part of the wife which is mainly being criticized. Richeut, Hersent and Maheut (we accept here Vàvaro's correction of the r in Mareut in Cabra Juglar to h) are the embodiments of the dangers that the world holds for one who is stupidly generous.

The presentation of Richeut and Hersent is consistent with the types they embody in Richeut. They are eager to satisfy their cupidity at the expense of someone else, and, as in Richeut, they proceed according to a preconceived plan. They have the mestier of deception and they carry out their ruse par sens. Even the perverted use of courteise smacks of the style of Richeut. Philippe de Beaumanoir probably knew our tale of Richeut. As a writer living in the thirteenth century, he would have known his native French repertory, and as a resident of Beauvais, he lived in the general region where we assume Richeut was composed. What is important here is that his grouping together of Maheut, Richeut, and Hersent strengthens the identification of the three names in the Cabra Juglar with the same types found in Richeut. However, my conviction that there cannot be enough material missing from the Richeut manuscript to allow for Maheut's inclusion leads me to conclude that the reference in the Provençal work is not to our tale but probably to a group of like tales. Such tales were probably widely known and had as principal protagonist now Maheut, now Hersent and again Richeut. It is not necessarily excluded that our work was one of those being referred to under the rubric of Riqueut. There are problems of a chronological order, however, which discourage the assumption that the Cabra Juglar refers necessarily to our tale. It is probable that all of these types designate the heroines of a series of works which were known at least to connaisseurs of literature in the vernacular.

The question of the dating of the Cabra Juglar is one of the most complex and controversial imaginable, as one might expect for a poem which is constructed on references to literary works and personages. It is precisely because the work is a kind of catalog of a great many works that its exact dating would be so valuable. Two potential questions are posed by every reference: the identification of the work referred to and its date. Evidently scholars of good will can differ on each of these, and, given the complexity and the quantity of matter in question, plenty of opportunity for disagreement exists. François Pirot has assembled all of the available relevant scholarship on the question of dating this work. He concludes that the ensenhamen of Cabrera was probably composed between 1145 and 1159, but in any case before 1165. For the complete
question of dating the work the reader is referred to Pirot's *Recherches sur les connaissances des troubadours occitans et catalans des XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, pages 109-196; for a succinct review of the critical history of the matter, to pages 189-92; and for Pirot's own point of view, to pages 192-96.

Remembering that our post quern date for Richeut is 1159, it seems very unlikely that the reference can be to our tale. The excellent articles by Irénée Cluzel which place the *ensenhamen* Cabra Juglar between 1150 and 1155 further confirm the opinion that the reference in the Provençal poem is not to our text and that there must have been a cycle of at least several works of which Richeut was the principal protagonist.1

**Richeut: Branch or Single Work?**

Before any conclusions can be drawn about the presence of Richeut in French literature, one must examine the hypothesis that it is not a single isolated work, but a part of a larger body of literature. The first consideration which suggests that there existed tales of Richeut anterior to the one being studied here is found in the text itself. As shall be seen below in the section on the personages, in contrast to the prolonged process of characterization to make Samson a worthy opponent of his mother and a fitting champion of all men, it is enough for the author to recall without any elaboration adventures which the audience presumably knew for Richeut to be sufficiently and fully characterized:

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Or faites pais, si escotez
Qui de Ri. oïr volez;
Sovante foiz oï avez
Conter sa vie.

Nostre Sires Ri. confonde
Qui tant mal fist,
Car de nonain reçut l'abit,
Mais ele lo tint mout petit.
Escotez, se Dex vos ait,
Qu'ele devint:
Fors de l'abaife s'an vint,
Nonains i avoit plus de xx,
N'i vost plus estre,
Ainz en mena o soi lo preste.
El li toli regne celestre,
Car il fu pris
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In the first verses there is a clear, unambiguous statement to the audience that they have often heard Richeut's life recounted. There follows a general characterization of the heroine and her evil ways. Starting with verse 34 there are allusions to various adventures she has had: her stay in a convent, her corrupting and killing of a priest, and her reduction of dan Guillaume to penury. Not one of these adventures will be taken up again in the story. There is, to be sure, a knight who is ruined by her, but he is not dan Guillaume, and one finds not the slightest hint that he had ever had any religious inclination as inferred by verse 55: "Qu'ere a tornez a Deu proier." I am confident that the statements of the narrator can be taken at face value and that these verses are what they appear to be, reminiscences of previous tales of Richeut that were generally known to the public.

Faral considers these allusions to former episodes in the life of Richeut to be merely a literary technique, and he cites an analogous treatment in Courtois d'Arras to bolster his interpretation.¹ Vârvaro points out that in Courtois d'Arras it is one character speaking about another, whereas in Richeut it is the narrator addressing the public directly. It seems most unlikely, indeed, that the narrator would have told the public that they had often heard about the life of Richeut, if this were not in fact the case.²

In verses 65-67 the poet announces:

Or diroie, s'avoir escout,
De li un conte
Qui trestoz les autres sormonte.

¹Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 262.
²Vârvaro, "Due note," p. 228.
That the narrator is promising a story about Richeut which is better than all the other stories which they have heard about her seems the most natural and logical reading of these verses, and as such, it may be considered as yet another indication that there existed other tales of Richeut. One is bound to note, however, that as solid a scholar as Vàrvaro interprets the passage somewhat differently. He considers it probable that these verses mean that this particular tale surpasses all other tales in general, and he admits the preceding interpretation only as a possibility.\(^1\)

The following point, which is owed totally to Vàrvaro's insight into the text, can be considered highly significant. Hersent first appears in verse 50 and she reappears in verses 86, 113, 140, 233 and 234. However, it is only in verse 235 that we learn that Hersent is Richeut's servant: "Cele [Hersant] saut sus con sa dame ot." This indication is given only indirectly, as though the poet had felt no need to inform the public of this important relationship. If the personage had not already been familiar to the public, the poet would surely have established this rapport explicitly and earlier, as was his method in his exposition of all other pertinent elements of the tale.

As we have already seen in the discussion of the presence of Richeut along with Maheut and Arselot in Cabrera's ensenhamen, the appearance of these three together as commères in Folle Largesse by Beaumanoir strongly suggests that there was a body of tales of more or less the same type in which these three were the protagonists, either together, as was the case for Richeut and Hersent in Richeut, or alternatively in works now lost. Gaston Paris identifies two of the names with Richeut and Hersent of our tale and conjectures that a part of the tale now lost may have contained the Maheut found in the Cabrera work (Romania 7 (1878):458). This supposition is very problematic. It is true that the work ends quite abruptly and that this abruptness may indicate the loss of a few lines at the end. But Richeut is structurally a very harmonious work, and the lines of its construction do not admit the possibility of a significant amount of narration having been lost. Moreover, it is far from certain that any lines have been lost from the ending. Many fabliaux and tales in French from the Middle Ages have this rather characteristic ending, which to modern sensibilities and literary conventions appears overly abrupt and truncated. For many short works in the low style, when the tale is told or the point on which it is constructed is made, the work stops. Sometimes, however, the author prefers to add a tag containing a general reflection or a proverbial truism, but this is less often the case than seems generally supposed.

If we regard as fact the hypothesis that the Riqueut of the Cabra Juglar refers to Richeut as a type, chronological considerations indicate that it does not refer to our tale of Richeut and that, consequently, there did exist other Richeut material which antedates this particular

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 229.
tale. The problem of the dating of the Cabra Juglar is extremely com-
plex, but even if one eschews the 1150-55 dating established by Cluzel
and accepts only the terminus ante quem of 1165 proposed by Pirot, it is
difficult to imagine that Richeut, whose earliest possible date is 1159,
should have become a "classic" in Catalonia in so brief a span of time.

The fact that Richeut is used in a number of French works as an
approximate synonym for entremeteuse clearly indicates that the type
was well established in the minds of the public for whom these works were
destined. It would seem evident that the establishment of such a literar-
ary type was the result of its embodiment in literature. With regard to
the question of whether literary works containing this type existed prior
to the composition of our tale of Richeut, it is certain that the most
significant use of the name in this precise way is to be found in the
text itself:

Encor nule ne s'an retrait,
Et chascune Rî. se fait
De sa voisine.

(Vv. 9-11)

Two readings are possible: not being able to resist the appeal of whore-
dom, every woman makes a "Richeut" of herself in the eyes of her neigh-
bor; or, taking the se as an intensifier rather than as a reflexive, each
makes a "Richeut" of her neighbor. Leaving aside the exact interpretation
of these verses, which poses the sort of problem legion in this text, the
important point is that, at the time this text was composed, Richeut was
already recognized as an established type.

On the basis of the allusion to other adventures of Richeut within
the text itself, as early as 1891 Bédier concluded: "Ces événements sont
obscrets pour nous, mais devaient être de claires allusions à des récits
déjà entendus: il a dû exister tout un petit cycle de la menestrel
Richeut, dont l'une des branches était le Moniage Richeut." In the
Mêlanges de littérature française (p. 55, n. 4), Gaston Paris seconds his
illustrious student and states that the allusions in question are proof
of the existence of other tales with Richeut as heroine. He prefers to
call them romans à tiroirs, in which a number of episodes are constructed
around a single protagonist. In 1961 Vârvaro added additional weight to
Paris's identification of the names in the Cabra Juglar with those of
Richeut and Hersent by accounting for Maheut through the linking of the
three names in Beaumanoir's Folle Largesse. Nevertheless, no matter how
logical and convincing were the conclusions of the aforementioned schol-
ars, some prudent scepticism still might have been justified had not
André Vernet unearthed a fragment of this corpus whose existence had been,
until then, a matter of conjecture which lacked objective verification.

\footnote{Bédier, "Richeut," p. 25.}
A Fragment of a "Moniage Richeut"

In 1973 André Vernet published the results of his remarkable discoveries. In a huge catalog announcing a sale of the 28th of March, 1859, at Sotheby's in London, there is the following specimen:

Richeut lor mist l'amour el ventre.  
Au prouvoir pas n'atalente  
Tele assemblee:  
A Richeut donne tel coleee  
C'a la terre chaï pasmee.

The fragment itself, bought by the London bookseller Quaritch, has not been found. The manuscripts on sale were collected by Mr. Guglielmo Libri, a light-fingered Florentine scholar and adventurer in exile in England at the time, after having been condemned in absentia to ten years of prison for his theft of manuscripts in France. The essential extent and detail of Libri's larceny in the public libraries of France was revealed by L. Delisle in his Bibliothèque Nationale: Catalogue des manuscrits des fonds Libri et Barrois, 1888.

The tone, content, and form of this short specimen accord perfectly with Richeut. It is an extremely valuable document because it adds considerable weight to the hypothesis that the tale of Richeut is a kind of branch of a larger corpus with Richeut as heroine. These five short verses show us Richeut getting knocked unconscious by the prouvoir, evidently more than a little displeased by Richeut's arousing the other men.

Vernet discovered yet another fragment of more significant length. It will be remembered that in Richeut Samson stopped off at Clairvaux in his triumphant itinerary:

Moines devint a Clerevax,  
S'ot les blans dras, s'ert moines faux  
Et tot sans loi,  
A ses freres manti sa foi,  
Fuit s'an, s'en mena o soi  
.I. cheval sor.  
Si en porta tot lo tresor,  
Croiz, calices d'argent et d'or.

(Vv. 895-902)

An inventory of 1472 of the library of the monks of Clairvaux shows only two French manuscripts. One taken in the first third of the sixteenth century, the other...


2Cited by Vernet, "Fragments," p. 587, n. 11.
century shows a collection of about eighty manuscripts, including, among other tales and fabliaux, one on Richeut.¹ Most of these were transcribed in the beginning of the sixteenth century and given up to the binder's knife at that time, during the reorganization and reconstruction of the library. Two unattached leaves of this collection reached the Bibliothèque Nationale from Troyes under unknown circumstances. One contains verses 151-293 of Les trois aveugles de Compiègne, and the other has 144 verses of Le Valet à la cote mal taillée. Two other unattached leaves protect the present Troyes MS 1511. They, like the above, are made of parchment with three columns of 36 lines and they have been damaged by the binder and by insects. On the face side of leaf A, there remains only column 2 and the first letters of column 3; on the back, there are only the last letters of column 1 and all of column 2. Leaf B has the last letters of column 1 and all of column 2 on the front, and, on the back, all of column 2 and the first part of the verses of column 3. These two leaves contain fragments of four tales of which two are unpublished. The first (leaf A) contains a passage from Gombert le Beau; the second contains 26 lines of the end of a tale whose protagonist is Richeut:

Richeut lor en rent a tous grê
De ce qu'i l'ont ensi tué
Après lor conte:
"Signeur, il m'a fait mainte honte;
J'estoie fille a .I. haut conte
De Normendie
Mais il m'avoir ensi traîne
Et fors traite par sorcerie
Or n'en sai plus;
Venê avant et cloez l'uïs
Et si gardés n'i entre nus.
Deduions nous."
Li lecheour sont angoissous.
Au vin envoient chiez Tious
Le tavernier.
A porter en font .I. sestier.
Endementiers se fit froyer
Nostre nonnain del franc moustier
Or retient court:
Par l'ostel vient li vius qui sort.
Ains que nus d'aus d'enki s'en court
Au viu conter,
Les fist Richeut entretuer,
C'en est la voire.

Encor a Richeut moult grant foire:
Veler se fait de coille noire.

(Vernet, pp. 590-91)

This MS 1511 comes from Troyes, and, if Delisle neglected to mention that the pilferer Libri passed that way, Libri himself informs us of this fact in a notice he published in 1841. Indeed, there is much to recommend Vernet's suggestion that the specimen and the fragment come from the same tale.

Richeut thanks the rakes around her for getting rid of the fellow in whose thrall she was. This person could easily be the prouvoire of the Libri specimen. She then tells her version of events. He made her, the daughter of an haut conte de Normendie, commit many a shameful act. He led her astray through sorcery. She then tells them to bar the door and invites them all to have a good time and to send out for wine from the taverner Tious. The festivities are interrupted, however, by the arrival of the "old man." To cover her activities, Richeut provokes a brawl during which she covers her face with a black hood.

Vernet advances the hypothesis that this particularly scandalous episode in the saga of Richeut is her revenge for the public humiliation she suffered in the Libri specimen: she managed to get her band of lecheors to rid her permanently of her prouvoire.

What rapport is discernible between this fragment and our tale of Richeut? Vernet feels that the language is less archaic than in Richeut, and I would concur in this impression. However, in both cases, the copyist's intervention renders comparison difficult. A good example of the degree of interference that the copyist causes is the last verse of the fragment: "Veler se fait de coille noire." The only reading which seems to make sense is coule noire, but, it seems, to make the passage more piquant by a poor play on words and by recalling the fabliau of this name, the coule noire became coille noire.

What seems both astonishing and incredibly significant is that the stanza form is identical to that of Richeut. One might have expected that the corpus of Richeut's adventures would have been thematically similar and, of course, the character of the heroine basically the same as that of our tale, but the discovery that the content is apparently linked intimately to a given formal stylistic is, indeed, a revelation. The form in question is essentially two rhymed octosyllabic verses followed by a four-syllable line which initiates the rhyme of the following stanza. Though this pattern is by far the most frequent (302 such stanzas out of 436), the two octosyllabic verses are sometimes reduced to one (72 stanzas) and sometimes increased to three (50 times), or even to four (7 times). These figures may be slightly influenced by verses lost.

in a damaged manuscript, but the basic pattern is certainly clear: the
two octosyllabic lines followed by a four-syllable line introducing the
new rhyme for the next stanza constitute the canonic metric form, which
is varied sparingly, probably for the sole reason of forestalling metric
monotony. The fragment discovered by Vernet manifests not only the
canonic pattern in seven out of nine stanzas, as does the Libri specimen
as far as one can tell, but it also contains one each of the most fre-
quent, and therefore most characteristic, variations, i.e., one stanza
of a single octosyllabic line and one stanza of three such lines. This
formal similarity is strongly reinforced by the fact that, even in so
short a fragment, many of the rhymes are identical to those of Richeut:
conte : honte : conte, found in Richeut, verses 66-68, 667-69, 770-71 as
conte : monte : honte; and plus : uis : nus, found in Richeut as sus :
plus : uis in verses 1070-72, and as sus : jus : uis in verses 1289-91.

The apparent intimate link between this fragment and Richeut is
suggested by the identity of the personage, the thematic similarity, and
the tone. Richeut is of a piece with the heroine of our work. Again she
has blood on her hands, having been the agent in the murder of a man.
Again she lays claim to a noble lineage: "J'estoie fille a .1. haut
conte / De Normendie." (Cf. vv. 274-75 of Richeut: "Je sui nee de bone
gent, / .Vii. chevalier sont me parant."). Again Richeut punctuates her
series of adventures with the inevitable call for wine and frolic
("Dedions nous."). And finally, when the situation risks turning sour,
Richeut manifests her quick and sure instinct for avoiding retribution.

The presence of both the lecheours and the viu, who is possibly
the same personage as Signor Viel, reinforces the impression of family
resemblance between the two works. The motif of sorcerie and the expres-
sions nostre nonnain and angoissous further strengthen their apparent
relationship. Indeed, considering the extreme brevity of the fragment,
it is astonishing how closely it reflects Richeut.

Maheut and Hersent in Old French Literature

Richeut seems not to have appeared in any works not mentioned
above. The presence of our heroine, Hersent and Maheut together in the
Catalan ensenhamen Cabra Juglar by Cabrera and in Folie Largesse by
Philippe de Beaumanoir is an important link in suggesting the existence
of a Richeut cycle. If the use of Hersent in other works of Old French
literature is consistent with her character in Richeut, and if the use of
Maheut represents a type identifiable with that of Richeut and Hersent,
the assumption that each played a role in cycles of tales similar to
Richeut and received their basic characterization in such works is sub-
stantially strengthened. The three personages form a rapacious trio of
commères in Folie Largesse, in which they are not distinguished from each
other, perhaps because they represent collectively more or less the same
type and are known to the public. This type may have been established
before our tale and caused the names to be linked in the Cabra Juglar.
If this supposition is true, other occurrences of Maheut and Hersent should reflect characters which do not belie those already associated with them.

Maheut does not seem to appear outside of the Recueil général, though the fact that Hersent turns up in at least three works not included in that collection leaves open the possibility that Maheut may also be attested elsewhere than in the four fabliaux from the RG discussed below.

In the Sot Chevalier, the main plot interest is centered on an imbecilic knight and on his mother's efforts to give him the rudiments of sex education so that he might consummate his marriage. In order to retain his lesson, he repeats constantly, "Li plus long est foutuz, / Et le plus cours sera batuz" (p. 224). The tale turns on the ambiguity of these words meant to apply to the female anatomy. But travellers given shelter from a storm for the night overhear them and take them as threats to two of their number. Maheut is the knight's wife of more than a year who has been left a virgin. Her role is a minor one indeed. She suffers from this neglect and is unhappy for the pleasure she is missing:

Quant il l'ot espousée et prise,
Si le tint plus d'un an pucele.
Moult en pesa la demoiselle,
Qui vausist ses deduis avoir.

(RG, 1:221)

In Jouglet by Colin Malet, the story is again about the education in sexual matters of a particularly inept fellow called Robinet. Dame Maheut is given to this son of a well-off landowner, Dame Ermengart, by her father, a debt-ridden vavassor, as a way of improving his own financial condition. The menestrel Jouglet is charged with educating Robinet for his wedding night. The education consists principally in stuffing Robinet full of green pears and admonishing him not to relieve himself. The wedding night is the expected disaster, and Jouglet is beaten and sent away by the villagers. As in the Sot Chevalier, Maheut complains that her husband does not give her sexual pleasure. Her complaint here includes rancor against her parents for marrying her off to a stupid villain, as well as an evocation of how her ami would use her:

Mës ele ne fet que cuidier
De ce que Robins ne l'adoise:
"Lasse," fet ele, "com me poise
De ce nice, de ce musart;
Moult li deëst ore estre tart
Qu'il m'acolast et me besast,
Et q'o tel fame s'aaisast
Com je sui et de tel afere;

1RG, 1:220-30. 2RG, 4:112-27.
Mès il ne set que l'en doit fere:
Il ne me taste ne manie.
Por la char Dieu, com sui honie
Quant cis vilains gist delez mi!
Se j'esuse ore mon ami,
Qui m'acolast et me besast
Entre ses braz et m'aaisted,
Mout me venist or mieus assez
Que cis vilains muse enpastez!
Honi soient tuit li parent
Et trestuit li mien ensement
Qui m'ont doné à ceste beste!"

(RG, 4:116-17)

In Connebert by Gautier le Leu, the priest Richard is cruelly punished by the blacksmith Tiebaut for his liaison with Maheut, the smith's wife.¹ In this tale the personage Maheut goes beyond libidinous desire. She not only wants her pleasure, but she takes it illegitimately with the priest. Her wanton character and attitude toward her lover and her husband respectively can be seen in the words which she speaks to the priest after making love:

La dame baisa en la boche,
Puis li a dit: "Amie doce,
Don n'estes vos trestote voie?"
Elle respont: "Se Deus me moie,
Vostre est mes cuers, vostre est mes cors
Et par dedanz et par defors;
Mais li cus si est mon mari,
Cui j'ai mainte foiz marri."

(RG, 5:166)

In the Prestre et Alison by Guillaume le Normand, Maheut is a bourgeoisie who pretends to acquiesce to the proposition of the priest Alixandre, who offers a substantial sum of money for one night of pleasure with Mares, the lovely twelve-year-old daughter of Maheut.² Instead, she engages the prostitute Alison to take the place of the child at the crucial moment in the bedroom. The servant Hercelot makes all the arrangements, and all three women profit handsomely at the priest's expense. The trist takes place in the dark, and the virile priest makes love with Alison eleven times, thinking all the while that he is with the pucelete. Hercelot sets fire to the house to bring the townspeople. They are led by the master butcher and they give the priest a terrible drubbing. He can only rue his misfortune: swindled, humiliated and beaten for the enjoyment of a whore whom he could have had anytime for an esperon.

¹RG, 5:160-70; (Bern MS 354).
²RG, 2:8-23.
There are a number of details in this tale which suggest a relationship with Richeut. There is Hercelot as the busy servant arranging an unsavory and profitable affair. She is very much the same Hersent found in Richeut, except that Hersent's role of playing the abused virgin falls this time to Alison. The manner of duping the priest in the darkened bedchamber is similar to the scene with Samson. In both cases a whoe replaces the virginal prey whom the lover-dupe expects to find. In both the adventure ends with the victim being beaten and begging for his life. Faral considers that not only is the Prestre et Alison a reworking of Richeut, but that, whenever Hersent appears, it is almost surely a conscious reminiscence of this tale.\(^1\)

The fact that Maheut was chosen for the name of the principal mover of a tale which betrays a family resemblance with Richeut and that it also contains Herselot, suggests that the three cronies found in Folie Largesse and in the Cabra Juglar are associated in Gallo-Romanic cultural traditions.

Maheut's role in the Prestre et Alison is simply one of using her daughter for bait in order to swindle the priest. In this she more closely resembles Richeut than any of the personages named Maheut in the discussions above. In the Sot Chevalier and in Jouglet, both the character of Maheut and her situation are equivalent. They are both newly married and are impatient with the ineptness—not to say total ignorance and stupidity—of their husbands. Both frankly crave sexual pleasure and suffer for the lack of it. The marriage in each case has been arranged by the mother of the husband and concluded for a financial consideration. The differences in the personages called Maheut are in the nuances between their respective situations and in their reactions to their plight. In the Sot Chevalier, the wife has been neglected for a year, whereas the story in Jouglet takes place immediately before, during and immediately after the wedding night. There is a strong suggestion in both tales that the wife is eager for sexual pleasure and is perhaps already experienced. In Jouglet it is explicit. Maheut tells how her ami would hold her, kiss her and give her pleasure:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Se j'eusse ore mon ami,} \\
\text{Qui m'acolast et me besast} \\
\text{Entre ses braz et m'aaisast.}
\end{align*}
\]

(RG, 4:117)

Although Jouglet is crude and the motif of excrement repugnant, the character of Maheut is much richer than that in the Sot Chevalier. She gives vent to her anger and frustration against her parents for wedding her to such a doltish, unappealing person (p. 117). This anger and indignation already seem to prefigure Molière, thematically at least, by indicting parents who dispose of their daughter in a way which, while satisfying their own selfish ends, disregards the feelings and happiness of the girl.

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\(^1\)Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," pp. 268-69.
Nevertheless, both Maheut personages are of the same type, the young spouse who wants sexual pleasure and is frustrated by the ineptness of her legitimate mate.

The Maheut in Connebert is a married woman who has a regular liaison with the priest. At first reading, she seems a different type from the newlyweds of the tales above, but this opinion is open to question. She exhibits the same scorn of her husband as does the wife in Jouglet. The difference in tone between Jouglet and the Sot Chevalier, on the one hand, and Connebert, on the other, comes from the character of the husband. Whereas in the first two tales he is passive, doltish and inexperienced, in the latter he is experienced and possessed of a virile will and savage desire to be avenged. It is precisely the cruelty of his vengeance—castration—which renders the tone so somber and which distinguishes Connebert not only from the fabliaux under discussion, but from the genre in general. Here gauloiserie shifts perceptibly toward tragedy. Save this exceptional tone, is the Maheut really different from the preceding ones? It would seem not. The difference is to be found in the particular situation. Motivated by sexual desire and scornful of their legitimate mates, the newly-wed Maheuts are both potentially the adulteress of Connebert. Only the situation, not their character, must change; when the priest, gallant, sophisticated and beau parleur, comes to call, nothing prevents the situation from mutating into the typical triangle of Connebert. The element which unites these three Maheuts is their single motivation, sexual gratification.

The personages bearing the name Maheut in Folie Largesse and the Prestre et Alison distinguish themselves from all three of the preceding ones by the fact that their motivation is not sexual. What unites them is their goal, which is gain, and their elaboration of a stratagem to achieve their ends. The fact that it is a woman, the salt-seller's wife, who is the immediate victim in Folie Largesse dictates that the means which Maheut, Richeut and Hersent employ not be sexual. In the Prestre et Alison, on the other hand, the victim is a man, and the traditional ploy of sexual enticement comes into play.

In summary, then, Maheut is a married woman whose libidinous nature is not satisfied within this institution. A second characteristic is her readiness to engage in combinations of doubtful probity for gain. From this small sampling, at least, it can be concluded that she is not a prostitute nor a procuress in the professional sense. She is always the dame and never the servant. Based on the small number of selections, it is difficult to conclude that the name can evoke a well-defined type. However, the blending of sexual enticement and ruses to profit from the priest in the Prestre et Alison, where Maheut does act as a procuress, even though it may not be her trade, may hold the key to understanding Maheut. As mentioned, this tale seems to owe much to Richeut, in which there is a similar blend of the themes of seduction and gain. Though linked normally in a cause-effect relationship where seduction precedes the economic profit, it is clear that in Richeut they are but two prongs of the same attack, of which the end is dominance. It is in these domains
that the vices of avidity, lechery and duplicity attributed to women by French medieval culture have full sway. Perhaps the typology of Maheut cannot be carried further than that of a possessor of the traditional vices of women, with the redeeming trait of being a "knower," at least as far as sex and duplicity are concerned, in a world full of dolts and dupes. Nevertheless, Maheut's presence with Herselot in the Prestre et Alison, which in turn appears to be a reworking of Richeut, further strengthens the impression that Richeut, Hersent and Maheut form a trio which somehow belong together. Thus, this fabliau, along with Folle Largesse, hints at least that the association of the three together in the Catalan ensenhamen Cabra Juglar was not a pure coincidence.

Hersent appears in Richeut, the Roman de Renard, and five times in the Recueil général, one of which is in Folle Largesse. The name is used once inexplicably to designate a trouvère in the introduction to the Trois dames de Paris by Watriquet Brasseneil, de Couvin.\(^1\) In La Vieille qui oint la palme au chevalier, a priest takes two cows from an old woman and, in spite of her entreaties, refuses to return them.\(^2\) In desperation she solicits advice from her neighbor Hersent, who advises her to grease the palm of a certain knight. When the old woman carries out this suggestion literally, she is promised the return of her stock providing she give up her meadow and grass. The fabliau ends on the proverb: "Povres n'a droit, se il ne done" (p. 159). The only thing which characterizes Hersent in this case is that she is the one who knows to whom one should address oneself to get things done unofficially. It is she who knows how the real world works, whom to contact, and what it takes to get action, i.e., money. The danger of overreaching here is great. Nevertheless, it would appear that Hersent is in touch with the same sort of obscure underground that exists in Richeut, where one can have a castle burned down, have a man killed, or have two stolen cows returned, if one only knows the levers of the mechanism and what is required to set it in motion.

In a farcical and unconvincing tale called the Fablel d'Aloul, a beautiful wife invites the priest Aloul to enter the house surreptitiously and make love with her while her jealous husband is asleep in the same bed.\(^3\) The tale has the most improbable shifts and incredible situations. In the end the wife and the servant manage to help Aloul escape just when he is about to be castrated. The servant is "Hersent, une vieille bajasse, / Qui moult estoit et mole et crasse" (p. 266). While looking for the priest in the dark among the sheep, she grasps his privates without recognizing what she has (a device of estrangement used over and over in this work), and she ends up being taken sexually by force. Afterwards, the priest asks for her help and she grants it. This Hersent is reminiscent of the louve who, after having been raped by Renard, is not the slightest bit resentful toward her attacker at the time of his trial. Here the servant Hersent seems to be the consenting female who is always used by men. Indeed, when she goes in search of the priest, it is partly because her master has promised a reward. After

\(^1\)RG, 3:145. \(^2\)RG, 5:157-59. \(^3\)RG, 1:255-88.
being raped (?), she agrees to help her assailant, and the only thing he offers is his word, "que toz jors mès vous aurai chière" (p. 267). The key to the puzzle may be that tradition had conferred on Hersent such a character that the idea of her being raped was inconceivable, which gave an immediate ironic interpretation to these lines describing the assault: "Hersent, ou elle veult ou non, / Sueffre tout ce que li a fait" (p. 267). There is a similar description of Hersent in Richeut. When Samson leads the "trembling virgin" away to bed, it is put this way: "Apres mangier la prist Sanson / Si l'an moine, o voille o non" (vv. 1266-67).

In the *Prestre teint* by Gautier le Leu, the priest Gerbaut in the city of Orléans has his mind set on seducing the beautiful wife of the rich bourgeois Dan Picon.1 His advances are repeatedly repulsed, and in the end he is sorely humiliated for his efforts. After having received blows from the faithful wife for his first advances, Gerbaut decides to see if Hersent can help him. She is:

La marrugliere des mostiers  
Qui mout savoit de tel mestier;  
Il n'a el mout prestre ne moigne  
Ne bon reclus ne bon chanoine,  
Se tant feist qu'a li parlast  
Que de s'angoise nel getast.

*(RG, 6:11)*

The priest embraces Hersent and hurries her into his house, very much afraid to be seen with her. This detail tells much about Hersent's reputation. For money Hersent pleads the priest's case with the bourgeoise and receives two mighty blows in exchange for her efforts. The reputation and activities of Hersent are clearly evident in the following exchanges between her and the wife of the smith:

"Dame Hersent, de vostre escole  
Encore ne veu ge mie estre:  
Ja de ce ne seroiz mon mestre,  
Que je por vos face hontage  
Se l'en nel tenist a hontage  
Je vos donasse de mon poing,  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
Ou de ma paume ou d'un baston.  
--Dame, ce ne seroit pas bon:  
Il n'a bourjoise en tot Orliens,  
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .  
Qui par moi son ami ne face."

* (RG, 6:13)

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1 *RG, 6:8-23.*
Escole evidently has here the same specialized meaning as mestier, i.e., broadly, corruption and prostitution. The hold which the entremetteuse can exercise over her clients is well understood, as indicated by her refusal to have Hersent become her mestre through this affair. In spite of the defective text, shown by the dotted lines, Hersent's pitch seems clear: she pimps for all the other wives of Orléans, so there is nothing exceptional or dangerous in her offer.

In this work Hersent's social station is marginal; a marruglièrê is a kind of cleaning woman in a church, but her real, surreptitious trade is that of whore and entremetteuse. Her clientele for this function would appear to come from the male world of the clergy of all levels. In any case, she is here clearly the same type seen in Richeut.

In Aiol, a chanson de geste of the twelfth century, a Hersent makes an appearance. According to Jacques Normand and Gaston Raymond, the first part of the work, where Hersent is found, was first written in decasyllabic monorhyme laisses in the middle of the twelfth century in a dialect of central France (p. xxvi). They place the reworking of the work by a Picardian poet, including a long supplement in dodecasyllabic verse, between 1205 and 1215 (p. xxviii). Hersent plays no essential role in the work but has a part in an episode in which Aiol passes through Orléans on his way to court with the purpose of recovering the lost lands of his father Elie. For such minor personages, Hersent and her spouse are given a surprising amount of development. The fortune acquired de droit niant (v. 2676) started with a paltry twenty deniers that they had upon their arrival. They parlayed these into ovens, mills and houses, plus many freemen, in five short years by usury and saving (vv. 2659-78). Perhaps the joke, understood by contemporaries, is that the fortune did not come from the masterful cultivating of twenty deniers, but from less laudatory pursuits. It is perhaps such an understanding which prompts Hersent to say to the handsome young Aiol:

"Car je sui marcheclièrè, je vos creant;  
Mais je ne vendi car bien a .xv. ans:  
Neporquant le sornon en ai tous tans."

(Vv. 2700-2702)

In combination with other examples of her crude humor, it would not be impossible for her to mean by car, "meat," that she was a prostitute or entremetteuse. This interpretation is strengthened by other details. For example, she asks Aiol to join her household (maisnie, v. 2693), for which she says: "Donrai vous une offrande molt avenant: / Ch'est une longe andoile grose et pendant" (vv. 2694-95).

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Hersent is described rather fully and in completely terms. Below are some samples:

"Car fust chi Hageneus li enivrés
Et Hersent, sa mollier al ventre lé!"  
(Vv. 2587-88)

Atant evos Hersent al ventre grant;
Ch'est une pautoniere molt mesdisant,
Feme a un macheclier d'Orliens le grant.  
(Vv. 2656-58)

Ele est si felesense et mesdisant,
Cuiverte et orgellouse et mal parlant.  
(Vv. 2679-80)

El ot le panche grosse et le cul grant.  
(V. 2689)

Whether or not Hersent is here a femme de mauvaise vie, as pautoniere suggests, or simply grossly libidinous, as her offer to Aiol indicates, she does not belie the image that Hersent has in Richeut. She is not a servant, however, and she is even the master of her household: "Atant est Hagenel le soudiant, / Baron estoit Hersent le mal parlant" (v. 2722-23). Like the two whores in Richeut, Hersent in this tale seems to have a whole following which does her bidding—in this case, a horde of rabble who pelt Aiol with stones and excrement. Aiol reproaches Hersent for surrounding herself with dung:

"Molt vous aiment ches mousques par Dé le grant,
Car vos estes lor mere, mien ensiant:
Entor vos trevent merde, j'en sai itant,
Que a molt grans tropiaus vos vont sivant."
(Vv. 2710-13)

Moreover, the use of mousques and sivant is curiously suggestive of Richeut. Both words have a sexual connotation. (See "Notes on the text," vv. 372 and 1273.) Mousques hints at a kind of promiscuous touching, and sivant, although it literally means "following," could mean "sexually eager," as it does in Richeut, where the whore "plus est sivanz que lisse en gest" (v. 372). It is worth mentioning that Aiol, too, connects prostitution and sorcery, for upon leaving Hersent, he rejects the advances of some prostitutes and calls them putains sorchieres (v. 2753).

In Aiol, Hersent has a civil status, that of being a butcher's wife. There is, however, a strong suggestion that her real function is of a more seamy nature and that perhaps there is not a great distance between the tripot in Richeut and the tripiere in Aiol. She would appear to be essentially the same type, bearing the same outlook and values that she manifests in Richeut. It must be born in mind that the part of Aiol in which Hersent appears is dated in the middle of the twelfth century.
and is, therefore, another indication that neither Hersent nor Richeut is a type which automatically implies the tale Richeut. It appears ever more clear that the genesis of these types predates any literary incarnation of them which survives today.

No doubt there exist many other mentions of Hersent scattered throughout lesser-known works in Old French literature. For example, verse 30 of C'est don conte de Bair et d'Ocenin son genre reads: "Per lou conseil dame Hersant." The obscurity of the poem makes it impossible to divine the precise meaning, but it does call for a comparison with a similar verse in Étienne de Fougère’s Le Livie des manières in which:

Richeut li vient qui li conseille
Que porter se face a la veille.
A la veille se set voer
Non pour preier, mais pour joer.

(Vv. 1071-74)

Finally, we return again to the Prestre et Alison, in which Hercelot (in Richeut both Hersent and the diminutive Herselot are used) has exactly the same character and function as has Hersent in Richeut. There are only two major differences: in the former work Hercelot serves Dame Maheut instead of Richeut, and a third party, Alison, is designated to play the role of the trembling virgin in bed with the victim.

The examination of the appearance of the name Hersent in Old French literature does not fully justify the widespread notion that the name traditionally designates a servant. The name designates a domestic servant only in the Prestre et Alison (generally considered a reshaping of Richeut) and in the Fablel d'Aloul, to which can be added the marrugliere of the Prestre teint. In Folle Largesse and in La Vieille qui oint la plame au chevalier, she is ill-defined with no civil status. Still, it is probable that both evoked for contemporaries a rather precise type of the commère of the village or neighborhood who knew everything that was going on, officially and unofficially, and who never lost an opportunity to take advantage of this knowledge.

In both the Roman de Renard and Aiol, Hersent designates a wife, and both Hersents are liberally tainted with the vices which were ascribed to women in the Middle Ages. Both, too, are old and ugly, but the machecliere is a much more self-imposing figure. In her "masculine" aggressiveness she is more akin to the heroine of Richeut than to either her servant or to the louve in the Roman de Renard.

This examination should determine the answers to two questions: do the names Maheut and Hersent correspond to recognizable types, and, if so, do these types belong in the same orbit with the personages in

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1Jubinal, Rapport, p. 43.
Richeut? In other words, do they justify the trio—Richeut, Hersent, and Maheut? Since most of these works cannot be satisfactorily dated, the question of chronological priority and influence must be muted. The question of type for Maheut and Hersent appears more thorny and difficult to encompass than for Richeut, who, where the context is revealing, always appears as the archiprocuress and prostitute or as that side of woman's nature traditionally condemned by official society. An examination of the personages in question from a triple point of view should help yield answers to the questions posed. It is important to clarify their status and whether they are motivated primarily by a libidinous nature or by desires for gain.

In the case of the personages studied who are labeled Maheut, none is a prostitute by profession. The commère in Folle Largesse is a kind of marginal figure whose status cannot be fixed, but whose motivation is gain alone. In all other cases Maheut refers to a married woman. In Jouglet she is married to an oaf of a vilain and it is her wedding night. In the Sot Chevalier she has been married to a knight and after one year has yet to have sexual relations with her husband. She is the experienced adulterous wife of a blacksmith in Connebert. In all three cases the woman wants to experience carnal love. In the first two the bride can do nothing but bear the unbelievable ineptitude of her doltish spouse. The wife of the smith uses what outlet she has and takes the priest for a lover. These examples depict a Maheut as a married, sensuous woman. The Maheut in the Prestre et Alison is married also (she is called a bourgeoise), but she is under the control of no visible husband, and her motivation, while complex, is mainly gain. She enjoys a party and is adept at mounting a convine ("stratagem"), which is reminiscent of Richeut. She does not participate in any sexual encounter, but she uses a sexual lure to snare her victim and to triumph in the farce she plays on the priest blinded by passion. If Maheut constitutes a type, it is evidently only within the broadest of parameters. In spite of a family air which suggests that they are all somehow related, this limited sampling does not appear to justify the conclusion that the name Maheut is necessarily applied to a single, well-delineated type. On the other hand, none of the Maheuts encountered exemplifies the spiritual elevation or the high moral tone which would preclude her being a fit companion for the duo found in Richeut.

Hersent is presented as a married woman only in the Roman de Renard and in Aiol. In both cases she has a gross, sensuous nature, and in the latter she may have made her fortune as a prostitute. Her presence in the Conte de Bair, Folle Largesse, and the Vieille qui oint la palme is too furtive to categorize her, though her name is always linked to negative values—debauchery and exploitation. In both the Prestre teint and the Prestre et Alison she is a kind of servant who functions as a procuress for profit; in the former work she is a whore as well. In the Fablel d'Aloul she is a curiously lecherous servant who is willing to risk the ire of her master and pass up a reward in order to help the priest who has sexually abused her.
The distinction between married versus unattached and between sensual motivation versus pecuniary consideration is revealed vain in classing Hersent. Yet she is a single type. Regardless of whether or not she is a married woman, her appetites are great and indiscriminate. One time she procures money by ingenious and illegitimate combinations only to squander it on the abundant good food and wine needed for an orgiastic feast. Another time her appetite is more specifically carnal. Either way her nature is a constant challenge to the Church's ideals of spiritual asceticism. Moreover, her appetites are never satisfied by her nominal function, and so she is usually in touch with a netherworld of corrupt practitioners who risk the censure of official society in pursuit of gain and pleasure.

It would appear that both Maheut and Hersent possess a certain degree of typological unity which justifies their name being used over and over again in different works. Both, too, are in general accord with the type Richeut. Hersent is far more fully developed in this sense, but, given her character, Maheut is at least a potential companion of the archprostitute.

Localization of Maheut, Hersent and Richeut

The purpose of this section is to determine whether the names Maheut, Hersent and Richeut represent a historically and geographically localizable phenomenon. All three names are associated in the Cabrera ensenhamen and in Folle Largesse by Philippe de Beaumanoir, Hersent and Richeut are twice present together in the Roman de Renard, and Maheut and Herselot (Hersent) are both personages in the Prestre et Alison. All three names are of Germanic origin, which suggests a possible folk provenance. A better understanding of the relationship among these types should shed light on the specific nature of each and ultimately on the tale of Richeut itself. In the analysis below every work will be examined for the following data: 1) the author, where and when he lived; 2) the dialect of the text; 3) internal indications of locale, such as the names of cities; 4) the type of personage that the name designates; and 5) whether the work appears in the Bern MS 354. The method employed here is to set forth first the facts relative to the above five categories and then to draw the conclusions which this information suggests.

Maheut in the fabliaux

Maheut occurs in Jouglet (RG, 4:112-27), whose author is given by the RG as Colin Malet. According to the Dictionnaire des lettres françaises, this writer lived in the second third of the thirteenth century

in the confines of Champagne, Burgundy and Lorraine (dept. of the Haut-Marne). This fabliau is found in two manuscripts: (A) in Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS 837, folio 116 R° to 118 R°, and (B) in London, Brit. MSS, MSS Add. 10,289, folio 175 V° to 178 V°. The Bibl. Nat. MS 837 is carefully analyzed in Le Jongleur Gautier le Leu by Charles H. Livingston. This manuscript was executed by a copyist from Central France at the very end of the thirteenth century. The British manuscript is no doubt a defective copy of the French one, as a number of the variants in the RG indicate. The first verse of the text tells the location of the story: "Jadis avoit en Carembant." The British version has instead: "Jadis encoste Monferrant." The RG (4:263) gives the following explanation:

Le "Carembant" est un petit pays de la Flandre française, sur la frontière de l'Artois. Le scribe du ms. B, ne connaissant sans doute pas cette province, a transporté la scène dans le midi de la France, où se trouvent de nombreux "Montferrant."

Maheut here designates the daughter of a vavassor newly married to a doltish knight.

Two works containing Maheut, Le Sot Chevalier (RG, 1:220-30) and Connebert (RG, 5:160-70), are attributed to Gautier le Leu. For the first work the RG used Bibl. Nat. MS 837, folio 227 R° to 278 V° (see Jouget above), and Livingston used the Middleton manuscript for his edition. This manuscript was made in France by several scribes writing in Picardian during the third quarter of the thirteenth century. The tale is not found in Bern MS 354. Connebert, however, can be found in its complete form only in Bern MS 354. Livingston (pp. 4-10) describes this manuscript as being from the beginning of the fourteenth century in a dialect from eastern France. This writer will refrain from entering into the details of internal references and other pertinent data of localization because Livingston, in the excellent work cited above, has carefully established both the authorship of Gautier le Leu for the works published in Le Jongleur Gautier le Leu and his patrie. Livingston (p. 31), like Rita Lejeune in "La Patrie de Gautier le Leu," Moyen Age 47 (1937):3-23, concludes that Gautier is from the old province of Hainaut. After a careful and minute examination of clues in Gautier's works and in those referring to them, Livingston concludes that the poet lived in the thirteenth century and that his career continued well past 1250 (p. 100). In the Sot Chevalier Maheut is the young wife and in Connebert she is the smith's adulterous wife.

1Charles H. Livingston, Le Jongleur Gautier le Leu (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1951), pp. 3-4; see also p. 3, n. 1 for other studies of the manuscript.

2Ibid., pp. 13-25.
There is one other mention of the name Maheut in verse 30 of the Fol Vilain, a work by Gautier le Leu published by Livingston (pp. 147-58). Here the term is used only to designate Hellinés and Godefrois as "li fil Mehaut." The name does not reappear in the work. The Fol Vilain is the same sort of tale as the Sot Chevalier, in which a libidinous young woman is married to a ridiculously stupid man. Both works are found in the Middleton manuscript. (The Sot Chevalier bears the title of De l'aventure d'Ardane in this collection.)

Maheut, then, occurs four times in the Old French literature which has survived in tales in which neither Hersent nor Richeut is present. In three of the works Maheut is an active personage in the story. One tale is attributed to Colin Malet, who lived in the second third of the thirteenth century near the tangent of Champagne, Burgundy and Lorraine (Haut-Marne). This work, Jouget, presents many analogies with Le Sot Chevalier of Gautier le Leu. The other three mentions of Maheut are found in the works of Gautier le Leu: as personages in Le Sot Chevalier and Connebert and as a simple reference in Fol Vilain. On this basis, one can say that Maheut is probably a phenomenon of thirteenth-century northern Picardy and the adjacent Flanders. However, this result is not satisfying because it does not shed any light on Maheut's presence in the Catalan work of the early second half of the twelfth century.

Maheut appears with Hercelot, the diminutive form of Hersent, in Le Prestre et Alison. Maheut is the bourgeoise and Hercelot the servant in this work attributed to Guillaume le Normand by the RG (2:8) on the basis of verse 439. The Dictionnaire des lettres françaises describes him as an author who lived in the first part of the thirteenth century and wrote in the continental Norman dialect.¹ A description of the manuscript (Bibl. Nat. MS 19152, fol. 49 v° to 51 r°) can be found in Livingston, p. 6. Faral indicates that the manuscript was executed in some region of the north of France at the beginning of the fourteenth century and that it is difficult to be more exact about the location.² The tale, generally considered a reworking of Richeut, is not part of the Bern MS 354.

Hersent alone in Old French tales

Hersent occurs alone in Le Fable d'Aloul (RG, 1:255-88) which is based on the Bibl. Nat. MS 837. The author is unknown and there are no place references. Hersent is a debauched old servant. This tale does not appear in the Bern MS 354.

¹Dictionnaire des lettres françaises, vol. 4: Moyen Age, s.v. "Guillaume le Clerc (de Normandie)." 

In La Vieille qui oint la palme au chevalier (RG, 5:157-59), Hersent is a neighbor of the vieille. The tale is found in Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS 2173, folio 97 R° to 97 V° and in Bern MS 354, folio 111 V° to 112 R°. There is no indication of place in the work.

In Aiol Hersent is a butcher's wife in Orléans. The work is supported by the single Bibl. Nat. MS 25516. There are two distinct parts. The first part, which contains Hersent, was originally composed in decasyllabic monorhyme laisses in the scripta of Central France around 1160. Between 1205 and 1215, a Picardian remanieur reworked portions of this section, substituting twelve-syllable lines for some of the original ten-syllable ones, and he added a long second part in twelve-syllable verse which differs greatly in spirit and content from the original. Details about Orléanais and Berry as well as the cities of Poitiers and Orléans convince the editors Jacques Normand and Gaston Raymond that the original poet must have come from this region.

Le Prestre teint also takes place in Orléans. The tale is supported only by the Hamilton MS 257, and it is given without title except that which a later hand inserted, to wit, "De Dame Hersens" (Livingston, p. 11, n. 1). The manuscript is from the end of the thirteenth or beginning of the fourteenth century with no exact dialectal tendency. This study assumes that Livingston is correct in assigning Gautier le Leu as the author of the Prestre teint. Nevertheless, the fact that the story takes place in Orléans, the same town in which the episode with Hersent in Aiol takes place, suggests a possible rapport between this city and the type Hersent. In any case, it is true that the internal indications which permitted the critic to place the other works of Gautier in the region of Hainaut are entirely lacking here. Livingston says of Hersent in this work: "C'est une sorte de Trotaconventos du XIIIe siècle qui a quelques traits communs avec Richeut et Aubérée" (p. 255).

In the Roman de Renard, Hersent alone of the three types occurs in the oldest branches, II and Va, given as between 1174 and 1177 by Foulet (Renard, pp. 217-26) and attributed to Pierre de Saint-Cloud. Maheut occurs nowhere in the Renard. Hersent is present in the following episodes of these branches: "The Adultery," "The Rape of Hersent," and "The Judgment of Renard." For this material Martin used the Bibl. Nat. MS 20043, which he describes as a thirteenth-century copy containing a mixture of Picardian and Norman dialectal traits. However, many manuscripts contain these parts of the story, and the diffusion of the Renard

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1Normand and Raymond, "Aiol": chanson de geste, pp. ix-xxvii.

2See Maurice Delbouille, "Le Fabliau du Prestre teint, est-il l'oeuvre de Gautier le Leu?" Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire 11 (1932):591-97. In this study Delbouille shows that the language and style of the Prestre teint are totally different from those of the seven fabliaux of which Gautier is the assured author. He concludes, consequently, that Gautier is not the author of this fabliau.
was so great that its original creation cannot be localized, except for the milieu, which was evidently clerical. The only thing known about Pierre de Saint-Cloud is that he is the author of Branches II and Va of the Roman de Renard and a contributor to the Roman d'Alexandre around 1180.1

The only other mention of Hersent that this writer has found is in C'est dou conte de Bair et d'Ocenin son genre, Bern MS 389, verse 30.2 According to Jubinal,3 the manuscript dates from the thirteenth century and the scripta appears to be from eastern France; most of the writers represented in this manuscript are from the twelfth century, and the personages in the poem have not been identified. The most intriguing detail is that this is the only example known by this writer in which Hersent is used metaphorically.

If Le Prestre et Alison is eliminated as a reworking of Richeút in a Norman setting and if the Fable d'Aloul, La Vieille qui oint la palme, C'est dou conte de Bair, and the Roman de Renard cannot be localized, what remains are two works in which the story takes place around Orléans and in which Hersent is a more or less uniform type: the first part of Aiol and the Prestre teint. Since the attribution of the latter work is based mainly on Gautier le Leu's affirmation that he wrote a "prestre taint," one might be sceptical about the correctness of assigning this work to him because the setting is nowhere close to his native Hainaut. But he certainly wrote Fol Vilain, in which he alludes to a Hersent, and this work is clearly set in Gautier's native region.

An examination of the manuscripts in which Maheut and Hersent can be found does not give more than slight hints as to the location and genesis of these types. Their use follows the general pattern of the fabliaux and indicates a wide diffusion with a preponderance of Picardian scriptal traits. The fact that the works of Gautier le Leu have survived, that he used both names, and that he has been identified with Hainaut probably distorts the overall picture more than any single factor.

It can be assumed that a great many lay texts of the twelfth century and many tales which had a prominent oral diffusion have simply been lost. This examination has been mainly on tales which have survived from the thirteenth century, by which time any significant works created in the previous century had been widely diffused and their milieu of origin largely obscured. Nevertheless, for an audience of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the names of Maheut, Hersent and Richeút must have had a precise content in both the Catalan Cabra Juglar and Philippe de Beaumanoir's Folle Largesse to justify their being grouped together.

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1Foulet, Renard, p. 235, n. 1.
2Jubinal, Rapport, pp. 42-43.
3Ibid., p. 20.
Maheut is probably lost irretrievably in the mists of Old French oral tradition, and if echoes of what Hersent originally represented are to be discovered, they must be sought in the earliest manifestations of this type to have survived. These include principally the first part of Aiol, dated around 1160 from Orléanais, and in the genesis of the Roman de Renard. Perhaps the third and most infamous of the unholy trio, Richeut, will help shed some light on the history of these types.

Richeut in Old French texts

Philippe de Remi, sire de Beaumanoir is the author of Folle Largesse (RG, 5:53-67), in which the three types are found together. The manuscript is found in Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS 1588, folio 107a to 109b. It was edited by Hermann Suchier in Oeuvres poétiques de Philippe de Remi, sire de Beaumanoir, which is basically the edition followed in the RG.

A study published by Achille Clément Albert in 1893 on the language of Philippe's poetic works concludes that his native dialect was Picardian, although he attempted to write in the more standard language of Ile-de-France. He lived from about 1250 to 1296 and travelled so extensively that to speculate about where he might have known of Richeut, Hersent and Maheut is useless, especially by the second half of the thirteenth century. The name Maheut was certainly not unknown to him. His father, Philippe, entered the service of the countess Mahaut, widow of Robert, Count of Artois and brother of Louis IX; she later married Gui de Châtillon, Count of Saint-Pol. Philippe père is known to have been chevalier de la court de [Mahaut] la comtesse d'Artois in 1257. He was also involved in a trial held in Arras in 1259 to settle the share of the succession of the Countess Mahaut de Boulogne to be received by the Countess of Artois.

Philippe de Beaumanoir is one of the most important poets of the French Middle Ages. His production includes Jehan de Dammartin et Blonde d'Oxford, La Manekine, Salu d'amours, Conte d'amours and others (see the Suchier edition cited above), but he is best known for his Coutumes de Beauvaisis. His life does not shed any light on the question at hand.


because he wrote about a century after the composition of Richeut. It may be worth noting not only that Philippe must have known the Countess Mahaut whom his father served, but also that Remy is an arrondissement of Compiègne in Oise,¹ and that in Aubere the richiaus Aubere is linked with this city, being called "Aubree de Compiengne." Though interesting, no conclusions can be drawn from these facts to advance this study.

In the Cabra Juglar, Cabrera refers to Richeut, Maheut and Hersent in the context of a list of literary works which his pupil does not know, but should. Consequently, it is assumed that these names, too, allude to literary works. It is the same situation as in Les deux bordeors ribauz (RG, 1:1-12; also known as Les deux trouvères ribauds), based on the Bibl. Nat. MS 19152, folio 69 Vo, which has already been described. "Richeut" occurs with "Renart" in verse 299, but this is not supported by the second manuscript used in the RG, the Bibl. Nat. MS 837, folio 213 Vo to 214 Ro. The same work is contained in the Bern MS 354, folio 65 Vo to 67 Ro, under the heading Li Esbaubisemenz Lécheor. These two references can be taken as titles, and they serve only to indicate that Richeut was considered a "classic" which a troubadour should know, from shortly after the middle of the twelfth century to well into the thirteenth century. (Les deux bordeors ribauz cannot be dated, but it probably belongs to the second half of the thirteenth century.)

With the exception of the tale of Richeut which is the object of this study, of the heroine of the Vernet fragments and of Branch XXIV of the Roman de Renart, the term richeut is always used in a metaphoric sense, and this sense is uniform, designating a kind of entremetteuse.

The only two manuscripts that support the use of Richeut in Branch VII of the Roman de Renart, the oldest in which Richeut appears (1195-1200), are the Bibl. Nat. MS 20043 (Martin A) and the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal MS 3334 (Martin H). Martin indicates that MS A is from the thirteenth century and that the text contains both Norman and Picardian traits: the vowels generally follow the Norman pattern and the consonants the Picardian. The text is written in several distinct hands. Martin describes MS H as being from the end of the thirteenth century and as having a very pronounced Picardian character.² Moreover, he believes that Branch VII can be localized in the area of Compiègne:

Le v. 76 nomme la ville de Compiègne, le v. 210 l'Oise; tout près de Beaumont-sur-Oise se trouvent les villages de Chambly (cité au v. 502), de Ronqueroles (503), de Puiseux (614). Il y a cependant plusieurs villages de ce dernier nom, comme il y a plusieurs lieux du nom de Mareuil (724): c'est peut-être Mareuil-la-Motte, au nord de Compiègne, auquel il faut penser ici. (Observations, p. 47)

¹Ibid., p. i, n. 2.
²Martin, Le Roman de Renart, 1:iv, xiii; Observations, pp. 2-4.
Branch XXIV of the *Renard* is based on the Cangé manuscript (Bibl. Nat. MS 371) in both the Martin and the Roques editions.\(^1\) This manuscript is dated by Martin as from the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century with generally Île-de-France orthography and some Picardianisms.\(^2\) Roques's analysis agrees with that of Martin both for the dating of the manuscript and for the identification of the dialect.\(^3\) Neither the manuscript nor internal evidence provides any clues relative to the locale of creation of this branch, which is among those which Foulet places after 1250.\(^4\)

In *Les Tresses* (*RG*, 4:67-81), based on the Bibl. Nat. MS 19152 described above, Richeut is used as the now familiar metaphor. The setting cannot be localized and nothing is known about the author, Guérin.

Richeut is again used metaphorically in the *Boucher d'Abbeville* (*RG*, 3:227-46). Here the priest says, "Maugré en ait sainte Richeus" (v. 428). The "Abbeville" of the title, as well as the attribution to Eustache d'Amiens, of whom little or nothing is known, suggests a Picardian provenance. Verse 16 cites "Oisement," a town near Amiens, and verse 30 cites "Bailleul" in French Flanders. These references almost surely place the scene of the action in the general area of northern Picardy, which has been very bountiful in the production of these kinds of works. The Bibl. Nat. MS 837 establishes an ante quem limit on the creation of the tale as the end of the thirteenth century, but, apparently, there is no way to date it more precisely.

Livingston points out that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the practice of citing facetious saints was very much in vogue

\(^{1}\)The Martin edition indicates that the section of Branch XXIV in which Richeut appears, vv. 119, 121, 129, is also supported by MS C, i.e., the Bibl. Nat. MS 1579. This manuscript is from Île-de-France and is the base manuscript of the Méné edition of the *Renard*. Martin m, too, contains this section. The "m" indicates a second version of a branch, in this case XXIV, that can be found in the manuscript. This text is in Rome, Vatican Library, cod. Regin. 1659. It contains several instances of branches being repeated. For a description of the manuscript, see Adalbert Keller, *Romvart* (1844), pp. 438-47. According to Martin (*Le Roman de Renart*, 1:xviii-xix), this text dates from the fourteenth century. In his Observations, p. 7, Martin states, "Son orthographe sent tant soit peu le terroir picard: on y trouve ch au lieu de c."

\(^{2}\)Martin, *Le Roman de Renart*, 1:vi; Observations, p. 3.


\(^{4}\)See Flinn's chart in his "Le Roman de Renart" dans *la littérature française*, pp. 16-18.
in the genre sermon joyeux. He cites "Saint Bacchus," "Saint Raisin," "Saint Faulcet," "Saint ongon" and a "Madame Saincte Andouille," among others. In De la goute en l'âne, Gautier's Connebert is even canonized:

Sachiez de voir, bon mires sui
Par Saint Connebert ou je fui
L'autre nuit et nus et dechaus.

This work is supported by the manuscripts Bibl. Nat. MS 837 and MS 2168, by the Hamilton MS 257, and by the Library of Pavia MS 130 E 5. Only in the last does the word Richeut occur, and a description of the manuscript was unavailable for this study.

The fabliau Aubere is placed around 1200 and is supported by eight manuscripts described in Ebeling's edition:

A - Bibl. Nat. MS 837, folio 24 R° to 27 R° (already described)
B - Bibl. Nat. MS 1553, folio 501 V° to 504 R°, early second half of the thirteenth century in Picardian scripta
C - Bibl. Nat. MS 1593, folio 213 V° to 217 V°, second half of the thirteenth century
E - Bibl. Nat. 19152, folio 80 R° to 82 V°, second half of the thirteenth century
F - Bern MS 354, folio 52 V° to 55 V°, thirteenth century
H - Hamilton MS 257, folio 45c to 48d, end of the thirteenth century
G - fragment from Chartres 620, folio 129

The only manuscript for this tale known to contain Richeut is MS D, Bibl. Nat. MS 12603, folio 245 R° to 249 V°, which Ebeling describes as a copy from the beginning of the fourteenth century in the Picardian dialect. The story takes place in Compiègne, which is given in the title in MS A, Explicit d'Aubrée de Compiègne. It has been suggested that the author might be identified:

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1 Livingston, Jongleur, p. 236; see also Emile Picot, "Le Monologue dramatique dans l'ancien théâtre français," Romania 15 (1886):363.


3 Ebeling, Aubere, p. 77.
Il est à noter que le nom de l'auteur ou plutôt l'arrangeur du fabliau, "Jehan," ne se trouve que dans le ms. C au dernier vers; s'agit-il ici du poète picard Jean de Boves, dont nous possédons plusieurs autres pièces? La chose est probable, si l'on remarque que la scène se passe à Compiègne, à la limite de la Picardie.1

As previously noted, Richeut is used in the MS D as a clear metaphor meaning procuress, and, although one version (F) of the tale can be found in the Bern MS 354, it contains no mention of Richeut, which would seem to indicate that the reference was not in the original and that a Picardian scribe introduced it into the manuscript tradition later, perhaps because the type was well known in Picardy and the figure of Auberee naturally called forth that of Richeut.

Richeut appears in one verse of Le Livre des manières as a kind of symbol of women's nature. Much of what is known of the author comes from the Chronique of Robert de Torigni.2 Etienne de Fougères was chaplain to Henry II Plantagenet, and from 1168 until his death in 1178 he was Bishop of Rennes. Le Livre des manières was probably written near the end of his life, before an apparition warned him of his approaching death and induced him to devote himself to more serious pursuits. It was at this time that Etienne wrote two hagiographies.3

The work rests on the thirteenth-century Angers MS 295, folio 141a. In his edition Estienne von Fougieres' "Livre des manières," Joseph Kremer concludes, on the basis of linguistic analysis, that Etienne was a South Norman whose language had all the usual distinguishing features of the Norman dialect with some apparent influence of Poitevin (p. 76). Since he was an experienced man who seemed to know both the society of the great lords and the ecclesiastical milieu and who probably travelled widely, it is impossible to say where Etienne became acquainted with the figure of Richeut. It is the date of the Livre des manières which interests this study; possibly as early as 1170 Richeut was so well known that she could be used metaphorically for evil feminine nature.4

1RG, 5:303; other works include Des deux chevaus (RG, 1:153-61), Le Vilain de Farbu (RG, 4:82-86), De Barat et de Haimet (RG, 4:93-111), Le Vilain de Bailleul (RG, 4:212-16), Del Couvoiteus et de l'envieuxes (RG, 5:211-14), De Gombert et des deux clerces (RG, 1:238-44); see also RG, 5:325.

2Cited in Salmon, Coutumes, pp. i-ii.

3HLF, 14:10; Dictionnaire des lettres françaises, vol. 4: Moyen Age, s.v. "Etienne de Fougères."

4The Dictionnaire des lettres françaises (vol. 4: Moyen Age, s.v. "Etienne de Fougères") points out, however, that the last stanza
Richeut's appearance in the Tristan by Thomas (v. 1322) is metaphorical and reposes on two of the eight fragments now known: the second part of the Turin fragment and the Douce fragment of the Bodleian Library of Oxford. Bédier (Tristan, 2:6) places the manuscript in the first half of the thirteenth century. On the basis of an examination of the language, Bédier seconds the initial conclusions of Francesco Novati that the scribe was a continental Frenchman copying a Norman or, more probably, Anglo-Norman manuscript.¹

The Douce manuscript was executed in England in the thirteenth century and it abounds in Anglo-Norman traits.² It is, along with the Sneyd manuscript, the most important Tristan fragment. The most recent and very judicious description of all eight fragments is to be found in Bartina H. Wind, Les Fragments du "Tristan" de Thomas, pp. 1-12. This scholar passes in critical review all the essential scholarship touching this poem. Below are set forth her answers to three of the questions which interest the present study: who is the poet and where and when did he live?

Nothing is known of the poet except what can be detected in his work. He was of a clerical milieu and he introduced a courtly element into the primitive tale recounted by Béroul. His tale was addressed to an elite, "as pensis e as amerus," as he states at the end of the Sneyd manuscript. He certainly lived in England, as many indications in his work show. His language is very close to that of Marie de France, according to Wind, and he tried to write in the literary language of Aliénor's court; however, some of his native Anglo-Norman peculiarities slipped through (pp. 11-12). Again, relative to date and localization, Wind has carefully arranged and sifted through many critical studies to conclude that the period and milieu are that of the Plantagenet court, especially under the influence of Aliénor and her daughters. There is, in addition, evidence of a strong influence of the Eneas on the psychological analysis of the characters. What scholars have not been able to resolve is the priority between Thomas on the one hand and Chrétien and Marie de France on the other. This writer follows Wind in the hypothesis that the Tristan was composed at the court of Aliénor d'Aquitaine between 1180 and 1190, unless new evidence comes to light to alter this view.

Unlike in the Boucher d'Abbeville, where the Pavia manuscript changed a single verse in order to insert "Sainte Richeut," only the two


²Bédier, Tristan, 2:8.
fragments mentioned cover the material numbered verse 1322 in the Bédier edition. Moreover, the Turin (T2) and the Douce (D) manuscripts are very much alike. As Bédier points out, some gaps in D are covered by T2 (vv. 1335-36, 1471-74, 1480), and mistakes in T2 are eliminated by using D (vv. 1406, 1428, 1514) and vice-versa (vv. 1295, 1319, 1331, 1366, 1522). Bédier continues to the effect that, if one eliminates the chance similarities which can occur with two scribes working independently of each other, two passages remain which would indicate that both are copied from the same model: verses 1287 and, especially, 1346. That the two manuscripts are nearly identical in content, at least, is fortunate, since the Turin (T1 and T2) text is lost. Novati made a diplomatic edition of it, published in the already cited Studi di filologia romanza.

The standard edition for Gerbert de Mez, the third of four branches of the Geste des Loherains, is the one edited by Pauline Taylor. With nineteen manuscripts at her disposal, she chose to use the Arsenal MS 2983 (anc. 180), dated as either late twelfth or early thirteenth century. There is no Richeut in this text, and Taylor chose not to note the innumerable variants found in the other eighteen manuscripts. Only the four manuscripts supporting the reading of richous in the Stengel edition of Gerbert will be examined here. For a complete list of partial editions of this work, see Taylor, Gerbert de Mez, p. xxxi.

Based on Stengel's text and notes, the four manuscripts which contain the reference to Richeut are: D (Bibl. Nat. MS 1461), E (Bibl. Nat. MS 19160; Stengel's base manuscript), P (Bibl. Nat. MS 1442), and X (Bibl. Nat. MS 2179). The other three manuscripts used by Stengel are F, G and M (Bibl. Nat. MSS 1582, 19161 and 1622 respectively). There are known to exist, therefore, twelve other manuscripts in which richous might possibly appear. An examination of these others would not be justified realistically within the framework of this study. Of the four which will be reviewed, E, P and X belong to the so-called Lorraine group, as studied by François Bonnardot. Only M of this group accords with F and G of the non-Lorraine texts in replacing "S'en est richous" with "Si la dognoie."

Bonnardot says of E and P that they "représentent la rédaction lorraine et messine" and, along with a fragment found in Hannover (H, Hannover IV, 576), that they have a common source (p. 211). Of E he

\[1\text{Ibid., 2:1-9.}\]
\[2\text{Taylor, Gerbert de Mez, pp. xxii-xxiii.}\]
\[3\text{Stengel, "Girbert de Metz," p. 516, v. 14.}\]
\[4\text{François Bonnardot, "Les Manuscrits des Loherains," Romania 3 (1874):234; see also Hermann Marseille, Über die Handschriften: Gruppe E M P X der "Geste des Loherains" (Marburg: Pfeil, 1884).}\]
says, "Ce beau ms. peut être considéré comme le type du groupe lorrain" (p. 234), and of P he reports,

[Le ms. 1442] présente la même rédaction que le ms. 8 [E]. On vient de voir . . . avec quelle fidélité ces deux mss. se correspondent. L'un et l'autre sont à deux colonnes comptant chacuns 30 vers. Un troisième ms. identique par le texte et la justification est 1622 [M] que je désigne par 5. La même leçon, mais abrégée, se retrouve dans 2179 [X] qui compte seulement 28 vers par colonne. (p. 218)

He continues by stating that P and E are in more intimate agreement and that X is a shortened version which is incomplete in the beginning and at the end. M is supposed to be identical with P up to folio 176, in which Gerbert kills Fromondin. This assertion is not quite true if Stengel's note on the verse containing richous is exact. Since Fromondin is addressing Gerbert and his cousins, M should contain the same verse as P, which it apparently does not.

There seems no ready explanation for the absence of richous in M while the other manuscripts of the Lorraine group contain it. It is not easy to see why D (MS 1461) contains richous, whereas the other manuscripts with which it is affiliated lack this term. Both F and G are grouped with D under "famille I, groupe I" in Bonnardot's classification (p. 261). These are tantalizing little enigmas which, left unsolved, do not infirm the generally accepted opinion that Gerbert de Mez, like the other branches of La Geste des Loherains, took shape in Lorraine around the city of Metz. Working on the language of the Arsenal MS 2983 alone, Taylor concludes that this text is from the second half of the twelfth century in a northern French tongue in which Champenois traits predominate, with certain Picardian and Lorraine features which are more pronounced for the second copyist (p. xliii). The geste itself may have developed around the middle of the twelfth century or even earlier. Its popularity, measured by the great number of manuscripts and fragments discovered all over Europe, may lie in its sober nationalism, rooted in the distant struggle of the Franks of Austrasia against the Aquitanians of the region of Bordeaux. Its heroes and place names, affectionately memorialized, are evidence of its genesis in eastern France.

It is worth noting that Philippe de Vigneulles also wrote a prose version of the Hervis branch of the Geste des Loherains in 1515.1 It will be remembered that, as late as the early sixteenth century, richeut meaning "procuress" is found in the works of this native son of Metz.

The harvest of solid evidence for localizing the area in which Richeut as a type was best and first known is light indeed. Two

fundamental difficulties are always posed. The first concerns the problems of a manuscript tradition which is usually imperfectly known. The fact that a certain scribe whose dialect is identifiable came to set down a work on parchment does not automatically mean that the work originated in the geographic confines associated with that particular scripta. Secondly, the works containing a mention of Richeut are not dated with the precision one could hope for. The fact that Richeut is frequently used as a metaphor for a procuress or whore in the second half of the twelfth century indicates that the type was well known by this time. The question of in which regions it was known and what conclusions can be drawn from identifying these regions is more tenuous. If one eliminates Les Tresses and Le Boucher d'Abbeville because they cannot be placed before the second half of the thirteenth century, one is left with Auberee, Branch VII of the Roman de Renard, Tristan by Thomas, Le Livre des manièères and Gerbert de Mez. They are arranged in reverse order of chronological precedence with all but Gerbert de Mez placed in the last three decades of the twelfth century. The pattern they present is perplexing.

We have no explanation for the presence of Richeut in only one of the eight manuscripts containing Auberee. Based on the locale in which the story takes place, however, the work can be situated in Compiègne. As has been seen, Branch VII of the Roman de Renard can be associated with this same region, and Etienne de Fougères had family roots in nearby Oisemont. These are tenuous associations indeed and, as such, are evoked only as suggestive matters of reflection.

Obviously the theater of action in Tristan is far removed from the Continent, and Le Livre des manièrès is a moral didactic work related to Etienne's pastoral duties. There may be a connection between the two, nonetheless. If the hypothesis that Thomas d'Angleterre composed his work at the court of Aliénor between 1180 and 1190 is correct, and if it is true that Etienne was chaplain to Henry II Plantagenet, both must have moved in the same general intellectual ambiance diffused throughout the Anglo-Norman and Aquitanian domains.

On the other hand, the above hypothesis does not explain the reference to Richeut in Gerbert de Mez and the presence of richous in the Lorraine dialect of the sixteenth century. Do these factors point to an eastern genesis of the type? Not necessarily. Every word has its history, and Richeut was certainly generally known all over France by the thirteenth century. Chance or a certain eastern mentality may be responsible for the longevity of this term in Lorraine. However, the presence of the term in so many manuscripts of Gerbert, particularly those of the Lorraine group, is not easily accounted for. It is not impossible that the political alliances of this region with the kings of England provided the necessary link to explain the mention of Richeut at the same time in Lorraine and in the Anglo-Norman domains.

There does not appear to be a consistent geographical pattern created in the works which use Richeut as a metaphor, either relative to
the region in which the story takes place or in the manuscripts which contain the works. By the second half of the twelfth century the type was well known over an extended geographical area from England to Lorraine. The Bern MS 354 shows no more predilection for works mentioning the type than does any other manuscript containing a large number of tales. It seems clear that Richeut was perceived in a different way from Hersent and Maheut. The latter are found as names of personages, whereas Richeut is almost always introduced as an epithet devaluing women, with the exception of the tale bearing this name, the Vernet fragments and Folle Largesse, in which she is a personage. The works which contain Richeut as a personage always manifest the rare and very peculiar cauda stanza form, except in Folle Largesse.

This state of affairs suggests two possible conclusions. Richeut may have been the subject of a series of tales diffused before the middle of the twelfth century by itinerant trouvères throughout the territories of what is today northern France and England, which would account for the type being so widely known by poets of the later twelfth century, and which would adequately explain the affirmation of the opening lines of Richeut itself to the effect that the audience has heard the story of the heroine's life many times before. The second possibility is that Richeut originated in the special milieu of the clerical world and was rapidly disseminated throughout the school centers. The twelfth century was very much the time of the itinerant clerc. Such means of dissemination would explain the universal manifestation of the awareness of Richeut. Evidence to support one or the other of these hypotheses may be forever lost, but whatever the distant sources of the type may have been, the tale which has been preserved in the Bern MS 354 shaped it in a definitive way which prevented it from being reused as a subject of popular literature.

These conclusions are based on evidence extrinsic to the works which have been preserved in which Richeut is the principal personage. An examination of intrinsic evidence follows below.

The Scripta of Richeut

In his 1913 edition of Richeut, Lecompte analyzed the language of the text and reached the following conclusions:¹

From the above résumé I would conclude that the author of Richeut wrote the literary French of his time as represented by the Roman de Troie and Eneas. The careful separation of an from en, of s from z, of ei from oi, the form us instead of uis, and the absence of Picard forms would indicate the home of the author as Normandy or, if Île de France, at least close to the Norman border. (P. 270)

Because of the publication of many significant works in the field of French dialectology and scripta, a fresh look at the language of the test is justified. In general, the description done by Lecompte is very accurate. Some of his conclusions are, however, open to question. Regarding only the language of the scribe and without venturing into the delicate problematic of the language of the author, certain observations can be made.

An examination of the list of Picardian features compiled by Charles Théodore Gossen in his Grammaire de l'ancien picard shows that the proportion of these in our text is small and that, indeed, the language of the text is not Picardian per se. It is well known that certain Picardianisms became incorporated in the scripta of Francian during the so-called Franco-Picardian period and were widely disseminated as part of the prestigious language of the royal domains. This fact plus the absence of any extreme dialectal tendencies in the text suggest a scripta somewhere in central France.

Gossen in his Französische Skriptastudien has made a careful study of this scripta based on documents which have been precisely located and dated. Below is found a confrontation of some of the principal linguistic features of Richeut with the main results of the Gossen study.

The scribe regularly confuses \(a\) and \(e + n\) in final position or + consonant. \(An\) is preferred over \(en\) in over 50 percent of the cases for the form from Latin INDE (\(an\), vv. 9, 40, 105, 135, 159, 188, 227, 229, 263, 298, 347, 364, etc.; \(en\), vv. 16, 43, 80, 138, 146, 154, 265, 278, 322, 356, 375, 387, etc.). Other examples of this confusion include enfant (v. 313), vautre (v. 261), anbrace (v. 171), and in the rhyme: raant : tant (= "elle tend") : richement (vv. 389-91), candre : prandre : pandre (vv. 269-71), panse : despanse (vv. 299-300), mant (= "mens") : longuement : gent : parant (vv. 272-75), and prandre : raienbre : desfandre (vv. 200-202). The etymology of the above examples should have produced \(en\). In such cases throughout the text \(an\) is more frequently used. It is, however, never confused with an \(an\) justified etymologically in the rhyme. Note the \(en\) spellings of gent and raienbre. Quite clearly for the scribe the two spellings are homonymous. One word which is exempt from this confusion is the preposition \(en\) from Latin IN.

Such confusion is general in the dialect of central France, as well as in those of Champagne, Lorraine and Normandy from the second half of the eleventh century on. The only northern French dialects to have maintained the distinction were Picardian and Walloon; the scripta

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2Carl Theodor Gossen, Französische Skriptastudien (Vienna: Hermann Bohlaus, 1967). (Hereafter referred to as FS)
of the Franco-Picardian period blurs this fact. The language of the
scribe manifests precisely that confusion between en and an which makes
these graphs worthless as criteria for dialect studies except for some
Walloon and Picardian texts.

The spellings en and an (< HOMO) for the indefinite subject pro-
noun do not help to localize the scripta. They could represent any of a
number of phonic variations in French dialectology scattered over a wide
area. The spellings an, en are attested from the Chanson de Roland down
to the sixteenth century.

In Richeut tonic free è is regularly rendered by oi (moi < ME,
avoir < HABERE, oir < *HÈRE, etc.), as is è + palatal (destroiz, v. 1009,
< DESTRÎCTUS; loi, v. 897, < LÈGE; droit, v. 848, < DIRÊCTU). Both of
these passed through an ei stage represented by veisin (v. 100). Oi is
used throughout in the imperfect and conditional endings. There is one
subjunctive beneie (v. 1219), as well as one in the generalized oi in
the past participle, benoi(e)te (v. 1107).

According to Gossen (FS, pp. 85-86), the spelling oi spread out
from a center in the western part of the Parisian region. First of all,
this spelling is the expression of a shift from ëj > oj dating from the
tenth century in the east and reaching the territory later to be called
Ile-de-France by the middle of the twelfth century. From there it spread
to the south, west and southwest. This influence was greatest in Nor-
mandy (except close to the English Channel), Touraine, Berry, Angoumois
and Morbihan. The influence was less great in Orléanais and around
Nantes, while in eastern Poitou, Anjou, Maine and Cotentin the spellings
oi and ei maintained themselves in more or less equal proportions.

The scripta of Berry has been examined because the text tells
that Samson was raised there (vv. 996-97), because the scripta of the
region is essentially Francian, having some directly under the crown in
1101 (FS, p. 195), and because documents from there show a few anomalies
found in Richeut. For example, Richeut shows do from DE + ïLLU in
vv. 249, 1903, and 1171, and so for si + lo in v. 79, along with del in
vv. 386 and 397. Berry documents C 2 (1248), 6 (1278), 7 (1280), 10
(1287) show do, but C 5 (1267), 8 (1285), 13 (1292), 14 (1295) and 17
(1298) show dou (FS, p. 195). Berry documents show oi from ei from any
source, with rare exceptions, in ei (FS, pp. 83-84).

In Orléanais oi predominates, though ei is more frequent than in
Berry. The verbal ending -ÈRE does not usually give -oir (in Richeut:
menoir, v. 267; ardoir, v. 268) except after a labial, e.g., savoir
(FS, pp. 84-85).

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1Ibid., p. 196.

2Walther von Wartburg, Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch:
eine Darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatzes (Bonn: F. Klopp,
1928-), 4:457a. (Hereafter referred to as FEW)
In the area later to be called Ile-de-France oi is the rule. For the imperfect endings the result is usually oi, except in the documents from Pontoise, which give e. The graphemes ei, ai, and e occur sporadically in the non-Picardian part of Oise. Valois: C 174 (1263), povet; C 176 (1267), trais, metait, Val de Courrai (< -ÊTU); C 186 (1280), trais, sait (< SIAT), mais. Senlis and surroundings: C 193 (1277), loet; C 203 (1284), hairs, trais, Geoffray, -aient with -oient; C 209 (1277), her(s), povae; C 210 (1279), tournais, etc. (FS, p. 85).

In Richeut tonic free o regularly gives o, e.g., vos, coe (< CAUDA), or(e) (< HORA), error, etc. The exceptions are: preu(z) (vv. 310, 543, 585), which rhymes preuz (v. 657) : toz : degeoz; and aveu (v. 343), which rhymes with leu from o + palatal, as in neu (< NÔDU; v. 526) : feu (< FÔCU) : queu (< CÔCU), and feu (< FEÔDU; v. 862) : jeu : leu : tonleu. The spelling ou is reserved for consonant. What the phonic value of o, ou were is hard to say, since there is the expected ou in escout (< A(U)SCÚTA; v. 65), but coche (< COLLÓCAT; v. 971) rhymes with boche : toche.

In Berry tonic free o gives very mixed results. Out of eighteen documents only six show -or, less frequently -our; and -ous, less frequently -os; eight show eu, of which four show only this result (FS, p. 93).

The result of the tonic free o in Orléanais is very mixed; o, ou and eu compete on nearly equal footing, frequently in the same text. In the documents from Chartres eu is the rule with few exceptions, and in the fourteenth-century documents from Blois only eu is found. There is a decrease of the spelling o, ou (< ÔRE) from the south to the north. The coexistence of eu with o, ou is frequently the result of a deliberate tendency to archaic spellings in the texts (FS, pp. 93-94).

From Paris and its surroundings the documents generally show eu from tonic free o, but o, ou are not unknown. Pontoise has almost exclusively eu. In the French (versus Picardian) portion of Oise fifty-six documents show eu exclusively. Since this is probably the area in which Richeut was copied, the exceptions are listed below. The documents, indicated by number, are listed on FS, pp. 187-93. Soissonais: C 168 (1255/56, Soissonais), signor; 184a (1276, southern Valois), (mon)signor, porteur, but procureur; 187 (1280, Valois), signor; 194 (1277, Senlis), signeur with signeur, sireurs, leur; 196 (1281, Senlis), maieur, but prieur, neveu; 206 (1285, Senlis), signor; 207 (1259, Sellentois), signor with signeur, prodome with preudom, prieur, deus; 211 (1281, Sellentois), successor, lor, but seingneur; 231 (1275, Pays de Caux), signors with signeur (FS, pp. 94-95). Gossen concludes that the area from which the sound change underlying the spelling eu occurred was probably Picardy rather than Ile-de-France:

Es ist jedenfalls unwahrscheinlich, dass das ursprüngliche Irradiationszentrum des Wandels oy > òy hier [Ile-de-France] zu suchen ist, wie das von den meisten Forschern angenommen
wird. Dieses Irradiationszentrum liegt vielmehr in der Pikardie. Es ist kein Zufall, dass die Graphie eu gerade in den Urkunden der südlichen Oise, die an den pikardischen Dialektraum grenzt, eine solche Vorherrschaft besitzt. (FS, p. 95)

The consistent use of oï (< œ) in Richeut suggests an area in Ile-de-France and more particularly near or in Picardian Oise, where this orthography has very rare exceptions. Orléanais can probably be eliminated because there -ERE goes to -oir only after a labial, e.g., savoir, whereas in Richeut this result is always given.

The results of η + nasal tend to confirm this localization. In Berry the result is always ei (FS, p. 84). In Orléanais it is e, ei, and more rarely ai or oï (FS, p. 85). Richeut consistently shows ai (vaint < VINCT, v. 887; maint < MINAT, v. 886; ençainte < INCÎNTA, v. 151; plaines < PLÈNAS, v. 791; alaine < ALÈNA, v. 844). This result is normal in the Ile-de-France, along with the rarer ei, e (FS, p. 85). Another feature which points to Oise is the consistent o in such words as chose (< CAUSA, v. 867) and enclose (< INCLAUSA, v. 869). All scriptae of central France show a high frequency of ou in this situation, indicating a closing from o to u. Only in Oise is this result practically unknown (FS, p. 201).

One more feature in Richeut which points toward the border zone between Picardian and French Oise is the treatment of -s-, -ss-. The rhymes chose : grosse : fosse (vv. 190-92) and carrosse : aproche (vv. 1028-29), which Lecompte calls inexact, as well as ocissse : joisse : mise (vv. 187-89) may be explained in terms of "provincialisms" in the Francian scripta. Gossen treats this confusion:


It goes without saying that if final /z/ tends to devoice and cause graphemic confusion, /â/ will naturally follow. This tendency can account for the -oge : -oche rhyme mentioned above.

The reduction to -ie < iee (< -ÄTA) occurs once in boidie : die : empraignie : ençaintie (vv. 382-85) together with the normal Francian
-iee (vv. 331-33). The Francian glide consonant is used everywhere except in vanra (v. 1163).

Liquid n is represented by (i)gn but liquid l shows no g. The non-Picardian side of Oise shows a much higher incidence of g with l to mark its palatal nature (see FS, pp. 203-4). Since the western border area of Oise rarely shows the use of g in this instance, perhaps this area is the most likely in which to situate the scripta of Richeut.

The main objection to placing the scripta in western Oise, near or on the Picardian side, is the infrequency of tonic free ç going to eu. This study would conclude that the scribe probably used o as a conscious attempt to give an archaic embellishment to the work. In any case, based on the language itself, I do not feel that a localization of the text in either Normandy or Champagne is indicated.¹

It appears that the language of the text should not be seen fundamentally as an attempt by a copyist trained in a narrowly defined scripta tradition to render a work by a poet who expressed himself in a different dialect. The shape of the words suggests the following conclusions. The scribe deliberately wrote in a literary koine which tended to level extreme dialectal tendencies. The state of the language, reflected by the scripta, had reached the point where Old French provided a new beginning in which certain results could be considered uniform, even though their sources were distinct. Thus estoire and gloire, the semi-learned results of -ORIA, rhyme with acroire (< AD + CREDERE), the result of tonic free ç. In addition to the general characteristic of any scripta, which conventionalizes the graphic representation of sound units without fully rendering them phonetically, the written language has its own laws which solicit the writer to make in rhyme position uniform—and therefore pleasing to the eye—words which were probably never homonymous in any French dialect. In this way, the written word, through artistic intentions, acts upon the eventual phonic realization of the poem, rather than slavishly following it. Thus he writes veut : sueut : Richeut (vv. 998-1000), which elsewhere can be found as vialt, valt, Richaut. Escout is written normally, but the rhyme boche : toche : coche shows the primacy of orthographic considerations, on occasion, over phonic reality. Only in preuz : toz : degroz : desoz (vv. 657-60) is this tendency not manifest. It may be that this prestigious word, which the scribe always spells with eu, could be conceived by the scribe only in this form. The best example of the tendency to graphic leveling and uniformizing is jeu : aveu : leu (vv. 342-44), neu : feu : queu (vv. 526-28), feu : leu (vv. 581-82), and jeu : leu : feu : tonleu (vv. 860-63). Here ç + palatal is given the same form as tonic free ç. Moreover, words like jeu and leu probably contained a yod after the initial consonant, as does lieu (v. 1139). With these exceptions and preuz, tonic free ç is never rendered by eu. The same process of orthographic adaptation is seen in

¹Lecompte ("Richeut: Old French Poem," p. 270) felt the author was Norman, and Hagen (Catalogus, p. 338) described the text as Champenois.
vest : pest : gest (vv. 370-72), preste : mestre : estre (vv. 604-6), and plaist : paist : laist (vv. 888-90), which shows not only that ç from different sources could be rhymed, but that the spelling ai or â is kept consistent within the rhyme, rather than within a given word. These examples again point out the concern for the visual, written effect. The licence which the scribe exercised on the linguistic forms to satisfy the rhyme can sometimes seem radical, for example, moine (v. 360) and maint (< MINAT, v. 886).

While it may not be impossible to localize further the scripta on the basis of competing dialects and writing traditions, the great freedom that the scribe exhibited in making the spellings conform to the visual requirements of the rhymes of his poem, against prevailing pronunciation if need be, justifies great prudence. Most probably the scribe, and perhaps the author, was operating more in a literary tradition—therefore, a linguistically artificial one—than close to popular models. The use of vait/veit exclusively instead of va may be an indication of such a practice, since the form is rare but attested in Eneas, Roman de Troie, Huon de Bordeaux, Girard de Rousillon and Le Siege de Barbastre.

The choice of toponyms used in Richeut suggests a central France point of view. References to the East, e.g., le flun Jordain (v. 912) and Inde la grande (v. 872), may be reminiscences of the great conquerors of Antiquity, perhaps of Alexander. Most of the lands which are the theaters for Samson's conquests are European: Alemaigne (v. 864), Lombardie and Bretaigne (v. 865), Engleterre (v. 868), Irlande (v. 870), and Sezille (= Sicily, v. 989). These countries describe a circle with France in the center. Conspicuous by its absence is Spain. Her absence may be explained by the marginal role she played in twelfth-century Europe while her vision was almost exclusively directed inward and her energies were absorbed by the Reconquista. Curiously enough, England is favored by four toponymic references in addition to the country itself. These are Winchester (Vincestre, v. 921), an important political center and the legendary capital of King Arthur; London (Londre, v. 825); Noagre (v. 855), which Flutre places in Northumberland; and Lincoln (Nicole, v. 248), the episcopal city located about 130 miles to the north of London.1 In addition to places in central France, such as Paris (v. 1003), Beauvais (Biauvez, v. 1007), Orléans (vin orlenois, v. 296), and Berry (Berri, v. 996), Saint Denis is twice evoked (vv. 108 and 1153), which strongly suggests that the author lived in the royal domains where this saint was particularly venerated. The Bar in verse 644 is probably Bar-le-Duc, and Viane (v. 853) is probably the Vienne located just south of Lyon. Both towns were border posts on the frontier of the German Empire during the twelfth century. Although the references to these

1Fernand Flutre, Table des noms propres, avec toutes leurs variantes figurant dans les romans du Moyen Age écrits en français ou en provençal et actuellement publiés ou analysés (Poitiers: Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 1962), s.v. "Noager" and "Nicole."
various towns are not conclusive evidence, they do suggest an outlook on the world from a geographic point in central France. When one adds the two evocations of Saint Denis, the most likely conjecture on the home region of the poet would appear to be north of Paris.

Arguments Tending to Place Richeut Between 1160 and 1170

On the basis of the substantial presence of the name-type Richeut in the French literature of twelfth century and later, it can be assumed that this figure exercised a significant fascination on the consciousness of amateurs of vernacular literature. It became enmeshed in the Roman de Renard tradition, although probably relatively late; it appears in the Tristan of Thomas probably near the middle of the twelfth century; again it recurs in the Livre des manières by Étienne de Fougères no later than 1176; around 1200 it finds an important place in a Picardian manuscript supporting Auberée, this "aubree de complengne"; it manifests itself in Les Tresses by Guérin and as a saint in the Boucher d’Abbeville; it shows up in Gerbert de Mez, in Folle Largesse, and in works of the beginning of the sixteenth century by Philippe de Vigneulles, a native of Metz. The work Richeut is already a "classic" in the Catalan ensenhamen Cabra Juglar by Cabrera in the middle of the twelfth century, as well as in the French fabliau Les deux bordeors ribauz.

Statistically, then, either in the form of a type or a title, Richeut occurs twelve times in French literature, counting the reference in the Catalan Cabra Juglar, which inventories much of the French literature of the time. To keep a sense of perspective, however, it is sufficient to compare the quantity of allusions to the Tristan legend in French and other literatures (approximately forty-five) with those to Richeut. Nevertheless, the extent of Richeut's presence in literature is both undeniably great and surprising for a work which is so little known to later centuries. This presence seems to have been pervasive from 1150 to 1200. The word richeut apparently survived in the Lorraine dialect as late as the first part of the sixteenth century.

The presence in question is that of a fully established literary type, a type, moreover, which appears to be well defined by the time the preserved tale about Richeut was composed. While we have little doubt that this work contributed significantly to the Richeut tradition, it appears clear that it did not create it. None of the allusions which have been examined in detail justifies an assured conclusion that the preserved tale was the specific source of the reference, and in the case of the Cabra Juglar and the Tristan, chronological considerations alone render such a conclusion doubtful at best.

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It is possible that this specific text represents one tale among others of a kind of cycle Richeut or geste de Richeut and that Hersent and Maheut were probably also heroines in their own right in a related corpus. The following considerations suggest that Richeut was the protagonist in a cycle: Richeut's appearance in the Catalan Cabra Juglar indicates that she was known before 1159; no allusion to her definitely reposes on the one tale which has survived; in Richeut itself the narrator states that the audience has heard stories about her before, Hersent's relationship to Richeut is assumed to be known, and the type is already established. To all this one can add the most convincing piece in the argument: the fragments discovered by Vernet not only prove the existence of at least one additional tale of Richeut, but would appear to be an elaboration of the episode in which a priest is killed, which is alluded to in the beginning of Richeut. For these major reasons and a host of minor ones, one can conclude that Richeut was the heroine of a cycle, that this cycle existed before 1159, and that the type referred to in this study was primarily the result of a lost corpus.

Why time was so unkind to this corpus and, indeed, why Richeut survives only in a single manuscript are intriguing questions. Perhaps Bédier is justified in his belief that tales in the vernacular survived largely by chance and that those which have come down to us represent an infinitely small and largely unselected sampling of the total production. In all probability, what has been preserved is essentially the "classics," that is, those which are the result of a process of choice and selection. In this view, those which were most significant have largely survived. Richeut (in one form or another) was at least deemed to be counted among the classics of the repertory of a troubére. No doubt the cost of parchment and the piety of the guardians of monastery libraries were sufficient cause for the loss of other manuscripts of Richeut. It is known, however, that interest in Ovid was officially discouraged in monachal circles in the second half of the twelfth century, and no doubt Richeut suffered the same stigma. In addition to the preceding factors, it may simply be that, learning being primarily in the hands of the Church, the well-to-do laity who had access to learning appreciated Richeut's value too little, or the Church authorities understood its potential impact too well.

Having examined the presence of the name-type Richeut in French literature and its single echo in Catalan, what conclusions assert themselves in regard to the dating of the tale Richeut? Bédier assigns the date of 1159 and Paulin Paris that of around 1160, both essentially on the single factor of verses 991-92: "Droit a Tolose / Qui li rois Henris tant golose." Bédier is the more categorical: "Il faut donc que la date soit exactement celle de l'expédition entreprise contre Toulouse par le roi Henri II Plantagenet: or, cette date est 1159." Poulet shows, however, that even if the "Henri" is Henry II Plantagenet, this king golose Toulouse as late as 1188. Gröber, entertaining the possibility that the reference is to Henry III, conjectures that the year in question might be as late as 1242. Faral admits an ante quem limitation based on the allusion to Richeut in the Tristan of Thomas, for the dating of which...
he accepts the 1155 to 1170 proposed by Bédier. The present study has shown that this limitation is irrelevant because Richeut as a type is already established by the time the tale is composed and that the allusion in Tristan is only to the type.

The basis on which Richeut has been dated heretofore has been criticized, and, if one stayed within the single framework of the reference to King Henry in the text, one should be forced to admit the possibility of Richeut's having been composed any time between 1159 and 1242, the year that Henry III, a relative of Raymond VI of Toulouse, attempted to capture the city, or even after this event. This result would be totally unsatisfactory and would only serve to demonstrate the debility of this "objective" method for dating the work. Any attempt to fix the chronological limits of Richeut based on references to the heroine in other works is frustrated by the likely existence of a Richeut cycle. This cycle and the type apparently predate the surviving tale. Consequently, none of the allusions to Richeut can be assumed to originate in this tale. It does not follow, however, that the work was composed as late as the thirteenth century. On the contrary, Richeut was probably composed between 1160 and 1170, but dramatic, objective proof of this conjecture is lacking. The present study would like to show that the work very probably belongs to this period through a number of arguments that point to this hypothesis without any single one of them constituting irrefutable evidence of it.

Although strictly impressionistic, it is nonetheless true that Richeut produces the distinct feeling of a very old text both in regard to the spirit which informs it and to the language itself. Bédier noted this feeling, and it certainly must have lain in the background of many of the generations of scholars who have accepted in essence the date he assigned to the work. It is only when one forgets this overall impression and narrows one's field of vision to the single problem of King Henry that hypotheses which substantially alter this dating are put forward. It is vain to suggest that this impression of an archaic test is the result of the Sainte-Palaye copy and the Mémon edition. The impression remains when one uses the Lecompte edition or even the Bern MS 354 itself. The numerous linguistic difficulties presented by the text seem as much the result of its early date and its specialized genre as any mutilation the manuscript might have undergone. The fact is that for this kind of literature there is a paucity of linguistic matter for comparison, which is in turn reflected in the best Old French dictionaries. It may be, as Lecompte says, that we simply know too little about the language of the lecheors. It may also be, in some significant measure, that a sufficiently ample corpus possessing Richeut's venerable age is lacking in order to clarify with certainty many of the obscurities in this poem.

Foulet has suggested that Richeut's metric form might better be explained if the work were placed in the thirteenth century. Gotthold Naetebus lists sixteen non-lyric works including Richeut which share
Richeut's basic form. Nine are by Rutebeuf: 1) Du pharisian, 2) La Griesche d'estë, 3) Renart le bestourné, 4) La Complainte de maistre Guillaume de Saint Amour, 5) L'Ave Maria, 6) Le Mariage Rutebeuf, 7) La Complainte Rutebeuf de son uel, 8) Le Dit de l'erberie, and 9) De la griesche d'yver. The others are: La Lande dorée by the Vicomte d'Auvoy, Des Cornetes, Un Dité de vérité, De l'ipocresie des Jacobins by Jean de Condé, and Le Ditté des choses qui faillent en ménage et en mariage. As Foulet points out, it is a near certainty that none of these can be placed before 1250, and three are from the fourteenth century. To this list can be added the second part of Le Privilège des Bretons, which Faral places between 1236 and 1252, and Piramus et Thisbé, dated about 1170, in which the shorter line is of only two syllables. Only the latter can be placed in the same time frame attributed to Richeut. Faral concludes that it is in Piramus and Richeut that one should look to discover to what mentality this form originally corresponded.

This form, however, was not created by either Richeut or Piramus. It is recorded in the treatises on Latin versification of the time and is known as a couée stanza or a stanza à la traîne (rythmi caudati continentes). The examples published by Faral are all essentially panegyric. The nature of the French language dictates adapting the trochaic meter advocated for Latin to an iambic meter if the final syllable is unstressed, in other words, if the rhyme is feminine.

It is interesting to note that the Cabra Juglar of Cabrera uses a version of this form called versus tripertitus caudatus (hereafter, v. t. c.). Like its Latin forebears, the Provençal meter is normally based on ternary rhythm which allows verses of six or twelve with a cauda of three or six, when in fact the cauda is shorter than the verses in the body of the stanza. In Latin and Occitan works the cauda does not initiate the rhyme of the following stanza, but it simply rhymes with the other caudae. This verse form was especially reserved for liturgical chants in Latin as well as in the vernacular. The v. t. c. was used in many séquences and became the rule for joyful liturgical chants, such as at Christmastide, Pentacost, the dedication of new churches, etc. Even Abelard used it for his Saints innocents. In profane works usage conventionalized its subjects to satires against the Church or its

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2Foulet, "Richeut et Renard," p. 325, n. 3.


4Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 263.

5Ibid., p. 264, n. 1.
representatives, and to poems of a goliard inspiration. In French the cauda was regularly shorter than the stanza body while rhyming cauda to cauda. It is especially in Anglo-Norman and, consequently, in English poetry, that the v. t. c. had an exceptional career. Paul Meyer states that the v. t. c. is so frequent in the Anglo-Norman world that one might think that it originated there, rather than simply having proliferated in that cultural climate, as he believes to be the case. From Anglo-Norman poetry where it had a religious and didactic value, the v. t. c. passed to English creations where it treated variously religious, moral, love or trivial themes. The Anglo-Norman development of this formal tradition is revealing. According to Dominica Legge,

Les écrivains anglo-normands ont adopté avec enthousiasme une forme de stance lyrique dérivée des hymnes latins, mais rarement employée par les Français du continent. C'est la stance en "rimes couées." Au début, apparemment, la stance consistait en six vers de six syllabes. La "queue" avait la même longueur que les autres vers. En Angleterre, la plupart des écrivains qui se sont servis de cette formule furent des moines. Ils l'ont adoptée pour des textes homilétiques et didactiques. Le sermon Grant mal fist Adam est attribué à un Normand établi en Angleterre. Le sermon Deu le omnipotent et les Distiques de Caton d'Everard de Gateley, moine de Bury, sont anglo-normands. Ce qui est vraiment extraordinaire, c'est que, vers la fin du siècle, un moine de Saint-Albans, Beneit, traduisit en stances de rimes couées une vie de Thomas Becket. La stance ici a subi une modification. Des six vers les paires rimant ensemble sont d'octosyllabes, mais la "queue" n'a que quatre syllabes. Le choix de cette forme essentiellement lyrique pour un long poème narratif est malheureux. Il est souvent possible de lire le texte en omettant la "queue," qui, pour la plupart du temps, consiste en un cliché. Ainsi, on a l'impression que la "queue" est insérée dans un texte en octosyllabes en rimes plates. Néanmoins, il est évident que la "queue" fait partie de la conception originale du texte. En moyen anglais, une stance de ce type, mais souvent allongée de plusieurs vers, a fait fortune chez les romanciers de l'Est-Angle, qui l'ont adapté au système de versification basé sur l'alliteration. A Chaucer, qui s'en est moqué dans Sir Thopas [sic], la stance en rimes couées ne fut qu'un barbarisme. L'on ne sait si Beneit fut le premier à employer cette formule pour un poème narratif, mais au moins s'en est-il servi pour une vie de saint, ce que explique peut-être le choix d'une forme inventée pour les chants ecclésiastiques.


2Dominica Legge, "La Versification anglo-normande au XIIe siècle," Mélanges R. Crozet (Poitiers, 1966), pp. 39-43; cited in Pirot, Recherches,
It would appear vain to insist that *Richeut* should be dated later than is customary because of its form, and especially to imagine that it must have been created nearer in time to Rutebeuf so as to account for the similarity of this form with that of many poems by the latter. As stated, the basic form originated in Latin prosody and was adopted and generalized by the Church for a specific type of celebration of the Christian cult. When adapted to profane use, it tended to be a familiar vehicle which enhanced a satirical or sensual content by contrast. This use is already apparent in Latin works like the *Tanto viro locuturi*, a satire of the Roman Curia, and like the *Planctus peccatoris*, a work of goliard inspiration about a girl who has sinned. From the point of view of the Church, the form shows signs of degeneration at an early date, while incontrovertibly within a learned—therefore clerical—milieu, since the process is manifest in works written in Latin. It is all the more understandable that this tendency had the potential for being greatly accelerated by the poets writing in the vernacular. As a group, Early English poets clearly went much further in exploiting this tendency than any other group of writers. Apparently in all of Christendom, however, there existed a penchant for using this metrical form for profane purposes which were the antitheses of that to which it had become consecrated in the Church tradition.

In regard to the purely formal character of the phenomenon, Legge's remarks about the Anglo-Norman poets adopting an octosyllabic stanza with the *cauda* regularly shortened to four syllables are interesting. It would appear that the genius of the French language with its atonic finals led it to find a more natural mold in the octosyllabic verse and to eschew a ternary meter. The octosyllable ends by becoming the most popular and comfortable for French metrics. That both the continental French-language poets as well as the Anglo-Norman ones adopted this special mutation of the v. t. c. is probably attributable to the nature of their linguistic instrument.

The continental poets seem to have taken two additional liberties with the form. Whereas the Latin, Occitan (and Catalan), Anglo-Norman and even German poets rhymed the caudae with each other and the stanza body with itself, the French used the *cauda* to generate the rhyme for the subsequent stanza. The *cauda* generally belongs to the stanza it completes by meaning and to the following one by rhyme, and almost all the French works using this form show considerable variability in the number of octosyllabic lines in the stanza, which has given rise to some misunderstanding and to some pseudo-classification. When scholars refer to those non-lyric works which have the same form as *Richeut*, they refer to the fifteen works under the rubric given by Naetebus as 8a 8a 8a 4b 8b 8b 4c . . . 4z 8z 8z. This formula does not correspond perfectly to *Richeut*, which even in the beginning is 8a 8a 8a 4b 8b 8b 8b 4c 8c 8c 4d . . . The work as a whole shows 302 stanzas of the type 8u 8u 4v 8v 8v

p. 102, n. 33; see also Pirot, pp. 96.108 for both a discussion of this meter and abundant references.
8v 4w . . ., 72 stanzas of the type 8u 4v 8v 4w 8w 4x . . ., 50 of the
8u 8u 8u 4v 8v 8v 4w . . ., and 7 stanzas of 8u 8u 8u 4v 8v
8v 8v 4w 8w 8w 4w 4x. This variability of pattern is more typical
than exceptional (see also the Vernet fragments). Lecompte, Faral and
others have suggested adding other works such as Le Privilège des Bretons
and Dan Denier to the list.

All of the works mentioned by scholars to be included in an
inventory of works using the same form as Richeut are already in Naetebus
under the rubric 8a 8a 8a 8a 4b 8b 8b 8b 4c . . . 4z 8z 8z 8z 8z; that
is, the stanza form is one line longer than those listed with Richeut.
Upon examination of the works concerned, it becomes apparent that this
separation is not fully justified. A good example is the Privilège des
Bretons. Both Lecompte and Foulet suggest that it be included in the
list of those works with forms like Richeut's. Naetebus obscured their
relationship by classifying the Privilege separately because it has an
additional octosyllable per stanza. The Privilège has the same system
as Richeut relative to the cauda which initiates the rhyme for the
following stanza, but it is not always shortened to four syllables. The
number of lines per stanza is so irregular as to make the formula of
Naetebus's rubric misleading, especially when the system separates two
works which correspond so imperfectly to the rigidly construed mold. For
this reason it is more reasonable to redefine the system, allowing for
more variability and, instead of admitting so selectively to the category,
now a Dan Denier, now a Piramus et Thisbé, etc., to include the other
works which Naetebus inventoried and placed with the aforementioned.
Such redefinition gives us a more representative picture of the produc-
tion, which includes Salut d'amors, La Vie de un vallet amerous, La
Bestournée by Richard, De l'yver et de l'esté and a Paraphrase of the
Songs of Solomon. It may be noted that Dan Denier in this list is found
in the same manuscript as that of Richeut. At least two of the works,
La Bestournée and De l'yver et de l'esté are from the twelfth century,
according to Naetebus, and so did not wait for Rutebeuf before employing
the specialized metric form exhibited by Richeut.

In conclusion, the form in question is already known in the
medieval Latin literature. It acquired a specialized use in the celebra-
tion of the Christian cult. From such a use it was adapted to various
profane ends thoughout Christendom. In general, it tended to serve as a
vehicle for satire and for profane love themes, and the English poets
who inherited the form through Anglo-Norman culture appear to have
carried this tendency to the greatest extreme. Remembering that the
Anglo-Norman poets manifested a predilection for this meter during the
twelfth century, it seems not unlikely that French poets on the Continent
followed a parallel pattern, albeit independently and with the added
twist to the form mentioned above. It would appear that Rutebeuf's use
of the cauda stanza form represents the end of a formal tradition which
had had its day, rather than an objection to placing formally similar
works at an earlier date. The widely known Piramus et Thisbé is a
famous example of one variety of the cauda form, to wit, the cauda of
only two syllables.
The archaic features of the language of the Richeut text are not sufficient to date the composition of the original, particularly since the only manuscript available is from the late thirteenth century, in all probability. The examination of the cauda form shows only that it cannot be used to support the hypothesis that Richeut should be placed later than the twelfth century. However, there are certain factors which suggest that Richeut should be dated during the second half of the twelfth century, probably between 1160 and 1170.

None of the references to Richeut which have been examined can be positively identified with the specific tale being studied here. Nevertheless, it does not follow that this tale is necessarily excluded from being the object of such references. There is no reason to suppose that the specific work under study did not greatly contribute to the notoriety of the famous entremetteuse, even if it did not create the type in question. At least six of the works using Richeut can be dated before 1200: Branch VII of the Roman de Renard (1195-1200), if the two manuscripts containing the reference faithfully represent the original composition; the Tristan by Thomas (1155-70); Le Livre des manières by Etienne de Fougères (1176); Auberee (1200); Gerbert de Mez (middle of the twelfth century); and Cabra Juglar (1145-1159). Some of the other works, such as Les Tresses, Le Boucher d'Abbeville and Folle Largesse, may possibly have been composed before 1200, but their dating is uncertain, and it is more prudent to assume they came later. The six works before 1200 are testimony to the likelihood that Richeut knew a kind of literary vogue in the second half of the twelfth century. It would seem probable that the version in question here played its part in that vogue. It is quite possible that the Tristan and Le Livre des manières, that have ante quem dates of 1170 (Bédier) and 1178 respectively, referred to this precise tale. If this could be proved, Richeut could be placed between 1159 and 1170. Unfortunately, this conjecture cannot be demonstrated and needs additional support to render it probable.

The author of Richeut was clearly an educated cleric writing in a school tradition. The spirit of the work, certain Latinisms (e.g., meretrix, etc.), and emphasis on themes of learning and education confirm this assertion. It was in just such a milieu that works in Latin and French acquired the typical symbiotic relationship which they manifested during the twelfth century. Before 1150, all works in French were of a Christian or martial inspiration. Latin literature provided alternative models of inspiration and form for works in the vernacular. The first decade of the second half of the twelfth century saw the earliest fruit of this relationship in the form of the romans antiques. The process was no doubt at work for a long time, but the changes in French society after the second crusade favored the production of vernacular works of a new spirit. This symbiosis was at its height after 1150, and by the beginning of the thirteenth century French literature had acquired a marked and accelerated freedom vis-à-vis its Latin counterpart. Faral's study of the Latin sources of the French contes and romans confirms both the intimacy of the Latin and French literatures and the privileged
status that the second half of the twelfth century enjoyed in this regard. The same scholar has studied Richeut's particular debt to Latin models.\(^1\)

In addition to the general influence of Latin literature on works in French, Faral delineates two specific currents which relate to Richeut directly. The first is that of Ovid, in particular his Art of Love. The presence and treatment of profane love in French owe more to this poet than to any other. Not only does Samson claim Ovid as his maître à penser: "Mout en cuide / Sansonnez savoir par Ovide" (vv. 749-50), he considers Ovid's writings and those of his confrères as the essential weapons in the arsenal which makes him superior to women:

"Mere, cil qui entant et ot
Ses bons autors
Set bien de fames les trestors,
Car il descovre bien lor mors
Et lor nature."

(Vv. 694-98)

These citations suffice to link Richeut with the Ovidian tradition which Faral has shown to be at its apogee in the decades immediately after 1150. For French literature in general, Alfred Dressler in Der Einfluss des altfranzösischen Eneas-Romans auf die altfranzösische Literatur [dissertation, Göttingen, 1907] (Borna-Leipzig: Robert Noske, 1907) has documented the importance of the influence of the Eneas, a work of Ovidian inspiration, on subsequent literary productions in Old French.

The second current which involves Richeut directly is the medieval Latin genre termed *comoedia*.\(^2\) This phenomenon and its relationship to the French fabliaux have been carefully analyzed by Faral. The *comoedia* is perhaps the best example of the symbiosis between French and Latin literatures in the second half of the twelfth century, first, because both exemplify the same spirit and themes and, second, because a number of the Latin works were apparently modeled on French originals. The *comoedia* starts to develop around 1150 along with other productions which translate the dawning of a new spirit in French society and letters.

One of the ideas which form the background against which Faral undertook his analyses is that Richeut is an isolated, original work with

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\(^1\) Edmond Faral, *Recherches sur les sources latines des contes et romans courtois du Moyen Age* (Paris: Champion, 1913); in regard to Richeut, see the same author's "Le Fabliau latin au Moyen Age," Romansia 50 (1924):367-69, and his "Richeut et la tradition latine," pp. 256-70.

\(^2\) There is no precise definition of *comoedia*, but it is considered by Faral as a transitional genre between the classical Latin theater and the French fabliaux (his "Le Fabliau latin," p. 321).
no apparent sources or direct rapport with other works which precede it or are contemporaneous with it. Students of Richeut are familiar with the pronouncements of two great specialists on this question. Gaston Paris puts it this way: "Notons que quelques fableaux . . . sont sortis de l'invention même des auteurs (tel paraît être le cas pour Richeut)."\(^1\) Bédier formulated essentially the same notion: "Le fabliau de Richeut ne se retrouve dans aucune littérature et nous n'avons à présenter à son sujet aucune remarque comparative."\(^2\) Only the essential of Faral's study as it relates specifically to Richeut's debt to Latin literary tradition is summarized here. For a more detailed treatment see his "Richeut et la tradition latine," pp. 256-61 and his "Le Fabliau latin," pp. 367-69. The latter work should be consulted in its entirety to appreciate the importance of the *comoedia* in Latin as a transitional genre between classical Latin dramaturgy and the French fabliau. It is also useful in helping to understand the "school" mentality and the closeness of the rapport, for clerics trained in Latin, between the *comoedia* and French narrative works, which are often conceived as simply "popular." Even in this comparison, which is intended to be based on a specific genre, the most pervasive influence is again that of Ovid.

In his *Fasti* (bk. 3, vv. 523-696), Ovid recounts the origin of the feast day of the goddess Anna. This sister of Dido, after her wanderings, joins the immortals on Olympus. Mars asks her help in his pursuit of Minerva, with whom he is is love. Since Anna is old, Mars evokes the traditional role of *entremetteuse* assigned to old women and recalls, in particular, the adventures of Eneas and Dido.\(^3\) Anna feeds his hopes with promises; Mars continues to insist, however, and finally Anna announces that she has convinced Minerva to sleep with him. Mars leads the woman, who is veiled in the fashion of maids on their nuptial night, into his chamber, not suspecting that it is Anna herself. When he is about to embrace her, he recognizes his partner, and his anger is tremendous.

The analogies with the situation of the last scene in Richeut are obvious. Samson is shown a young beauty who has been promised to him; then he is plied with food and drink to keep him in the right spirit and to dull his critical faculties:

\[
\text{Des mes mangerent a devise} \\
\text{Et burent mout} \\
\text{De bon vin ferré et estolt.}
\]  
(Vv. 1258-60)

\(^1\)Quoted by Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 256, as being from G. Paris's *Manuel*, para. 73.


\(^3\)V. 684; cited by Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 259.
In the semi-darkness and with artful make-up, Hersent manages to seem appealing:

Herselot avoit cler lo volt
A la chandoille;
La face avoit clere et vermeille,
Pert que ce soit une mervoille
Del vermeillon.

(Vv. 1261-65)

These physical details reinforce the comédie of the inexperienced maiden which Hersent plays by sobbing and reproaching Richeut for having deceived her. At the entreaties of Samson, Hersent goes into her act:

Sansonez par la main la prant,
La pute tranble dant a dant.
"Avoi! Florie,
Avez me vos donques traïe?"

(Vv. 1225-28)

Samson declares his passion and tells her that without her he will never again know a happy day:

"Mais vostre amor mout me favele;
Li cuers m'estraint desoz l'aissele
Por vostre amor.
Se je pert vos, n'en ai retor;
Ja n'avrai mais joie nul jor."

(Vv. 1231-35)

Hersent responds:

Et Herselot
Li respont au miauz qu'ele sot;
Plore et sanglote mot a mot
Tot par faintié:
"Florie, mal as esploitié
Qui a Sanson m'as acointié,
Mais or li otroi m'amistié
Par vostre lox.
Herdie sui qant faire l'ox,
Mout par sui fole."

(Vv. 1236-45)

The last verse conveys to Samson that she recognizes that she cannot escape. The stratagem works and, impatient in his ardor, Samson rushes to the culminating act, where he discovers the physical disintegration of his prey, where there is neither fonx nor rive. Like Mars, his anger is immense:
At this point the lecheors enter and give Samson a good thrashing, as planned.

It is evident that this scene has a different significance in Richeut than in the Fasti, but it is the crowning point of the work for which all the rest is a preparation. It is difficult to imagine that the author, obviously a clerc, was unaware of the illustrious Ovidian model. Faral was essentially concerned with this last scene; he compares its treatment with two additional Latin works which contain more or less the same analogies we have seen. The first, dated before 1170, is called Baucis et Traso, and the second, Vetula, is a pseudo-Ovidian work, probably by Richard de Fournival, which cannot be placed before the end of the thirteenth century.1

Both works bear resemblances to Richeut but may have been inspired directly by Ovid. Faral sums up Richeut's attachment to Baucis in the following way:

Si Richeut est un fabliau, Baucis et Traso en est un: Richeut est un jeu de clerc si Baucis en est un. Une entremetteuse roué, Baucis; une fausse ingénue, Glycère; un épais valet, Birria; une grosse et scabreuse duperie; une gaîté qui ne recule pas devant la chose crue ou même la recherche; le procédé de l'énumération burlesque, pratiqué dans la formule de l'onguent réparateur; ce sont les éléments du conte à rire français. Ce Samson docteur en luxure, qui a couru la vaste terre pour se perfectionner; cet expert connaisseur dans l'art d'aimer et de duper; cette façon de commencer l'histoire de Richeut sur le ton d'une vie de saint; ce choix d'un rythme habituellement consacré à des poèmes d'inspiration religieuse: ce sont les fantaisies parodiques dont s'égaye d'ordinaire le conte à rire français.

Rien ne dit que l'auteur de Richeut ait connu le Baucis et Traso; je ne soutiendrais point que l'auteur du Baucis n'a pas connu Richeut: Richeut, composé entre 1152 et 1170, est un poème ancien, et le Baucis ne l'est peut-être pas autant. Mais, quel que soit l'intermédiaire, que ce soit le Baucis, ou une pièce de sujet identique, ou d'une pièce d'inspiration générale analogique, Richeut ne s'en rattache pas moins au genre [the comoedia or Latin fabliau] inauguré par Vitalis [with his Amphitryo and

1Baucis et Traso is found in the same library as Richeut, Bern MS 568.
Auluria, not later than the middle of the twelfth century]. Encore tout imprégné de l'esprit écolier, tout ruisselant déjà de la licencieuse bouffonnerie qui suffit à un public sans culture, ce poème apparaît comme un intermédiaire où l'on saisit sur le vif le passage de la "comédie" latine au fabliau. C'est un type mixte, qui continue une tradition savante et ouvre la voie à l'art populaire. Il conduit tout droit au conte du Prêtre et d'Alison, qui n'en est qu'un remaniement. ("Le Fabliau latin," p. 368)

Richard de Fournival, the putative author of Vetula, was no doubt aware of Richeut, as well as of the works of Ovid. His Latin piece follows in the wake of Richeut, as do French works like Le Prestre et Alison, showing the close symbiotic rapport between Latin and native French creations. As far as the climactic scene in Richeut is concerned, other rapprochements with Latin literature are possible, for example, Casina, in which the lover discovers his rival in the bed where he expected to find his mistress.

Beyond the question of the final scene, the most striking comparison can be made between Samson and the hero of Miles Gloriosus, a kind of playboy lover of Ancient Rome. Like Samson, noble and courtois, he is successful in love, and his fortune is made through a woman (for Samson read "women"). There is, moreover, a scene in which Pyrgopolynice is thrashed, which Samson's final humiliation seems to echo.

Faral has emphasized analogies between the various comoediae and the last part of Richeut. It might also be added that the privileged scenes in the French work are in the form of dramatic dialogues. This feature further identifies it with the comoedia genre.

Although Baucis and Richeut appear to be kindred works and one might infer that one influenced the other, their family resemblance does not constitute a proof that the two works are contemporaries. Nevertheless, Richeut betrays the same mentality that produced Baucis, which can be placed before 1170, and, therefore, strengthens the hypothesis that the French work belongs to the seventh decade of the twelfth century.

The special stanza form of Richeut argues for dating the work in the second half of the twelfth century. By adapting a form of prosody which belonged to the medieval Latin Church tradition, it points to a period in which native works had not yet acquired the near-canonic octosyllabic, rhymed couplet which dominated the following centuries. Already in 1200 Aubereee was cast in this rhythmic mold. It seems much more persuasive to associate Richeut with a work like Piramus et Thisbé in an analogous cauda form from around 1170 than with the short pieces of Rutebeuf of the following century.

Although clercs writing in the thirteenth century continued to be schooled in the Latin grammar schools of the Church and to have intimate contact with Latin profane literature, vernacular literature acquired a
marked and accelerated freedom vis-à-vis its Latin counterpart. By the end of the twelfth century, the French octosyllabic rhymed couplet was the rule rather than the exception in French works, particularly in narrative literature. This form by its facility constitutes a kind of bridge between earlier forms and the mises en prose of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Richeut might better be placed at a period in which the native tradition was groping for a formal mold, when the influence of Latin poetics was overwhelming, and in which formal considerations were paramount. Such a period invited writers to eschew facility in favor of an encastering form more prestigious than the content itself. The twelfth century possessed this formal idea to a greater degree than later times, which may well account for the peculiar pattern of Richeut.

A study done by Henry and Renée Kahane adds weight to the hypothesis that Richeut was composed between 1160 and 1170, or at least before the early eighties.¹ The point of the article is to reinforce their argument that Kyot, the mysterious informant of Wolfram, the author of Parzival, was William of Tudela. The essence of this identification they established in the ZfdA.² Wolfram based his Parzival, begun around 1200, largely on Chrétien’s Perceval. Some details of Parzival’s indoctrination by his mother and his leave-taking more closely resemble the analogous scene in Richeut than in Chrétien’s Perceval. Two of the personages in Parzival have names which the Kahanes identify with Richeut and Hersent of the French tale. These indications, plus the mention of Hersent and Richeut in the Catalan Cabra Juglar, strengthen the identification of Kyot with William of Tudela, a Navarrese who was well-acquainted with the Catalan, Provençal, and French literatures of the twelfth century.

The relationship between Richeut and Chrétien’s Perceval stated by the critics is what interests this present study:

[The] popularity [of the personage Richeut], then, seems to have contributed to the fact that in Chrétien’s presentation of the enfance of Perceval there recur so many elements of the fabliau [Richeut]. The topoi common to both are: the fatherless son who stays with his mother; his urge to venture into the world outside; his final indoctrination by his mother; his ausfahrt. Or, as summarized by the author of the fabliau:

Or escotez
Comment il fu conçuz et nez,


Norriz, apris et dostrînez
Et en quel vie destînez.

(Vv. 81-84)

The date at which Chrétien started to work on his Perceval, probably the early eighties (St. Hofer, Chrétien de Troyes, Graz and Köln, 1954, p. 198-201), falls within the period during which the fabliau enjoyed its popularity as a literary model. We do not know, of course, whether it was used directly by Chrétien, with a transfer of genre from fabliau to romance, or whether both Chrétien and the fabliau go back to a common, perhaps not facetious, source.

The Kahanes do not prove that Chrétien made use of topoi from Richeut, nor did they attempt to, since their main thesis revolves around similarities between the French tale and the German romance. Nevertheless, the use of these topoi is suggestive, and, if Chrétien did know Richeut, the tale must have been in circulation around or before 1180. There is reason to believe that the French tale must have been somewhat earlier, before Chrétien's work and shortly after the earliest romans antiques.

The kind of education Samson is given indicates that the courtly ideals promulgated by the works of Chrétien had probably not yet become part of the consciousness of the school milieu in which Richeut was born. An examination of the use of certain key words, such as preu, sage, and especially courtois, show that these probably belong in the semantic and cultural orbit of the very early Middle Ages, just after the second Crusade. (See pages 157-61 for a discussion of courtois.) Like the education of Samson, these words point to a period in which old ideals are being questioned and the words which represent such ideals are being transformed for use in a context of new spiritual and intellectual preoccupations and of a new economic and social reality for the French baron and cleric. Richeut appears to fall into the same semantic-ideological sphere as the romans antiques as far as its vocabulary is concerned, although it makes different, mocking use of the key words. The central concept is courtoisie, rather than the vasselage central to the Chanson de Roland and Gormont et Isembart, and this concept is more the limited, perhaps indigenous, one found in the romans d'antiquité than a global spiritual ideology frequently assumed for Yvain and many of the works of Occitan poets. These factors are developed in detail in Chapter II of this study. The conclusions reached there are reported here only to help establish Richeut's date of composition.

This study has touched on the following points to attempt to situate the tale of Richeut historically:

1) references to her in twelve literary works
2) indications that a Richeut cycle existed

1Kahane and Kahane, "Herzeloyde," p. 332.
3) the archaism of the language of the extant copy
4) the history of the stanza form of Richeut
5) the relationship between Latin literature and this French tale, particularly the *comœdia* and the works of Ovid
6) its apparent relationship with the romances of *Enèas*, *Troie* and other romans antiques
7) the identity of some topoi in Chrétien's *Perceval* and *Richeut*
8) Samson's pre-courtly education and the use of certain key words in *Richeut* and in the romans antiques

None of these points can be used to establish a definite date for the composition of this tale. Many are so important to the analysis of the work that they are developed in the following chapters. Taken together, however, they tend to point to a period around 1170 or slightly earlier. *Richeut* fits most comfortably into the spirit of this particular time. Finally, even though Bédier did not furnish objective proof for his dating of *Richeut* and though his insistence on the year 1159 is exaggerated, his view is probably basically correct. Verses 991-92 say that Samson advanced "droit a Tolose / Que li rois Henris tant golose." While it is certainly true that more than one Henry coveted Toulouse and that Henry II Plantagenet negotiated with Philippe Auguste as late as 1186, two years before his death, still, in combination with all the other features of the work, it seems reasonable to conclude that Henris is indeed Henry II Plantagenet and that the mention of Toulouse is a reference to his siege of that city in 1159.

The most important factors which have prevented this study from establishing a definitive date for *Richeut* are the inability to date precisely the works referring to the héroïne (e.g., *Cabra Juglar*, the *Tristan* by Thomas, etc.) and the apparent existence of a Richeut cycle. In spite of the lack of objective evidence, however, it is my conclusion that *Richeut* can be placed with reasonable assurance around the seventh decade of the twelfth century.
CHAPTER II

THE PERSONAGES, STRUCTURE, STYLE AND VOCABULARY

The Personages

It may at first seem surprising that a poem written as early as Richeut should have as central protagonist a whore. The social type may have always existed and it is a well-known figure in Antiquity. Literary expression of the phenomenon in French is generally associated with more modern times and with the modalities created by the rise of modern capitalism. The peculiar conditions of the Regency created a moral climate favoring the expression of matters like venal love, but a full literary treatment of the subject is mainly the work of nineteenth-century novelists like Balzac, Dumas and Zola. The subject matter of Richeut is, in fact, both anomalous to and symptomatic of the second half of the twelfth century. Until the middle of the century two basic generic forms dominated expression in the vernacular. Hagiography was a very satisfactory form for one kind of Christian inspiration, but it permitted a very narrow range of subject and by its nature excluded many kinds of subjects with which writers might want to deal. The chanson de geste was a somewhat more flexible medium, in that it could combine national ideals with spiritual aspirations and social views with human psychology. Although it enjoyed a great and undeniable popularity all through the thirteenth century, the germs of its demise are planted in the genre itself. The hero of the old gestes, of which Roland is the archetype, was a kind of glorified killer for God and country, totally lacking in the Christian charity taught in the New Testament. Both the prevailing attitude to the non-Christian and that of the exemplary knight were gradually modified in the course of the century. The "Conversion de Bramimonde" in the Chanson de Roland and the changing character of the genre throughout the following century are indicative of the changing tastes of the public, which is usually assumed to date from the end of the second Crusade. The vernacular writer attempting to find a new form appropriate to his own attitudes and to those of a certain public had basically two options. One was to leaven the canonic forms through parodic devices. This option is the one chosen by the author of the Pèlerinage de Charlemagne near the

middle of the twelfth century. The second option was to adapt the litera-
ture of Antiquity available to him as a model to express new tastes
and preoccupations. The romans antiques are manifestations of this
solution.

In this peculiar ambience at the dawn of the twelfth-century
renaissance in French cultural history, the état civil of Richeut, a
counter-hero, is an extreme, but not altogether unaccountable phenomenon.
The tale as a whole is a transposition of selected traditional forms
available at the time. It makes major use of parody and, at the same
time, participates in the vogue of native works which utilize Latin sub-
jects, mainly Ovid. The astounding choice of a prostitute as heroine
can be explained in great measure by the strong parodic intent of the
work and by the special clerical milieu in which it was probably written,
essentially the same milieu in which Ovid was read with great avidity.
Both its audacity and its air of grosse plaisanterie point to this kind
of restricted and specialized public.

The Typology of Richeut

Bédier states that the plot interest in Richeut is minimal
because its main function is to expose Richeut's character. While his
statement is true, the plot versus character interplay can be viewed from
a somewhat different angle. Richeut is first and foremost a type, or
better, she is an amalgam of types, some of which she embodies seriously
and some for which she provides a parodic contrastive image.

It was noted above that the basic strophic form was a vehicle
for celebration in the Church tradition familiar to clercs. Faral notes
that the introduction resembles that of a hagiography, and in the
Boucher d'Abbeville there is the reference to "Sainte Richeut." The
suggestion of Richeut as a kind of inverted saint is colored by her asso-
ciation with the clerical world and by the detail that "de nonain reçut
l'habit" (v. 36). Moreover, certain word choices, such as "Richeut sert
mout" (v. 63) and "Ri. la menestrel" (= "one who ministers to others";
v. 94), create an image of an active servant of mankind. While it is
true that this vocabulary is also that of feudal lay society, it is
especially that of the Church, where it has its purest and most presti-
gious association with divine service. Richeut as the mother of a
peerless and unique son cannot have failed to trigger analogies with the
woman saint par excellence, Saint Mary. The confusion about who is the

1Bédier, "Richeut," p. 28; and Les Fabliaux, p. 308, n. 1.


3Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzsch, Tobler-Lommatzsch, Alt-
französisches Wörterbuch (Berlin: Weidmann, 1925-), 9:564-70.
real, biological father of Samson suggests a grotesque rejoinder to the Immaculate Conception:

"Mais or me dites, bele mere,
Li qex de ces .iii. est mes pere?"
"Biax fiz, ne sai,
Car a chascun de .iii. coplai,
Et a mil autres. Pas n'en ai
Envers toi honte.
Fame sor cui tex pueples monte
Conmant savroit tenir lo conte
De ses enfanz?
Ne sait de cui conçoit ne qant."

(Vv. 662-71)

Is it going too far to suggest that, whereas Jesus was engendered by the Holy Spirit, Samson is the son of everyman? Without stressing unduly this aspect, it seems clear that Richeut represents, as one of her dimensions, the type-saint, or rather its exact opposite, the precise counter-image of the Virgin Mother.

Richeut also represents the type-mother in the more banal sense. She endures the pain of confinement and childbirth (vv. 403-19), is irritated by the child crying (vv. 505-6), works to see that her child is educated to have a station in society (vv. 535-47), sees that he is fittingly dressed (vv. 548-50), and generally "s'antremet de Sanson / Par mout grant cure" (vv. 532-33). There is a strong suggestion, however, that Richeut is strongly motivated by the fact that Samson is for her something mid-distance between a meal ticket and a philosopher's stone. For example, "Ri. s'antremet de Sanson / Par mout grant cure" is intercalated between:

A grant foison
Et volaille ont et venison
Et claré plus dolz que poison

and

Ri. ot bone noiriture.

(Vv. 529-34)

This juxtaposition of abundance with caring for Samson suggests a cause and effect relationship, which is more explicit in verses 77-80:

Ri. ne sot onques son pere,
Et nequedant
So mist el sus a plus de .c.
Mout en conquist or et argent.
Richeut thus incarnates the type-mother, but the apparent manifestations of her maternal love, like her other acts, are tainted by her single-minded desire for gain.

Another mutation of a maternal type is one well known to chivalric romances. It is the squire's mother who, on the eve of her son's departure into the world, attempts to give the fledgling knight some quintessence of her knowledge of life and some rules to guide the youth's conduct in order to keep him from harm and to assure his success (see Chrétien's Perceval). In Richeut's case, this chastiement reveals a great deal about her real views and attitudes, particularly concerning education. When Samson refuses to take any of the estates of his putative fathers and benefactors, "Car apovriz les avez toz" (v. 658), Richeut is not surprised and can only attempt to hide her pleasure at his observation: "Ri. s'an rit par de desoz" (v. 660). But when Samson announces his intention to enter the chivalric world in order to have ladies of this milieu and to make his fortune at their expense, Richeut realizes that her son is treading on dangerous ground for which he is insufficiently prepared (i.e., knowledgeable, sage):

"Biax fiz Sanson, que as tu dit?  
Ja sez tu encor si petit  
De cest tripot?  
Envers les fames n'en sez mot;  
Les homes font tenir por sot."

(Vv. 689-93)

Now the source of Samson's confidence is revealed, and Richeut can launch a frontal attack on what she judges to be his illusions. It is to be remembered that Samson was an excellent student, but his education was conceived like the great majority of educational programs down to Rousseau—to provide the candidate with a certain style, a polished veneer, appropriate to his class and calling. For his bourgeois "father," the money-changer, Samson "del conter fait a grant exploit" (v. 600). For Seignor Viël it is said:

Que Sansons sanble fil de conte,  
Car preuz est, isnelemant monte  
Sor son cheval  
Ne dote mont, conbe ne val,  
Einz s'essaie con bon vasal,  
Nelui ne crient.  
"Sire, fail ele, il t'apartient  
Car mout est fiers;  
Il est autex comme tu ies,  
Mout s'afiche sor les estriers,  
Bien s'ademet.  
En cest païs n'a nul vallet  
Qui plus sache de Sansonet."

(Vv. 584-96)
The qualities he possesses for the nobility are all of a martial nature, useful in the lists of tournaments and, if need be, on the field of battle. These are intrepidity, fierce pride, good horsemanship, and, withal, a certain visible panache.

His clerical education includes learning, along with the Psalter, to speak and sing pleasingly and, finally, to be able to compose all manner of lyrical forms: "Sonez set faire et servantois / Et rotruanges" (vv. 623-24). Moreover, he has learned logic and "... a tant apris / Par son cler sans / Qu'il est dialecticéens" (vv. 617-19).

All of these skills acquired by Samson with angien sotil serve primarily to polish him and to make him a socially desirable ornament. Little effort is expended in teaching Samson what the world is like or in attempting to bring about any kind of fundamental change in him that would fully merit the name of education.

Having observed through the spectacle of his mother's example that the way to arrive is through exploitation of the sexual foibles of the opposite sex—after all, none of the three estates nor of the vilains is proof against this weakness, and all are eventually ruined because of it—the specific area of knowledge which interests Samson is, quite naturally, women. It is in this particular domain that Samson's natural bent is reinforced by one part of his livresque education, and he counters his mother's accusation that he knows nothing about women with:

"Mere, cil qui entant et ot
Ses bons autors
Set bien de fames les trestors,
Car il descovre bien lor mors
Et lor nature."

(Vv. 694-98)

So the skirmish lines are drawn not only between the sexes, but more precisely between two kinds of formation which equip one to make one's way in the world, specifically in knowing the adversary to be conquered. Richeut has in mind a kind of romantic concept of love which is destructive to the one who experiences it. This concept may be an echo of the fin' amor of the south, but not necessarily. Richeut is endeavoring to put Samson on his guard against a kind of love which makes the loved object too great and distant and which prolongs the psychological pleasure and pain, thus paralyzing and blinding the lover. The central concept here is the classical "measure":

"Fiz, cil qui sevent d'escriture
Solent amer a demesure." (Vv. 699-700)

Those "who know more" through experience unhindered by bookish concepts of love are able to conquer and abandon their victim (for that is really...
what she or he is) more rapidly and, therefore, to make their fortune in the world more effectively:

"Cil qui plus set [more than books]
Aime plus tost et plus tost het
S'il voit chose qui li agret.
Cil qui set plus [through books]
Est par fame plus tost mis jus
Que cil qui conoissent lor us,
Qui que s'en gart.
Fame cointe de male part
Si se fait bien vers lo musart
Et cointe et fiere."

(Vv. 701-10)

Samson rejects this advice and will continue to be blinded by his male sense of superiority and his confidence in an education accessible only to the fortunate among men, this in spite of the affirmation by his mother (which he must not have doubted) that:

"N'i a si cointe clerc d'escole
Que n'alie mise en ma jaiole
Et toz raans."

(Vv. 724-26)

And since it is obvious that Samson is in no way convinced by Richeut's point of view, she adds a warning which foreshadows the denouement of the poem:

"Biax fiz Sanson, si con je pans,
Encor avras perdu lo sans
Par art de fame."

(Vv. 724-26)

Having failed to convince her son of an essential philosophical point, she still tries to give him the benefit of her knowledge in his chosen career:

Ri. ne fine,
Sansonet aprant et doctrine
Commant doit joer a meschine
Et servir dame soz cortine.

(Vv. 735-38)

After some very concrete advice on how to "servir dame soz cortine," Richeut ends up with certain precepts:

Qu'est debonaires, totjorz vaint--
Tot dis promete,
Vers fames soit totjorz en dete,
De lor servir bien s'antremete
De bel parler.

(Vv. 742-46)

These details are less interesting than the fact that Richeut's instructions to her recalcitrant son are an obvious parody of a topos which has become consecrated by tradition. Where one should have expected some exhortations about defending the weak and destitute (women, orphans, etc.), as well as some spiritual precepts and perhaps some recommendations about remaining chaste, Richeut, on the contrary, does her best to provide Samson with an arsenal of knowledge to help him succeed and to make his fortune by waging war on women! In this aspect of Richeut we see again the playing out of the role of a defined type somehow turned upside down. The result is a parodic presentation of the canonic type.

Richeut has also something of the epic hero, the ever-victorious warrior who emerges from every battle unscathed. The word richeut is used in the sixteenth century as a masculine noun (for macquereau, "pimp"), and some critics have interpreted "Nostre Sires Ri. confonde / Qui tant mal fist" (vv. 34-35) as an indication that she is given a man's title. Both facts seem to suggest that Richeut may be so addressed here so as to strengthen her association with epic heroes. This study concludes, however, that "Nostre Sires" is the subject of a hortative and that "Richeut" is in the oblique case. The verses would thus read "May Our Lord confound Richeut / Who has done so much evil." But the impression still remains of Richeut as the epic hero. This impression originates in the astonishing energy with which she dominates all situations and types:

Ri. desjuge les cortois,
Clers et chevaliers et borjois
Et les vilains.

(Vv. 58-60)

and

Plus conquiert el par sa boidie
Et par sa lobe
Que cil qui prant et tost et robe.

(Vv. 366-68)

There is even the suggestion that the whole male world is captured and enslaved by her power, as can be seen by rereading verses 387-95:

Ri. trestoz en araisone,
Les garçons prant et enprisone,
Puis les raant.
De totes parz les mains lor tant.
Mout se conroie richement.
N'i a mestier,
N'i a vilain ne pautonier
Ne bacheler ne essartier  
Que nel raamme.

Her cruel dominance of men is expressed in an image of Richeut astride a man's back as on that of a horse: "Lo pas moine home et puis l'acorse / Par sa boidie" (vv. 381-82). This image recalls the Lai d'Aristote, in which Aristotle plays a horse and bears on his back the girl with whom he has fallen in love. Moreover, Richeut is endowed with noble blood; she herself says, "Je sui nee de bone gent, / .Vii. chevalier sont mi parant" (vv. 274-75). She is quite aware of her valeur as she "se tient et cointe et noble" (v. 369).

Probably the most important contribution to suggesting the comparison is stylistic. When the narrator describes Richeut with the words: "Lo corage a fier et estout" (v. 64) and "Chies un borjois / En vait Ri. preu et cortois" (vv. 309-10), one automatically thinks of such formulas as Roland est preuz et Olivier est sages. These indications, however light the touch, are certainly there, and they gain relief by being set in a framework which includes other echoes of the French romances, such as Samson's twelve-year wanderings of knightly quest.

Richeut as a parody of the heroes of the chansons de geste and of the romances, though muted, follows the pattern of other types which she at least momentarily embodies. The type is only suggested in order to bring out the glaring differences between it and Richeut. It is from this contrast that much of the humor and the literary pleasure experienced in reading Richeut is derived.

An examination of the allusions to Richeut in other works of literature has clearly established that the name represents a known type. This type is endowed with a nexus of traits which form the total portrait of what Richeut, or a richeut, is. That this is a specific type is manifest even in our text: "Et chascune Ri. se fait / De sa voisine" (vv. 10-11). Within the tale this personage functions as the representative of a type which is ever more generalized. Richeut is first of all a particular personage among others, albeit the most important one from every point of view. The second category which she represents is that of prostitute. She is designated four times as a putain (vv. 62, 291, 361, 523), once as a pute orse (v. 216), twice as la menestrel (vv. 94, 539), and once as la meretriz (v. 984). But Richeut is not just a prostitute. By the fact that she "maistresse fu de lecherie" (v. 5), she dominated and controlled numerous other women ("Maintes fames ot en baillie," v. 6). Although all women are seen to be predisposed to lecherie, it is Richeut who "bien les aprist a la reonde" (v. 33) and who makes consummate whores of them by her anseignemant. Richeut is more than a prostitute; she is at once the teacher-whore, the captain of her troops, and, in a word, the archwhore par excellence.

The last and most general category represented by Richeut is that of all womankind. This interpretation is established at the very outset
of the tale. It is done by identifying all women with prostitution, and then by sustaining this view throughout the tale:

Ne voit en mais jone meschine  
Qui soit a grant bonté encline  
Por po d'avoir s'estant sovine,  
Qant en li done.  
El mont n'en a nes une bone,  
Ainz se lient a la corone,  
C'est de puterie la some,  
Et lo fardet  
Metent eles en lor raget.  
Chascune de soi s'entremet  
Bien atorner.  
Qant .i. vallez a que doner,  
Bien se sofrent a acoler  
Por lui traîr et afoler:  
C'est lecherie.

(Vv. 12-26)

The libidinous character of women is not the result of learning but forms part and parcel of their female nature:

Mais il lor vient d'ancesserie.  
Totes sevent de trecherie  
Communaumant.

(Vv. 27-29)

It is through this process which identifies Richeut as the supreme whore and all women as whores in their very essence that she becomes their representative and champion. To realize this role Richeut is endowed with all of the most important tares imputed to women during the Middle Ages. She must necessarily be identified in the minds of a cultivated public of the twelfth century with Eve, the original negative principle which was the ruin of man. Our tale does not play itself out, of course, in the realm of transcendent spiritual values, but in the here and now, amid the exploitive commerce of an earth-bound society. As an exemplary woman, Richeut fully manifests the cunning falseness of her base nature. She has had a man killed, and a priest at that; she hypocritically exploits religious values both in her attendance at Mass, which she uses as advertisement of her improved social condition (and of her consequent higher price); and she takes orders as a nun, only to corrupt the other members of the order. Also, she robs the Church through the intermediary of the priest. Her voracious gluttony is everywhere visible, as after every successful foray there is an orgy of excessive eating, drinking and general indulgence of all her natural appetites. Indeed, her acquisitive appetite is so great and her power of consumption so overwhelming that she despoils all her victims without her appetite ever becoming slaked. Having indulged herself, she is once more on the prowl for a fresh infusion of wealth ("Despandu a, or vait en queste," v. 308), to the obvious detriment of men.
In conclusion, there are different types visible behind Richeut's silhouette, which are presented in this study in an order of relative distance from Richeut as the authentic being, starting with the saint, then the nun, then the various images of motherhood, and finally the trinity—Eve-whore-woman. The last role, the incarnation of the essence of female nature as it was conceived of during the twelfth century, is imposed on Richeut within the tale through the progressive identification of all women as whores. As a persona among other dramatis personae, she is the single and unified type which the label "Richeut" supposes—the gluttonous, libidinous, rusée and hypocritical entremetteuse. It is sufficient for the author to place her in the particular situation for her character to manifest itself and, by reaction, to provide the dynamic impetus which produces the entire action of the plot. Richeut is more than a mere personage; she is a kind of Uhr-Mutter who generates the whole universe of the tale.

The Characterization of Richeut

The first stage in the exposition of Richeut is accomplished simply by calling for the audience to get quiet if they want to hear about her. The evocation of her name alone is sufficient to form an image of her and to whet the appetite of the listeners, for they already know her, having "sovante foiz oï . . . / Conter sa vie" (vv. 3-4). The pre-established familiarity with the protagonist is an essential feature of the exposition.

Secondly, that she bears a name at all makes her stand out among the less substantial figures—lo prestre, lo chevalier, lo borjois—among whom she moves. The radical of the name is much more than its pale, modern counterpart would indicate, since rich- denotes only the most positive values of power, wealth, depth and dominance. The FEW (16:712b-713b) gives the etymon rîki as machtig and riche in Old French, as "puissant, noble, pourvu de grands biens et de droits de commandement." It is difficult for a twentieth-century reader to appreciate the suggestive weight that this word and value had in the Middle Ages, where power and wealth carried with them a quasi-mystical sense of awe.

The third stage of characterization is the narrator's statement of Richeut's primary traits:

Maistresse fu de lecherie,
Maintes fames ot en baillie
Qu'ele atrait tot as guise
Par son atrait.

(Vv. 5-8)

In this work these traits are immediately linked to the nature of women in general. The whores (i.e., all women) who lie on their back when they are given some money and then betray men and drive them mad do so because it is their nature. But they need a leader and knowledge of the
world for their special art. It is Richeut, the archwhore, who fulfills this role:

Mais ce fu par l'anseignemant
Ri., qui fu mout longuemant
Par tot lo monde;
Bien les aprist a la reonde.

(Vv. 30-33)

Fourthly, the narrator calls directly on God to confound Richeut: "Nostre Sires Ri. confonde / Qui tant mal fist" (vv. 34-35). This technique is used several times to orient the listeners' antipathies toward her. It is clear that the narrator is a man addressing a male audience. He associates himself and the audience with Samson's exploitation of women:

Ce est Sansons qui toz nos vange
Des pautonieres
Qui si se font envers nos fieres.

(Vv. 834-36)

The negative orientation of our sympathies in regard to Richeut remains somewhat ambiguous throughout the work and englobes two distinct points of view: she is regarded as an enemy because she is a woman (the most destructive of the lot) and, as such, a threat to all men; and she is regarded from the more universal point of view of tradition in which she is the sinner, the satanic force which leads men to lose their souls, and a destructive menace to the Church and society. It is the first point of view which is kept in the foreground without totally eclipsing the second.

After imprecating Richeut directly for having caused so much mal (= "evil and pain"), the narrator enriches this general statement by examples of her past exploits (which were probably recounted in some of the tales of her life which "sovante foiz oï avez").

Her danger to religion and her hypocrisy are established by her taking l'habit de nonain. The expression, though a cliche, is fortunate, for it clearly expresses that she put on only the external trappings of religious vocation and suggests the proverbial "wolf in sheep's clothing" and "l'habit ne fait pas le moine." The fact that "ele lo tint mout petit" (v. 37) reinforces the idea by suggesting "only long enough to get what she was after" (and given her talents, she had to keep her camouflage habit mout petit indeed!). Her corrupting power is demonstrated by her taking twenty nuns (we may assume novices) with her from the convent, no doubt so each "se lient a la corone . . . de puterie" (vv. 17-18). She even corrupts the priest in whose charge she nominally was: "Ainz en mena o solo preste" (v. 43). These actions underline both her corrupt power and her inimity to religious values, her flaunting of traditional respect for the clergy. Most significantly, she sends his soul to eternal damnation: "El li toli regne celestre" (v. 44). The
priest has no time to repent, for Richeut has him put to death by her amis, "don ele a maint par lo païs" (v. 48). Thus we see that Richeut does not stop even before the ultimate infraction of divine and human law. She is connected with a whole sinister underworld of henchmen who will do her bidding. The key to her control over them is no doubt the word amis, which is closer to "lover" than "friend" (see verses 1104-5, 1188, 1221-22, and 1229, where this rapport is evident) and which throughout the text is the approximate equivalent of lecheor.

The evocation of her past exploits continues after the general affirmation that Richeut makes beggars of the rich and powerful with the aid of Hersent (I place the period of v. 49 after v. 50), and she gets her share of tribute both from the nobility and the clergy. Her double attack on both religious values and the wealth of others is exemplified by her ruining of Dan Guillaume and turning him away from God (vv. 54-57); then follows a direct affirmation that there is no one who escapes the greedy grasp of this universal plague, no class, neither men nor women:

Ri. desjungle les cortois,
Clers et chevaliers et borjois
Et les vilains.
Par tot giete Ri. ses mains,
Si déçoit les autres putains.
Ri. sert mout,
Lo corage a fier et estout.  
(Vv. 58-64)

The first scene opens upon Richeut and her meschine indulging their appetites with a grant plantez of bons vins ferrez (vv. 89-90). As they talk together in their relaxed, homey atmosphere "d'un et d'el" (v. 93), words dictated directly by Richeut's character give the impetus, the dynamic motif of revenge motivated by resentment, which sets the tale in motion:

"Par les sainz c'an quiert en Breaigne
Mout ai del preste grant desdaigne
Qui si me triche."  
(Vv. 96-98)

Once into the plot, Richeut's character at no moment belies itself, but is particularized and reinforced. One of the methods for realizing this reinforcement is found in Richeut's speech, which is savory in its crudeness, as will be seen in the examples below. Richeut's own style is a particularized illustration of a general stylistic choice for which the narrator has already prepared us in the introduction. His technique of apologizing for and justifying his use of language is, of course, a way of calling attention to it and of underlining its intentional and self-conscious use:
The protagonist's clearly irreligious nature is shown by her very first words, which invoke the "sainz c'an quiert en Bretaigne" (v. 96). This motif is maintained throughout the tale as she invokes Saint Denis, Saint Paul, Saint Thomas and others, even in the course of her most unholy enterprises. Her lack of faith is confirmed by the fact that she had sexual relations with the priest. It is even more significant that her campaign against all men is initiated by her resentment toward the priest, who has failed to pay her.

Another process used to characterize the protagonist and to tax her with yet more negative associations is that of linking her to black magic. Her unholy intimacy with such powers (associated with satanic influence), even though she does not value their efficacity at poires porries (v. 120), reinforces a totally negative attitude toward her. Familiarity with the occult sciences places her in diametrical opposition to the Church and also to men in general, since these practices were commonly considered the special domain of evil women. Moreover, the specific harmful effects that this magic would produce in its victims further stigmatize it and its practitioners. Richeut prefers a method of extortion more in keeping with her nature; namely, she proposes to get pregnant. However, to effect this result she relies on the help of drugs, specifically an aphrodisiac, mandragora. Such recourse to unnatural means is in itself negative. Lucid control is the most positive value in the work, and to s'afoler, to lose one's cler sans, is at the opposite pole. Also, the indiscriminate promiscuity which this loss of control supposes further lowers its value:

Ainz quist une herbe qui ot non
Mandagloire.
Ri. en but o ele esclaire
Puis n'i guieres demore
Ainz croist a toz.
Tant a alê desus desoz
Et a retraiz sofert et boz
Qu'ele est ençainte.

(Vv. 144-51)

Of course, this mad frenzy is directed by a lucid plan which rejects magic in favor of a stratagem which is more effective for her blackmail scheme and which is precisely in keeping with her libidinous female nature:

Ce m'est avis
Ja par charaies n'iert conquis.
A moi meîsmes ai conseil pris
This review of Richeut's character and the methods by which it is exposed seems to show an artless, "natural" technique on the part of the author. There are few of the obvious figures of ornamentation, few images, metaphors and similes. Yet the effect on the reader, in spite of the apparent artlessness, is very strong and demands some explanation in terms of esthetics, since no subject can be effective without an appropriate mise en forme. This question will be treated in more detail, but the characterization of Richeut provides the beginning elements of a system. It is clear that the key to the work and its effectiveness lies in the intimate link between a powerful, well-delineated image of Richeut and the global semiotic structure of the tale. The best style is the one which produces the most powerful and clear image of Richeut, by whatever stylistic means. This imperative no doubt accounts for the lack of figures of ornamentation in favor of others, such as gradation and repetition, which will be discussed below. The second element is the intimate integration of the protagonist into the structural and thematic fabric of the piece. Not only is Richeut a dynamic motif in the sense that it is her words and acts which command the action in the tale directly or secondarily, but the exposition of her situation and character forms the generative nucleus from which the work as a whole develops.

The Characterization of Samson

Excepting Richeut, who is a generative structural element and a type inherited de toute pièce from tradition, all of the personages fulfill the Aristotelian precept that personages should be endowed precisely with those qualities required for a good plot structure. The primary necessity for the plot and dramatic integrity of the work is to provide Richeut, the female protagonist, with an appropriate male analogue worthy of her stature.

Like Richeut, the name Samson is rich in suggestion and it orients the reader to the significance of the personage. Samson is the Biblical strongman and lover. His interest lies in the meaning he generates. His exploits make of him a kind of superman among men; his strength is legendary, but he is humbled and destroyed by female guile. All the characterization of Samson in Richeut contributes to presenting him as first among men and, eventually, as their representative and champion. The narrator underlines the importance of the name as he announces the matter to which the audience should pay attention:

Or escotez
Commant il fu conçuz et nez,
Norriz, apris et doctrinez
After Richeut's successful accouchement, Samson is baptized:

Or a lo non de son parrain,
Seignor Sanson.

(Vv. 450-51)

One may assume that his parrain is a spiritual one, the strongman of the Bible.

The name Samson is the only essential element in the process of characterizing the great male protagonist which is drawn from external, cultural sources. All the other elements, it would seem, are commanded by what are broadly artistic considerations inherent in the work. Such considerations have an immediate effect on the way in which Samson's character is constructed.

The first involves the thematic significance of the work, which pits women against men and gives the superiority to the former. (The quality of this superiority will be discussed below.) This superiority resides in the female nature, which is manifest in its purest form in the archetype, Richeut l'entremetteuse. The thematic "motivation" used to explain Samson's superiority over other men and women (excluding his mother, the primary principle) is having him participate in female nature in its purest form; he is the closest possible derivative of this nature by being Richeut's son. The fact that his father cannot be identified with any individual or class helps to emphasize the ascendancy of Richeut's female principle over any other. There is no thematic interest in the biological necessity that a particular man had to participate in Samson's conception. The theme of blood relationship between protagonists and its central role in the functioning of a work are as old as Western literary tradition itself. Besides being a traditional topos of the Ancients, this theme is a standard feature of the French epic. The importance that the feudal society of the Middle Ages attached to these relationships infused a literary convention with ever-renewed life and the weight of mimetic reality. The solution to the problem of amplifying Samson sufficiently to become a significant and convincing adversary for Richeut is found in part through this filial relationship and the participation of the son in his mother's nature.

This theme is what justifies the legion of allusions to Samson's being like his mother, such as, "Ri. sa mere bien resamble / Qu'il fu ses fiz" (vv. 981-82). At the outset an identification exists between the essential female nature (libidinous, interested, treacherous) and the exemplary woman, Richeut. Women's reprehensible conduct, in a word, their lecherie, flows directly from this nature:
Mais il lor vient d'ancesserie.  
Totes sevrent de trecherie  
Communaumant.  

(Vv. 27-29)

At the moment of the first phase of his characterization and immediately before the conflict between Richeut and Samson surfaces, the same formula is used to explain the son's penchants:

De si a Bar n'en a son per  
De lecherie,  
Car il li vient d'ancesserie.  

(Vv. 644-46)

This particular case is not an aberration but a manifestation of the universal law: "[Sanson] en lecherie met sa cure; / Chascuns retrait a sa nature" (vv. 628-29).

The most complete statement of this theme and its consequences is found in the block quotation below. It is a succinct presentation of Samson's tragic situation. He is the expert in lecherie because he is "condemned" to be so by his mother's nature. Consequently, he tastes the deliz del mont to such an all-consuming degree that he cannot tear himself away from them in order to ascend to a life of honor (or to save his soul from perdition). Again it is Richeut's nature which is the efficient cause of his dilemma:

Mar fu qant a enor ne monte,  
Mais il ne puet;  
De Ri. sa mere li muet  
La nature qu'il li estuet  
Sore et tenir.  
A pris ne puett il pas venir  
Car del lechois ne puett partir,  
Il nel lairoit  
Por trestot l'avoir que il voit;  
Non feroyt il, qui li donroit  
L'anor de Rome.  
De lecherie set la some.  

(Vv. 772-83)

By the motif of a shared nature, Samson's acts are both justified and given a precise meaning. Our primary point at the moment, though, is to show that this identification with the dominant personage helps in the process of enhancing the dimensions of Samson so that he may bear sufficient dramatic interest to be Richeut's eventual antagonist.

The second problem to be solved derives from the first solution. Samson is conceived by Richeut out of vengeance, and, before he is born, his mother uses his existence as a joisse (= "a legal proof") in her extortion scheme. After he is born and as he is growing up, she
continues to extract money from the "fathers," assuring each that Samson bien lo resamble. The esthetic problem here is to make this child a convincing male antagonist for Richeut's well-established prowess. Our heroine's character and strength are fully developed in the public's mind even before the tale commences. It is enough to recall briefly some of the most notable exploits of her infamous career to underline her already familiar traits. In order to enrich and elaborate an analogous character for Samson, it is necessary to create his biography. This is done in two stages, excluding the denouement, because what is significant are those traits which he bears when he enters into the lists to joust with Richeut in the final clash in the conflict between the sexes. The first stage treats his education or how he was "norriz, apris et dostri­nez" (v. 83). It would be appropriate to call this section the geste Richeut, for it is always Richeut who occupies center stage. Through her deceit she grows rich, rises in status and affects the trappings of social superiority; at the same time she is bringing about the progressive ruin of the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois. In this part of the work, Samson's education is linked, first of all, to the primary theme of Richeut's duping of men and, secondly, to the emerging theme of Samson's prowess. In this phase he is more acted upon than an independent actor. He is absorbing, surpassingly well, what it is that society has to offer him. The second phase of Samson's characterization comes after the conflict between the two protagonists is formulated (vv. 689-734), when the mother chastie her son on the eve of his departure into the world (vv. 735-53). In this geste Sanson the male protagonist is the active agent and he occupies center stage.

Samson's education is a device for Richeut to continue enriching herself at the expense of her erstwhile lovers. She must convince each dupe—the priest, the noble, and the bourgeois—that the child is indeed his son and that he not only reflects the talents appropriate to his "father's" estate (each is shown the child's accomplishments relative to his own condition), but that he surpasses all his classmates. When presented from the right angle, he is a son of whom any man would be happy to claim the paternity, a wholly meritorious receptacle for individual and class pride. Samson's education is also one of the most significant devices for exposing his character.

When he reaches the appropriate age, Samson is put in school, which is, of course, the special domain of his first "father," the priest:

Par la parole
Fu Sansonez mis a escole.
Mout ot cler sans,
N'ot si sotil en toz les rans:
Son sautier sot en po de tans,
Chanta .ii. anz,
Voiz ot sor les autres enfanz,
Mout sot et conduiz et sochanz.
Vait a gramaire,
So we see that Samson is a prize student in the program of the parish school. It may be concluded, though, that Samson was the object of special attention, for:

Et li maistres bien i entant  
Por lo grant loier qu'il en prant  
Del preste fol.  

(Vv. 570-72)

Samson is competent in the arts and attitudes of the nobility as well, for he is a fearless horseman and proud like his "father" the knight. He is so accomplished that he seems like the son of a count (vv. 584-97). We might have learned more fully what talents he possessed which would gladden the heart (and empty the purse) of the bourgeois had not the manuscript been defective (after v. 555), but we know that he possessed the essential for the son of a money-changer, for "del conter fait a grant esploit" (v. 600).

The degree to which Samson has been amplified becomes clear when his mother decides to discuss with him his choice of a future estate. Samson is a kind of medieval voyageur sans bagages who is offered the possibility of choosing his condition and calling, a rare opportunity for the times. Here is shown his remarkable degree of emancipation relative to social codes. Richeut presents the possibilities:

"Voiz lo preste de Saint Thomas,  
Mout sera liez s'a lui t'an vas;  
Ou au borjois  
T'an va, s'i changeras a pois,  
Ou a dan Viel, lo cortois,  
Biax fiz, t'an va."

(Vv. 650-55)

Samson's rejection of all of these estates ("... ne ça ne la / N'est l'alers preuz," vv. 656-57) is at first surprising to the reader, but it indicates both his sense of superiority relative to all classes and his ambitious nature. This dialogue occurs at a significant moment of the plot. It is the eve of Samson's departure, and the process of impoverishment of the lover-victims has been completed. Their sorry state is in direct contrast with Samson's growing image and with Richeut's increasing prosperity and absolute ascendancy over her male adversaries. The priest is reduced to a pitiful figure clad in the cheapest of weeds, the bourgeois faces losing his livelihood, and the knight has mortgaged all his lands and titles:
The final stage of their ruin is reached, and the narrator allows no ambiguity as to the reason for their undoing:

 Qui croit Ri. et qui la fot  
 Mout est chaitis.  
 Or a Ri. ses .iii. amis  
 Par son engin sor fussiax mis.

(Vv. 613-16)

Samson's image grows immeasurably now, for he is above all the mundane careers in ruin. The destructive power of lo lechois has been demonstrated.

Now that his education in school disciplines is completed, he learns those specialized skills wherein lie power and success. This change of activity is immediately juxtaposed to the verses just cited which mark the total impoverishment of his "fathers":

 Et Sansonez a tant apris  
 Par son cler sans  
 Qu'il est dialecticiens.  
 Lo jeu des dez aprist par tans  
 Et lo lechois.

(Vv. 617-21)

Samson now appears to be on his way to equaling his mother's stature in her domain of activity. His preeminence is a combination of his name, his participation in his mother's nature, his educational accomplishments, his rejection of all accepted social callings, and, finally, his choice of a career of lecherie, which has been shown to be the secret motor of success. But Samson is yet a novice, a squire in the cortois arts; he is not yet a full-fledged knight and champion.

Through what can be called the enfance Sanson part of his biography, we see that he has been moving in the direction of his mother and under her guidance. The dramatic interest of the work rests on the conflict between mother and son. Between the exposition of this conflict and its resolution, there is a second movement to his biography, the geste Sanson (vv. 754-980), which further amplifies Samson. In this second section, Samson goes off on a twelve-year quest that carries him
perpetually from amorous victory to amorous victory. The dimensions of both time and space are extensive in order to create a vast theater for his multifarious activities and his limitless ambitions. All his deeds and all the enriching details converge to one end: to make of Samson the peerless champion of male dominance and the exemplary scourge of woman-kind. The principle underlying the manner of presentation confers on it an astonishing degree of unity. That principle is based on the view of Samson as a reflection of Richeut. It is given form and substance on 1) the thematic, 2) the structural, and 3) the stylistic levels. This parallelism is taken to great lengths.

Thematic Parallels

A number of the thematic parallels between the mother and the son are about to be pointed out, but it is important to keep in mind that these parallels take shape against previously established principles which motivate the thematic direction of both character and plot. The most significant of these is Samson's participation in his mother's nature. The domain in which each exercises his activity is lo lechois, this area of activity now having been confirmed as one of predilection for rake's progress and arrivisme. Richeut's working within her son dictates that "Sanson en lecherie met sa cure" (v. 629) and that "mout tenoit bien les mors sa mere" (v. 76), for "chascuns retrait a sa nature" (v. 630). Obviously, Samson carries his war against women and Richeut carries hers against men. This difference creates the main thematic element of the work—the conflict between the sexes—and constitutes its central dramatic interest.

As her means permit it, Richeut acquires not only more things which satisfy her gluttony—an abundance of food and drink—but also the vestimentary complement to her rising status. This visible sign of her worth is at once an effect of her success and a cause of ever-increasing prosperity. Before she affected it,

El soloit foutre por maaille
Ainz que venist del tot a faille.
Enorgoillir
Se vialt Ri. engorllir
.I. denier part qui vialt ferir
Desus l'anclume,
Or a Ri. muë costume.

(Vv. 493-99)

The result of her dress is the increased price of her services. Because in her more beguiling attire she is better able to inflame men's sensual passion, she puts them in grant engoisse and mout les travaille (vv. 491-92). Her accouterments are perhaps even more a visible extension of her pride. The short scene in which she is depicted as a kind of twelfth-century demi-mondaine is both amusing and dramatic. Samson has been born and baptized, and it is the first time that Richeut ventures forth from
her confinement. She goes to the church for Mass, a perfect theater for her reentry onto the world's stage. After having eaten all kinds of good things (vv. 455-59), she bathes and grooms herself before a mirror. Then she goes to Mass:

Mantel a ver, grant coe trait.
N'i a lecheor ne agait,
Tuit ont mervoille;
L'uns a l'autre dit et consoille
O el prant ce don s'aparoille:
"Lo vis a bel,
O prist ele si bon mantel,
Et cel chainse ridé novel
Qui si traîne?"

(Vv. 471-79)

and

Grant coe trait par la podriere.
Ri. se tint et baude et fiere.

(Vv. 486-87)

Her costume, besides being new, is apparently both costly and somewhat extravagant. No doubt it is in keeping with her nouveau riche status. Her coat of ver is surely the vair which was a highly prized fur from a squirrel-like animal. It was this rare fur from which Cinderella's famous slippers were made and which became confused with glass, verre, through homonymy (/ver/). That the coat is rare and costly is further emphasized by the lecheor's wonder and bewilderment as they ask each other where Richeut could have gotten it. The extravagant character of her dress is suggested by its long train which she (disdainfully?) allows to trail in the dust.

If Richeut cuts a figure of a medieval cocotte, Samson's extravagant attire suggests the nineteenth-century dandy or the beribboned petit marquis of Molière's day:

Ses costez lace a longues franjes
Et sa çainture;
Coetee a sa vestëure.

(Vv. 626-28)

Samson affects not only long coattails like his mother's train, but he also adorns both his belt and the sides of his coat with fringes.

Both personages are presented as being without peer. One of the images which translates this impression is that of teacher, a logical function for one who is the most sage. Richeut is the teacher of her vast coterie:
Mais ce fu par l'anseignement
Ri., qui fu mout longuemant
Par tot lo monde;
Bien les aprist a la reonde.

(Vv. 30-33)

Samson, who has mastered all of the lyrical and rhetorical repertory of
the school curriculum, is so proficient that "bien en porroit tenir
escole" (v. 794). This theme enriches the epithets of maistresse et
maistre applied to them. The supremacy of each is maintained throughout
all their encounters until the denouement, for which it is a necessary
preparation. Richeut's dominance would appear more self-assured since
Samson's is frequently reaffirmed. (See vv. 595-96, 605-7, 818, 937-38.)

The first of the quotations in the above paragraph contains the
theme of travel and experience which Samson will echo when he refuses to
settle down where he is: "Aler m'an voil, / Ja n'ert prodom dedanz son
soil" (vv. 676-77). Indeed, one whole section describes his victorious
wanderings in the world (the River Jordan, Sicily, Toulouse, Italy,
Germany, France, England, Ireland, Brittany, the Indies, etc.).

The central element of Richeut's and Samson's dominance is that
they are "knowers." No citation is necessary because this leitmotif
pervades the entire fabric of the text and, as the most significant trait,
provides one of the most important bases for the conflict between them.
Everywhere abound the terms sage, mout set, plus set, aprant, apris,
among others. Knowledge is the principal motor of their deception.
Lecherie and trecherie form an almost indivisible couple from the
beginning (vv. 26 and 28). Richeut is the maistresse de lecherie (v. 5),
and Samson is both the lechieres (v. 938) and the trechieres (v. 939).
The deception of both extends even to their own sex. Richeut "deçoit
les autres putains" (v. 62), and Samson "trestoz ses conpeignons jostise"
(v. 805) and "a ses freres manti sa foi" (v. 898). (See also vv. 916-19.)
Both Samson's and Richeut's superiority (and moral inferiority) over all
those of their own sex is thus established.

The knowledge of both extends to occult powers. Hersent suggests
that Richeut wreak vengeance on the priest in the following way:

"Charmez li, chiere, par la vanche,
Escrivez brief de sane et d'anche,
Faites cheraudes
Don les ymages soient chaudes
Et refroidies."

(Vv. 115-19)

Samson, too, is an initiate: "Mout set caraudes, / Les fames fait plus
que feu chaudes" (vv. 634-35) and "Sanson enchante / Trestotes celes o
il ante" (vv. 932-33).
Both hero and heroine are profligate consumers and spendthrifts on their own pleasure. After Richeut becomes pregnant, she extracts enough from the priest and the knight for a good party. She cannot wait, and it is only the following day with her booty depleted that she exploits the bourgeois: "Despandu a, or vait en queste / Chies un bor­jois" (vv. 308-9). Like mother, like son, "car grant despanse / Moine Sanson, . . . ; Par tot ravist, par tot despant" (vv. 905-6, 909). The narrator directs our attention to this trait in Richeut alone by stigmatizing her as one who reaps but does not sow (vv. 396-97).

Both also live off the opposite sex, vanquish their adversaries, and take their wealth by deception. Richeut's activities are much more profitable than those of any other kind of criminal:

\[
\text{Plus conquiert el par sa boidie} \\
\text{Et par sa lobe} \\
\text{Que cil que prant et tost et robe.} \\
\]

(Vv. 366-68)

Samson intends to use the same means to the same end: "Se puis encor avoir del lor / Et par boidie et par amor" (vv. 686-87).

Both protagonists exploit their prey in order to live off them, and to live "richly." Richeut gets everything she wants (vv. 378 and 440) and lives richement on it (v. 391). She and Hersent bien s'an paistent (v. 442). Richeut is always eating and drinking. Her original scheme is set in motion because the priest does not keep his word to give her food and clothing. She and her lieutenant are constantly returning home with their arms laden with good things to eat, and their other activities are regularly modulated by feasts, even during Richeut's confinement for childbirth. Samson, too, lives on his lecherous activities: "De ce se vit, de ce se paist / Richemant . . ." (vv. 889-90). Gluttony is not, however, one of the sins with which he is taxed.

The program of both mother and son goes beyond simply living off their victims. They want to defeat, despoil, and humiliate them. Strength and dignity depend on being sage. When Richeut predicts her son's eventual defeat, it is in these terms:

\[
\text{Biax fiz Sanson, si con je pans,} \\
\text{Encor avras perdu lo sans} \\
\text{Par art de fame.} \\
\]

(Vv. 724-26)

Richeut causes Dan Guillaume to be regarded as sot (v. 52), and she threatens to have the priest tenir a fol (v. 169). Both predators afolent their victims. To make fol or sot involves a concept with both inner and outer dimensions. It means to cause the loss of rational control (perdre lo sans) and of reputation in the eyes of the world. Richeut and Samson want to reduce their victims to abjection because their victory is also a celebration of the superiority of their sex.
This superiority is all the more manifest and éclatant if the victims are bereft of material, and therefore psychological, resources. From the outset one of the effects of Richeut's nature is to impoverish even the wealthy: "Ri. a fait riches mandis" (v. 49). Samson underlines this result of Richeut's commerce with her three amis: "Car apovriz les avez toz" (v. 658). It is his desire also to impoverish his victims totally: "Tot li torrai; / Ja nule rien ne li lairai" (vv. 716-17). When Samson sleeps with a girl en recelee and then takes all she has, including her clothes, the private encounter becomes a public spectacle of her defeat and humiliation. With her possessions, he also takes her sense of worth and her reputation. When she trovoit soi nue in the morning, it is a nakedness which is as much psychological as physical (see vv. 971-77). The victories of both mother and son depend on the humiliation of the vanquished, which is often exteriorized by their impoverishment.

There is no limit to the quantity of men that Richeut has. This is part of the hyperbolic presentation which creates an impression of Richeut as a hero of the chansons de geste. For dramatic and symbolic effect, our interest is fixed on the one representative of each estate—lo prestre, lo chevalier, lo borjois. It is clear, however, that this really means that her commerce extends to all men and that class and calling are secondary. After Richeut first gets money from her three amis, she turns to every man:

N'i a celui cui el ne die  
Que de lui est ele enpraingnie.  
"Vos m'avez, fait ele, ençaintie;  
Del tuen me done."

(Vv. 383-86)

To paint a more concrete image of their occupation and number it is written that:

N'i a mestier,  
N'i a vilain ne pautonier  
Ne bacheler ne essartier  
Que nel raamme.

(Vv. 392-95)

A good measure of her discriminating exclusivity is seen in verse 503: "Toz les reçoit granz et petit." Samson has the same epic appetite as his mother: "Plus d'un millier / Que il a mises au mestier" (vv. 640-41; see also vv. 837 and 846).

Lest their conquests be thought easy marks, those of Richeut include not only the noble class like Dan Guillaume and lo chevalier, but also clergymen and the most comte clerc d'escole (v. 721). Samson's adversaries include the most bele dame (v. 728), the most roide (v. 632), and the most comte (vv. 633, 636, 713, 823). In sum, he has names of all types, including cortoises riches dames (v. 683).
A final and most significant parallel between mother and son is their attitude toward religion, as seen through their acts. It is absolutely clear that both exemplify the diametrical contrary, the negative opposite, to the positive moral values of the Christian religion and its Church. Traditional Christian values and teachings are the background and orientation point against which the tale is played out. Both protagonists are guilty of attacks on the Church's servants and treasure, not to mention its spirit.

The narrator reminds the audience that one of Richeut's previous exploits involved her taking the habit of a nun and then leaving the convent with more than twenty nonains in tow. Much more serious is the fact that she seduced the priest, caused him to abandon his religious vocation, had him put to death and "li toli regne celestre" (vv. 36-48). Within the plot of the tale itself it is evident that the priest is a choice victim. It is he who sets off Richeut's resentment and causes her to put into action her plan of vengeance. His image comes through somewhat more sharply than that of the other men, especially when he is reduced to such a state that he has only the cheapest fabric with which to clothe himself:

\begin{verbatim}
Tant l'a Re. feru el mol
Qu'il a grisset mantel au col;
Or est au lange.
(Vv. 573-75)
\end{verbatim}

By pressing the priest hard for money, Richeut is not only forcing him to ruin himself, but she is really taking wealth from the Church. In the end she will leave him neither croiz nor calice (v. 510).

Samson carries on his mother's attack. In the section on his pechiez criminaux (vv. 892-931), all his misdeeds are directed against the servants of religion. He becomes a monk at Clairvaux then breaks faith with his brothers and steals tot lo tresor, including croiz and calices of gold and silver. Samson repeats his ploy in every maison and covant de religion as far as the River Jordan. Whereas his mother ruined one priest and had another killed, Samson himself is ordained a priest at Winchester. He then makes an abbess pregnant and turns her into a whore. Just as Richeut preyed on nonains, so does Samson by becoming their chapellains in order to lead them into a life of sin:

\begin{verbatim}
Mar lo crerench les nonains,
Car les plusor en fist putains,
Puis les roba.
(Vv. 924-26)
\end{verbatim}

Their moniage is recalled by the narrator at the point where they meet for their final confrontation: "Hai, quel nonain et quel moine!" (v. 1100).

It has been shown that the main thematic element of the work, the conflict between the sexes, is brought out by the parallelism between
Richeut and Samson in various aspects of their respective life styles. The aim of both is to live off the opposite sex by means of sexual exploitation, but beyond the theme of economic gain is that of total dominance: each is the best in his activities and each must completely ruin and humiliate his victims in order to demonstrate his dominance and superiority. They both succeed in their enterprises because of their respective knowledge and excellence at deception. Both outwardly manifest their success by their extravagance in dress, in celebration, in satisfying all of their appetites. Their activities are the antithesis of the moral precepts of the Church, and they constitute an aggressive challenge to all aspects of religion.

Structural Parallels

On the level of structure there is a perceptible parallel between Richeut’s exploitation of her three amis and Samson’s conquest of the world of women. Both proceed from a preliminary stage of abusing their victims through three subsequent stages, each marked by a more rapacious, destructive onslaught.

For Richeut this preliminary stage takes place before her son’s birth. With means suited to each, she gets five sous from the priest, ten from the knight, and twenty from the bourgeois. For Samson this stage occurs before his mother chastises him (vv. 620-46). To read this passage and conclude that Samson has already reached the zenith of his possibilities is to be taken in by the hyperbolic mock-heroic style. He does get worse.

The three stages noted for Richeut are marked by the progressive ruin of her victims. The process really gets under way after the birth of her son. Herselot goes to each benefactor as soon as she has put the new-born to bed and returns home bearing tot lo conroi from each (vv. 421-37). These goods provide the whores’ continuous feast. The second stage takes place after Richeut has assumed her new and more expensive station. Now she bites deeper into her prey:

El vient au preste, si l’antice
Ni li laira croiz ne calice
Se il la croit.
Lx. sous ot par destroit,
Tant dist ele que il devoit
A son enfant.
Au chevalier en vint corant,
De lui en resache autretant,
Puis au borjois,
.C. sous ensache d’orlenois.

(Vv. 509-18)

The passage shows a progression in the amount of money taken over the first time: sixty sous each from the priest and the knight and one
hundred of Orléans mintage from the bourgeois. There is also a prefiguration of future destitution in the statement that Richeut will not even leave the priest his crosses and chalices. The third stage reduces the men to absolute penury (vv. 573-609). For each she individualizes the splendid talents of his "son," and each ruins himself, as a consequence, in sacrificing all he has to the child's welfare.

In Samson's first stage, he is essentially the victorious lover (vv. 825-90). His conquests are on an epic scale. All over the world he "as fames bestist gries cenbiax" (v. 829), and in this respect there is no one "... qui miauz sache deçoivre / Char de famele" (vv. 856-57). He corrupts more than one thousand and seduces, robs and abandons more than seven hundred. He knows all the cortois ways of all the courts, and he plays the game well for his profit. He takes "tost lor deniers, dras et aniaux" (v. 830), even though "Sansons ne a terre ne feu, / Mais des fames quialt lo tonleu" (= "toll, rent, profit"; vv. 862-63). He lives lavishly on his commerce with women: "De ce se vit, de ce se paist / Richemant; ..." (vv. 889-90).

The second stage (vv. 892-931) is prefaced by the narrator's statement that he wants to tell a part of the hero's pechiez criminaux. Namely, Samson becomes a monk, breaks faith with his brothers, steals from the order (items include un cheval sor, tot lo tresor, croiz, calices d'argent et d'or, lx. livres), takes vows in every covant de religion even as far away as the Jordan River, and robs his brother monks. Then he is consecrated a priest at Winchester, makes putains of the nonains, robs them, gets an abbess pregnant and makes her a juggle­resse. What makes these acts particularly "criminal sins" is the fact that they are directed against the Church: its possessions, its ascetic spirit and its servants.

The third stage of Samson's war on women (vv. 932-80) emphasizes his degrading and sadistic treatment of them. First he violates family taboos. In unholy intimacy he couples first with the niece, then the tante and sorors, the fille, then the cousines. The litany of the positions he has them assume, although the exact meaning of some of the expressions remains obscure, seems to be designed to emphasize their degradation and humiliation, e.g., pissechien. His sadism reaches a paroxism as he physically abuses them: "Maintes en monta sor les dos / A cui il fist croistre les os" (vv. 959-60). On a psychological plane he so completely denudes them (of money, of clothing, of reputation and esteem) that when he has gone they dare not show themselves in public:

Cele robë avoc cui coche
En recelee.
Mainte en avra ensi menee,
Et qant ce vint a l'anjornee
Trovoit soi nue.
Cel jor l'estovoit estre an mue.
Ne se demonstroit pas en rue.

(Vv. 971-77)
Clearly this structural parallelism is not the result of chance, particularly since it is constantly supported by affirmations of the type: "Ri. sa mere bien resamble / Qu'il fu ses fizzes" (vv. 981-82). The effect is not only to confer an esthetic unity to the whole, but, most germane here, to develop Samson fully for his epic clash with Richeut.

Stylistic Parallels

In addition to the above, the language itself is made to produce echoes which create parallels between Samson and Richeut in the reader's mind. In this manner one is prepared for the final confrontation between the protagonists. Samson gains in stature and regularly conjures up Richeut as their careers work out their antagonistic, yet analogous, meanderings. Below are a few selected significant rapprochements:

C'est de puterie la some. (V. 18; Richeut)
De lecherie set la some. (V. 783; Samson)
Si s'en conroie richemant. (V. 611; Richeut)
Richemant wait, a bel conroi. (V. 768; Samson)
Toz les reçoit granz et petiz. (V. 503; Richeut)
Que n'en i a petit ne grant
Qui ne li face bel sanblant. (Vv. 759-60; Samson)
Tant a alê desus desoz
Et a retraiz sofert et boz
Qu'ele est ençainte. (Vv. 149-51; Richeut)
Tant a alê et ça et la
Que plus de .c. en afola. (Vv. 927-28; Samson)

There are many other parallels of similar ilk which, without necessarily dealing with the same theme, create analogies between the male and the female protagonists.

Thematic and structural parallelism and stylistic echoes have polyvalent functions, to be sure. The field of vision has been limited to a single one of these, namely, the process by which the author manages to create for Samson a stature which is as grandiose as that of Richeut. This effect is absolutely necessary to produce successfully the dramatic interest of the work. No doubt other means are used as adjuncts—the direct intervention of the narrator, for example—but it seems clear
that the fundamental process is one which relies to a great extent on the public's a priori perception of Richeut as a colossus of evil. The technique used to raise Samson to an equivalent stature is one which creates constant parallels and analogies between the two protagonists. In my opinion, the results are very effective indeed.

The Minor Personages

It is significant that none of the secondary personages have names except Hersent. She, like Richeut, is a type already known to the public. Her relationship as meschine to Richeut is not even mentioned until verse 235, where she jumps to her feet when she hears her dame. She is a willing and active servant for Richeut's schemes. Not only "Ri. a fait riches mandis / Por Herselot" (vv. 49-50), but it is Hersent who is designated to be the principal instrument of Samson's humiliation in the final act. She is not only Richeut's servant in the banal sense of taking care of her, notably during her confinement for childbirth, and of running to each dupe to collect tribute upon the birth of the valiez, etc., she is also companion, advisor, and especially confidant to her mistress. It is she who shares with Richeut the unholy and conniving intimacy that is created when food is bountiful and good wines flow freely. It is Hersent who advises magic against the male adversaries but in the end approves Richeut's own scheme. Hersent's presence always appears to lower the moral tone a few notches toward a less human level. I would like to make use again of Faral's felicitous phrasing. She is the femelle flétrie, worn in the traces. Her name could hardly fail to call forth in the minds of a popular audience the herse or "harrow" which tirelessly works the land. Perhaps for the more evolved, her name might even have evoked the Biblical harrowing of hell. A third possibility suggests itself. To attach any credence to it, however, we must remember how important were etymologies and word-plays for the medieval clerc-writer. Behind herse is the etymon hîrpx. All authoritative dictionaries confirm it, even though the semantic shift seems a veritable leap. Hîrpx is given as a Tuscan word meaning "wolf." Playing again on the ambiguous semantic referent of the Latin lupus, which in the feminine is "she-wolf" or "whore," the author may very possibly have made here a

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1 I do not include Dan Guillaume because he has no direct part in Richeut. He is alluded to only as a means of recalling Richeut's previous adventures. Likewise, I exclude Seignor Viel because I am sceptical about the conclusions of Tobler and G. Paris that the viel should be read as a proper name (see vv. 230, 434, 541, 597 and 654 of the Notes on the Text). Because this personage is regularly referred to as lo chevalier and lo corteis and the other victims are designated only by type, and because the Vernet fragment uses simply lo viu (which may be the same personage or type), I prefer Méon's reading of viel/viex.

2 Faral, "Richeut et la tradition latine," p. 270.
highly arcane linguistic joke, conceived for his own private amusement and for that of a clerical elite.

Hersent's decidedly important role of confidant allows us to hear Richeut's words and thoughts directly in an atmosphere of unguarded intimacy, in direct contrast to the way she speaks to men, which is always calculated as to the effect she wants to produce. Because of Hersent, we know Richeut better than we know Samson. He is the master swindler and corrupter por la parole, yet the only times we hear him speak is in two dialogues with his mother. The technique of providing the heroine with a confidant as a means of exposing the former's innermost feelings and thoughts is as old as the theater of ancient Greece.

The band of lecheors who gravitate around Richeut and who are at once her customers and henchmen ready to do her bidding is testimony to the whore's power and influence. These are faceless men who always live on the margins of any tripot. Pariahs of official society, they form a subculture with its own rules and loyalties. When Richeut tells them that the victim is her own famous son and that they are not to touch him with either an espee d'acerine or a baston, the reader feels confident that these are instructions that no lecheor would dare disobey and that, consequently, Samson will not be killed. When needed, they come out of their half-shadow existence and play their brief part on center stage before disappearing again. Their appearance in the Vernet fragment suggests that they may have been a permanent part of Richeut's world.

The meschine who helps dupe Samson at the end of the tale is just a girl, like any other, who knows a masse about tripot and, by inclination and for gain, is glad to play her role.

The three most important amis of Richeut—lo prestre, lo chevalier, and lo borjois—are first of all and most significantly social types. As the representative of their respective classes, their defeat symbolizes the weakness of a whole class in generating values which can resist lo lechois. When Richeut turns immediately to every man, regardless of his mestier, two things become clear: the social range of Richeut's activities is unlimited, and the common bond which unites all these social types—that of being men—makes them all vulnerable to her feminine allurements and treachery.

As men, all of the types committed the same act with Richeut, which proves to be their undoing. Each is, however, particularized adequately so as to render him interesting and distinct from the others, to make his particularities conform to the social class he represents, and to justify the tactic adapted to him for extorting his wealth. From Richeut's point of view, they all share the fundamental failing of being stingy with their money.

The priest's weak point is his fear. This is convincing because he has much to lose if the matter becomes public. It is precisely the threat of making a public scandal that is Richeut's trump card. She has
a noîsse in her that would bear witness in court to the priest's misdeed, and her complaint to the bishop would cause the poor fellow to be removed from his priestly functions. He promises to help the doxy all he can, but secrecy is his greatest concern: "Li prestes mout celer lo rove / Icel secroi" (vv. 180-81). Again he emphasizes secrecy:

"Mais or celez
Ceste groisse tant con poez,
Et qant li anfes sera nez
Sel metez sore
.J. autre; se Dex me secure,
Ne vos faudrai puis nes .i. ore."

(Vv. 203-8)

After Samson is born, Hersent makes her rounds to collect the promised lucre from the "fathers." Only the call on the priest is given any elaboration, another indication that he is somehow Richeut's victim of predilection. This elaboration takes the form of a short, humorous exchange between Hersent and the priest. The basis of the humor is the latter's nervous fear and his great desire to keep his culpability from becoming known:

"Sire, dist ele, Dex vos saut."
"Et vos, ma bele."
"Dire vos sai boene novele."
"Et que est ce, ma damoisele?"
"Un fil avez."
"Taisiez, Hersant, soef parlez,
Je sai mout bien que vos querez.
Venez a moi."
Chargié li a tot lo conroi,
Puis l'an envoie en secroi.

(Vv. 423-32)

Two factors set up the comic in this short dialogue. The first is the light, gallant tone established by the priest, followed by the abrupt shift in which he pleads for Hersent to keep her voice down and bends all his efforts to give her what she wants in order to get rid of her expeditiously and en secroi. The second factor is Hersent's loudly proclaiming the ironic "good news" and, just as loudly, explaining this as the priest's being the father of a son. The underlying central trait on which the scene plays is the priest's apprehension. The priest's image is completed in the episode on Samson's education. His paternal pride ruins him as he receives reports of Samson's mastery of the traditional clerical school program.

The knight is endowed with traits that are, at the same time, traditionally associated with the landed and warrior class and refreshingly counterpunctal to those of the priest. His are outdoor pursuits befitting his calling. Bravery and horsemanship evidently rank high in his esteem (see Samson's knightly education, vv. 582-96). No doubt
possessing a bold and open nature, bolstered certainly by his professional calling, his lands and fiefs and his assurance of social station, the knight shows neither fear nor apprehension. Richeut obviously realizes that threatening to expose publically his culpable paternity of her child is unlikely to impress him. Speaking to a man bred to the arts of war, she uses a warrior's approach. She does not bother to whine and sob before him or affect that pitiful pose of introspection—"A sa maïsele sa main tient" (vv. 155 and 338)—which she deems appropriate for her other two lovers. No, rather she states with forthright and "virile" anger that she is capable of having his castle burned down and even of having him put to death. With each of the other two, Richeut announces that she is pregnant and that it is he who is responsible. In both of these cases, this affirmation is greeted with resistance and disbelief. But in the case of the knight, he guesses the cause of her ravings and gives expression to it. His open nature shows itself as he cuts Richeut short, without fear or anger, but with a kind of jovial gaillardise:

Li chevaliers en fait un ris,
Si li responst:
"Ri., li vins te monte el front.
Ne sai que ces menaces sont.
Di mo por quoi
Es tu ençainte? Est ce de moi?"
"Oïl amis." "Et je l'otroi,
Pas nel reni."

(Vv. 278-85)

He understands that the only thing Richeut can want from him is money and gladly gives it. This is confirmed by the narrator's aphorism: "Qui putain loe, si l'apaise" (v. 291). The chevalier seems mainly concerned that the party not stop. He was courting Hersent when Richeut arrived; now he kisses the latter: "Ainz qu'il s'an tort firent lor aise / Soz l'obier frois" (vv. 292-93) and sends for food and bon vin orlenois. Richeut recognizes here the kind of extravagant generosity which is her meat, and she honors him with her highest praise: "Ce dit Ri.,'Cist est cortois.'" (v. 297). The knight's generous attitude proceeds from a spirit of panache, beau geste or simply galanterie closely identified with his class. It also betrays that noble pride which will not stoop to the mean task of studying accounts and surveying expenditures. In addition, his generosity is to a great extent explained by the fact that he is sexually stimulated and in a party mood. In a sense, Richeut's battle tactic against the knight, while appropriate, misses the mark because it is unnecessary. His own folle largesse is the efficient cause of his undoing and, in the end, he signs over all his earthly possessions, lands and titles for the sake of his "son."

The borjois is a money-changer and his only interest is, on the surface, the process of acquiring and amassing wealth. The author is obliged to provide him with a trait which individualizes him to the exact degree that it offers leverage for Richeut's machinations while maintaining essential traits typical of his class. It is clear that he is both
rich (his contributions in money to Richeut are double those of the knight) and stingy with his wealth. At first he resists the idea that he is the father of Richeut's child: "De moi? C'est gas" (v. 334). He has never been able to have a child. While this is an individual trait, his preoccupation with keeping his accumulated fortune in the family and passing it on to the next generation is one that is identified with all wealthy bourgeois of those and subsequent times. Working on his pride as a possessor and as a man, Richeut soon gets him to concede: "Bien pu estre je l'anjandrai" (v. 349). The bargain is struck. Providing that the child is a boy, he will be made heir to all the bourgeois's fortune and will want for nothing. Such a valiez does Samson turn out to be, that before he reaches maturity, the money-changer is impoverished and about to lose his business as well. It is his pride as a possessor, a money-changer, and a man which lead him to ruin.

All of the personages are provided with those traits which allow for the creation of effective plot structure. Each of the three paternal dupes is endowed with those traits which allow us to witness in a dramatic way Richeut's confrontation with and eventual defeat of them. Thematically, they each represent the attitudes and values of a given class before melting into the larger category, that of simply being men. The tale divides the whole of mankind into two warring camps, one female, one male, and each of us is destined by our nature at birth to be affiliated with one or the other. Within Richeut the three social types reflect a masterful creation for the dramatic interest of the plot, but from the philosophical framework which confers a specific meaning to the piece, the division of men into social types is a kind of façade. As the work progresses, the social typology is revealed as secondary to its philosophical underpinnings. The only reality of consequence is found in people's sexual nature; one is either a man or a woman. The destiny of each must work itself out along the lines of this pre-established nature.

Conflicts in the Character of the Protagonists

The dynamism in the work flows naturally from the conflicts inherent in the typology of its principal agents, and the dramatic nature of its structure results from their essential character. Each of them is a bearer of a meaning, a world view, and a sexual identity, which must be translated into a specific kind of action conditioned by these factors. The protagonists, being constructed of such radically incompatible and inimical traits and of such aggressive tendencies, must be joined fatally in overt conflict. For reasons of dramatic necessity, this clash occurs on the level of personae, but, nevertheless, through them resound the immense reverberations of two world views and of two hostile hosts locked in unremitting and intransigent struggle. The tension which is gradually accumulated reaches a paroxism and must be successfully resolved both in dramatic and ideological terms. It is for this reason that the distinctions between Richeut and Samson are of paramount importance.
It is important to view the differences between the two protagonists as something greater than the results of two different personalities. A concept of this sort based on the individual is both alien to the times and irrelevant to the work. Richeut and Samson are types rather than personalities with an individualized psychology. One of their functions as types is to be labels, on which ideas and attitudes can be grafted and made to play a dramatic role. While it is undeniable that both reflect incidentally traits of a definite type of social parasite, their essential reality in this work is to be ideological types.

The importance of the fundamental theme of Richeut's nature has previously been shown. The necessary conflict between mother and son grows out of this central idea. There is a preliminary stage in which this nature, operating through Samson, makes it impossible for him to "rise" to a religious, or even simply moral, life (vv. 775-82). Samson is distinguished from his mother in that, as a man, lofty spiritual possibilities are open to him. The fact that he is an accomplished man, the finest product of the education offered for each of the three estates, makes him a desirable candidate for a respectable role in either lay or religious society. He can even pretend to the anor de Rome. However, Richeut's nature prevents him from becoming a man of worth: "A pris ne puet il pas venir / Car del lechois ne puet partir" (vv. 777-78); and the delights of the world hold him tightly in their thrall, even though he is well aware that he is sinking into a life of sin:

Ce set il bien qu'en pechié maint,  
Mais li deliz do mont lo vaint  
Que mout li plaist.  

(Vv. 886-88)

Pris is a key concept in Old French. It combines notions of social importance, moral value, esteem and reputation (Godefroy, 10:419b). Samson is thus placed in opposition to the accepted norms of what is right in his society. He is led to reject taking any place in it when he refuses all of the three estates proffered to him. The essential thing that distinguishes him from his mother here is that he has a choice (although in reality does he?), whereas she is always seen as operating in her single domain of lechois, possessing neither talent nor inclination beyond it. Samson, too, chooses this dimension: "En lecherie met sa cure" (v. 629). Lo lechois is firmly established as the occupation of predilection from this point on, and all ulterior conflicts between the protagonists relate immediately to it.

A second and more significant distinction between the protagonists originates also in the nature of Richeut. Within the tale this nature is established in the first thirty-three verses. Not one good woman has ever been born; they all enter the realm of puterie and lie on their back for any valiez who can pay them something. Then they betray him and drive him mad; all know lecherie because it is part of their nature: ". . . il lor vient d'ancesserie" (v. 27). They all know about trecherie as well through Richeut's teaching. Richeut's nature, then, is
the epitome of female nature, combining natural inclination with acquired knowledge. The nature of the female protagonist represents the ideal perfection of woman. It is the full blossoming of the corruption inherent in any and all, the perfect flower of evil in perpetual bloom.

The tale recalls Richeut's past acts and recounts yet another episode in her life. All of this confirms her unconquerable evil nature, which is always of a piece and true to itself. She can never find herself in opposition to her own nature because it is ideal, perfect and complete, and because it is she and she is it. The relationship is stable and harmonious because the coincidence between the personage and her nature is absolute.

All men, being born of woman, have a corrupt nature of which the metaphysical origin is Eve. This corruption means knowledge-power in lechois. Samson is stronger than other men and even women in this domain because he inherits his corrupt nature from a pure, unadulterated source and because he has no father. Therefore, he is no match for any man or any woman (except Richeut). But Samson is a man, and in him the force at work is an incomplete principle. He cannot be totally integrated like Richeut; his male nature prevents it. Thus the basis for his conflict with Richeut is in his existence as a man.

Samson chooses the occupation of lechery over all others. It is the only possible one for Richeut and the one which dominates all the others in the tale. Knowledge produces success, and knowledge in this domain is the inheritance from Eve, the original sinner and putain. It is significant that the tree of knowledge should have granted awareness in this specific area. In Richeut, knowledge is, above all, knowledge about debauchery.

Samson, however, is given the most complete education his society can offer. It is conceived by males for males, and it deliberately excludes females. Our hero is the consummate product of this conditioning. The principal results of this education are his ability to speak (parole) in all imaginable ways, his devaluation of women, and his overweening male pride and sense of superiority. The first result underscores the rhetorical nature of his training. Rhetoric is essentially a discipline of which the goal is to persuade with words. This art serves Samson well in his seductive enterprises at the various courts. Also, the age-old dichotomy between words and direct, "authentic," empirical knowledge of the world is suggested. The unlettered have always had and continue to have a great distrust of beautiful words. They suspect that behind the rhetoric there is no knowledge, and, especially, they see in the articulate the threat of being fooled and exploited. The second result of Samson's education is simply the effect of his being removed from his mother's world into one which is created by official, male society and supported by metaphysico-religious philosophical precepts. His devaluation of women is empirically reinforced by his seduction on a vast scale through his "beautiful words." His male pride is, first of all, an aprioristic concept derived from his society's view. It is
enough that he is a man for him to be proud. His sense of superiority is nourished by the fact that he mastered the knowledge that school offered him better than any other student. He is particularly adamant in his insistence that he knows all about the trestors, mors and nature of women through studying "good authors," Ovid in particular.

Richeut contests Samson's view. According to her, not only does he know so little about this tripot, but he is being abused by bookish concepts about love. Those who learn about love from books usually love beyond measure. She suggests that those men who hold their own with women are those "... qui conoissen lor us" (v. 706).

The conflict between Richeut and Samson takes shape around these ideas:
1) Samson regards women as inferior; Richeut (and all women) consider men stupid.
2) Samson sees his superiority as based on knowledge acquired from books, particularly relative to the nature of women; Richeut sees such bookish views as faulty and dangerous and would substitute a more empirical approach.

The conflict revolves around knowledge. Is real knowledge the result of the male principle, which implies education and words, or the female one, which implies the power of instinct and empiricism?

Samson is the designated tragic hero. His flaw resides in a fault in his knowledge, which his male pride prevents him from perceiving. His success in lechery is, in fact, the necessary effect of his corrupt nature derived from his mother, but he misinterprets its cause. He believes that the source of his superiority is the knowledge about women that he acquired through books.

The blood tie between Richeut and her son dictates the kind of denouement which will occur. Family relationships provide a motif which harmonizes conflicts, and in this case the result is an attenuation which guarantees the life of Samson while annihilating the male world view which he embodies.

A foreshadowing of Samson's defeat is provided by Richeut when she realizes that she cannot convince her son of the error of his ideas:

Biax fiz Sanson, si con je pans,
Encor avras perdu lo sans
Par art de fame.

(Vv. 724-26)

The author has provided the best expression of the contention between the two principles:

Mout set Ri. de l'art d'amer
Qui Sansonet vialt dostriner;
It has been suggested that *art d'amour* should be italicized to indicate that the expression is really the title of Ovid's work. I believe that this would be a serious *contre-sens*. This passage can be interpreted to mean that Richeut really *knows* her *mestier* of love and that Samson believes he knows about love through reading Ovid. Richeut, an uneducated woman, obviously did not read the *Art of Love*. It is significant that she set, whereas Samson *cuide savoir*. Clearly, we have here a good invention on the part of the author, which plays on the double possibility of *art d'amour*, the knowledge or the book, followed three verses later by a reference to Ovid. The meaning seems very clear: Richeut had the knowledge; Samson read the book.

It is my conclusion that the protagonists are types created to represent a specific world view or principle. They are endowed with the traits necessary to command their actions and to bring them eventually into a dramatic collision. Since the character traits are intimately linked to the underlying philosophical views which the work as a whole exposes, the entire dynamic structure is elaborated from the conflicting nature and views of the hero and heroine. The identification of Samson with all men and Richeut with all women confers a universal dimension on their conflict. This idea is somewhat analogous to the introduction of Baligant into the primitive *Chanson de Roland*, of which Eugene Vance says, "A need arose in the poem for an antagonist of Charlemagne's own stature, one who could pretend to the same universalism as Charlemagne himself. With the arrival of Baligant, the ideological axis of the poem no longer involves just France and Moslem Spain, but East and West."

**Structure**

The global movement of the work, the economy of its parts, and the presence of each personage in quantitative terms appear to be carefully weighed. This harmony betrays intentions which surpass in ambition the usual goal of medieval tales, the fabliaux in particular, of which the main purpose is to amuse by recounting a simple adventure. In such works the interest is concentrated on the action itself and on the way it unfolds. Character development is normally limited to that which is strictly necessary for the progression of the plot. In Richeut, on the other hand, most of the action is a device whose only justification is to characterize the personages and, in particular, to endow them with

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1Ibid., p. 260, n. 5: "On imprime ordinairement en romains et sans capitale, comme si l'on n'avait pas reconnu là l'ouvrage d'Ovide."

certain moral attitudes. The quantity of text devoted to any particular personage is a function of his importance as a bearer of significant ethical values. It is for this reason that the work can be described, grosso modo, as having three principal movements: in the first Richeut occupies center stage, in the second Samson is the only significant actor, and in the last mother and son share attention equally. Within this broad framework exist patterns which enrich the work without infirming the integrity of the whole. It is these patterns which will be examined below.

The tale opens with a rhetorical flourish on the part of the narrator:

> Or faites pais, si escotez
> Qui de Ri. oïr volez;
> Sovante foiz oï avez
> Conter sa vie.

(Vv. 1-5)

This technique creates interest and nascent suspense for what follows by announcing the subject and enhancing it with an imperative, heightened tone. This manner of introduction is by no means rare in French tales of the Middle Ages. The author here has put the device to an original use, however: all divisions within the entire poem are clearly marked by his addressing the public directly or by his commentary. The section now under discussion is delimited by his opening invitation to the audience and by his promise to relate the best tale of them all, as well as by his determination not to be dissuaded by shame from the telling (vv. 65-71). This section (vv. 1-71) constitutes the introduction.

A number of elements are carefully established in this introduction. The contents include a portrait of Richeut's character and the following thematic material: Richeut is the mistress of lechery, but all women are debauched by their female nature; they all use this bent to get money from men, then they betray and make fools of them. These elements are carefully orchestrated so that all are smoothly incorporated into the beginning of the tale and yet remain satellite notions which depend on the most important element, Richeut. In verse 2, the subject is announced; verses 3-4 tell the public that it already is quite familiar with the character; and verse 5, "Maistresse fu de lecherie," provides a succinct, epigrammatic definition of Richeut. Verses 6-11 provide a gradual link between Richeut and all women. Of those under her power none so far has renounced her lecherous activity, and each makes a whore of her sisters around her: "Et chascune Ri. se fait / De sa voisine (vv. 10-11). The image is one of universal corruption, a kind of creeping plague which contaminates all women and casts them in the mold of the epitome of feminine evil, Richeut. These transitional lines thus prepare verses 12-26, which characterize all women as whores. They form a kind of vast sorority, which for money proffers caresses and then betrays and makes fools of men. Two of the motifs used to render their portrait as morally unattractive as possible are fardet (v. 19) and raget (v. 20).
The first suggests that their make-up hides their lack of natural beauty and thus tricks men unfairly. This motif is elaborated in verses 1040-47, in which Richeut makes up Hersent in order to pass off the aging prostitute as a beautiful young girl:

De blanchet li poroint la face
Et lo menton.
El vis asist lo vermeillon
Desor lo blanc
Por ce que del natural sanc
Po i avoit.
Hersanz pert bele, mais n'estoit,
Ainz ert boschiee.

The purpose of this exercise is explicit; it is to gaber (v. 1034) and engignier (v. 1035) Samson. A vice imputed to all women in the introduction thus becomes the specific device used to dupe the hero of the tale. Raget is a motif suggesting loss of control and lucidity. It is clearly a negative trait, and throughout the work a dazing of the critical faculties through passion is the necessary prelude to misfortune. These verses then, bracketed by "Maistresse fu de lecherie" (v. 5) and "C'est lecherie" (v. 26), neatly identify Richeut, those under her sway, and, finally, all women as a single moral category labeled lecherie. This process of identification is artfully carried out and is absolutely necessary for the meaning of the work. If Richeut were taken as an isolated individual, the central conflict between man and woman would be lost from the work and trivialized into a game interesting only the protagonists. On the other hand, leveling Richeut to being simply a woman among other women would rob the tale of its dramatic interest. Her character is and must be magnified.

All women are claimed to be lecherous and deceitful by their nature:

Mais il lor vient d'annesscrie.
Totes sevent de trecherie
Communaumant.

(Vv. 27-29)

But Richeut is proclaimed the maistresse of lechery. The author is careful to provide a justification for her superiority, namely, knowledge and experience:

Mais ce fu par l'anseignemant
Ri., qui fu mout longuement
Par tot lo monde;
Bien les aprist a la reonde.

(Vv. 30-33)

Now the narrator intervenes to mark the end of this development and to open another:
Nostre Sires Ri. confonde
Qui tant mal fist,
Car de nonain reçut l'abit,
Mais ele lo tint mout petit.

(Vv. 34-37)

The narrator's intervention has three functions: it provides an agencement between distinct parts; it orients the public's sympathies against the heroine; and it heightens interest and suspense in what is to follow. Verses 36-37 provide a tantalizing glimpse of what is to come, but before continuing, the narrator calls again for attention, thus increasing the suspense: "Escotez, se Dex vos ait, / Qu'ele devint" (vv. 38-39). What follows (vv. 40-57) is a concretization and a justification of the preceding statements about Richeut: "Maistresse fu de lecherie"; "Qui fu mout longuemant / Par tot lo monde"; and "Qui tant mal fist." This elaboration of the heroine's misdeeds has three principal effects: it gives credibility to the general statements about her, thus characterizing her more fully; it apparently recalls to the public episodes of her life which they have heard before; and it provides her with a quantitative presence in the introduction commensurate with her importance as a personage. After generalization (v. 5), followed by concretization (vv. 40-57), the last strokes of her portrait are given with a broad brush which generalizes her capacities and presents her as a universal scourge. Such a device sums up her character and provides her with all the traits necessary for the story:

Ri. desjugle les cortois,
Clers et chevaliers et borjois
Et les vilains.
Par tot giete Ri. ses mains,
Si déçoit les autres putains.
Ri. sert mout,
Lo corage a fier et estout.

(Vv. 58-64)

Her victims are identified by social categories, the sum of which equals all men. Details of her description are significant: verse 61 emphasizes her grasping avidity for gain and echoes verses 23-24; verse 62, which states that Richeut even dupes the other whores, is an indication of her superiority in evil and stands in contrast with the impression of the sorority of women one gets from verses 6-33. The portrait ends with motifs emphasizing energy, pride and courage— moral values all. What is lacking in her portrait in the introduction, and in the rest of the tale as well, is any element of physical description.

The theme of lechery, which embraces all women as well as Richeut, having been established and a strong image of the heroine's character having been impressed upon the public, the narrator turns to reinforcing the interest in the particular tale he is about to tell. It surpasses all the others (v. 67) and requires the raw language which befits the subject: "Qui de Ri. conte la vie / Ne puet parler par cortoisie"
The device of the narrator's direct address again serves as an articulation and as a means of stimulating interest. It is certain that verses 70-71 show that the author is conscious of levels of style; it is possible that he is disparaging the courtly literary fashions of the south that were actively promoted by Aliénor and her entourage. The frequency of the use of cortois and the people and actions it characterizes lend weight to this possibility. In any case, he has found a clever, coquettish way of promising his audience a frankly bawdy tale. It may be assumed that this interested them more than any worry about "uncourtly" words.

The next subsection (vv. 72-80) provides the genesis of the most important themes needed for the story: Richeut has a son; he is very clever and handsome, ruins many women and follows the ways of his mother; Richeut values his father, though she does not know who he is, because he caused her to get much gold and silver. This preview not only orients the reader's anticipations, but is essentially a device for creating suspense. In this tale, as is typical for medieval literature, interest is centered less on what is going to happen than on how:

Or escotez
Commant il fu conçuz et nez,
Norriz, apris et dostrinez
Et en quel vie destinez,
Quel non il ot.

(Vv. 81-85)

The phase of preparation completed, the tale proper can begin. What has the author accomplished? The introduction appears a marvel of density in which essentially all of the material for the construction of his tale has been deposited. Character, theme, tone and orientation of the reader's sympathies have all been carefully seeded, ready for their elaboration into full growth. The exaggerated fanfare for a tale about a prostitute sounds a false note which the rest of the work continues. It has been suggested that the work starts out like that of a saint's life, and, indeed, only a subject of this sort could justify such a tone, given the value system of the twelfth century. All of these elements, including linguistic expressions, are used in the work as a whole, through the processes of recall, parallelism and repetition.

The first scene opens with Richeut and Hersent having a feast (escot = "partie de plaisir") amidst an abundance of food and wine (vv. 86-93). This sort of scene is repeated every time Richeut is in her ostel. Not only does this plenty relate metonymically to her name—rich and abundant—it is also significant thematically in that it suggests the earthly rewards of officially proscribed lechois activity. An inciting motif is introduced immediately. Richeut will have vengeance on the priest because he promised her goods for sleeping with her, and he has not kept his word. There follows an exchange between the two whores on how to get revenge. Hersent's suggestion of using sympathetic magic further blackens their moral portrait. Richeut decides to get pregnant
instead and chooses three men whom she will hold responsible, one from each estate—the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois. The theme of vengeance is never explicitly extended to the knight or the bourgeois. It seems to mutate automatically into a desire for gain, which is perhaps the result of the close wedding of the two concepts. From the first lines of the introduction, women are stigmatized as exploiting men for their money, and indeed, the method of vengeance is that of extorting money from men. The immediate result is that of enriching Richeut; but eventually, as the men are ruined, a strong element of hostility, if not vengeance per se, becomes apparent. It should be noted that the immediate justification for Richeut's vengeance is that one man, the priest, did not pay for her services as promised. One would be tempted to dismiss the theme of vengeance as simply a device for initiating action in the plot if the desire for gain were not intimately linked with a desire to harm, and if the narrator did not reinforce the theme himself when he speaks of Samson to the audience:

Ce est Sansons qui toz nos vange
Des pautonieres
Qui si se font envers nos fieres.

(Vv. 834-36)

The extension of a vengeful campaign against one man to embrace all men is not explicitly justified and probably must be attributed to the context, which pits the sexes, not individuals, against each other.

The choice of the three victims—the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois—is first of all a device to concretize Richeut's values into action. These types represent the most significant social estates and are presented in the descending order of their social prestige and moral authority. The choice of these three representatives can hardly be attributed to chance. The number three is the symbol of perfection, and in the Middle Ages much importance was attached to numerology. Consequently, it seems logical to suppose that the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois represent all of society. It may be for this reason that the author felt no need to create any specific cause for Richeut's vengeance against the latter two. That the prostitute's war against men extends beyond these three is frequently emphasized. In the introduction it is already explicit:

Ri. desjugele les cortois,
Clers et chevaliers et borjois
Et les vilains.

(Vv. 58-60)

Also, after she has extorted the preliminary payment from her three favorite victims, she turns to everyman:

N'i a celui cu el ne die
Que de lui est ele enpraingnie.
"Vos m'avez, fait ele, ençaintie;  
Del tuen me done."

(Vv. 383-86)

Nor does she slight any trade:

N'i a mestier,  
N'i a vilain ne pautonier  
Ne bacheler ne essartier  
Quel nel raamme.

(Vv. 392-95)

The problem of creating an interesting plot out of Richeut's exploitation of all men is solved in part by centering the reader's interest on only three. These three are, moreover, at least minimally differentiated through providing them with distinct character traits (see Minor Personages above). There remains the task of integrating them successfully into an interesting plot structure. It is well to bear in mind that the author is working without any real literary tradition in this domain. To expect the kind of sophisticated solutions possible seven or eight centuries later would be unrealistic. Nevertheless, the structuring of the plot relative to Richeut's extortion scheme is far from being devoid of art.

The encounters between Richeut and her lovers are the subject of three short dramatic scenes in which the quasi-totality of the matter is in dialogue form. Each is a kind of microcosm of the ideological underpinnings of the work as a whole. A woman meets a man for the purpose of manipulating him out of his money, and she succeeds. The most obvious attention was given to the ordering of these encounters. First comes the priest, followed by the lay representatives by order of precedence. Great attention was evidently given to the proportions of these scenes: for the priest and the knight sixty-eight verses, verses 154-22 and 231-99 respectively, and for the bourgeois fifty-six, verses 309-65. The slight shortening of the scene with the bourgeois may have been commanded by one of two reasons, or both at the same time. In spite of subtle differences in the latter scene, it is essentially a repetition of the one with the priest, and, therefore, its abbreviation anticipates the possible fall in interest on the part of the public. Then too, in medieval perspective, importance is normally rendered in quantitative terms. Therefore, the slightly shorter passage treating the bourgeois may be to a certain degree a recognition of his inferior social status.

The locus and spacing of the encounters indicate a deliberate effort to avoid an impression of repetitiousness. Richeut goes to the priest, and their meeting takes place on his territory. The knight is already at Richeut's place when she arrives back bearing the booty she extracted from the priest. After her successful negotiations with the chevalier, an all-night feast and orgy takes place, and only the following morning does she set off in quest of gain at the expense of the bourgeois. The author has in this way avoided the obvious danger of
having Richeut shuttle back and forth to each victim in monotonous succession. Moreover, he has carefully motivated this arrangement. That it should be the knight abroad in search of pleasure, in this case Hersent, is a happy choice. Not only does his character make him the most likely to be at Richeut's tripot, but it also motivates an encounter which differs most from the initial one with the priest. The differences between the scenes with the priest and with the knight are a function of the differences in their respective characters. The knight's pleasure-loving gaillard nature dictates a markedly different tone. Perhaps even more important is the fact that he settles Richeut's complaint rapidly in order to get on with his pleasure. He orders that food and wine be sent for. The festive atmosphere thus created produces a natural transition into an all-night orgy, which in turn provides a welcome lapse of fictional time before Richeut goes to see the bourgeois (vv. 292-308). In addition, her visit to the bourgeois is further justified and thematically enriched by the introduction of the character-related vice of profligacy: "Despandu a, or vait en queste" (v. 308).

The most arresting parts of the work are cast in dialogue form. These constitute little scenes which could easily be acted out as pure theater. They are not, however, self-contained in that each is embedded in the plot and depends on the plot for full effect. This dramatic form is used sparingly throughout the work, but it makes up the main fabric of the text at seven points: Richeut and Hersent plot revenge (vv. 96-142); Richeut goes to the priest (vv. 154-228), to the knight (vv. 229-91), and to the bourgeois (vv. 309-64); Hersent collects more booty from the priest (vv. 422-32); Samson and Richeut expose their conflicting points of view (vv. 647-751); and the conflict reaches its climax, starting with verse 1062.

The three scenes which show the greatest mastery of technique are the ones in which Richeut confronts each of her victims individually and successively. Having chosen this pattern of presentation, the author had to invent ways of varying the individual scenes in order to short-circuit an excess of repetition. These scenes have necessarily the same general pattern: 1) Richeut's initial recriminations, 2) the announcement that she is pregnant, 3) the reaction of her lover, 4) threats, and, finally, 5) payment, all of which concludes with the narrator's intervention. The invention of detail to render each of these scenes distinct is admirable.

In each case Richeut uses a device for arousing the curiosity of her lover. In the case of the priest, she sets the tone first by adopting an attitude of sorrowful meditation: "A sa maisle sa main tint, / Plore et sopire, sofllant vint" (vv. 155-56). When he responds that he does not know what can be the matter, she breaks out in anger, swears by Saint Paul and threatens to make a fool of him. The priest puts his arms around her, at which point she twists free and angrily announces that she is pregnant.
The scene with the knight starts with Richeut's refusal to return his greeting; the text leading up to the announcement that she is pregnant is much longer and elaborated than for either of the other two scenes. This lengthening compensates for the fact that the knight accepts the paternity immediately, whereas the priest and the bourgeois resist. Thus the overall scene is of approximately the same proportions as the others, even though the central theme of pregnancy does not generate any conflict with the knight. The negative gesture of refusing the knight's greeting corresponds to her gesture of holding her hand to her jaw in the preceding scene, and it serves as an introductory motif to arouse the curiosity of the man before a word is spoken. Then Richeut bursts forth in a torrent of angry verbal abuse against the knight. This diatribe takes up most of the scene. She accuses him of going back on his word (v. 245), says any woman who gives him her caresses is folle (vv. 246-47), accuses him of being stingy (v. 248), attacks his race and virility (vv. 253-54), charges that he had her when she was just a girl and that now no one will want to love her (vv. 255-57), claims he has wronged her and made her stomach swell up (vv. 258-61), and finally threatens to burn down his manors and even to have him killed if he does not help her (vv. 263-77). All of this long series of recriminations before the knight has the opportunity to speak creates a pattern which contrasts sharply with the two scenes bracketing it. By its exaggerated and extended nature, which makes Richeut appear as a raving hysteric, it prepares the amusing, cavalier reaction on the part of the knight:

"Ri., li vins te monte el front.
Ne sai que ces menaces sont.
Di moi por quoi
Es tu ençainte? Est ce de moi?"
"Oui amis." "Et je l'otroi,
Pas nel reni."

(Vv. 280-85)

In the scene with the bourgeois, the introductory motif to arouse curiosity is verbal. Richeut announces to him, "Je vos voldroie .i. secré dire" (v. 319). It is a nice touch that when she goes to see the bourgeois, Richeut is preu et cortois, as though she were a knightly hero in contrast to the lowly bourgeois. Although she states that she is angry (v. 332), the tone is much more polite and calm. The reason is that, instead of threats, Richeut can count on a particular detail in the bourgeois's situation—that of his lack of and desire for a male heir. This element motivates some of the particularities of the scene with the bourgeois, notably the tone and the absence of threats.

In contrast to the knight's pronouncing the fateful word "pregnant" himself, both the priest and the bourgeois greet Richeut's declaration with explicit scepticism. The priest thinks Richeut is just pretending: "Ri., je cuit que tu te fainz" (v. 176). To this she counters by showing how her stomach is swollen: "Veez con li vantre se prove" (v. 179). Convinced that she really is pregnant, his next line of defense is to doubt that he is the responsible party:
At this point Richeut not only affirms that she knows the child is his ("Jel sai de voir," v. 185), but she launches into threats of creating a scandal because she is carrying proof of the priest's misdeed in her body. She also rejects any idea that she will kill or abandon the child. The priest's vulnerable situation (the bishop can forbid him to say Mass, etc.) and his fear of scandal cause him to capitulate. He will give her money, but he wants her to hide her pregnancy and blame it on someone else when the child is born:

"Mais or celez
Ceste groisse tant con poez,
Et qant li anfes sera nez
Sel metez sore
.1. autre; se Dex me secore,
Ne vos faudrai puis nes .i. ore."

After his reply, Richeut tells the priest that the only reason she is consenting to keep the affair quiet is that she loves him so much. She goes off loaded down with goods that the priest gave her.

When Richeut announces to the bourgeois that she is pregnant, his response is immediate: "De moi? C'est gas" (v. 334). Remembering that he has been unable to have a child, the reader cannot be surprised that he calls the idea a joke. There may even be a hint of bitterness in his attitude, for we know that the bourgeois,

Qui mout erë en grant sopois
Qu'il n'avoir oir;
Onques ne pot enfant avoir.

The fact that he was so distressed may suggest that he feared he was incapable of producing a child. This device is excellent because it justifies simultaneously his disbelief, therefore his resistance, and his desire to believe he had fathered a child, therefore his eventual acceptance that the child is his. Parenthetically, the word gas (gab + s) for "joke" may contain an ironic intention. The corresponding verb gaber means "to trick, to fool," and Richeut uses it in this sense when she is planning to deceive Samson (v. 1034). Thus, while the bourgeois is saying that his having a child is an improbable notion that he does not credit, the reader may perceive a second meaning—that he is saying he is being deceived, while he is actually unaware of the truth in this second meaning.
The motif of sterility eliminates all the need for threats or any other means to convince the sceptical money-changer. His desire for a son dictates that the child will be very well taken of, provided that it is a valiez. In this way the motif of the bourgeois's inability to have a child is at the same time an organizing principle for the meeting between him and Richeut and a part of the thematic frame of the tale. The work shows men and women in confrontation, and it is clear that the whore's child would have inherited nothing from the bourgeois is it had turned out to be a Delilah instead of a Samson. Once her son's future is guaranteed, Richeut must ask for money for her immediate needs. For this and for wine and bread to be picked up the following day Richeut thanks her man.

The author has shown great originality in making scenes which are basically parallel appear both varied and interesting. The patterns of the way in which each develop are sufficiently distinct to individualize each and to minimize the manifestation of their underlying identity. In addition to the differences in the structuring of the three scenes, each scene contains distinct variations in detail on the same theme.

There is a clear gradation in the amount of money each lover gives Richeut. The priest gives five sous, the knight ten, and the bourgeois twenty. Such a gradation also implies the relative wealth of each. The receptacle holding the money is varied: the priest and the bourgeois each have a borse, while the knight has an aumoniere. The image of taking the money from the purse is almost identical for the priest and the bourgeois: "La main li fait mestre a borse" (v. 218, the priest) and "Cil met en sa borse lo poin" (v. 357, the bourgeois). It is clear that even this identical gesture is expressed with a different sentence pattern and different significant details. In the case of the bourgeois, the ownership of the purse is emphasized by sa borse, and, perhaps more importantly, the priest uses his main while the bourgeois uses his poin. These stylistic details stress the bourgeois's identification with possession and they are in harmony with the fact that his payment is more generous. They are also in harmony with another motif: from Richeut's point of view, one of men's greatest failings is their reluctance to give her money. The bourgeois is the only one whom she does not accuse of avarice, which accords well with his gift of twenty sous, compared to the lesser amounts from the first two victims. The lack of such an accusation has been rendered perceptible by the expectation built up in the previous scenes. The plot gets off the ground through her anger at the priest who, "si est avers, / Croistre vialt et noiant doner" (vv. 111-12). She also accuses the knight of the same vice: "N'a si aver jusq'a Nicole" (v. 248). By avoiding the same detail in the scene with the bourgeois, the author conveys Richeut's basic complaint against men without setting up an exaggerated parallelism between the scenes.

The same kind of variation can be observed in the levers she uses in her extortion scheme. It has already been mentioned that the ploy of working on the bourgeois's desire for a son eliminates the necessity for
threats. This is a particularly effective device since her approach to both the priest and the knight is based on threats--exposure for the priest and violence for the knight.

No saints are evoked during the scene with the knight, which corresponds well with his irreverent nature and avoids a sense of repetition that one would otherwise have, for in her anger Richeut swears by Saint Paul with the priest and by Saint Thomas with the bourgeois. The choice of saints is suggestive. Saint Paul was a major influence in shaping the early Church; thus calling on him in the presence of one of the Church's servants is appropriate and amusing (v. 167). It is amusing because Richeut is using the saint to second her anger and to win her way in a most unholy piece of treachery. She calls upon Saint Thomas (v. 335) to counter the bourgeois's rejection of the accusation that he has made her with child. His scepticism and reluctance to believe her, coupled with the evocation of Saint Thomas, produces an amusing rapprochement between noble Biblical content--Thomas's insistence on seeing and touching Christ's wounds to believe--and the low content and style of this situation.

Besides the money, each victim provides Richeut with something additional. The priest gives her bread and "other things": "Mout s'an veit bien sozaisselee / De pain et d'el" (w. 227-28). The knight orders what is needed for a feast:

"Envoiez, dist il, enevois
Por de la char et por des pois
Et por de bon vin orlenois."

(Vv. 294-96)

The bourgeois tells her to send someone to him the following day for meat, wine and bread: "Envoiez ça, dist il, demain, / Si avroiz char et vin et pain" (vv. 362-63). The quantity of food reflects the relative poverty of the priest. The demanding palate of the spendthrift knight is shown both in his specifying peas and in his designation that the wine should be good Orléans wine. Distinctions between the tribute of each are created, and the formulation is in each case distinct. The way in which the goods are received is always different. The priest loads Richeut down with things which she carries home immediately under her arms (sozaisselee = sous + aisselle + participial ending). The knight sends for the things to be brought back to be consumed in the common promiscuity of the feast. The bourgeois asks that Richeut have someone pick up his gifts the next day. All of these details vary from scene to scene and help create interest by varying the potential sameness of the situations.

The expression of the physical act of love-making is a necessary element of each scene. Richeut's act with the priest is first evoked in the discussion she has with Hersent in which she complains:
"Il m'afia l'autrier sa foi
Et lou vestir et lo conroi
Ainz q'avenir poist a moi."

(Vv. 102-4)

In the course of the scene itself this is alluded to obliquely in regard to the physical evidence she carries in her stomach: ". . . . i. joisse /
Que de vos fu dedanz moi mise" (vv. 188-89). The sexual act is referred to, first in a general, euphemistic way, then, with the knight, by a more concrete image:

"C'oi je do tuen
Desque je fis l'autrier ton buen
(Lasse moi!) cline?
Mar m'i cochai soz toi sovine."

(Vv. 249-52)

For the bourgeois Richeut simply calls the act le commun jeu (v. 342). This expression is richly suggestive both of his lack of social distinction and of a kind of universal promiscuity.

The author has introduced many distinctions which are purely linguistic to oppose the scenes. For example, Richeut expresses her anger to the priest by saying, "Je ai assez coroz et ire" (v. 166); to the knight, "De mau talant su et eschauf / Qant je te voi" (vv. 243-44); and to the bourgeois, "Sire, por vos sui molt iriée" (v. 332). To express "pregnant" the first scene has prainz (v. 175), the second, ençainte (v. 283), and the third, enpraignée (v. 333). Distinct formulations for the physical manifestations of Richeut's pregnancy exist in the scenes with the priest and the knight: "Veez con li vantre se prove" (v. 179), and "Vos m'avez fait lo flanc lever" (v. 258). This motif is absent from the scene with the bourgeois, who is more concerned with whether he is capable of engendering a child than with whether Richeut is indeed pregnant.

In each scene there is an intervention on the part of the narrator. The point of intervention is different for each: before Richeut is paid anything by the priest, after she is given ten sous by the knight and before his call for food and wine for a party, after she is paid twenty sous by the bourgeois and before he promises wine, meat and bread on the morrow. The point at which the narrator intervenes is yet another detail which individualizes each scene and renders each more distinct from the others. In this way, the formal aspect of the text masks to a certain extent the basic similarity of each of the three situations.

The narrator's exclamatory comments in the scenes with the priest and the bourgeois underscore what is happening and orients the public's antipathies against Richeut. After she tells the priest that she is concealing her pregnancy because she loves him so much, the narrator exclaims: "Oz de pute orse, / Qui lo prevoire si amorse!" (vv. 216-17). When the bourgeois pays her, the narrator inveighs: "Or lo moine Ri. con
ivre. / De la putain!" (vv. 360-61). Both are in the form of exclama-
tions which raise the tone and invite the public to condemn Richeut. In
spite of rigorously analogous content, the author has managed to invent
quite distinct formulations.

In the scene with the knight, the narrator's comments contrast
with those indicated above. Whereas the other men resist Richeut, the
knight pays cheerfully and kisses her:

X. sous atrait de s'aumonieres,
Puis li doné a liee chiere,
Après la baise.

(Vv. 288-90)

In harmony with the knight's cheerful acquiescence, the narrator eschews
invective in favor of a proverb-like aphorism: "Qui putain loe, si
l'apaise" (v. 291). This variety on the level of detail is a good example
of the art of the author. Nevertheless, the basic message of each of the
interventions is the same, and the specific motif which reinforces the
identity of the content is the epithet pute. In each case, pute/putain
is a characterization of Richeut and confers on her the negative moral
charge associated with such a designation.

Principles of the Plot Structure

The analysis of the introduction of the work and the scenes of
Richeut's deception of her three main victims provide the basis for the
discovery of their subjacent principles of composition, which can be
generalized for the work as a whole.

These principles cannot be satisfactorily defined without intro-
ducing certain concomitant notions. An artistic construct always parti-
cipates to a very great extent in the means and vision of the cultural
and historical tradition of which it is a part. One of the most obvious
features of Richeut is its view of life as a stasis rather than as a
process. The view is communicated by the treatment of time and by the
manner of characterization.

The real time encompassed by the tale must be at least thirty
years. It starts before Richeut conceives, continues until Samson is old
even to go out into the world, and includes a twelve-year separation
(v. 1018) before mother and son meet again. The introduction suggests
that Richeut has experienced a good deal of living before the tale proper
begins. The effects which the passage of real time produces are ignored.
The lack of temporal verisimilitude is relatively unperceived by the
reader because the personages do not change; Richeut carries on her trade
at the end of the tale as she does in the beginning. It is quite clear
that the action is not to be seen as mimetic of real life, and, therefore,
it is not governed by the laws of real time. The image which suggests
itself is that of a series of panels or windows in a medieval church or
cathedral. Such windows often depict scenes from the Bible, which the clergy used to present the Christian story and its moral message. Each panel is complete in itself and yet is related in some way to all the others; they are disposed according to chronological succession. Between the narrative units in Richeut time is infinitely elastic, and within the units it is largely uncued.

One example in which there is a very discrete linguistic cue to indicate a telescoping of time can be found in the text between Richeut's campaign to become pregnant and her complaint to the priest:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Tant a alé desus desoz} \\
\text{Et a retraiç soñert et boz} \\
\text{Qu'ele est ençainte.} \\
\text{Or a la face megre et taïnte,} \\
\text{Dès or vialt faire sa complainte.} \\
\text{Au preste en vint.}
\end{align*}
\]  

(Vv. 149-54)

Her acts are put in the compound past and the result is in the present. This present is twice emphasized by or in verses 152-53; then she "went" to the priest. The mixture of past tenses and present is not in itself remarkable, since it is a standard practice in both this and many other medieval texts. The reader is surprised only when he realizes that Richeut is not only pregnant, she is visibly great with child (v. 179). The only transition between her conception and the scene in which it is visibly evident is found in the lines quoted above. It is as though the insistence on the word or were considered sufficient to indicate that the necessary lapse of time had occurred for her to have grown great with child. Three possible interpretations can be offered. The first is that the reiterated or can be perceived as an adequate framing device to separate two distinct moments, and the reader may assume that in this interval the necessary amount of time has elapsed to allow for gestation. The second is that Richeut's condition is accelerated, even instantaneous, because of the mandragora she took. But this drug is considered only an aphrodisiac and would not, in itself, imply any supernatural phenomenon. The third interpretation, and the most probable, is that the work exhibits little sense of time. It is as though temporal considerations were of no importance to the author, and he ignored them in favor of others. In the case of this passage in the text, the logical rapport of cause and effect seems to have completely obliterated the notion of the time required in reality for the cause to produce the effect. The author is careless about cuing the flow of time.

Certain expressions imply the passage of time, as, for example, the one in which Richeut complains to the knight:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{"J' estoie encor bien jovenete,} \\
\text{Or n'en iert mais qui s'antremete} \\
\text{De moi amer.}
\end{align*}
\]  

(Vv. 255-57)
But it is clear from the introduction that Richeut was never *jovenete* and that, if she appeared so to the knight, it was because she was artfully made up. This passage really does not signal the mutation caused by time; it is motivated only by Richeut's desire to make the knight feel that he has done her a grievous wrong. The reader understands that this is part of her deception and that *jovenete* and Richeut are incompatible concepts.

At two points an exact number of years is mentioned: "Vii. anzo plus fu en Sezille" (v. 989), and "Sansons ne l'a pas conëue / Car xii. anza ne l'ot vëue" (vv. 1017-18). The numbers seven and twelve probably have a symbolic value, but only in the second quotation is there any indication that the passing of time brings about any change. The twelve-year absence justifies Samson's inability to recognize his mother. The failure to recognize her is the key to his downfall, and it is a motif indispensable to the denouement. The reference to the twelve-year absence of Samson is motivated by symbolic considerations and as a justification for this necessary element in the plot; it does not give expression to the flow of time in which the story moves. Lacking expression, time is perceived as a blurred continuum without precise contours, which gives the action an atemporal quality. This carelessness can go so far as to violate the reader's experience-bound expectations, as in the case of Richeut's pregnancy. Perhaps one could call the mental outlook which informs this aspect of the work extra-temporal.

Another element of the *stasis* within the work is the personages. Each is, at the end of the work, what he was at the beginning. There are changes in the material situation of Richeut, the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois; they are linked to the theme and structure of the work and will be accounted for in these terms. Samson would appear to deny this affirmation: his life is traced from conception, through birth, childhood, adolescence and manhood. To a certain degree, it can be conceded that he manifests a dynamic development, rather than a static one; but the stages of his development, too, are wedded to theme and structure and will be discussed in this context. May it suffice for the moment to affirm that behind the polymorphous and successive views of Samson, there lies a single immutable type.

Succession as a Compositional Principle

Bédier saw *Richeut* as a work in which there is little plot, and most critics have judged the element of plot to be minimal. The scenes under examination are symptomatic of this characteristic. Richeut goes to each of her victims in turn. None of the victims, however, is led to establish relations with any others. None has a life which develops according to its own dynamism. Each one becomes animated only as a creature of Richeut's machinations. They exist in the work only as a reflection of her ambition. Because of this, the three personages who receive the most attention, after Richeut and Samson themselves, and who, consequently, represent the greatest potential for plot development, are
revealed to be simply pantins. Since it is Richeut who pulls the strings, interest remains centered on her, and the potential for plot creation is sacrificed in favor of magnifying her character.

In structural terms, the only relationship which the priest, the knight and the bourgeois have to each other is to appear always in the same ordered succession. They are visible only when Richeut is present (or her delegate Hersent, vv. 422-37). It is this point of view which dictates that the male victims remain unrelated. Nevertheless, they are doubly motivated: they serve to magnify Richeut, and they present the theme of female deception in dynamic concreteness.

As the Russian formalists have defined it, the distinction between plot and story has proved to be a useful one. The story is seen to be content presented in its normal chronological and/or cause-and-effect sequence. The degree of artistic transposition is roughly the degree to which this "normal" order is distorted in the process of presentation. It has been noted that the temporal dimension in Richeut does not attempt to fulfill the expectations of the reader, based on the conceptual model of "real," experiential time. Time is quantitatively blurred. However, the order of presentation in the work is never distorted, either in regard to chronology or to cause and effect.

The tale unfolds as a series of scenes and narrated events which are strung together according to the principle of chronological and logical succession. This order produces a linear pattern for which the *fil conducteur* is successively Richeut, then Samson. Starting in verse 755 and continuing to verse 1007, Richeut is eclipsed and linearity is maintained as Samson becomes the actor on which the story devolves. It is the simplest and most natural pattern. The tale first follows the heroine, then the hero, and finally, these two narrative lines blend into one from verse 1007 to the end. The relationship of the first two developments is clearly sequential, and only when the blending occurs and both agents are present is there any simultaneity between the Richeut and the Samson narrative lines. There is a twelve-year hiatus in the story of Richeut between the point (v. 755) that her son goes away and when they meet again in Beauvais. As though to stress that Samson's adventures are entirely unrelated to his mother's from a narrative point of view, Samson does not even know where to find her. He must first search for her in Berry and Paris before he locates her (but without knowing it) in Beauvais.

The twelve-year hiatus in the Richeut story is very revealing in regard to the treatment of time, the global structure of the work, and what the author intended as its primary interest. Plot complexity appears to have been subordinated to characterization. This characterization has less to do with character in the usual sense than with the establishment of a personage of appropriate magnitude to bear certain emotionally charged moral values. If the author had been interested primarily in a kind of fictionalized biography of a literary type, the lapse in the Richeut narrative line would appear completely unmotivated, and thus
absurd. The fact that one feels no curiosity about what has been transpiring in the life of the heroine, but a great deal of interest in what will happen when Richeut and Samson meet is an indication that the work is successful in orienting the interest of the reader to the clash of contending values, male and female, embodied in the protagonists. Once the theme of antagonism between the sexes has been constituted and Richeut's moral character established and sufficiently amplified, there is no further need for her until Samson is magnified enough to incarnate the opposing male principle.

It is evident that from his birth to his departure for the courts of the world (vv. 411-755), Samson is present in what is properly the Richeut narrative line, but he is a passive element in her story until the transitional section from verses 617 to 754. In this part, Samson exercises his own will for the first time. By his words and deeds it is seen that he not only possesses the main elements of his mother's nature and value system, but others derived from his education and from the fact that he is a man, both of which are inimical to Richeut.

Quantitative Proportion as a Principle of Composition

In the sculpture and graphic arts of the Middle Ages, the relative importance of a figure was indicated by its size. This technique can easily be seen in both Romanesque churches and Gothic cathedrals. As an example among many, the figure of God in judgment or God in glory in the upper register of the tympanum of the western portico of a Gothic cathedral dwarfs the figures which surround it. Quite apart from medieval perspective, it is a truism that in a literary or dramatic work a personage acquires importance in direct proportion to the amount of text devoted to him or to the length of time he is on stage. The thematic material makes of Richeut and Samson two hemispheres of a single event, the primal contest between the sexes. The quantity of text alone devoted to each of the protagonists tells the reader that here are the two important people of the tale and that they are of equal significance.

Though quantitatively the hero and heroine occupy the attention of the reader equally, the way in which this is done is distinct. Richeut is seen in her council of vengeance, her encounters with the priest, the knight, and the bourgeois, giving birth to her son, going to Mass, extracting ever more money from her victims and advising Samson before his departure. Of all these appearances, the encounters with the three male dupes generate the most verbal material and create the greatest effect. It is these scenes which translate the generalities about Richeut's evil nature into action and provide her with a commanding presence. As previously noted, the technique employed is to use direct address in confronting her respective adversaries and in overcoming them.
To magnify Samson's character to the extent of making him equal to his illustrious mother in the mind of the reader, the work provides a quantity of text which is equivalent to that devoted to Richeut. The process of magnification starts with Samson's education, which stresses his superior intelligence and scholarly accomplishments; his real interest, however, is in lechery, in which he also excels (vv. 617-45). The process of magnification is greatly enhanced in the scene with Richeut (vv. 647-751), where Samson rejects the estates offered by his mother and claims that he is superior at seduction because he is educated and knows about the ways of women through studying good writers. His self-affirmation in opposition to Richeut amplifies his image thematically, but it is his presence on center stage which increases it structurally. Moreover, Samson tells his mother and the reader how he thinks through direct address, which is more impressive and immediate than indirect narration. The work makes use of this technique at choice moments of the plot. Not only is this scene obviously a privileged moment, it is the first time he actually speaks—an excellent device by which to convey the limitless and overweening pride of his character.

Although Samson's image and presence are greatly enhanced in this scene, they are not sufficiently so. He must be provided with an arena far from the maternal presence to test his pride and to mature. From the point of view of structural economy, verbal material must be created in which he alone is the center of interest. Thus, from verses 755 to 984, the story line follows only him; his malevolent talents and relentless pride prove too much for the world, especially women, so he is perpetually victorious in his pursuit of pleasure and wealth.

Basically the author has reversed the process of generalization to concretization used for Richeut in treating Samson. Instead of the narrator making general statements about his character and using a dramatic dialogue to concretize it, as with Richeut, Samson's values and character are mainly exposed by Samson himself in his dialogue with his mother. The illustration of the acts which flow from such a character are all given in narrative, third-person form. Samson does not speak again until he meets Richeut after a separation of twelve years (v. 1104). Indeed, in the entire work there is no direct address by the personages unless Richeut is present, with the exception of verses 423-30, in which Hersent is apparently delegated to collect money from the priest and the others after Samson's birth.

The indirect style of narration of Samson's exploits creates an effective contrast with the dramatic style characterizing much of the first part of the work. It also prepares the final and most dramatic section of the work, which is largely in dialogue form, by providing a narrative contrast. It is ironic that in all of his victorious adventures Samson is never heard to speak, since it is frequently emphasized that his seductive power comes from his beautiful voice and use of language. This is stated most succinctly in verse 763, "Par sa parole les enlace." A more elaborated description of his prowess in this area can be found in verses 789-800. The author probably felt that to attempt to exemplify such a hyperbolic claim for his character would be an
unsound wager to cover. Samson's rhetorical accomplishments are, therefore, highly extolled but never illustrated.

Framing as a Compositional Principle

The tale is not characterized by a continuous flow of action from start to finish, but by fragmentation into many smaller units. The plot is carried forward by a mixture of narration and dialogue, occasionally by direct address on the part of Richeut. The narrator never effaces himself to allow the reader to react to the story itself, but he constantly intrudes with statements, comments and exclamations of his own. These interventions usually precede a narrative element, sometimes bracket it, and, more rarely, occur within it. Such a phenomenon is intimately related to the nature of the work itself. One aspect of this nature is that the moral significance of the personages and their acts is highlighted at least as much as the action and the actors themselves. An ancillary factor is that the work renders both acts and personages as perceptible as possible in the moral terms of the author. The exact moral view of the work will not be treated here, only the structural manifestations of such a view.

A modern work would probably contain material which could be classed into at least three categories: plot, character and setting. As in other works of the High Middle Ages, setting in Richeut is absolutely minimal, if it can be said to exist at all. To a great extent the material used to frame the action performs the function of setting in a more modern work. The narration is conditioned more by an ideological and moral charge than by a physical setting. A unit of narration formally oriented by such conditioning can be said to be framed. The length of the narrative units thus created vary greatly.

The frame always relates to the narrative unit itself in some way. This relationship can be broken down into four major categories: 1) enhancement, 2) orientation of sympathy, 3) moral emphasis, and 4) thematic underscoring. Enhancement has to do with material whose purpose is to stimulate interest. For example, the narrator announces that he is about to regale the audience with a great story:

Or diroie, s'avoie escout,
De li un conte
Qui trestoz les autres sormont.

(Vv. 65-67)

Orientation of sympathy means that the narrator guides the reader's affective identification with the personages in either a negative or a positive way. He intervenes after the narration in which Richeut extorts money from legions of men, for example, to ask, "Oistes mais si male fame, / Qui totjors quialt et rien ne semes?" (vv. 396-97). The same example serves to stigmatize Richeut and her acts as morally "bad," thus emphasizing the moral dimension of the action.
By thematic underscoring is meant that certain sections which advance the plot are formally separated, framed, by material which underlines the most significant thematic element. An instance of such underscoring can be found after the scene, largely in dialogue, in which Richeut and Samson discover themselves in conflict over the value of education in seductive enterprises. Closing this scene and demarcating it from the one in which Samson leaves home is the author's summation of the central point of the conflict:

Mout set Ri. de l'art d'amer  
Qui Sansonet vialt dostriner;  
Et mout en cuide  
Sansonez savoir par Ovide.  

(Vv. 747-50)

Because the moral thematics of Richeut are identical throughout the work, many narrative units are demarcated by frames having the same content, partially or entirely, as another frame. The formal detail, however, is always unique.

Since this pattern of framing can be found throughout the work, it would not be useful to identify each instance of it and relate every narrative unit to the material which delimits it. An example chosen at random should demonstrate the technique. It should also show how specific action is related to the general thematic universe of the work.

After Samson's departure from his mother, he is portrayed as a master of dominance and exploitation, both of the lecheors and of women. This hyperbolic account ends with:

Nean a force;  
.I. cotel a don les escorce,  
C'est la losange.  

(Vv. 831-33)

Samson's successes are explained in terms of deception (losange). The narrative unit and the frame are, therefore, linked by cause and effect. The cause, deception, emphasizes the underlying theme of the passage and thereby relates this particular unit with the work as a whole.

The following narrative section (vv. 837-51) recounts that Samson corrupts more than a thousand women and leaves them after having robbed them. It is introduced by:

Ce est Sansons qui toz nos vange  
Des pautonieres  
Qui si se font envers nos fieres.  

(Vv. 834-36)
The unit of action closes with:

Sansons a droit,
S'il les fames tient en destroit.
Ri. sa mere homes deçoit
Et ses ahane.

(Vv. 848-51)

Samson's actions, especially given their exaggerated character, may risk alienating the public. The introductory and closing frames relate to the passage in two ways: they attempt to make the audience identify with the hero by depicting him as the avenger for all men of the rejections which they suffer at the hands of women, and they serve as a justification for the excesses of Samson. The main identification element is nos toz, which automatically involves the male audience in complicity with Samson. The justification is two-fold: the first is based on the resentment the audience might personally harbor against women, and the second is based on the example of Richeut. If she ruins men, the argument would go, why would it not be just for Samson to despoil women? Thus the frames relate to the passage by orienting the reader's sympathies toward Samson, through identification, and by granting a positive moral value to his acts, through justification. At the same time, the word vange recalls the words of Richeut, "Commant m'an vanche?" (v. 114), thereby reemphasizing the general theme of hostility between the sexes which pervades the entire tale. This passage is typical at least in this sense: the acts of the personages are always bathed in the specific moral light which the author gives them. The commentary on every act and situation is the essence of the pattern here called framing.

One could probably relate every frame to its passage in a like way. Since much of the thematic material involved relates to the entire work, it is interesting to note the nature and frequency of such matter.

The most frequent interruption of the narrative development serves to orient the sentiments of the audience against Richeut. Both the general tenor of the work and explicit references (vv. 834-35, 985) indicate that the work assumes a male audience. Predictably, all of these condemnations of Richeut occur in the first half of the work. The first one comes in the introduction and calls upon God to confound Richeut (vv. 34-35). All of the other examples are placed after specific instances of the prostitute's exploitation. Of these, four use some form of the word putain to deprecate her (vv. 216-17, 291, 360-61, 522-23); one uses male fame (v. 396); one calls her a grosse horte (v. 379); and one gravely intones that it was an evil hour that she did not die in childbirth (vv. 406-7). The great majority of the above examples are in the form of exclamations which incite the public against her. The last example, by contrast, is in a matter-of-fact tone which sums up all of the preceding action and closes the chapter temporarily on her adventures: "Qui croit Ri. et qui la fot / Mout est chaiitis" (vv. 613-14). This statement, without rhetorical adornment, is as much an underscoring of the moral content of the work as a condemnation per se of our heroine.
He who has commerce with Richeut (or any woman; see vv. 16-18) and believes what she says will suffer dearly for it. Such a lesson is obviously addressed to men.

Similar techniques are used to create on the part of the reader a sympathetic solidarity with Samson. The male audience is told that Samson is the instrument of revenge for all of them against all those proud women who misuse them (vv. 834-36). Samson, being much stronger than other men, can carry out this terrible vengeance, of which the next 150 verses are an illustration. Both the actions of Richeut and those of Samson are thus justified at the outset by vengeance, hers against the priest, his against all women. By this device the author rules out the possibility, to the degree that he gains the reader's adherence, of judging specific acts by specific individuals as more or less good or bad. He makes ethical judgment entirely a matter of sexual identity, and, within the framework of the tale, the reader is obliged to adhere to its moral and affective norms. This one-time appeal to the masculine bias of the listeners to ally themselves emotionally with Samson is justified by the antipathies (or frustrations) they bear in their heart rather than by material intrinsic to the text. By their very number, the imprecations against Richeut versus this single appeal for solidarity with Samson create more enmity for the mother than actual sympathy for the son. The reason is clear. In the Middle Ages (and even today) both religious and social codes of morality made it easy to label Richeut a male fame, but in no way could Samson be called "good." The closest the work comes to a morally positive designation for Samson is to call him "right" in abusing women because Richeut exploits men (vv. 848-51). The reader is asked basically to admire Samson for a dominance of women which the reader himself cannot possibly achieve and thus to enjoy this power vicariously.

The work provides justifications for Samson's acts which serve to attenuate our judgment of them. These justifications are used formally to frame narrative units. The first is that Samson cannot escape from the fate of being of Richeut's nature, and, concomitantly, the delights of the world are too attractive to forsake. The first use of this justification by nature precedes the first description of Samson's hyperbolic gallant successes (vv. 629-30), the second comes as a frame between that description and his confrontation with his mother (vv. 644-46). Other places where this theme is introduced as an articulation include verses 774-76 and 981-82. The secondary justification—that of Samson's inability to leave the delights of the world and to "rise" to honor—can be found in verses 772-82 and 886-91.

The story line may also be interrupted by an aphoristic comment (v. 443) or simply a rhetorical exclamation (v. 1100). Frequently, the narrator comments on a thematic detail as a way of underscoring it (vv. 747-50), announces a tactic to be illustrated (vv. 1079-80), or summarizes a situation (vv. 1180-81). A very typical device is to announce in advance the plot elements which are to follow. Thus in verses 72-80 the reader is given a mini-plot summary of the work, and in verses 81-85 the phases of Samson's development. In verses 892-94 the
author declares that he is going to tell about Samson's "criminal sins"; there follows a long enumeration of the hero's excesses against men and women of the cloth. He announces Samson's defeat (vv. 986-88) before it is consummated. This device serves both to create suspense and interest as well as to frame a unit of material.

The final kind of content used in this technique has to do with style. The author warns that the language used will be raw because one cannot speak about a subject like Richeut par corteisie (vv. 68-71), and after describing the physical positions involved in Samson's love-making, the narrator apologizes:

Pardonez nos s'ansi parlons
Vos qui entandez nos raisons
Tex est l'estoire,
N'en volon oster ne aoire.
(Vv. 953-56)

Apart from the tone of complicity produced by verse 954, both of these passages basically serve to draw attention to the crude vocabulary by providing a fictitious justification for it. Verses 942-52 cannot be justified only by the remark "such is the story"; their justification must be sought elsewhere.

Three of the main compositional principles, then, are succession, quantity and framing. The first is probably entirely conditioned by the historic context of the work. The presentation of material in an order other than logical and chronological is a phenomenon which does not belong to the Middle Ages.

The proportioning of material in relationship to the magnification of the two principal protagonists is a natural development of the initial choice of having only two major personages representing only two points of view. Like the use of dialogue, this principle may have been influenced by the theater, which was then very vital, e.g., Le Jeu d'Adam.

The source of the peculiar compositional pattern which is here called "framing" would appear to lie in the particular intent of the work. Although there is no written record of popular tales in French before Richeut, it is unlikely that the genre did not exist. Moral didacticism of all kinds was more the rule than the exception in medieval literary production. The role of the Church, and particularly its role in education, easily accounts for the phenomenon. Richeut appears to be an outgrowth of these two traditions. It is the result of an attempt to make a tale of "low" mores serve as a vehicle for moral statements. Lacking any highly developed tradition in the art of narration and belonging to his time with his reflex to expostulate in a didactic framework, the author created an original combination. The result produced a structural pattern which carefully encases plot segments in moral commentary. It is an interesting enterprise and an original one.
Later works (Auberee, for example) have handled problems of plot
and character in a more sophisticated way. To devalue Richeut for want
of sophistication is to lack historical perspective and to miss the
unique blend of genres it attempts to realize. Neither should the work
be taken as a moral preachment. It is first a plaisanterie which plays
with moral themes.

Style and Vocabulary

The style of Richeut is undistinguished. It is the deliberate
low style found in the fabliaux and is consistent with the stylus humilis
appropriate to the subject. There is no indication of an attempt at
rhetorical virtuosity or embellishment and none to suggest that the
author was educated beyond the trivium. Nevertheless, his clerical and
literary culture is broad enough to subsume a knowledge of traditional
forms and to play upon them. His culture is implied less by occasional
Latinisms like meretrix and references to good authors, of which Ovid
alone is named, or even by his knowledge of lyrical forms taught in the
school, than by the fact that his work relies on a knowledge of tradit-

ional forms for its effect. Indeed, much of the esthetic pleasure
derived from this work is based less on what it says than on the contrast
between its tone and matter and those of works it evokes. This contrast
is sometimes carried out with a light touch and sometimes with great
insistence, as with the use of courtois.

The cauda stanza form appears to have been chosen for its asso-
ciations with the celebration of the Christian cult in hymns in Latin.
Rooted in Church Latin prosody, it acquired a more generalized use for
satirical subjects, specifically for mocking things ecclesiastical and
for subjects of a profane and ribald nature. (See pp. 80-83.)
The form with its ecclesiastical resonances becomes a grotesque foil
for the subject matter of the story, which seems to have been its unique
function in Richeut. Little use is made of its potentialities otherwise.
An individual stanza rarely is used as a formal unit to embrace a single
idea. The number of run-on lines is so high as to suggest that the form
and content are not organically related. Occasionally, however, the
cauda of four feet serves an expressive function of mise en relief. A
few examples are: "C'est lecherie" (v. 26), "De la putain!" (v. 361),
"La menestrel" (v. 539), "Et lo lechois" (v. 621), "C'est la losange"
(v. 833), and "Cortoisemant" (v. 881). The felicitous expressive use of
the cauda is, nevertheless, rare.

The same kind of parodie, mocking technique seems to enhance both
protagonists. The exaggerated rhetorical build-up that the author
accords Richeut at the outset can only have suggested the exemplary life
of a Christian saint in the twelfth century. Much of the enjoyment which
the readers derived from the unholy enterprises of the heroine must have
come from their knowledge of hagiographic literature and the contrasts
which Richeut must have conjured up in their minds. Samson, too, was
probably seen in this way. Frequently, saints' lives start with a
recounting of the exceptional qualities of humility or charity prefiguring the marvelous Christian destiny that the saint realizes as an adult. Samson's extreme aptitude in school and early hyperbolic successes in lechery are probably also part of this pattern.

Likewise, certain motifs associated with romances appear to be a parody of known forms. The mother (Richeut) who gives her son precepts to live by before he goes out into the world to become a man and a full-fledged knight, is one of these topoi. (See Chrétien's Perceval.) Richeut, however, teaches Samson how to seduce and exploit women. The voyage throughout the world is another one of the features familiar to romances, as is the knight-errant. It is probably significant that Samson's wanderings last exactly twelve years, and it is certainly significant that instead of suffering and moral elevation, he continually experiences the victories he seeks with women and, therefore, moral degeneration. Exactly what romances were known at the time of Richeut is unclear. Perhaps they were in the form of oral tales which the author refers to under the name of lais bretons (v. 800).

The chanson de geste is suggested in burlesque fashion, principally by the device of hyperbole. Samson's conquering women by the hundreds and thousands recalls the prowess of Roland and his peers against their heathen adversaries, for example.

Once the reader has been sensitized to the parodie elements of the work, even more possibilities can be entertained. Richeut can be seen as the Virgin Mary because of the insistence that Samson has no father. The Immaculate Conception is replaced by mandragora and Richeut's indiscriminate coupling (vv. 144-51), and Samson's final humiliation can be seen as a grotesque echo of Christ's crucifixion. It is even quite possible, considering that Samson "moines devint a Clerevax" (v. 895), that the author is specifically mocking the cult of the Virgin Mary which was being greatly encouraged by St. Bernard at the Cistercian abbey of Clairvaux, where he died in 1153. The parodie elements in the work are painted in with a broad brush and do not appear to mock any particular work. There appear to be, for example, no formulas from any of these genres directly adopted for use in this tale.

The low style is deliberately related to the nature of the content: he who recounts Richeut's life cannot do so using courtly style (vv. 70-71). The emphasis is on content, and the use of rhetorical figures is rare. Physical descriptions of the personages, for example, are general and are more concerned with the ideology of the work than with any visual image. The author describes Samson's hands as beautiful but immediately follows this truncated portrait with "Fames afole" (v. 792), which shows that the physical detail is only a detail, hardly significant in itself, and it is motivated by Samson's capacity to seduce. The work is anything but a pretext for rhetorical virtuosity. The most frequent figure is banal and belongs to popular speech, i.e., a figure of extension: "De si a Bar n'en a son per / De lecherie" (vv. 644-45). This figure is used to show Samson's superiority. There
are many others which show the geographical range of his conquests; these include Western Europe and exotic lands beyond it.

There are many images which devalue women. These may be particularly perceptible to those of us who are living in the cultural climate of the feminist movement, but for any period such images result in the perception of women as objects, and rather vulnerable and abject ones at that. None of Samson's victims is individualized; all are treated in wholesale fashion and in exaggerated quantities. Samson seduces and makes prostitutes of more than a thousand (vv. 640 and 837), and he seduces, robs and abandons seven hundred (vv. 846-57). The description of the love positions Samson makes his victims assume (supine being the only attitude acceptable to the Church, all others considered sinful aberrations) objectifies and devalues women (vv. 945-52). This description is followed, after the author apologizes for his language, by the frankly sadistic "Maintes en monta sor les dos / A cui il fist croistre les os" (vv. 959-60). Other examples which show both hostility and a deprecating attitude toward women include:¹

Ce est Sansons qui toz nos vange
Des pautonieres
Qui si se font envers nos fieres.  (Vv. 834-36)

Sansons les point jusq'a la vaine,
Il les met en la grant alaine,
Les malsenees.  (Vv. 843-45)

Del Noagre de ci c'au Toivre
N'avra qui miauz sache deçoivre
Char de famele.  (Vv. 855-57)

These examples illustrate that content is more important than form, which in these cases is undistinguished. The depreciation of women is, on the other hand, an essential theme in the work. It may be suspected that a certain amount of this material is gratuitously pornographic and min­imally motivated artistically.

There are other indications of a tendency to introduce a sexual allusion where possible, e.g., coille (v. 808) for what must be coule, "cowl" of a habit; Richeut manages to question the knight's race, generosity, and sexual potency when she says, "Maldite soit vostre racine / Qui si poi giete" (vv. 253-54); Samson "i. cotel a don les escorce, / C'est la losange" (vv. 832-33); and "Maint cuer a fait triste et dolant / L'angin Sanson" (vv. 910-11). It may be that croist and croit (vv. 511, 613, etc.) are homonyms and another example of ambiguous sexual allusions.

¹Italics mine.
All critics who have dealt with Richeut have tended to ignore the very evident theme of dominance and arrivisme. There is always an implied contrast between images of worldly success and immorality. Richeut not only exercises an officially proscribed activity, but also resorts to threats, extortion and even murder when less violent means of deceit are not successful. The wages of such transgressions are tellingly expressed in a few key images, which are in strong contrast with the situation of her victims, who are, if not paragons of morality, at least less immoral and less rapacious than Richeut.

The most important of these images is the feast or party (escot) in which Richeut and her lieutenant take their ease amidst an abundance of food, wine and creature comforts. Richeut is first found in such an atmosphere (vv. 86-143), and she returns regularly after her foray in search of gain (vv. 272-308), during her confinement, as Herselot returns with the booty she has extracted from their gulls (vv. 438-65), after collecting another tribute from her victims (vv. 526-50), and finally, in the scene of Samson's downfall (vv. 1212-end). This image is in contrast with that of the impoverished priest:

Tant l'a Ri. feru el mol
Qu'il a grisset mantel au col;
Or est au lange.

(Vv. 573-75)

The knight mortgages his lands and fiefs (vv. 580-81). The bourgeois will lose his money-changing business (v. 576) and will sign over all his rents (v. 603). Richeut, on the other hand, lives lavishly on their ruin: "Si [elle] s'en conroie richemant" (v. 611).

Upon Samson's birth Richeut receives the promised tribute from the "fathers." She goes to Mass, which gives her the pretext for displaying, somewhat theatrically, the external trappings of her newly won status. Whereas the escot is indicative of her creatural abundance in the intimacy of the ostel, her attendance at Mass shows her social metamorphosis, i.e., the new perception that others have of her. The most obvious element is vestimentary. Her attire amazes and intimidates her erstwhile clientele and, with the aid of artful make-up, makes her appear a beautiful maid:

Mantel a ver, grant coe trait.
N'i a lechër ne agait,
Tuit ont mervoille;
L'uns a l'autre dit et conseille
O el prant ce don s'aparoille;
"Lo vis a bel,
O prist ele si bon mantel,
Et cel chainse ridé novel
Qui si traîne?"
Ele a ŕu bone gecine.
This image of opulence is continued as she makes her way home allowing her train to trail in the dust (v. 486) and defies the lecheors by announcing that the price of her favors has gone from a maaille to a denier (vv. 493-97). Her economic status now allows her to project on the onlookers an externalized psychological state of being baude et fiere (v. 487). This comédie is a façade and a pose carefully carried out by the heroine. In reality it is an extension of the use of make-up, which is stigmatized as a device women use to fool men (v. 19), but such is the nature of social status that the façade becomes the reality. The efficacity of this farce can be represented by the denier versus the maaille, i.e., by economic gain. The point cannot be missed—money, power and, in a sense, grudging respect are the wages of Richeut’s immoral activities.

Samson’s career follows analogous lines to his mother’s. Though the image of Samson as an ever-victorious conqueror is dispersed throughout the text, the same contrast between real social status and worldly success is emphasized. He has neither lands nor fiefs (v. 862), the basis of power and wealth of the nobility; nevertheless, he lives from his immoral activity (v. 889, etc.), and he lives richemant (v. 890). Enough has been said about his humiliation of women, but his lack of hesitation to violate taboos or normal decency to attain his goal—gain—must be stressed:

Assemblé en a plus de .c.,
Si ne li chaut si sont parant;
Ses espose, c’ume n’en prant
Mais qu’il gaaint.

(Vv. 882-85)

The way the word courtaios is employed in Richeut is particularly significant. The period after 1150 was characterized by revolutionary intellectual and social change in France. In many of the works of the time certain fundamental values during the period prior to 1150 started to undergo certain semantic shifts which would adapt them to a world view eventually given adequate expression in the courtly novel. Richeut and the romans antiques are products and documents of this creative age of contending values reflected in literary expression. They all reveal the vestigial meanings attached to key words like courtaios, preu, and honor, along with the newer acceptations of these words. All tend to use these terms, however, in a way which places them more in the semantic orbit symbolized by courtaios, rather than by the older ethic which coalesces around the concept of vasselage. Individual words, of course,

1See Glyn Sheridan Burgess, Contribution à l'étude du vocabulaire pré-courtois (Geneva: Droz, 1970), chap. I.
receive their value not only from the general cultural and historical environment in which they function, but also, and more specifically, from the more immediate context of which they are a part: the individual work, paragraph and sentence. The use of the term courtois and its variants constitute a fundamental element of the value system in Richeut.

Before the second Crusade in 1147, courtois referred to a man who had the qualities to belong to the court of the king or a lord. These courts were simply the entourage of the lord and had an essentially military character. For example, when Olivier in the Chanson de Roland is called "li proz et li curteis" (v. 576), it means that he is a brave soldier and a faithful vassal. Olivier is certainly not valued for his distinguished refinement and cultivation of social graces. The author of Richeut uses precisely the same formulas consacrated in the Chanson de Roland—preu et cortois—on two occasions (vv. 310 and 1123). This usage appears to be a conscious mockery of a literary form which is at odds with the context and, therefore, completely emptied of its meaning. The technique of using a traditional form in a context in which it is totally unmotivated and inappropriate is, of course, a fundamental parody device. In these cases, the suggestion of virile military virtues evokes an immediate contrast with the situation involving scheming exploitation.

Except in the above two instances of the parodic retention of the atavistic formula from the world of the chanson de geste, all of the other eleven occurrences of courtois imply the new meaning of the term, which derives from the change in the referent from a military entourage to a social center in which the influence of women played a very large role. These courts reflected and catalyzed the changing ideal of the chevalier from one possessed of the virtues of a warrior to one having the social graces and manner of speech appropriate to polite society. During the Crusades contacts with knights from the south of France and with the sumptuous courts of the East, like that of the Emperor of Byzantium, introduced French knights to new styles of life and social attitudes. The most significant of these was the courtly ideal, then in full flower in Occitania. Aliénor d'Aquitaine and her daughters are granted a major role in promoting this ideal in France and in stimulating literary productions which embody it. It is now rather well established that the courtly ideal imported from Occitania met resistance in the north of France and was never well assimilated into its mores or literature, in spite of much good will on the part of writers like Chrétien. Both the self-sacrificing generosity and the free equality between the sexes in courtoisie were undigestible ideals which could easily slip from the sublime to parody and mockery in the gaULOIs and practical turn of mind of the French.

Richeut is a witness to the resistance to the generous ideals of courtoisie. The narrator insists that neither his subject nor his style is courtly (v. 71), but he makes frequent use of the term. Courts are the arena for Samson's activity, and it is there that he really schools himself, having already acquired a clerical education:
It should be noted that courts are associated with the idea of wealth and the presence of attractive, rich women (v. 683). The term courtoise, when applied to women, has the positive value of beautiful in the romans antiques: "S'avré les fames / Et les cortoises riches dames" (vv. 682-83). It also contains an idea of style in comportment and speech:

Bien set parler devant .i. roi
Et devant conte
Bel et cortoisemant sanz honte.

It should also be noted that courtoise attempts to provoke Samson by accusing him of lacking these positive values:

"San. n'ies pas, par Saint Alaire,
Frans ne cortois ne debonaire,
Por noiant te vantes.

Twice Richeut refers to Dan Vïel as cortois. The first time comes after he has not only agreed to give her money, but sends immediately for good wine and food (v. 297). The second time is at the moment that she invites Samson to choose an estate. In this case, it is simply a designation of class and completes the triptych—lo prestre, lo borjois, lo cortois (v. 654).

The value of the term courtois is undermined in several ways. One is the parodic context which alerts the reader to mistrust the value of the word in a tale that cannot be told par cortoisse (v. 71). Another is the inflation of the use of the term; in the end practically everyone is designated as courtois. The most important way in which the positive meaning is negated is through associating courtoisie with lecherie and, eventually, trecherie:

Lo jeu des dez aprist par tans
Et lo lechois.
Volantiers vait o les cortois.

The juxtaposition and association of two concepts which, if courtois is to preserve its positive ideal, must be rigorously distinct, provides the key to the assault mounted against the courtly ideal in this work.
When the author says that

Ri. desjuge les cortois,
Clers et chevaliers et borjois
Et les vilains,

(Vv. 58-60)

he is suggesting that courtois is not a special category but one which embraces all classes of men. What they have in common is sexual appetites and a desire to satisfy them. No one is exempt, and there is no religiously or socially legitimate love in the work. It is as though all men were reduced to an essentially sexual nature without religious, social, or moral principles. This primitive nature is then shown to be the motor for deception and gain which governs the fortunes of both men and women. It is the vision, very likely, which led Bédier to describe Richeut as a cynical tale. It opposes the primitive nature of man to a beautiful ideal; its heroes use the trappings and devices of the ideal for profit, exploitation and sinister self-aggrandizement. Is this not the underlying message in the following passage?

Sansons est sages,
De totes corz set les usages;
Entre amanz porte les mesages
Cortoisement.
Asamblé en a plus de .c.,
Si ne li chaut si sont parant;
Ses espouse, c'une n'en prant
Mais qu'il gaaint.

(Vv. 878-85)

Samson knows the ways of courtly life, so he plays his role in due form, cortoisement; but he is a knower in a more significant sense. He knows that beneath the artifice, however noble, lies the more primitive reality of power, wealth, and sexual gratification. Perhaps the real country maids who served as models for literary incarnation in works like the pastourelle would have understood, too, the gap between reality and the idealism of courtly language. His personal motives can never be known, but, clearly, the author of Richeut is intractably opposed to a courtly view of life and the nature of man.

Speaking of the romans antiques, Burgess states:

On pourrait même dire qu'un monde stoïque s'est transformé en un monde épicurien, parce que le bonheur terrestre, le plaisir (où la mesure est l'équivalent de la moderation d'Epicure), et la joie d'amour commencent à être préférés à la sévérité et la rigueur de la vie héroïque d'un Roland. ... Après la foi qui cherche à comprendre, c'est l'amour charnel qui cherche comme
but ultime une vie spirituelle établie en marge de l'Eglise, une vie spirituelle laïque et mondaine. (Pp. 17-18)

If this characterization is accurate for the period in France after 1150 as manifested in the romans antiques, Richeut certainly bears witness to an opposing view. The rapacious nature of men, and particularly of women, as presented in Richeut, is such that the ideal degenerates into a façade masking a more primitive struggle for power, wealth and dominance, in which men and women are condemned to perpetual conflict.
CHAPTER III

INTERPRETATIONS

Richeut as Exemplar of the Corrupt Nature of Women

The work appears, at least on its surface, to be a tract against women. From the outset all women are characterized by debauchery and treachery. Richeut is presented as a superior example of the sisterhood; she particularizes their general evil by incarnating it in the story. Her superiority is affirmed as early as verse 5 ("Maistresse fu de lecherie") and by her role as teacher (vv. 28-33). Her superior role is justified by her experience in the world (vv. 31-32). The reiterated condemnations of Richeut (v. 34 et al.) in no way exculpate any individual woman. The condemnation is general and allows for no exception: "El mont n'en a nes une bone" (v. 16). The reason that there is no appeal and no casual exception possible is clearly put forward—evil is rooted in the very nature of women: "Il lor vient d'ancesserie" (v. 27). In the cultural climate of the period, this affirmation must necessarily link woman's nature with the original sin of Eve. It is evident that both the Christian mythology of original sin and Richeut emphasize themes of lecherie and trecherie.

This ontological view of women is not distinguished from a genetic concept. The value placed on blood ties in the medieval period is well known, and even Richeut states, "Je sui nee de bone gent, / .Vii. chevalier sont mi parant" (vv. 274-75), as a means of enhancing her own worth. "Nature" probably embraced without distinction a genetic concept as well as one based on the Bible and on the teachings of the Church. It is noteworthy that in this work there is no reflection of that positive image of womankind, the second Eve who is the Virgin Mary and whose cult was growing in twelfth-century France. As Christ's sacrifice offered hope to mankind and helped attenuate the stark view of its sinful nature, so, in an analogous way, did the cult of the Virgin help to blunt the totally negative concept of women as the source of all sin. This positive side of the coin is never presented in Richeut.

The idea that actions and character are to some extent socially conditioned obviously has no place in the work. The acts and words of the personages are presented as the effect and the confirmation of their moral nature. The presentation of Richeut, for example, follows this order. Her evil nature is presented first; then her past acts confirming
this nature are recounted; and, finally, her actions within the tale are presented as manifestations of this nature. It is this kind of perception which allows one to speak of determinism in *Richeut*—a determinism, however, which is more ontological than social or hereditary.

The view of women in the work is that of predators without moral scruple. Medieval French society recognized only one justification for a sexual act on the part of women, that of procreation within marriage. Even in this case, many Church moralists proscribed pleasure in the act, and husbands were warned against the danger of falling in love with their wife. In this moral context, women in *Richeut* are thrice stigmatized: for engaging in the sexual act—"lo jeu commun," as *Richeut* calls it; for apparently enjoying it; and for taking money from men. Moreover, they do these deeds by deception and make men fous. Their commerce with men is summed up at the beginning and elaborated by *Richeut* throughout the work:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Qant .i. valiez a que doner,} \\
\text{Bien se sofrent a acoler} \\
\text{Por lui traîr et afoler:} \\
\text{C'est lecherie.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Vv. 23-26)

In the view of this work, the nature of all women can be encompassed in its essence by the epithet "*Richeut,"* or whore.

**Men as Victims: Sexual Identity and Moral Distortion**

Men are presented as the victims of feminine predatory instincts and as being universally so. *Richeut*’s chosen dupes, representing the significant strata of medieval society, are ruined; but so is everyman. Most of the tale is generated by proposing an exception to this general rule, Samson. For a time the hero gives a good account of himself, and the male world can take heart in the fact that its defeats are being avenged and that it, too, has a champion to match the wiles of *Richeut*. But after being alerted to listen for "quel non il ot" (v. 85) and hearing that he was named for "Seignor Sanson" (v. 451), the reader knows that his hero is destined for defeat as well as for glory, and that the defeat will be, to use *Richeut*’s words, "par art de fame" (v. 726). Samson’s fate thus confirms the rule of the victimization of men.

Samson is every bit as devastating to women as *Richeut* is to men. By failing to individualize any of his victims, the author arouses no sympathy for their plight. Only the ruining of male victims is dramatized. Samson’s prey are presented en masse. Below are samples of the type of expression most frequently used:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Au bordel en a envoiees} \\
\text{Plus d’un millier.}
\end{align*}
\]

(Vv. 639-40)
The exaggeration may have, in part, a humorous intention; but it also
dehumanizes women.

One of the fundamental questions which must be answered is why
the work sympathizes more with Samson than with Richeut. The way in
which it is done is apparent; the world view which informs the work is
less so. A great deal of emphasis is placed not only on the lechery of
women, but also on their motives of venal and deceitful exploitation of
men. Why should not Samson suffer an analogous stigma? Because he is a
man, he is not evil by nature. The nature of women is presented as
immutably corrupt and, therefore, this same nature justifies their being
made to suffer. Also, there is an idea of vengeance: since women use men
cruelly, they should get a dose of their own medicine.

The author did not invent these prejudices, of course. They are
of his time and probably deeply ingrained in the audience to whom he is
addressing himself. A degrading view of women is not only buttressed by
theological metaphysics and Christian mythology, but it is implicit in
practically all popular literature indigenous to Northern France. The
main exceptions are female martyrs, literature influenced by Occitan
models and the Tristan tradition.

Rapport Between the Sexes: Radical Hostility

Whatever the cultural, historic and personal reasons for this
view, Richeut pictures the two sexes posed one against the other in
unremitting hostility. It is true that both heroine and hero abuse
members of their own sex, but this treatment should probably be seen
only as a device to demonstrate their superiority in deception and
strength. The war of each one is waged against the whole of the opposite
sex just because it is the opposite sex. Their actions are rooted in
their attitudes of hostility. As Richeut states it, it is a struggle to
see which sex can be more cruel to the other through the quintessential
representative of each:

"Si m'aït Dex,
De nos .ii. est li plus cruex
0 je vers omes
0 il vers fames? car mout somes
Saje de l'art."

(Vv. 1022-26)

The hostile attitude toward the opposite sex is twice expressed in terms
of vengeance, once for Richeut and once for Samson. The hostility
between the sexes has a particular arena of action and its own special modalities.

**Samson: Victor and Victim**

The work creates a male counterpart to Richeut to mirror her vast destructive power over the opposite sex and thus to present her with an opponent of sufficient magnitude to enhance the interest of the final joust between these champions of their respective classes. To achieve this end and yet to retain the image of men as victims of the rapacity of venal feminine nature, the author invented two major solutions. The first concerns the symbolic associations of the name Samson. He is the perfect image of the lover and strong man who falls victim to feminine deceit. The reader is thereby mindful that beneath the arrogant masculine strength there lies a vulnerability which can be reached by female guile. The second solution is to model Samson's attitudes and actions on those of his mother and to explain them in terms of her nature. The same nature which is an object of opprobrium in women is the key to Samson's successes, with which the work would have the reader identify positively, since the victims are women. That Samson is like his mother is frequently emphasized (vv. 76, 981-82, etc.), as is Samson's identification with Richeut's nature (vv. 629-30, 644-46, 744-76).

Although Samson's inherited nature explains his actions, the fact that he is a man opens avenues to him which make him less one-dimensional than Richeut. She is entirely what her nature dictates—a whore. Samson, unlike his mother, is educated. He is a superior product of the education of his time, which is mainly rhetorical. His use of the spoken word in his gallant successes is directly related to his education. It also puts him in contact with a world of ideas which are out of the ken of Richeut and which are generally inimical to women. In matters of seduction he opposes his knowledge of Ovid to his mother's empirical knowledge. Not only is this difference an important source of conflict between them, it is also a source of and justification for his sense of superiority and his overweening pride. When Samson is brought down, it is a victory for empiricism over livresque learning as a source of knowledge, as well as for feminine deceit over men; the humbling of this male pride (Samson has to beg for his life) is perhaps the main element which makes the reader aware that there is a real fall, a primal defeat, in the end. Not incidentally, loss of one's proud pretensions and station is a frequent element in tragedy as a genre; and pride, especially intellectual pride, has always been considered the greatest of sins for a Christian.

On the moral level Samson is presented as though the only obstacle which prevents him from attaining a life of spiritual elevation is the legacy of his mother's nature and, concomitantly, the delights of the world (vv. 772-82, 886-91). The possibility of living a life of moral rectitude confers on Samson at least the potential of moral choice not granted to women; that his immoral life is determined by Richeut's nature is, at once, a notion which attenuates the moral judgment of his acts and
further stigmatizes feminine nature. The waste of the promise of a strong, clever young man, therefore, is imputed to women as well.

In an analogous way, Samson's choice to eschew a socially useful estate in favor of debauchery is based again on the nature he inherited from Richeut (vv. 629-30) and on the perception that lechery and Richeut's machinations have corrupted and despoiled these estates (vv. 648-61, 672-77).

These factors serve to provide for Samson a moral nature which is richer and more sympathetic than that provided for Richeut. They also serve to concentrate negative moral judgments on women, while at the same time accounting for Samson's gallant successes.

Christian Moralist or Cynical Social Observer: the Real Moral View of the Author?

In Richeut the world is divided first into women and men. Regardless of other designations—fame, meschine, cortois riches dames, nonain, mere, fille, tante, niece or espose—women are presented as being, in essence, putains. The social and personal traits which distinguish men and classes of men fall away to reveal a fundamental unity—man, the victim of women. The strongest among them must eventually conform to this fate. There remain only two categories of human nature, male and female, and these are opposed in an irreconcilable struggle.

Likewise, the vast domains normally assumed to be the theaters of human activity are reduced to the primitive arena of sexual commerce, lo lechois. This activity alone is shown to bring worldly success and prosperity.

A traditional moral framework requires that Samson's analogous behavior be justified. This justification is essentially based on sexual identity. In Richeut's case there exists a clear contrast between the progressive rise in Richeut's social and economic fortunes and the fall of her victims' fortunes. Richeut's economic ascent contrasts with her moral degradation. Since her nature does not change, this degradation is translated in quantitative terms by the level of her activity, the increased price of her services and the size of the tribute which she exacts from her three privileged victims. Richeut's rake's progress presents a contrast with the steady course toward ruin experienced by her male victims because the key to their downfall is their basic moral concern for the welfare of "their son." There is also an incidental admixture of paternal, class and professional pride involved. They ruin themselves for the sake of Samson, and Richeut values Samson for the money she receives on his behalf (vv. 77-80); it is clear that the wealth is largely diverted to Richeut's uses:

Li danz set bien qu'ele dit voir,  
Si li charje tot son avoir.
Richeut's rise parallels that of Samson's growth. He reaches the end of his school education and is initiated into the world of gaming and gallantry precisely at the point at which his "fathers," pursuing morally acceptable careers, are completely destitute. He has only to have the confrontation with his mother, display his male arrogance and faith in books, and set off to be matured by experience in the world. He is already completely formed as far as his character is concerned.

Quite apart from the distinction in moral orientation in the treatment of the two protagonists, their immoral activities of lechery and deceit gain them high rewards in worldly terms. Both live richemant on such activities (vv. 611, 890).

In the end Samson is outmaneuvered by Richeut and suffers a humiliating defeat. The work ends with the ambiguous "En la maison se gist toz liez" (v. 1318). The difficulty which the reader experiences in imagining Samson's participation in this general merriment is symptomatic of his hesitation vis-à-vis the sense of the work as a whole.

That Richeut is a kind of plaisanterie de clerc does not dissipate the many problems the text presents. Behind the laughter there exist serious preoccupations and a real world view. All works which treat neither great national figures nor the great themes of Christianity can, in twelfth-century France, be considered trivial. It is a global historical and literary tradition which makes this so. There existed no literary genre of the time ready-made for the expression of individual, "counter-cultural" views of reality. Such visions were either kept in check or were given expression in "trivial" genres, where they could pass as simple divertissements of minor importance. Such works, whose existence can only be imagined, had little chance of surviving the risky transmission process down to modern times. And yet, in a larger sense, is it so trivial to attempt to define relationships between the sexes? What would the works of Molière—never the darling of the Church—have been, devoid of this theme? One would appear justified, therefore, in inquiring beneath the comic mask about the real views and intentions of the author.

There are at least two basic interpretations possible. The first takes all material in the text at face value. This view interprets Richeut as an incarnation of the quintessence of female nature and assigns all misfortunes of men, both moral and economic, to the nefarious effect of the evil nature of women. The greatest of men, Samson, is seen as succeeding and failing to the degree to which he participates in the corrupt nature of women. Having received his mother's nature, he can undo any woman, but when he meets the pure essence of feminine deceit in the shape of Richeut, it is he who is defeated. In this way, all of the
evil and immorality recounted is blamed on women, and specifically on their corrupt nature. Even Samson's inability to rise to an honorable, spiritual life is made the fault of Richeut's legacy. This reading of the work would make it very traditional in its view of women. The fact that it portrays women as irredeemably determined to evil by their sexual nature, though it seems unjustly sexist to the modern conscience, does not mean that it represented either an unorthodox or shocking view to twelfth-century contemporaries. In this regard, Richeut fits well into the generally misogynous repertory of French medieval literature and runs counter to the more sympathetic view of women portrayed in the romans antiques and in the works of Marie de France and Chrétien de Troyes.

Another interpretation, which constitutes an enlargement of the preceding one, seems indicated. Three themes which permeate the work will be analyzed as a basis for such an interpretation: knowledge, deception and exploitation.

The first of these themes concerns the nature and value of education and knowledge. Richeut and Samson are distinguished not only by their sexual identity, but also by the differences in their cognitive formation. Samson possesses all the knowledge which formal education can give him, and Richeut is without any education in letters. Nevertheless, she is presented as possessing a certain knowledge. While all women are adept by nature in debauchery and deception (vv. 26-29), Richeut's enseignement (v. 30) instructs them in these arts. Her knowledge is perfected empirically: "Ri., qui fu mout longuemant / Par tot lo monde" (vv. 31-32). The verb savoir is used rarely for Richeut and then in an insignificant way (e.g., vv. 185, 348, 608, etc.). Three times, however, the theme of her knowledge of the art of seduction is reiterated:

N' i a si cointe dont el n' ait
Car trop set d' arz.
Ri. lace de totes parz.

(Vv. 551-53)

Cointe, from COGNITU, here means knowledgeable. Arz in the entire work is always used in the sense of the art(s) of seduction. This semantic restriction is probably a technique for mocking the value of other arts and reducing them to the one single important art in the world of this tale. The use to which Samson puts his school education is the best case in point. The second example of the formula is the previously mentioned "Mout set Ri. de l' art d' amer" (v. 747). The final use is the most significant, in that it implies that both Richeut and her son possess this specific kind of knowledge and serves to underscore the importance of their encounter as a contest in which only one personage, sex and kind of education can be shown superior. Richeut says:

"Si m' aït Dex,
De nos .ii. est li plus cruex
O je vers omes"
O il vers fames? car mout somes
Saje de l'art."

(Vv. 1022-26)

Richeut's knowledge, then, embraces a very narrow range; but this particular area is sufficient to assure her great success in the world and to ruin those who treat with her.

The theme of Samson's education is introduced long before he is born as a way of emphasizing its importance and of orienting the expectations of the reader:

Or escotez
Conmant il fu conçuz et nez
Norriz, apris et dostrínez.

(Vv. 81-83)

The young boy is sent to school "par la parole" (v. 555). There he learns grammar, all kinds of lyrical forms (vv. 559-67, 623-24) and logic (v. 619). The school training he receives in eloquence becomes his most important device for seduction. Samson is given a second kind of education before leaving his mother—an education in seduction—which also includes an admonition "de bel parler" (v. 746). It has been noted that he knows how to speak "bel et cortoisement" even to counts and kings (vv. 769-71), but this proof of his social polish is secondary to his principal enterprise: "Par sa parole les enlace" (v. 763). The hero has other positive qualities, but his main knowledge is rhetorical, namely, his ability to speak beautifully. He perverts his clerical training, however, by using it as a weapon for deception and seduction.

An admixture of perversion was part of Samson's education almost from the beginning. The schoolmaster understands that Samson is special and why; already money appears as a corrupting presence in what should be a disinterested activity:

N'ot en l'escole si porvers,
Mout bien aprant,
Et li maistres bien i entant
Por lo grant loier qu'il en prant
Del preste fol.

(Vv. 568-72)

Whatever *porvers* means exactly in this context, it establishes the coexistence of learning in a positive sense with knowledge of proscribed matters. A kind of *glissement* occurs which takes Samson from an intellectually superior student to the domain of *lechois* (vv. 617-21). The same cleverness which explains his superiority in school is immediately associated with his abuse of women: "[Samson] mout avoit l'angien sotil; /
Maintes fames mist a essil" (vv. 73-74). Samson triumphs in the same way his mother does, but his school training allows him to penetrate the courtly milieux, where Richeut has no access, and to exploit them.
The conflict which develops between Richeut and Samson is based fundamentally on the nature of their respective knowledge. This conflict is a most important theme, which motivates the duel to resolve the question of supremacy at the culminating point of the work. It is important to realize that their adverse points of view are not based on a difference of values. The son is as impervious to any of the ideals of the three estates offered to him, represented by the priest, the knight and the bourgeois, as he is to the authentic courtly ideals. His values are the same as Richeut's: he wants to practice seduction (vv. 682-83) and to realize gain (v. 716). His reason for not taking any of the callings offered to him is highly significant: "Car apovriz les avez toz" (v. 658), and so is Richeut's reaction: "Ri. s'an rit par de desoz" (v. 660). She can barely hide her pleasure at her handiwork.

The mother is not at all opposed to her son's ambitions; she even exudes a kind of maternal pride (vv. 733-34). Her objection to his pretentions is based strictly on her perception that the knowledge he possesses for such an enterprise is deficient: "Ja sez tu encor si petit / De cest tripot?" (w. 690-91).

Samson's erstwhile and future gallant successes are not based on dynamics distinct from those of his mother, except that he possesses a rhetorical patina. He lacks real perception in two areas. The first is the fact that he does not know women and shares the masculine prejudice that they are stupid (vv. 692-93). Probably their lack of education, a masculine privilege, reinforces the low esteem in which men hold feminine intelligence. The second is that Samson believes, on the contrary, that because of his knowledge of good authors like Ovid, he knows all there is to know about feminine nature.

As far as love is concerned, Richeut levels a telling attack on the knowledge to be acquired through reading: "Fiz, cil qui sevent d'escriture / Solent amer a demesure" (w. 699-700). It has already been mentioned that Samson's activities are presented hyperbolically, and they constantly overreach la mesure. In the Epicurean ethic, moderation has an important function; démesure is as great a threat to pleasure as asceticism. The second danger of livresque knowledge is that it is an impediment to empirical knowledge. "Cil qui conoissent lor us" (v. 706) fare much better with women than those who learn about them from books. The work thus opposes in a significant way the nature and value of knowledge and invests the two protagonists with diametrically opposed views on this subject.

Another theme of great significance is one of universal dupery. The theme is so pervasive that it goes beyond that of seduction and sexual identity. The means used by both protagonists run the gamut from lies to violence. Both establish their dominance over members of their own sex by dishonest means; Richeut "deçoit les autres putains" (v. 62), and Samson dominates and exploits the other lecheurs (vv. 801-24). Both also possess knowledge of magic (vv. 115-25, 635). The privileged domain is clearly exploitation of the opposite sex—for Richeut, all men and for
Samson, the riches courtoises dames. For all his praise of learning, it is clear that Samson's success is due to the same dynamics as that of his mother. She prevails through boide et lobe (vv. 366-67), and he through boide et amor (v. 687). Lucidity and self-control are the characteristics which protect one from being abused. In the world of Richeut those who lack these qualities are branded fol or sot, while the successful abusers are called sage. The distortion of terms like sage, which normally is associated with mesure (cf. Olivier in the Chanson de Roland), is an example of the way in which the work distorts values. Active cleverness is represented by Samson's angien sotil which leads to engignier, "deceive." Sans (< SENSU), and especially cler sans (v. 557), has more a nuance of lucid control. This control is what Richeut means when she warns Samson:

Biax fiz Sanson, si con je pans,
Encor avras perdu lo sans
Par art de fame.

(Vv. 724-26)

Loss of lucid control might be provoked in many ways (magic, for example), but the most obvious means is through sexual passion. The victims are considered sot or fol (vv. 52, 169, 246, 1245, etc.) if they fall into the trap. All women,

Qant .i. vallez a que doner,
Bien se sofrent a acoler
Por lui trafr et afoler:
C'est lecherie.

(Vv. 23-26)

Samson, too, "fames afole" (v. 792).

In the final confrontation between the protagonists these same elements are at work. Both are the most sage of their sex in their art. Both are masters of deception: "Mout set chascuns d'els de faloine / Et de boide" (vv. 1101-2). Although Richeut uses words as a preliminary device to snare him—"Primes parole por atraire" (v. 1079)—Samson remains lucid: "Bien aperçoit qu'ele li mant" (v. 1097) and "Bien aperçoit qu'ele l'anclot" (v. 1170). In this situation, how can Samson allow himself to be fooled? First, because he does not know with whom he is dealing, and Richeut does:

Ri. lo voit,
A lui est venue tot droit;
El lo salue,
Il li rant mais ne se remue.
Sansons ne l'a pas conëue.

(Vv. 1013-17)

Much more significant, however, is Samson's reaction to a "beautiful noble girl" whom he sees (in reality, Hersent artfully made up and richly
dressed by Richeut). Samson trembles with sexual passion: "Sansonez d'angoisse fretillé" (v. 1127). Although he thinks he is playing the game lucidly (vv. 1180–81), Samson loses control in this culminating encounter with the false and artful machinations of Richeut: "Sansons foloie" (v. 1175). Thus is the dupeur dupé with his own vaunted arms.

The last theme to be examined is exploitation. This study has previously underscored the role of dominance, particularly sexual dominance, the desire to ruin and even humiliate the victim, and the hostile relationship between the sexes. In other words, the desire for gain is only one dimension motivating the protagonists' words and actions. Nevertheless, the pervasive presence of the exchange of wealth is quite surprising and no doubt without peer in all of Old French literature. It includes the following categories: for sex directly (vv. 14, 23, 51, 103, 249, 305, etc.); with Samson as leverage (vv. 80, 219, 288, 352, 386, 431, 436, etc.); the increase in the price of Richeut's services (vv. 493–98) and, most significantly, Richeut's phenomenal rise in material and social status and the corresponding fall in the fortunes of her lovers. Samson not only lives well, like his mother, from his dissolute life; he is rapacious in swindling his fellow companions (v. 807), his brother monks (vv. 900–904, 917) and, of course, women (vv. 716, 830, 847, 863, 866, etc.). It is quite significant that in her defeat of Samson Richeut requires that his money be taken. She arranges with the lecheors not to use any deadly weapon, but she insists that they "tot lo despoillent par ravine" (v. 1201), which they do (v. 1304). It is as though, without the element of money, Samson's defeat would not be authentic, in spite of the other humiliations. Also, when Samson realizes that he has been fooled, his first vengeful reaction is to steal Hersent's linens. The value involved would seem incommensurately small for his humiliation, but the point is precisely that the acquisition of wealth at the expense of another is accorded a high value in the tale. This is the reason, too, that the only complaint which the heroine ever expresses against men is their stinginess.

These three themes create a world view in which school training does not result in knowledge of the world, but only of words; wealth is the ultimate value and dishonest deception the way to achieve it. Of all the types of abuse, sexual enticement is, at once, the most efficacious and the most frequent.

The parodic and jesting features of the work inspire prudence in attempting to define the view it projects. At least two things help to distinguish between what is gross humor and serious outlook. The first is its radical misogyny and the second is its tone. Even the pattern of the dupeur dupé, a sure-fire model frequent in the fabliaux, does not confer on the work a light comic tone because only one of the abusers is abused; and the sympathies of the reader have been oriented toward him. Richeut is never defeated. In the last line, while all around him are merry, it is more difficult to imagine Samson joining in with hearty laughter than staring into the void of his lost illusions with a pained and bitter rictus.
A fundamental characteristic of the work is that the two protagonists engage in frankly immoral and un-Christian activity, and yet they go unpunished for it. The narrator assumes the traditional Christian moral framework in condemning Richeut; and, in spite of the fact that he calls for adherence to Samson's cause and attempts to justify his acts, the theme of sin is maintained: "Ce set il bien qu'en pechié maint" (v. 886). The contrast between a traditional moral framework and a tale of unpunished sin suggests that beneath the rhetoric of moral didacticism lies a complex of values involving the world and society.

Samson does not suffer humiliation for his immorality. On one level, he is defeated because he is less wily than Richeut. The latter's immoral acts go completely unpunished. Since Richeut represents the essence of feminine nature and Samson the strongest of men, it can be inferred that women are superior in deception and treachery. This is, of course, no great praise.

Abstracting the question of female superiority in such matters, it is evident that the protagonists turn society upside-down. Although they have no social status in the beginning, belonging to none of the estates, they rise above all the social strata by the only indicator of success the work presents—wealth. Conversely, Richeut exercises a leveling effect on all social distinctions. She reduces all social types to the primitive category of men and plunges them into a common democratic poverty. Samson produces the same effect. Prostitutes, courtly ladies, aunts, nieces, mothers, daughter and nuns blend without distinction into an amorphous prey for his venal and sexual appetites.

The image of the world filled with only wolves and sheep prevails everywhere. One scrutinizes the text in vain for signs of resistance to the triumph of force in all its forms from some countervailing spiritual might. Priest, knight, bourgeois, vilain—all surrender to their sexual nature.

The social and moral view is extremely cynical. Sex, falsehood and money rule the world and corrupt all social ideals and institutions. That women are more suited by their sexual nature to this sordid game is secondary; the ideals by which society claims to live are hollow either because of weakness or because of gross hypocrisy.

What kind of man produced such a work? Perhaps he was an embittered cleric frustrated in his career? Perhaps he was of that fraternity of educated men who roamed the country in the twelfth century without any secure situation or protection, known as goliards? The work suggests that he knew school and travel, and perhaps bordellos, better than he knew family life. This description fits the pattern of the goliard, who remained celibate, not usually because of vows, but because of his economically precarious state, which may be the reason for the importance given to money in the work. It may also account for the theme of the powerlessness of Samson's education vis-à-vis Richeut's art.
Samson as Don Juan

In reading Richeut, one inevitably recalls the well-known figure of Don Juan. The rapprochement of Samson and Don Juan is justified not only because both are great seducers of women, but particularly because both brave the laws of God and Man with solitary pride. It is certainly not the intention of this study to examine the approximately six hundred incarnations the legend has undergone in all kinds of artistic forms. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that many great artists have been fascinated by the Don Juan legend, at least as much by the religious and metaphysical dimension of the theme as by the element of seduction. Samson manifests, quite obviously, both dimensions. He knows that his activities are sinful and, therefore, place his soul in jeopardy. He also violates rules of social conduct and must accept the risks of such transgressions. In addition, he attacks in a particularly virulent way the servants of the Church, both monks and nuns.

Scholars of the Don Juan literary tradition generally credit Tirso de Molina's El Burlador de Sevilla as its genesis in the early seventeenth century. Tirso was a man of the cloth who is supposed to have written his work as a pastoral exercise to show how sinful behavior like that of his hero is punished. The clerical milieu and the didactic intention are worth mentioning, since the work parallels in great measure Richeut.

Franz Rauhut in "Samson in der Richeut - ein Don Juan des Mittelalters" has developed the idea of Samson as Don Juan.1 His thesis is based on two fundamental ideas which he borrows from Kierkegaard. The first, and perhaps the least important, is the romantic view that there must have been a Don Juan legend centuries before the seventeenth century. In the view of the eminent Danish philosopher, the idea of Don Juan belongs to Christianity, specifically, to the Christianity of the Middle Ages (p. 163). Samson is proposed as proof of this contention. No one, however, has suggested that Richeut is the model for the Burlador. More important is the thesis that erotic sensuality is, in a certain sense, a creation of Christianity. Rauhut sums up Kierkegaard's notion in the following way: "Der asketische Geist des Christentums hat die Erotische Sinnlichkeit verdammt und ihr gerade dadurch eine besondere Macht verliehen" (p. 162). The philosopher's excursion into the psychology of the Christian religion enriches the portrait of Samson by generalizing erotic sensuality as the negative side of religious asceticism.

The present study has underscored the role of both Samson and Richeut as counter-heroes of positive religious and social values. The positive side in Richeut is presented as weak or absent. Eroticism, and evil generally, is depicted as being so powerful that the potential

1Franz Rauhut, "Samson in der Richeut - ein Don Juan des Mittelalters," Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen, 207 (1970), III, pp. 161-84. Despite its title, the excellent article deals with many facets of Richeut, but I discovered this too late for the bulk of my study.
strength of morality and religion is mainly present by implication, in
the same way that a negative pole implies a positive one. The work as
a whole functions this way; it implies a tradition outside of itself
and draws its strength and perceptibility from a reality which is
textually absent.

One can only approve Rauhut's excellent study. Three points of
unequal significance which distinguish Samson from much of the Don Juan
tradition should be mentioned. First, Samson never violates his own
matrimonial vows because he never marries. There is barely an echo of
the institution of marriage in Richeut, perhaps because the author chose
to level all contingent circumstances in favor of an all-encompassing
basis of sexual identity. Samson, consequently, never uses the promise
of marriage as a device for seduction, whereas Molière's Don Juan uses
no other method. A second distinction relates to the first. Don Juan
is normally presented as a noble hidalgo, while Samson is illegitimate
by any standards and without any estate. He has neither lands nor
fiefs. In contrast to Don Juan's assurance of legitimacy and social
status, Samson is a medieval Rastignac. His reputation and worth (pris
et los) are the result of his personal qualities as a lover, unaided by
the accident of being high born. The final distinction between Samson
and Don Juan is extremely striking. Samson lives off women ("De ce se
vit, de ce se paist / Richemant," vv. 889-90), a state of affairs
unthinkable for Don Juan. The differences in the social context go a
long way toward explaining this distinction, but the specific context
of Richeut is still more significant. First, Samson's values and acts
are modeled on those of his mother, a prostitute. Money is the primary
goal of sex. Pleasure, dominance and even the humiliation of the victim
are all part of the goal of abuse through sex. The former is merely
implied; the latter are more explicit. The acquisition of wealth is
both the goal of Samson's activities and the manifestation of his success
("Mais qu'il gaaint," v. 885). This theme has been noted as a fundamental
feature of his defeat by Richeut; money must be taken from the victim
for the victory to be authentic. The pervasive role of money places
Richeut on the plane of the social hic et nunc, perhaps as much as or
more than on a religious level. It also explains why Samson robs his
conquests. Never can one imagine such an unchivalrous act on the part
of Don Juan.

Realistic Motifs

There are a number of realistic elements in the work. Realism
can be given many and varied interpretations. This study is using the
term in the sense which Urban T. Holmes summarizes from the Princeton
Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics and expands upon further: "Realism
is that element in art which is concerned with giving a truthful
impression of actuality as it appears to the normal human consciousness." Holmes continues, "It describes normal situations and average characters
in ordinary settings, it refuses to use farfetched images and metaphors
and it tries to imitate actual speech and it inclines toward approximate prose rhythms.  

The language is realistic in the sense that it is deliberately stylus humilis; in other words, it follows the literary convention which requires a "low" style for a "low" subject. Although it is encased in a highly arcane form, it shows a marked tendency to follow a more popular rhythm and to flow easily over the stanzaic constraints. This tendency can be called realistic in that the supposed linguistic model is the everyday speech of simple people. The contrast it engenders with the metric form, however, belongs to art.

Janis L. Pallister in "Forms of Realism in Richeut" analyzes the various kinds of realism she perceives in the work. The point of view of this study is different from that of Professor Pallister and, consequently, the conclusions based on these distinct points of view are necessarily distinct. The best method would seem to be to expose only the differences in the two approaches and to invite the reader to consult Professor Pallister's excellent article.

The study in question is apparently a product of the theme chosen for the entire issue of Esprit créateur, namely, "Realism in the Literature of the Twelfth Century." The article, therefore, presents many forms of realism "ranging from a mere interest in the painting of everyday life and an effort to ground the work in historical reality, to more sophisticated efforts at esthetic realism and realistic character portrayal" (p. 233). It is the contention of the present study that the realistic elements in Richeut are artistically motivated by the thematic and ideological framework of the tale, and that none is due to a gratuitous intent to introduce realistic detail for its own sake.

The things men know from their daily life are present even in the primitive chanson de geste, but they are invested with a significance which transforms them into symbols, e.g., Roland's sword. The process in Richeut is not very much different. The most evident realistic motif is the enumeration of things to eat: char, vin, claré, pevrees, fruit, nieles, oblees, parmainz (vv. 456-59). The moment in the story at which Richeut enjoys this plenty is highly significant. It is just after Samson's birth and after Hersent has made the rounds to collect the first important tribute from the 'fathers.' In the verse preceding this enumeration is the indication: "Or a Ri. sa volanté" (v. 454). In the world of this tale spiritual aspirations are either absent or bankrupt,

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and success is measured in satisfaction of primitive appetites, e.g., food. The detailing of different types of comestibles is an elaboration of the more general connois (v. 431) which Hersent collects and an affirmation of Richeut's success and values. They are symbols, or at least objects with metonymic associations, which are posed, weighty and succulent, against the abstraction of a value system which would resist them. They promise the creatural satisfactions of a full stomach, against which considerations of morality weigh little. The same values pertain to and justify the details of Richeut's manner of dress (vv. 471-86). Her rich dress should be compared to the priest's poor clothing after Richeut ruins him (v. 574), in order to be convinced that it is not the realistic portrait which is significant, but rather the idea which the nature of the clothing expresses, i.e., wealth and poverty respectively.

The presentation of the three principal gulls as representing the three main social strata is not a realistic one. Their distinctness provides interesting differences for Richeut's campaign of deceit and matter for the amplification of her character and presence, thus illustrating her destructive capacities. But it becomes almost immediately clear that, far from being rooted in direct observation, the three types are but abstract façades of supposed social distinctiveness; these quickly crumble to reveal their basic unity as men.

The verses (991-92) which tell of Samson's arrival in Toulouse, which King Henry covets, do not invest the work with a basis in historic reality. Whatever the reason for this comment—perhaps it is simply a rhyming cheville—it is clear that the work deals with themes which are extemporal, i.e., the nature of women and the rewards which the world bestows on deceit and exploitation. While the author must have formed his views in his particular contingent situation, he presents them as timeless general truths in action.

The detailing of Samson's education in school might appear as a motif introduced for the sake of imitating a reality well known to the author. On the other hand, it is doubly motivated artistically. First, it serves as a device for presenting Samson as surpassingly clever. Secondly, it is a way of developing the theme of the benefit of such knowledge. To have simply stated that Samson was an excellent student would have been weak, indeed. Moreover, it is part of the author's technique throughout the work to exemplify any general statements he makes.

The theme of determinism based on environment and heredity is quite naturally associated with the realism of the nineteenth century, particularly with its naturalistic mutant with scientific pretentions. As themes these may, with justification, be associated with the esthetic realism of Balzac and Zola. It should not be lost from view, however, that what one may today call determinism is in Richeut called nature, and what one may call environment is in Richeut education. And it is nature which prevails over education. The modalities of these themes
are quite different from their modern analogues. It is not a question of which element is stronger, nature-heredity or environment-education; rather, in Richeut the point is that feminine nature is corrupt in its essence and that society abets and rewards its manifestations.

In sum, while Richeut uses motifs which may be termed realistic, they are, in fact, set in a system of presentation which is based on a certain ideological framework. This presentation is at opposite poles from direct observation, the assumed basis for the realistic esthetic. It can be assumed that the world view the author presented was meant to be "real," in the sense of authentic, but it proceeds from an apriorist ontology rather than from the concrete world visible to the eye.

Genre

Richeut has been generally associated with the fabliau genre. It was not included in the Recueil général, however, and Nykrog excludes it from the genre on the basis of length. Bédier calls it the earliest example of the genre and stresses the temporal coincidence of its creation and the birth of the bourgeoisie. The fabliaux and Richeut have many features in common which justify their rapprochement: language, characters, obscenity, etc. Moreover, at the time of their creation the fabliaux did not represent a self-conscious literary genre with uniform prescribed characteristics. Even in retrospect, the corpus grouped under this heading is so heterogeneous that the best working definition of the genre would appear to be Bédier's very broad one: "un conte à rire en vers."

Bédier saw in Richeut an embryonic form of the fabliaux, free of conventions which would subsequently enslave it, such as the octosyllabic couplet. He considered it, nonetheless, as already an authentic representative of the genre. In "Le Fabliau de Richeut" he says:

De Richeut aux contes de Jean de Condé, les jongleurs sauront perfectionner l'intérêt des intrigues, le comique des situations. Mais pour la peinture réaliste des types et des moeurs, pour la vérité de l'observation cruelle, ils paraissent avoir atteint du premier coup le genre spécial de perfection qu'ils recherchent. A cet égard, Richeut n'est pas seulement un exemplaire des fabliaux archaïques perdus; il est le modèle des fabliaux conservés, qui reproduiront, sans le surpasser, ce tour d'imagination caricaturale et de gaïeté cynique. (P. 25)

The same critic has underlined the differences between this work and the fabliaux. The nature of the subject of Richeut is totally different and, according to Bédier, "l'intrigue n'y est rien, les caractères y sont tout" (p. 28). On the other hand, he characterizes the fabliaux in the following way:
Les fabliaux du XIIIe siècle sont en effet presque tous la mise en œuvre d’un conte populaire, traditionnel; et le secret de cette transmissibilité réside dans l’ingéniosité de l’intrigue; c’est une situation unique, comique, plaisante ou touchante en soi; la trame de ces récits se suffit à elle-même et pourrait plaire encore, le conte fût-il redit en deux mots, et par un sot. (P. 28)

The discussion will come back to these points after the introduction of generic criteria of narrative literature closely linked with the nature of the fabliaux— the conte or nouvelle. In a fine and ample work, Les cent nouvelles nouvelles et la tradition de la nouvelle en France au Moyen Age (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1973), Roger Dubuis traces the development of the art of narration in France back to its earliest manifestations. There are certain elements of narrative art which are identified as constants. The narration should be brief; the matter should be presented as recent and authentic; and, most importantly, the action should be unexpected.

There are two points either contained in or implied by both Bédier’s description of the fabliaux and Dubuis’s narrative elements which place Richeut outside of the French tradition of narration. The first concerns the ingenious or unexpected nature of the plot. In the prostitute’s tale the pattern is radically different: the acts of the protagonists are announced beforehand, usually in a way that also exposes their moral dimension; then they are illustrated in a straightforward manner which never involves the least bit of surprise or trick. The second point concerns the uniqueness of each situation and event in the fabliaux and in the contes. In Richeut no situation can be called unique because each is merely the external manifestation of the immutable principles of nature and the world of men. Can it be imagined that either hero or heroine can change or encounter adventures different in kind from those contained in the tale? It is not thinkable. Even the chastened Samson is condemned to continue the same acts forever.

A final word about "les caractères sont tout" should be added. The interest is centered much more on the characters than on the rudimentary plot in Richeut, to be sure. Moreover, the personages are rather fully developed as well-defined types. We believe, however, that they function more importantly as symbols of values that the author wants to display. Richeut is not just a prostitute as a social type; she is the incarnation of what he presents as the essence of all women. Likewise, Samson is the essence of male strengths and deficiencies.

The classification of Richeut into any specific genre would appear to be vain. As an amalgam of elements from various literary forms, it belongs parodically to all of them and in reality to none. The peculiar mix of elements and their use makes the work entirely unique. It apparently has no precursors and no imitators.
Given the importance of the moral dimension in the work—though inverted by traditional standards—Richeut seems to belong to the general area of didactic literature. Moral didacticism was perhaps the literary activity most in tune with the training and function of clerics. That a gifted but bitter man of this milieu should create an artistic work which vents his cynical views in moral terms is somehow quite natural.

Conclusion

One could hardly imagine the creation of Richeut in a period other than the second half of the twelfth century. A period of rapid transformations and of great creativity, it is also one of instability and stress. France and England are engaged in a struggle over the Aquitanian heritage of Aliénor. The second Crusade has ended in disillusionment. St. Bernard has created a new image of individual spiritual adventure for the Christian and encouraged the cult of the Virgin Mary. The character of the noble class is being transformed by the progressive diminution of its warrior role and its increased leisure to pursue intellectual interests, supported by rents. As the need for him is less vital, a certain idealization of the chevalier results, which coincides with an idealized perception of women, the propagation of which is usually credited in large measure to Aliénor and her daughters. The century is prosperous. With the growth of towns and commerce, the bourgeoisie is born and money becomes an ever-increasing social factor.

Richeut is evidently a product of many of the above conditions. In one form or the other, they provide the tale with thematic material. The author appears to oppose much that is new. Samson's criminal excesses may suggest the dangers of the abuse of individualism, which St. Bernard teaches as a spiritual quest. Courtly love is certainly presented as a sham which masks indulgence of carnal appetites. The somber view of mankind as corrupt provides a logical, orthodox basis to show the defeat of ideals of courtliness. The fact that in Richeut the presentation emphasizes the world as ruled by sex, deceit and money more than by Christian metaphysics reflects the preoccupations of the time.

Somehow the very originality of the thematic and conceptual mise en forme of the work bespeaks this period in which literary models, laden with audacious pagan themes and attitudes partly legitimized by their Latin carapace, stimulate works in the native tongue. The practice of translating Latin works, the reading of Ovid and an acquaintance with the Latin comoediae may all have contributed to this creative process.

It is easy to read Richeut, with a long overview of the richness of the eight centuries of French literature which come in its wake, and

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1See, however, Jean Frappier, "Vues sur les conceptions courtoises dans les littératures d' occ et d'oïl au XII e siècle," Cahiers de civilisation médiévale 2 (1956):135-56, especially pp. 154-56.
think of many literary ideas which seem to be already present in embryonic form in this twelfth-century piece. Samson and Don Juan, Gil Blas or Rastignac, Richeut and Nana, or even Vautrin, determinism in the Naturalistic esthetic, money and the world of Balzac, sex as the secret motor which levels social hierarchy in Proust—such are the rapprochements which come easily to mind. There is no question of borrowing implied here; but, in a strange way, the phenomenon attests to the dense richness of the work. The key to Richeut's fascination and worth is its unique artistic form invested with a richness of themes and associations. It is a valuable document of literary history and of an individual conscience. In it are seen, as in a microcosm, reflections of the vital tensions of a period, of a complex literary tradition and of the human condition.
APPENDIX A

RICHEUT:

TEXT AND TRANSLATION

I have chosen to reproduce integrally the Lecompte edition of the text. Inevitably, the temptation to change certain details solicited me, but I feel that scholarship is better served by refraining from altering piecemeal a text which I consider basically sound. My suggestions can be found along with those of many illustrious predecessors at the appropriate places in Appendix B, Notes on the Text.

I have made a thorough and honest attempt to render in English the basic sense of the original text. In addition to the usual problems which the highly specialized art of translation encounters, the linguistic obscurities of the text and the imprecise contours of a culture of which the work is a reflection render any translation in modern terms and in a twentieth-century frame of reference approximate at best. It is for this reason that I have insisted on the facing-page disposition for the English translation, hoping that in this way it can provide a convenient and valuable aid for the reader, without ever supplanting the original.
CONTENTS OF THE TALE

Verses:

1-83 Exposition of personages and themes.
84-153 Richeut becomes pregnant.
154-228 Meeting with the priest.
229-298 Meeting with the chevalier.
299-364 Party and meeting with the borjois.
365-386 Richeut asks for money from all men.
387-395 More characterization of Richeut.
396-402 Direct imprecation of Richeut by the narrator.
403-420 Confinement of Richeut, birth of Sanson.
421-437 Hersent collects booty from the victims.
438-469 Richeut enjoys her confinement and Sanson is baptized.
470-499 Richeut goes to mass, makes a spectacle of herself and her price goes up.
500-525 She carries on her trade; her three dupes are induced to pay more.
526-534 Party.
535-553 Sanson's virtues are described.
554-581 Sanson in school.
573-581 Richeut's victims are lead to pay tribute for the sake of their "son."
582-609 Sanson's talents are extolled.
610-629 Sanson learns low games.

183
630-646  Sanson's nature makes him a successful lover on a grand scale.
647-661  Richeut "chastie" Sanson.
662-688  The question of Sanson's parternity and future estate.
689-734  Conflict in views on love and knowledge through books.
735-753  Richeut "doctrine" Sanson.
754-771  Description of Sanson as he makes his way in the world.
772-783  Sanson's nature.
784-824  The accomplished lover.
825-885  Lord of the lecheors and other conquests.
886-889  Sanson cannot leave the delights of the world.
890-931  He takes his war to religious orders and becomes a priest.
932-952  Sanson reduces whole families of women and takes them in many different ways.
953-956  The narrator apologizes for his crude language.
957-984  Sanson uses women ever more sadistically.
985-1006  The beginning of the last act. Sanson searches for his mother.
1007-1027 Richeut and Sanson meet, she knows him but he does not recognize her.
1028-1053 Richeut and Hersent plot on how to take Sanson in. Hersent is made up to appear beautiful.
1054-1112 Another servant's aid is enlisted to allow Hersent to be seen from her window.
1113-1164 Sanson, smitten, must have this "beauty." Richeut pretends to have persuaded her.
1165-1214 Preparations for the feast are made and Sanson is persuaded to part with more money.

1215-1272 Florie (Hersent) arrives and the festivities begin. Sanson's impatience soon overcomes Hersent's feigned resistance.

1291-1318 He is stripped and beaten by the lecheors in his mother's employ and surrounded in the end by general merriment.
RICHEUT:
TEXT AND TRANSLATION

An asterisk indicates that there is a note on this verse in the section "Notes on the Text."
Or faites pais, si escotez
Qui de Rî. oîr volez;
Sovante foiz oî avez
Conter sa vie.

5 Maistresse fu de lecherie,
*Mainte[s] fames ot en baillie
*Qu'ele atrait tot as guise
Par son atrait.
Encor nule ne s'an retrait,
10 *Et cha[s]cune Rî. se fait
De sa voisine.
*Ne voit en mais jone meschine
Qui soit a grant bonté enclîne,
Por po d'avoir s'estant sovine

15 *Qant en li done.
El mont n'en a nes une bone,
*Ainz se lient a la corone,
*C'est de puterie la some,
*Et lo fardet
20 *Metent eles en lor raget.
Chascune de soi s'entremet
Bien atornet.
Qant .î. valiez a que doner,
Bien se sofrent a acoler

25 Por lui traîr et afoler:
C'est lecherie;
Mais il lor vient d'ancerseerie.
Totes sevent de trecherie
Communaumant,
30 Mais ce fu par l'anseignemant
Rî., qui fu mout longuemant
Par tot lo monde;
Bien les aprist a la reonde.
Nostre Sires Rî. confonde

35 Qui tant mal fist,
Car de nonain reçut l'abit,
Mais ele lo tint mout petit.
Escotez, se Dex vos aît,
Qu'ele devint:

40 Fors de l'abaie s'an vint,
Nonains i avoit plus de xx,
N'i vost plus estre,
*Ainz en mena o soî lo preste.
El li toli regne celestre,
Now be quiet and listen,
Those of you who want to hear about Richeut!
Many a time you have heard
Her life's story told.

She was a master of lechery
And held many women in her sway.
She drew them to her and controlled them
By her cunning.
Not one has yet run off,
And each makes Richeut
Of her neighbor.
Young girls are seen no more
Who are to great good inclined,
For a little money they lie on their back
When they are given it.
Not one good one has been born in the world.
Quite the opposite, they flock to that coterie
Which is the cream of whoredom,
And with artful deceit
They mask their mad passion.
Each one endeavors to make
Herself look attractive.
When a man has something to give,
They allow themselves to be embraced
In order to betray and drive him mad:
This is lechery!
But this comes to them from their ancestry.
They all know about treachery
Without exception.

But it was Richeut's teaching,
She who had long experience
In the ways of the world,
Who tutored them all for miles around.
May God damn Richeut

Who has done so much evil!
For she took the habit of a nun,
But she kept it a very short while.
Listen, if God help you,
What became of her.

She left the abbey
Where there were more than twenty nuns,
She didn't care to remain there longer.
She even took the priest away with her.
She bereft him of his heavenly home,
*Car il fu pris
*O li, desmanbrez et ocis.
   Ce fist el faire a ses amis
   Don ele a maint par lo pais.
*Ri. a fait riche[s] mandis.

*Por Herselot
   Dou preste ot el bien son escot,
   Et si refist tenir por sot
   Lo chevalier.
*Nes dan Guillaume lerdefitier

*Qu' ere atornez a Deu proier,
   Refist el boivre lo destrier
   Et lo hernois.
*Ri. desjuge les cortois,
   Cleris et chevaliers et borjois

Et les vilains.
   Par tot giete Ri. ses mains,
   Si deçoit les autres putains.
*Ri. sert mout,
   Lo corage a fier et estout.

*Or diroie, s'avoie escout,
   De li un conte
   Qui trestoz les autres sormonte,
   *Et si ne lairai pas por honte
   Que je nel die;

Qui de Ri. conte la vie
   Ne puet parler par cortoisie.
   Ele ot .i. fil
   Qui mout avoit l'angien sotil;
*Ri. serit bien les mors sa mere.
*Mout tenoit bien les mors sa mere.
   Ri. ne sot onques son pere,
   Et nequedant
*Ri. ne sot onques son pere,

*So mist el sus a plus de .c.

Mout en conquist or et argent.
   Or escotez
   Commant il fu conçuz et nez,
   Norriz, apris et doctrinez
   Et en quel vie destinez,

*Entre Ri. et Herselot
   A cel jor firent .i. escot;
   *Au feu n'orent plus que .i. pot,
   Bons vins ferrez

La nuit burent a grant plantez
   Et a mangier orent assez
   Pero lo Noël.
   Mout ont parlé et d'un et d'el.
   Ce dit Ri. la menestrel
For he succumbed to her. Then he was cast out and killed. This she had her friends do Of whom she had many throughout the country. Richeut made rich men beggars.

Through Hersent She got a good share of the priest's wealth And made an idiot Of the knight Called Lord William the Proud Who devoted himself to praying to God. She drove him to drink up Both horse and harness. Richeut undoes the courtly types, Clerics, knights and bourgeois And those of lower station as well. Richeut gets her hands into everything And even deceives the other whores. Richeut serves tirelessly. She has a proud and stout heart.

Now, if you want to hear it, I'd like To tell you a tale about her Which surpasses all the others by far And so I'll not be stopped for shame For telling it.

Whoever tells of Richeut's life Cannot do so in the courtly style. She had a son Who had a subtle mind. Many women did he bring to ruin.

He was fair of face, And held closely to the ways of his mother. Richeut never knew who his father was And nonetheless, She valued him above more than a hundred, For through him she conquered much gold and silver. Now then, listen How he was conceived and born, Nurtured, taught, and instructed, And for what kind of life he was prepared, And what his name was. On a certain day were Richeut And Hersent having a feast together. They had more than one kettle on the fire. Good wine in kegs They drank in abundance, And they had enough to eat For the whole Christmastide. For a long while they spoke of one thing and another. Thus did love's servant, Richeut, speak
A sa conpeigne:
"Par les sainz c'an quiert en Breteaigne
Mout ai del preste grant desdaigne
Qui si me triche.
Ainz n'oï del suen fors une afiche,
Et si n'a nul veisin plus riche
*De soi,
Il m'afia l'autrier sa foi
Et lou vestir et lo conroi
*Ainz q'avenir poïst a moi;

Or ne l'an chaut s'ai fain o soi,
Mantie l'a:
Hui a .vii. jors qu'il ne vint ça.
*Par Saint Denis mar m'i tricha
Se jel puis faire.

Mout par est ore de mal'aire;
*Si est avers,
Croistre vialt et noiant doner.
Herselot sez me que loer
Commant m'an vanche?"

"Charmez li, chiere, par la vanche,
Escrivez brief de sanc et d'anche,
Faites [c]heraudes
Don les ymâges soient chaudes
Et refroidies."

Dit Ri., "ii. poires porries
Ne pris je pas ces sorceries.
Ce m'est avis
Ja par charaies n'iert conquis.
A moi meïsme(s) ai conseil pris
Con jel deçoive:
*Miauz est que atorne[e] herbe boive,
Puis foutrait tant je congoive,
Si metrai sore
Au preste, et meïsme l'ore,

Don li lou je qu'il me secore,
Et s'il lo nie,
Ja Ri. n'ait bien en sa vie
Se a l'eyesque ne l'anvie;
Sel tien a cort

*Il i perdra ainz qu'il s'an tort.
*S'ansi lo faz,
Lo preste avrai dedanz mes laz.
Or en entrera en porchaz
Hastivement.

Don nel me loes tu, Hersant?"
Dit Herselot, "Je n'i antant
*Se tot bien non."
Ri. no mist en sopeçon,
Ainz quist une herbe qui ot non
To her companion:
"By the saints they seek out in Brittany,  
I am really angry with the priest  
For cheating me this way.  
All I got from him was a brooch,  
And surely there is no one around here  
Wealthier than he.  
He promised me the other day upon his word  
Both clothing and provisions  
So that he could come to me.  
Now he doesn't give a damn if I am hung or thirsty.  
He has gone back on his word.  
Today makes a week that he hasn't come here.  
By Saint Denis, he'll pay for duping me  
If I can manage it.  
This pretty pass comes from his ill humor.  
He is so stingy,  
He only wants to take his pleasure while giving nothing.  
Hersent, what do you advise me  
On how to get revenge?"
"Put a spell on him, dear, with periwinkle.  
Write a letter in blood and ink.  
Make spells  
Where you heat up and chill  
His image."
Says Richeut, "I don't think such spells  
Are worth two rotten pears.  
It is my opinion  
That nothing will be gained through magic.  
I have thought about how I can  
Humilate him.  
It is better that I drink a special herb,  
Then I'll screw away until I am pregnant.  
That way I'll have in my power  
The priest and even the hour  
At which I'll beg help from him.  
And if he denies it  
May Richeut never possess anything in her life,  
If I don't have him brought before the bishop  
And held for trial.  
He will lose before he gets away.  
If that is the way I do it.  
I'll have the priest in my snares.  
I'm starting my pursuit  
Posthaste.  
What do you advise me, Hersent?"
Hersent says, "I don't see any reason  
Why it should not work."  
She didn't discourage Richeut,  
So the latter got an herb which has the name of
145 *Mandagioire.
*Ri. en but o ele esclaire
*Puis n'i guieres demore
Ainz croist a toz.
Tant a alé desus desoz
150 *Et a retraiz sofert et boz
Qu'ele est ençainte.
Or a la face megre et tainte,
Dès or vialt faire sa complaïnte.
*Au preste en vint,
155 *A sa maisèle sa main tint,
*Flore et sopire, soflant vint,
Puis dist itant:
"Mout malemant m'es[t] covenant
Et s'an atant pis en avant
160 Assez,
*Sire preste, bien lo savez."
"Ri., ne sai que vos avez,
Ce dit li preste(s),
*Mout me mostrez chiere meleste."
165 "Que je ai, sire?
Je ai assez coroz et ire,
*Mais par Saint Pol
Mout savrai poï se nel vos sol,
Si vos ferai tenir a fol."
170 Li danz li met les braz au col,
Soef l'anbrace.
Ri. s'estort, si se delace,
Flore formant, mout lo menace:
*"O jel vos die, o jel vos tace,
De vos sui prainz."
"Ri., je cuit que tu te fainz."
"No faz, danz prestes, par toz sainz
N'est pas controve;
*Veez con li vantro se prove."
175 Li prestes mout celer lo rove
*Icel secroi.
"Ri., faït il, je te mescroi.
Cuides tu donc ce soit de moi?
Nenil voir."
180 Ri. responst, "Jel sai de voir;
Ja ne puisse je bien avoir,
*Ainz soie ocisse,
*Se je n'an portoi i. joïsse
Que de vos fu dedanz moi mise
190 Iceste chose
Don me veez ençainte et grosse.
Ne cuidiez pas jel giet en fosse
Ne en mostier
*Se voz ne me volez aïdier."
Mandrake.
Richeut drank some along with pretty celandine
And then did not linger around
But made love with everybody.
She went at it, now on the top now on the bottom
And got so sore and endured such thrusts and pulls
That she is pregnant.
Now is her face all painted and drawn.
This is the moment she chooses to lodge her complaint.
She came to the priest,
Holding her hand to her jaw
She came breathing hard, sighing and weeping,
Then said this:
"I am faring very poorly
And, if worse is to be expected in the future,
I have had it.
Priest Sire, you know that well."
"Richeut, I don't know what has come over you,"
The priest says to her,
"You are showing me a very woeful face."

What has come over me, sire?
I am extremely provoked and angry,
But, by Saint Paul,
I'll know precious little if I don't make you pay for it
And have you pronounced a fool."

The abbot puts his arms around her neck
And gently embraces her.
Richeut twists free from his embrace,
Bursts into a torrent of tears and sternly threatens him.
"Whether I tell you or keep it from you,
By you am I pregnant."
"Richeut, I think you're just pretending."
"No I'm not, sire abbot, by all the saints,
It is not put on;
See how my stomach proves it."

The priest presses her urgently to hide
This secret.
"Richeut, I don't believe you.
So you think that it's by me?
No surely it is not.
Richeut answers, "I know it for certain;
I would never be able to have any wealth,
On the contrary, I would be put to death,
If I were not carrying a legal proof,
This thing which was placed inside me
By you,
Because of which you see me pregnant and big.
Don't believe that I will throw it into a ditch
Or leave it in a monastery
If you won't help me."
"Ri., ne di,
Je ne voil pas que soit ensi.
La moie foi, Ri., t'afi,
Se viax del mien
Ja ne voldras iclele rien

*N'en puisses prandre.
Por quoi me feroies raienbre,
*N'a l'eyesque messe desfandre?
Mais or celez
Ceste groisse tant con puez,

Et qant li anfes sera nez
Sel metez sore
.1. autre; se Dex me secore,
Ne vos faudrai pues .i. ore."

*Ri. se plaint mout et s'i plore

Et puis li dit:
"Certes ne vos aing pas petit;
Mout duremant, se Dex m'aît,
Lo tot puissant;
*Se je ne vos emmasse tant

Nel celasse ne tant ne qant."

*Oz de pute orse,
Qui lo prevoire si amorse!
La main li fait mestrê a borse,
.V. sous li tant or a rescosse:

"Ce prenez ore,
*Vos avroiz plus del mien encore."
Et li prestes mout bien l'estore.
Ri. se charge,
De son preu faire ne se targe.

Bien a trové lo prestre large
Por l'acolee.
*Mout s'an veit bien sozaisselee
*De pain et d'el.
Ploiant s'an veit a son ostel

*O el trova seignor Vïel,
Un chevalier
Qui fairoit tenir son destrier,
*O lui Hersant por donoier.
*"A! Herselot!"

Cele saut sus con sa dame ot;
Li chevaliers vers li s'esjot,
Si la salue.
Et Ri. se tint .i. po mue,
Pas ne li rant,

Sanblant fait de grant maltalant.
*De Herselot s'aproke atant:
*"Met ce en sauf."
"De mautalant su et eschauf
Qant je te voi;"
"Richeut, don't say that, I don't want it to be that way. I pledge my word to you on it, Richeut, If you want anything I have, There is nothing you cannot take Whenever you want it. Why would you have me fined Or have the bishop prevent me from saying Mass? But now hide This pregnancy as best you can And when the child is born, Then blame it On somebody else, the Lord willing, I'll not fail you anytime from then on. Richeut whines and weeps pitifully And then says to him: I certainly don't love you just a little; Very much indeed, God Almighty Help me. If I did not love you so much, There is no way that I would keep this secret." Listen how the whoring creature Snares the priest with her line! She gets him to reach into his purse And hand her 5 sous to tide her over. "Take this now, You will get even more later." The priest provisions her well. Richeut loads herself down. She does not dally over her clever coup. She decides the priest's generosity Deserves a hug. She goes away with her arms well laden With bread and other things. She makes her way home bent over by her load, There she finds Lord Viel, A knight, Who is having his battle steed held While he and Hersent are engaged in galantries. "Hey, Hersent!" She jumps to her feet when she hears her mistress; The knight is happy to see her And gives her his greeting. Richeut, for her part, remains silent awhile And does not return his greeting, But puts on a very angry face. She walks straight up to Hersent: "Put this in a safe place."
"I get hot and angry When I see you;
*Tu m'as manti la toe foi,
Mout par est folé
La damoisele qui t'acole;
N'a si aver jusq'a Nicole.
C'oi je do tuen

*Desque[je] fis l'autrier ton buen
*(Lasse moi!) cline?
*Mar m'i cochai soz toi sovine;
Maldite soit vostre racine
Qui si poi giete.

J'estoie encor bien jovene,
Or n'en iert mais qui s'antremete
De moi amer.
Vos m'avez fait lo flanc lever,
Ne me valt mais rien a celer,
De vos sui grieve.

Veez lo vantre qui se lieve;
*De l'anfant li termes abrieve,
Or m'an aideiz.
Si m'aît Dex, sel ren[i]iez

Vos en seroiz toz essilliez,
Jel di por voir.
Vos nen avez si fort menoir
Que je ne vos feiisse ardoir
Et metre en candre,
Se sor vos nel voliez prandre.
Miauz me lairoie ardoir o pandre,
Pas ne vos mant,
*Que n'en aüssiez longuemant.
Je sui nee de bone gent,

.Vii. chevalier sont mi parant,
Si rai amis
*Qui tost avroie[n]t ome ocis."
Li chevaliers en fait un ris,
Si li respont:

"Ri., li vins te monte el front.
*Ne sai que ces menaces sont.
*Di moi por quoi
*Es tu ençainte? Est ce de moi?"
**"OIIl amis." "Et je l'otroi,

PAS nel reni."
Dit Herseloz, "Sire, aidiez li."
**"Volantiers, chiere."
*.X. sous atrait de s'aumoniere(s),
*Puis li donë a liee chiere,

Après la baise.
 Qui putain loe, si l'apaise.
*Ainz qu'il s'an tort firent lor aise
*Soz l'obier frois.
**"Envoiez, dist il, enevois
You have gone back on your word to me.
Any girl
Who gives you her caresses is out of her mind;
There is no one stingier as far as Lincoln.
What have I heard about your wealth

Since I did your pleasure one day?
Woe is poor easy-going me!
Curse the hour that I lay on my back under you!
Damned be your root
Which is so spare.

I was yet a young lass,
Now nobody will undertake to love me
Anymore.
You have made my stomach swell out,
There is no use for me to hide it any longer,

I am pregnant by you.
See how my stomach is growing;
The child's time is drawing near,
Now help me with it.
God help me, if you denied it,

You would be brought to utter ruin,
I am quite serious about this.
You don't have a manor strong enough
That I cannot have it burned down
And reduced to ashes for you

If you would not accept responsibility for it.
It would be better to have me burned or hanged,
I am not kidding,
Than to defy me for very long.
I was born of a good family,

Seven of my relatives are knights,
I have friends as well
And I would soon have a man put to death."
At this the knight burst into laughter
And answers her like this:

"Richeut, the wine has gone to your head.
I don't know what these threats are about.
Tell me their cause,
Are you pregnant? Is it by me?"
"Yes, my friend, it is." "And I grant it,

I don't deny it in the least."
Then Hersent adds, "Sire, help her."
"I'll be happy to, my dear."
He takes ten sous from his money pouch
And with a happy face gives them to her,
After which, he kisses her.

He who pays a whore keeps her contented.
Before he rides away they take their pleasure
Under the fresh guelder rose.
"Send right away, says he,
Por de la char et por des pois
Et por de bon vin orlenois."
'Ce dit Ri.,' Cist est cortois."
Alez s'an est.
Ri. ne panse

*Fors d'atorem [r]iche desspanse.
*Li jors decline,
Entre Ri. et sa meschine
Aprestent mout tost la cuisine.

*I laisserent la nuit del lor.
*Ri. se dort; qant vint au jor
Ri. s'apreste;
Despandu a, or vaït en queste.
Chies un borjois

En vait Ri. preu et cortois,
Qui mout erë en grant sopois
Qu'il n'avoit oir;
Onques ne pot enfant avoir.
*Ri. garde, vit lo seoir

Sor sa fenestre.
Or li voudra conter son estre;
Prist lo par l'espaule senestre,
Dist li, 'Biau sire,
Je vos voldroie .i. secré dire.'

Cil fu cortois, pas ne s'aïre,
Bel li respont.
En une chambre endui en vont,
Desor .i. lit asis se sont.

*Ri. panse, puis si parla:
"Sire, je sui venue ça
Car mes granz besoinz m'i chaça.
Pas ne me fain,
De vos meïsmé a vos me plain,
*Qu'ier(t) travailliee.
Sire, por vos sui molt iriee,
Car je sui de vos enpreigniee."
"De moi? C'est gas."

"Non est, sire, par Saint Tomas."
"Certes, Ri., manti i as."
*El plore et gient,
A sa maisele sa main tient:
"Sire, fait el, ne vos sovient

D'un jor entier
Que me feïstes el solier
Lo commun jeu?"
"OÏl, Ri., de ce t'aveu."
*Certes, biau sire, en icel leu
For meat and peas
And good Orleans wine."
Says Richeut, "This is a courtly fellow."
He rode off.
Richeut is thinking of nothing
Except preparing a lavish expense.
The day wanes.
Between Richeut and her servant
They quickly prepare the food.
More than one person
Left behind his money during the night.
Richeut goes to sleep; When daybreak comes,
Richeut gets herself ready.
Having squandered her gain, now she goes out in search
To the house of a bourgeois of more.
Comes the courageous and courtly Richeut.
This man was much distressed
That he had no heir,
He had never been able to have a child.
Richeut looks around and sees him sitting
At his window.
Now she will no doubt want to tell him her business;
Putting her hand on his left shoulder
She says to him, "Kind sire,
I'd like to tell you a secret."
He was courtly, he doesn't get angry,
He answers her kindly.
They both go into a bedchamber
And sit down on a bed.
Sitting there
Richeut reflects, then speaks this way:
"Sire, I have come here,
For my great need drove me to it.
I will come right to the point.
I am bringing a complaint which concerns you,
For the time is not far off
When I will be in labor.
Sire, I am really very angry with you
Because you have gotten me with child."
"I have? That's a joke."
"No, by Saint Thomas, it's not."
"Surely, Richeut, you are lying about this."
She cries and moans,
Holding her hand to her jaw:
"Sire, says she, do you not remember
One full long day
That in the upper room you played the
Common game with me?"
"That I do, Richeut, that much I admit."
"It was in that place for sure
*Pris je cest fais."
"Taisiez, Ri., nel dites mais."
"Dex me confonde se m'an tais."
"Richaut, ne sai,
Bien puet estre je l'anjandrai;
Icist soit miens,
S'il est vallez, n'i faudra riens
Que il ne soit oirs de mes biens."
"Sire, espoir
Que vos avroiz de moi ma[s]le oir.
*Mais il m'estuet de[l] vostre avoir;
J'en ai besoin."
Cil met en sa borse lo poin,
.xx. sous li livre;
*Ja ne(n) s'an verra mais delivre.
*Or lo moine Ri. con ivre.
*De la putain!
"Envoyez ça, dist il, demain,
Si avroiz char et vin et pain."
El l'an mercie.
*Ri. s'an vait tote esjoie,
*Plus conquiert el par sa boidie
Et par sa lobe
*Que cil qui prant et tost et robe.
Ri. se tient et cointe et noble,
Et bien se vest
Et se conroie bien et pest.
*Plus est sivanz que lisse en gest.
Bien les atrait,
*Tant qu'el les a mis en son plait.
N'i a si cointe que n'en ait
Plus que lo droit.
*Bien les enplumë et degoit.
Ri. a tout qanqu'ele voit,
*La grosse borse!
*Agnel se fait, puis devient orse.
*Lo pas moine home et puis l'acorse
Par sa boidie.
N'i a celui cui el ne die
Que de lui est ele enpraingnie.
"Vos m'avez, fait ele, ençaintie;
Del tuen me done."
*Ri. trestoz en araisone,
Les garçons prant et enprisone,
*Puis les raant.
*De totes parz les mains lor tant.
Mout se conroie richemant.
N'i a mestier,
N'i a vilain ne pautonier
Ne bachelor ne essartier
That I took on this burden."
"Be quiet, Richeut, don't say any more."
"I will be damned if I'll keep it quiet."
"Richeut, I don't know,
It may well be that I begot it;
Let it be mine,
If it is a boy, nothing will be overlooked
In making him the heir to my wealth."  
"Sire, let us hope
That you have a male heir by me.
But some of your money is owed to me now,
I need it badly."
He plunges his fist into his purse
And gives her twenty sous;
Never will he see himself more generous.
Now Richeut leads him as though he were drunk.
Oh, that whore!
"Send somebody over tomorrow, he said,
And you shall have meat and wine and bread."
She thanks him for this.
Richeut goes away full of joy,
She gets more by her treachery
And seductive lures
Than he who seizes, kills and robs.
Richeut holds herself both comely and noble
And dresses well.
And lives and eats well too.
She is more eager than a bitch in heat.
She attracts them to her
Until she has them in her snare.
There is none so skilled that she
Doesn't get more than her due from him.
She does a good job of duping and fleecing them.
Richeut get whatever she sees,
The swollen sack!
She makes herself an angel and then turns into a bear.
She leads a man at a walk, then drives him full gallop
With her enticements.
There isn't a man to whom she does not say
That she has been made pregnant by him.
"You have knocked me up, says she,
Give me money."
Richeut goes to all of them about it.
She snares and entraps them,
Then takes their money.
She goes everywhere with her hand held out.
She lives in a very expensive style indeed.
There is no man whatever his occupation,
Neither peasant nor laborer,
Neither journeyman nor forester,
Que nel raamme.
Oistes mais si male fame,
Qui totjors quialt et rien ne seme?
Mar fust el nee
Qui si nos fu mal destinee,
Mar preïst el ceste vantee!
Par icel germe
Si a ploree mainte lerme.
Or est Ri. venue au terme,
Or couche, or lieve,
Or plore, or crie, l'ore abrieve;
Mal soit de l'ore qu'el ne crieve,
Ce fust grant joie.
Herselot a la crine bloie,
Qui reconforte, sa dame oïe.
Qu'atant je tant?
Or se delivre d'un enfant
Masle.
Il crie et brait plus fort d'un rasle
Hersanz lo leve,
Baigne et conroie et asoeee,
En dras lo couche,
Tot lo couvre ne mes la boche.
Richauz acline
Acouchiee est en la jecine;
Herselot la sert, qui ne fine.
Plus que lo saut
En vient au preste qui ne faut.
"Sire, dist ele, Dex vos saut."
"Et vos, ma bele."
"Dre vos sai boene novele."
"Et que est ce, ma damoisele?"
"Un fil avez."
"Taisiez, Hersanz[t], soef parlez,
Je sai mout bien que vos querez.
Venez a moi."

Chargiê li a tot lo conroi,
Puis l'an envoïë en secroi.
Vient a l'ostel,
Descharge soi, vait al Vïel
Et au borjois.
Cil li charge (jusq'a un mois)
Et pain et vin jusq'a un mois.
Or gist Ri.;
De la jecine mout se deute,
Mais ele a tot qanqu'ele veut.
Bien li estait,
Et Herselot tres bien s'an paist;
Malede est qui malade trait.
Empres mangier
Whose money she does not take.
Have you ever heard of such a wicked woman
Who would always reap and never sow?
It was an evil hour when she was born
Who was for us an evil fate!

It was an evil hour, too, when she got this belly-full!
By that seed
So many tears were shed.
Now has Richeut reached her term,
Now takes to bed, now gets up,

Now weeps, now screams, the time approaches;
Cursed be the hour that she didn't croak,
It would have been a joyful one.
Hersent with the flaxen locks
Who was comforting her mistress hears,

"Why must I wait so long?"
Now she gives birth to a
Male child.
He cries and shreaks louder than a magpie.
Hersent picks him up,

Bathes, feeds and comforts him,
Wraps him in a blanket and puts him in bed.
She covers him up, all but his mouth.
Richeut is submissive
Lying in bed during her confinement;

Hersent, whose care is endless, attends her.
As quickly as possible
She comes to the priest who does not fail her.
"Sire, says she, God be with you."
"And with you, my pretty one."

"I can give you some good news."
"And what is that, my lady?"
"You have a son."
"Hush up, Hersent, speak softly,
I well know what you have come for.

Come with me."
He loaded her down with all kinds of goods
And sent her off by a secret way.
She arrives home,
Puts down her booty and goes to Viel

And to the bourgeois.
These give her meat and vegetables,
Bread and wine to last a month.
Meanwhile Richeut is lying abed,
Finding her confinement very painful,

But she gets whatever she wants.
This suits her well
And Hersent really feasts on it;
He is sick who acts sick.
After eating
Porte Herseloz a un mostier
Lo fil Ri. por prinseignier,
A Saint Germain.
Les marraines et li parrain
Lievent l'enfant a la putain.
Or a lo non de son parrain,
Seignor Sanson.
Hersanz en revint en maison
Atot l'aubé.
Or a Ri. sa volonté
Et Herseloz la sert a gré
De char, de vin et de claré
Et de pevrees,
De fruit, de nieles et d'oblees
Et de parmainz.
Bien se costeïst en ses bainz,
De totes parz vient li gaïnz.
Ri. se jut,
A grant joie manja et but
Jusq' au terme que ele dut
A messe aler.
El ot lo vis vermoil et cler,
Mout entant a soi acesmer
Fresche color.
Ri. s'acesme au merëor,
A messe en vait.
Mantel a ver, grant coe trait.
N'i a lechëor ne agait,
Tuit ont mervoille;
L'uns a l'autre dit et consoille
O el prant ce don s'aparoille:
"Lo vis a bel,
O prist ele si bon mantel,
Et cel chainse ridé novel
Qui si traîne?"
Ele a ëu bone gecine.
Ri. devenue est meschine
Par son tripot.
S'ofrande fait et la messe ot,
Puis s'en repaire a Herselot
Lo pas arriére;
Grant coe trait par la podriere.
Ri. se tint et baude et fiere.
"N'i valdroit rien, fait el, proiere
Que nus me croisse."
Sanblant fait qu'an ne la conoisse.
Ri. les met en grant engoisse,
Mout les travaille.
El soloit fountre por maaille
Ainz que venist del tot a faille.
Enorgoillir
Hersent takes Richeut's son
To a monastery for his baptism
At Saint Germain.
The godmothers and godfathers
Christen the child of the whore.
Now he bears the name of his namesake,
Lord Samson.
Hersent comes back home
With the new-born child.
Now has Richeut all she wants
And Hersent serves her every whim
For meat, for wine, for honeyed wine
And for pepper broth,
For fruit, for both sweetened and unsweetened caraway
And for sweet pears.
While she primped in her bath,
From everywhere money flowed in to her.
Richeut was soon on her feet again
In great joy she ate and drank
Until the time came
to go to Mass.
Her face was pink and fair,
She was an expert at giving her face
A fresh color.
Richeut prims in front of her mirror,
And to Mass she goes.
She wears a long coat of fine fur.
There isn't a libertine who does not stare,
All are amazed;
They all talk to each other and speculate
Where she got such an outfit:
She has a pretty face,
Where did she get such a fine coat
And new pleated tunic
Which trails behind?"
She had a good period of confinement.
Richeut has become a young maiden again
Through her guile.
She makes her offering and hears Mass,
Then she wends her way home again
To Hersent
The train of her coat trailing in the dust.
Richeut holds herself bold and proud.
"Praying, she said, wouldn't be any help
To him who takes me to bed."
Everyone pretended not to know her.
Richeut puts them all in a sweat,
She gets them all worked up.
She used to make love for pennies
Before all that came to an abrupt halt.
It was to fatten her purse
*Se vialt Ri. a engorllir:
.I. denier part qui vialt ferir
Desus l'anclume,
Or a Ri. müë costume.
500
Li lechêor en font grant frume;
Ele les esprant et alume
Par ses blandiz,
Toz les reçoit graniz et petiz,
Ja nus n'en ira escondiz.
505
Mais el ne puët sofrir les criz
Que li fait Sansonez, ses fíz;
Quiert li norrice
*Por demener son jaêlice.
*El vient au preste, si l'antice,
510
Ne li laira croiz ne calice
Se il la croit.
Lx. sous ot par destroit,
*Tant dist élé que il devoit
A son enfant.
515
Au chevalier en vint corant,
De lui en resache autretant,
Puis au borjois,
*.C. sous ensache d'orlenois.
Ja Ri. no laira ençois
520 *Qu'il [i]ert ou val.
Ri. avra ovré maint mal.
Oïstes mais putain corsal
Qui si deceôve?
*Po sont des homes cui n'enboive
525 *Et do[nt] que que soit [ne] reçois.
Or a gros neu,
A l'ostel vient, s'i fait grant feu
*[Dont] dame Herselot est queu;
A grant foison
530 Et volaille [ont] et venison
Et clarë plus dolz que poison.
Ri. s'antremet de Sanson
Par mout grant cure.
Ri. ot bone noiriture.
535 *Ri. au preste sovant jure
*Qu'il lo resamle.
Toz li cuers de joie li tranble,
Et chascun jor lo soen li enble
La menestrel.
540 Au borjois redit autretel,
*Et dit au chevalier Vïel
Qu'il iere suëns:
*Mout par est preuz et biax et buëns;
*Se engenré l'aüst .i. cuëns
545 *Ne fust plus biax.
That Richeut acquired such haughty airs:
He who would hammer on this anvil now
Must part with a pound;
Now has Richeut changed her style of dress.

The rogues make a pained face at this;
She beguiles them and turns them on
With her blandishments,
She receives them all great and small,
None will ever go away unsatisfied.

But she cannot bear the crying
That little Samson, her son, makes.
She gets a nurse for him
So that she can carry on her dissolute life.
She comes to the priest and gets him excited.

She'll not leave him a cross nor a chalice
If he listens to her.
She dunned him for 60 sous,
She said that is how much he owed
To his child.

She ran to the knight,
From him she pockets a like amount,
Then to the bourgeois,
100 sous of Orleans mintage she collects.
Richeut will never let go

Until he is utterly ruined.
She must have caused much evil.
Have you ever heard of a whore run around so
To bring men to ruin.
Few are the men who didn't partake of her pleasure

And from whom Richeut takes whatever there is.
Now that she has a fat purse
She returns to her home where a roaring fire is going
Which Hersent is cooking over.
They have in great abundance

Fowl and venison
And claret sweeter than elixir.
Richeut looks after baby Samson
With tenderest care.
Richeut had good food.

Richeut often asserts to the priest that the child
Takes after him.
His whole body trembles with joy
And every day the doxy draws
Money from him.

She restates the same thing for the bourgeois
And tells the knight Viel
That the child is his.
For him is the child brave and handsome and good,
If a count had begotten him

He could not be more fair.
Or a Ri. toz ses aviax
Por Sansonet.
De lui bien vestir s'antremet
*Et a taz cez sore lo met
550 *Qui li ont fait.
N'i a si cointe do[nt] el n'ait,
*Car trop set d'arz.
Ri. lace de totes parz.
Tant cru Sansons qu'il fu granz garz.
555 *Par la parole
Fu Sansonez mis a escole.
Mout ot cler sans,
*N'ot si sotil en toz les rans:
Son sautier sot en po de tans,
560 Chanta .ii. anz,
Voiz ot sor les autres enfanz,
Mout sot et conduiz et sochanz.
Vait a gramaire,
*En .i. en sot bon ditié faire.
565 Con plus aprant et plus esclaire
Tant a fait vers
Qu'il en set faire de divers.
*N'ot en l'escole si porvers,
Mout bien aprant,
570 Et li maistres bien i entant
*Por lo grant loier qu'il en prant
*Del preste fol.
Tant l'a Ri. feru el mol
*Qu'il a grisset mantel au col;
575 *Or est au lange.
*Au borjois vialt tolir lo chanje,
*Et par menacë et par blanje
Que par proier
A tant mené lo chevalier
580 Que tot li a fait engagier
Et terre et feu.
Qant Ri. est en icel leu
Mout li aconte
Que Sansons sanble fil de conte,
585 Car preuz est, isnelemant monte
Sor son cheval.
Ne dote mont, conbe ne val,
Einz s'essaie con bon vasal,
Nelui ne crient.
590 "Sire, fait ele, il t'aparient
*Car mout est fiers;
*Il est autex comme tu ies,
Mout s'afiche sor les estriers,
Bien s'ademet.
Now are all Richeut's desires fulfilled
Through little Samson.
She takes pains to dress him well,
And she raises him above
All his fathers.
There is no man so clever that she does not
Get what she wants, for she knows her art well.
Richeut spreads her snares in every direction.
Samson grew to be a big lad.

To learn the art of good speech
Samson was sent to school.
He had a good mind,
There was none as clever as he on the school benches:
He learned his psalter in a short time,
Studied singing for two years,
His voice was finer than the other children's,
He could sing a cappella and with accompaniment,
He goes to grammar school,
In one year he learned how to compose poems.

As he became better educated and more enlightened,
He wrote so many poems
That he could compose a number of different types.
None in the school was as crafty,
He learned very well,
And the schoolmaster understands the situation
By the generous pay he gets out of it
From the foolish priest.
So heavily did Richeut put the bite on him
That he wore on his back a cloak of the cheapest fabric.

Now is he in pitiful attire.
She wants to take the bourgeois' money-changing business
Both by threat and flattery
And by entreaty.
She so led the knight
That she made him mortgage all he had,
Both lands and fiefs.
When Richeut is at the knight's manor,
She tells him over and over
That Samson seems like the son of a count.

For he is brave and nimbly rides
His horse.
He is undaunted by either mountain, hill, or valley,
But tests his metal like a good squire,
He fears no one.

"Sire, says she, he is yours,
For he is very bold;
He is just like you,
He can really keep his stirrups
And charge ahead."
En cest païs n'a nul vallet
Qui plus sache de Sansonet."

*Viex acroit, del suen i met.
Au borjois dit
*Que Sansonet son fil aït

*Del conter fait a grant espoit,
El li dit voir, se il la croit
Ne n'iert pas grief
Et sa rante metra en brief.
Ce dit au preste,

Que Sansons est des autres mestre,
*Mout aimë en escole a estre
Por plus savoir.
Li dansz set bien qu'ele dit voir,
Si li charje tot son avoir.

Ri, lo prant,
Si s'en conroie richemant
*Car li garçons pas nel despant.

*Qui croit Ri. et qui la fot
Mout est chaitis.

Or a Ri. ses .iii. amis
*Par son engin sor fussiay mis;
Et Sansonez a tant apris
Par son cler sans
Qu'i[1] est dialecticiens.

Lo jeu des dez aprist par tans
Et lo lechois.
Volantiers vait o les cortois.
*Sonez set faire et servantois
Et rotruanges.

Fames déçoit par ses losanges.
Ses costez lace a longues franjes
Et sa çainture;
Coetee a sa vestëure.
En lecherie met sa cure;

Chascuns retrait a sa nature.
*Sanson revate,
N'i a si roide qu'il n'abate
Ne si cointe que il ne mate.
Mout set caraudes,

Les fames fait plus que feu chaudes;
Les plus cointes fait estre baudes
Et envoiees.
*Soz soi les fait estre enragiees.
Au bordel en a envoiees

Plus d'un millier
*Que il a mises au mestier.
Mout par les set bien engignier
Et bareter.
There is no young man in this country
Who knows more than Samson."
Viel is taken in and shells out his wealth.
She tells the bourgeois
To help his son Samson.

The boy had done marvels in arithmetic,
She is telling the truth and he believes her,
He was not at all sorry to hear this
And he will sign his rents over to her.
To the priest she says

That Samson is the master of the others
And very well liked for being
The most learned.
The abbot knows very well that she is telling the truth,
And so he gives her all his wealth.

Richeut takes it
And lives lavishly on it,
For it is not the boy who gets to spend it.

Whoever believes Richeut and whoever screws her
Is severely punished

Now has Richeut reduced her three lovers
To paupery by her machinations;
And Samson has learned so much
With his sharp mind
That he became a dialectician.

Gambling with dice he learned in time
And the game of lechery too.
He loves to run with the courtly types.
Songs he can make, servantois
And rotruanges too.

He deceives women with his tricks.
The sides of his coat he bedecks with long fringes
And his belt too;
He wears a well cut jacket.
He devotes himself to lechery.

Everybody reverts to his own nature,
As does Samson.
There is none so reserved that he does not bring her down,
None is so skilled that he does not master her,
He knows many magic powers,

He makes women hotter than fire,
He makes the most sophisticated ones baudy
And gay.
He makes them rage with passion under him.
He has sent more than a thousand
To the bordello
Whom he introduced to the trade.
He can really trick
And deceive them.
De si a Bar n'en a son per
De lecherie,
Car il li vient d'ancesserie.
Ri. sa mere lo chastie:
"Sansons, biax fiz, di moi quel vie
Tu meneras.

Voiz lo preste de Saint Thomas,
Mout sera liez s'a lui t'an vas;
Ou au borjois
*T'an va, s'i changeras a pois,
*Qu a dan Viel, lo cortois,
Biax fiz, t'an va."
"Par Deu, mere, ne ça ne la
N'est l'aler[s] preuz,
*Car apovriz les avez toz.
*Ne puis sofrir malvais degroz."
Ri. s'an rit par de desoz,
*Sanson fait here:
"Mais or me dites, bele mere,
Li qex de ces .iii. est mes pere?"
"Biax fiz, ne sai,
Car a chascun de .iii. coplai,
Et a mil autres. Pas n'en ai
Envers toi honte.
Fame sor cui tex pueples monte
Commant savroit tenir lo conte
De ses enfanz?
*Ne sai[t] de cui conçoit ne qant.
*De ces. .iii. va au plus menant;
Met t'an a choiz."
"Mere, ne ça ne la ne vois;
*En cest païs plus nen estois,
*Aler m'an voil,
*Ja n'ert prodom dedanz son soil.
As riches cors panré escoil
De cortoisie.
*Une masse sai de clergie,
Connoistre voil chevalerie;
*S'avré les fames
Et les cortoises riches dames.
Mout les metrai encor en brames
Et en error,
*Se puis encor [avoir] del lor
Et par boidie et par amor."
Ri. s'an rit.
"Biax fiz Sanson, que as tu dit?
Ja sez tu encor si petit
*De cest tripot?
Envers les fames n'en sez mot;
*Les homes font tenir por sot."
"Mere, cil qui entant et ot
From here to Bar he doesn't have his peer
In lechery,
For it comes to him from his ancestry.
His mother Richeut upbraids him:
"Samson, my fine son, tell me what kind of life
You will lead.

See the priest at Saint Thomas' church,
He will be delighted if you go to him,
Or go to the bourgeois
Where you will learn money changing,
Or to Lord Viel, the noble,

Dear son, go."
"By God, mother, neither this way nor that
Is the choice very appealing,
For you have ruined them all.
I cannot stand an empty purse."

Richeut laughs at this under her breath,
Samson makes a face:
"But now tell me, mother dear,
Which one of the three is my real father?"
"My dear son, I don't know,

For I copulated with all three
And a thousand others. Do not feel any shame
Toward yourself.
How would a woman on whom
Such creatures mount be able to keep account
Of their children.
I do not know with whom I conceived with nor when.
Of these three go to the most attractive one;
Take your choice."
"Mother, I can't make up my mind one way or the other,
I don't want to stay in this country any longer,
I want to go away.
Never will one be great on his own soil.
In sumptuous courts will my career take off
Through courtly activities.

I know a lot about the life of a cleric,
I want to find out about chivalry;
Then I shall have women
And the courtly rich ladies.
I shall cause many more to lament
And go astray
If I can get their wealth
By deception and by love."
Richeut laughs at this.
"Dear Samson my son, what did you say?

Do you still know so little about
These things?
You don't know the first thing about women;
They consider men stupid."
"Mother, he who understands and possesses
*Ses bons a[u]tors
*Set bien de fames les trestors,
Car il descouvre bien lor mors
Et lor nature."
*"Fiz, cil qui sevrent d'escriture
Solent amer a demesure;
*Cil qui plus set
*Aime plus tost et plus tost [h]et
*S'il voit chose qui li agret.
Cil qui set plus
Est par fame plus tost mis jus
Que cil qui conoissent lor us,
Qui que s'en gar.
Fame cointe de male part
Si se fait bien vers[s] lo musart
Et cointe et fiere."
"Mere, je sa[i] bien la meniere,
Mainte en ferai encore corsiere.
N'i a si cointe
Que je ne face vers moi jointe.
Se je tant faz que l'aie pointe,
Tot li torrai;
Ja nule rien ne li lairai."
"Avoi, Sanson, certes bien sai,
*Encor la te reprouverai
Ceste parole.
N'i a si cointe clercl'escole
*Que n'aie mise en ma jaiole
*Et toz raams.
Biax fiz Sanson, si con je pans,
Encor avras perdu lo sans
Par art de fame.
*Mout crien qu'ele ne te raame."
*"Il n'a, dist il, si bele dame
En cest pais
*Que tant fusse de li espris
Que j'en poisse estre a pié mis,
S'an sui toz fiz."
"S'ansil faiz, Sanson, con diz,
Don sai je bien que ies mes fiz."
Ri. ne fine,
Sansonet aprant et dostrine
Conmant doit joer a meschine
Et servir dame soz cortine

*Estroit la corbe, bien s'anpai[g]ne,
*Soef la baist, vers soi l'estraigne
Tant qu'ele l'ainr--
Qu'est debonaires, totjorz vaint--
Tot dis promete,
His good writers
Knows well the wiles of women,
For he discerns clearly their ways
And their nature."
"Son, those who learn through literature
Are wont to love beyond measure;
He who knows better
Makes love sooner and cools off sooner
If he sees an object which appeals to him.
The one who knows more [through books]
Is more quickly brought down by a woman
Than those acquainted with their habits,
However much he is on his guard.
A woman acquainted with low ways
Makes herself proud and superior
Toward the fool.
"Mother, I know how to do it,
I shall make strumpets of many more of them.
There is none so knowing
That I can't make her join her body to mine.
If I have done so well that I have pricked her,
I'll take everything she has from her;
Not a single thing will I leave her.""Hold on, Samson, I know that for certain,
I will still condemn These words.
There is not a cleric in school so clever
That I did not get him in my power,
And I fleeced them all.
Samson, dear son, if, as I think,
You will lose your senses
Through a woman's guile.
Be very fearful lest she strip you clean.""There is no woman beautiful enough in this country,
Said he,
However much I were in love with her,
Through whom I could be brought low,
If I am your son in this.""If your actions match your words, Samson,
Then I am sure you are my son."
Richeut labors unceasingly,
She teaches and trains Samson
How he should give pleasure to a girl
And behave with a lady under a bed's canopy.

He should love hard against her, clamp his body tightly
Kiss her gently, press her close to him to hers,
As long as she loves him—
He who has style always conquers—
He must promise her everything,
Vers fames soit totjorz en dete,
745 *De lor servir bien s'antremete
De bel parler.
Mout set Ri. de l'art d'amer
Qui Sansonet vialt dostriner;
*Et mout en cuide
Sansonez savoir par Ovide.
750 Ri. sa mere li aide.
La nuit sejorne;
A sa mere, qant il ajorne,
A pris congié, puis si s'an torne,
755 *Veit s'an a corz.
*Sansons ne fu ne fox ne lorz,
Ançois se fist amer a toz,
Car il set tant
Que n'en i a petit ne grant
760 Qui ne li face bel samblant.
Et si ot grace,
Ne lor desplaist chose qu'il face;
Par sa parole les enlace.
Par amistie
765 Et par angin a porchacié
Sanson don a ahernechié
Son palefroi.
Richémant vait, a bel conroi;
Bien set parler devant .i. roi
770 Et devant conte
Bel et cortoismeant sanz honte.
Mar fu qant a enor ne monte,
Mais il ne puet;
De Ri. sa mere li muet
775 La nature qu'il li estuet
*Sore et tenir.
*A pris ne puet i[1] pas venir
*Car del lechois ne puet partir,
*Il nel lairoit
780 *Por trestot l'avoir que il voit;
Non feroit il, qui li donroit
L'anor de Rome.
De lecherie set la some.
En nule cort
785 *Ne trove si lonc ne si cort
Qui tant en sace.
N'i a nul qui taicir ne face.
*O qu'i[1] veigne, eoe est la place,
Tant set de bordes
790 De proverbes et de falordes.
*Mains a beles, plaines non gordes;
*Fames afole,
*Voiz a; bien chante et bien parole,
Bien en porroit tenir escole,
Always be in the debt of women,
And to serve them well endeavor to have
Pleasing speech.
Richeut knows a lot about the art of love,
She would like to instruct Samson;
And Samson thinks
He knows a lot about it from Ovid.
Richeut, his mother, helps him learn.
He rests during the night;
When day comes he takes leave
Of his mother, then goes away,
He heads for courts.
Samson was neither a madcap fool nor slow witted,
Rather he made everybody like him,
For he knows so much
That there is neither lowly nor great
Who does not give him a friendly greeting.
And he has such grace
That nothing he does displeases them;
He ensnares them with his words.
Through friendship
And through cunning Samson
Procures himself the means to outfit
His travel horse.
He dresses richly and has a fine entourage;
In the presence of a king or of a court
He knows how to speak
Beautifully and courteously without embarrassment.
It is very unfortunate that he does not rise to honor,
But he cannot;
The nature under whose sway and rule he is held
Came to him from Richeut,
His mother.
He cannot attain to worthiness,
For he cannot separate himself from debauchery.
He would not quickly
Pass up all the wealth he sees around him;
Nor would he do it if he were given
Honor straight from Rome.
He knows lechery from a to z.
In no court
Can one find a taller [longer] or shorter man
Who knows so much about it.
There is none he doesn't make hold his tongue,
Wherever he comes, the place is his.
He knows many spicy jokes
Proverbs and tricks.
His hands are beautiful, firm not fat;
He drives women wild,
He has a voice for both singing and talking beautifully,
He could give lessons in both arts,
795  Mout i. entant.  
   Soz ciel nen a cel estrumant  
   Don Sansons ne sache grantmant.  
   Plus set Sansons  
   Rotruange, conduiz et sons;  

800  *Bien set faire les lais bretons.  
   Si set des dez  
   *Plus que nus hom de mere nez;  
   *Onques n'en pot estre enjanez  
   En nule guise.  

805  Trestoz ses conpeignons jostise,  
   Mainz en fait tranbler a l'assise,  
   Il les despoille.  
   *Englootie a mainte coille  
   Car il est forz.  

810  Plusors en a gitié as porz  
   Et as putains puanz et orz  
   Plus que lanternes.  
   Onques rien ne perdi en quernes,  
   *N'a enbesa, n'a .ii. en ternes,  

815  Totjors a quines;  
   *En .ii. des .iii. bouez ot quines.  
   Tuit li plusor  
   Des lechêors en font seignor.  
   Il les esvoille,  

820  *Sansons les met en la corboille:  
   Qui mis i est pas ne somoille.  
   Sansons les bat,  
   Ja n'ert si cointes qu'il no mat  
   Ainz qu'il s'an tort.  

825  *De Londre jusq'a Monz n'a cort  
   0 Sansons ne voist et sejort.  
   Sansons est biax,  
   A cez citez, a cez chastiax  
   As fames bastist gries cenbiax,  

830  *Tost lor deniers, dras et aniaux,  
   Neant a force;  
   .I. cotel a don les escorce,  
   C'est la losange.  
   Ce est Sansons qui roz nos vange  

835  Des pautonières  
   Qui si se font envers nos fieres.  
   Plus de mil en a fait corsieres,  
   Mout est sauvaje  
   *La meschine qu'il n'as[o]aje  

840  As dames fait muer coraje;  
   Se il s'an poine  
   N'i a si counte qu'il n'en moire.  
   Sansons les point jusq'a la vaine,  
   Il les met en la grant alaine,
So well does he understand them.
There is no instrument under heaven
That Samson has not mastered.
He knows more,
Rotruanges, conduiz and sons;
He can perform Brittany lays very well.
And he knows more about gambling with dice
Than any man born of woman;
In no way could he ever be
Cheated.
He dominates all his companions without exception.
He makes many of them tremble at a gaming session.
He takes their money.
He swallowed up many a money pouch,
For he is tough.
He threw money to the swine
And to the dirty whores,
Stinkier than oil lamps.
He never lost by throwing fours,
Nor aces nor threes;
He always threw fives
And on two of the three he often had sixes.
The whole band
Of lecheors make him their lord.
He puts life into them,
Samson keeps them in anxiety:
To whomever he does so, that one does not slumber.
Samson beats them,
There are none so clever that he does not bring him to
Before he takes his leave.
From London to Mons there is not a court
That Samson doesn't see and stay at.
Samson is beautiful,
In these cities, in these castels,
He wages devastating erotic battles,
He takes their money, linens, and rings,
Nothing by force;
He has a knife with which to skin them,
It's called treachery.
Samson it is who avenges us all
On the wenches
Who act so haughty toward us.
He made whores out of more than a thousand of them,
She is wild indeed
The girl he does not tame.
He makes the ladies hearts to flutter
If he takes the trouble to.
There is none so beautiful that he does not lead her where
Samson excites them until their veins nearly
He puts them out of breath,
Les malsenees; 
Plus de .vii. cent en a menees, 
Puis les lait, qant les a robees. 
Sansons a droit, 
S'il les fames tient en destroit.

Ri. sa mere homes deçoit 
*Et ses ahane; 
*Sansonez les fames enjane, 
N'en a son per jusc'a Viane 
De bien deçoivre. 

*Del Noagre de ci c'au Toivre 
*M'avra qui miauz sache deçoivre 
Char de famele. 
Sansons set tant de la favele 
Que les plus cointes en apele 

Del jeu. 
Enui lor fait, s'il en a leu. 
Sansons ne a terre ne feu, 
*Mais des fames quialt lo ton[1]eu 
Par Alemaigne, 

Par Lonbardie et par Bretaigne, 
Et as Francoises rengaigne 
Auncue chose. 
En Engleterre passer ose 
Qui de la mer est tote enclose, 

Nes en Irlande 
Font les dames qanqu'i[1] comande, 
Et de ci q'an Inde la grande 
A il esté; 
Iluec a il mout conquestê. 

Sor putains a la po[ë]stê 
Lî fiz Ri.; 
Cele qui l'escondit s'an diáut. 
Sansons est sages, 
De totes corz set les usages; 

Entre amanz porte les mesages 
Cortoisemant. 
Asamblê en a plus de .c., 
*Si ne li chaut si sont parant; 
*Ses espose, c'une n'en prant 

Mais qu'il gaaînt. 
Ce set il bien qu'en pechié maint, 
Mais li deliz do mont lo vaint 
Qui mout li plaist. 
*De ce se vit, de ce se paist 

Richemant; ja ne cuit qu'il laist 
Icest vie. 
En volanté m'est que vos die 
Des ses pechiiez une partie 
Des criminaux. 

*Moines devint a Clerevax,
The arrant bitches;
More than 700 he has led away.
Then abandons them when he has robbed them.
Samson is right,
If he torments women.

His mother Richeut ruins men
And makes them suffer;
Samson ensnares women,
He does not have his peer from here to Vienne (Dauphiné)
In really putting it to them.

From the Noagre, from here as far as the Tiber
There is doubtless none who better knows how to abuse
Female flesh.
Samson knows so much about deception
That the most clever concede
The game to him.
He does them mischief if he has the chance,
Samson has neither land nor fief,
But he extracts his toll from women.
In Germany,

In Lombardy and in Brittany,
And from the Frenchwomen he reaps
Gain.
He dares go to England
Which is all enclosed by the sea,
Even in Ireland
All the ladies do whatever he orders them to,
He has travelled from here as far as
Great India;
There he conquered a great deal.

He has power over whores,
Does Richeut's son.
The woman who sends him packing bitterly rues her act.
Samson is knowing.
He knows the customs of every court;

He carries messages between lovers
Like a good courtier.
He assembles more than 100,
It does not matter to him if they are relatives;
Not one of his partners does he marry,
But he makes money on the deal.
He knows well that this leads to sin,
But the delights of the world conquer him,
He enjoys the world.
This is what he lives on, this is how he supports himself
Lavishly; He does not think he will ever leave
This life.
I want to tell you
Of his sins a part of the
Criminal ones.

He became a monk at Clairvaux,
*S'ot les blans dras, s'ert moines faux
Et tot sans loi,
A ses freres manti sa foi,
*Fuit s'an, s'en mena o soi
900 .I. cheval sor.
Si en porta tot lo tresor,
Croiz, calices d'argent et d'or,
Li fox, li ivres.
Bien en porta .lx. livres,
905 Car grant despanse
Moine Sanson, qu'il ne s'asanse
*De Deu servir, tant ne se panse,
*Mais dës presant
Par tot ravist, par tot despant.
910 Maint cuer a fait triste et dolant
L'angin Sanson.
Jusq'au flun Jordain n'a maison
Ne covant de relegion
O n'aït pris ordre.
915 Qant lui plaist, bien s'an set estordre,
Mais il vialt ainz ses freres mordre;
Trestoz les robe,
*Pechié ne dote ne oprobe,
Toz les vaint Sansons par sa lobe.
920 *Il devint prestes(s)
Sacrez fu, ce dit, a Vincestre.
A ces nonains dist qu'il vialt estre
Lor chapelains:
Mar lo creïrent les nonains,
925 Car les plusor en fist putains,
Puis les roba.
Tant a alé et ça et la
Que plus de .c. en afola.
Une abeesse
930 En amena grosse et espesse,
Puis devint ele jugleresse.
Sanson enchante
Trestotes celes o il ante;
*I[1] fout la niece et puis la tante,
935 Puis les sorors.
A droit lo fait et a rebors,
Desor toz autres lechëors
Iert il lechieres;
Sor eles a esté trechieres
940 Plus que gorpille
Qui par engin prant la cornille.
Sanson art fames et essille,
La mere fout et puis la fille
Et les coïnes.
945 *Sanson les fout totes sovines,
Les genoz lor met as poïtrines,
There he had white vestments; since he was a false monk
And completely without scruple,
He broke his oath to his brothers,
Ran away, and took with him

A sorrel horse.
He also took the whole treasure,
Crosses, chalices of silver and gold.
The madman, the drunk!
He carried away at least 60 pounds (of silver),
For many expenses
Does Samson incur that he cannot make up his mind
To serve God, he doesn't even think about it,
But from now on
Everywhere he plunders, everywhere he spends.

Samson's treachery caused many hearts
Pain and grief.
As far as the River Jordan there is
No house of religion nor convent
Where he does not take orders.

He knows how to extricate himself when he wants,
But rather he wants to hurt his brothers;
He robs them all,
He fears neither sin nor censure,
Samson vanquishes them all with his machinations.

He becomes a priest,
It is said he was ordained at Winchester.
He told these nuns that he wanted to be
Their chaplain:
Evil was the hour when they believed him,

For he turned the whole lot of them into whores,
Then robbed them.
He went so much this way and that
That he drove more than 100 of them mad.
An abbess

He took away from there, heavy with child,
Then she became a whore,
Samson cast his spell
On every last woman he associates with;
He screws the niece and then the aunt,

Then the sisters.
He does it forward, then backward,
Above all the other libertines
He was the most debauched;
On girls was he most treacherous,

More even than the fox
Who with his ruse caught the crow.
Samson makes women hot, then ruins them.
He screws the mother and then the daughter
And the cousins too.

Samson screws them all lying on their backs,
He brings their knees up to their breasts,
Il croist en coste
*Et a copresse et a soposte;
*Sanson croist bien,
950 *A bachet et a pisscheien.
Plus set Sansons,
Car il les croist a estupons.
*Pardonez nos s'ansi parlons
*Vos qui entandez nos raisons,
955 *Tex est l'estoire,
*N'en volon oster ne aoire.
De bien croistrate ot Sanson gloire
Et pris et los.
Maintes en monta sor les dos
960 A cui il fist croistre les os.
*Onques Sansons nen ot repos
De lecherie.
*D'angignier ot il la maistrie,
Toz les vainqui de lecherie.
965 Sansons set tot:
Une estorse set et un bot,
N'i a putain, se il la fout,
*Que ne li face dire "tprot"
D'el que de boche.
970 Mal ait Sansons qui si les toche.
Cele robè avoc cui coche
En recelec.
Mainte en avra ensi menee,
Et quant ce vint a l'anjornee
975 *Trovoit soi nue.
Cel jor l'estovoit estre an mue.
Ne se demonstroit pas en rue.
Trop set Sansons qui si treslue
Et qui si enble
980 A totes celes ou asamble.
Ri. sa mere bien resamble
Qu'il fu ses fiz.
Ainz Sanson ne fu escharniz
Fors par Ri. la meretrix.
985 Seignor, oëz
Commant Sansons fu enganez,
Bien lo sai dire.
San., qui des fames ert sire,
.Vii. anz o plus fu en Sezille,
990 Puis s'an avança ver[s] Saint Gile
Droit a Tolose
Que li rois Henris tant golose.
Mainte meschine et mainte espose
I fist dolante.
995 Qant l'estre plus ne li talante,
Vint an Berri,
He couples lying on the side
And driving forward and from the rear;
Samson does a good job screwing,

With the woman sitting on him and doggy.
Samson knows more than that,
For he takes them bent over forward.
Forgive us if we talk this way,
You who understand our reasons,

That's the way the story is,
We do not want to leave out or add anything.
For his good fucking Samson got glory
Praise and profit.
He mounted on the backs of many

And made their bones to crack.
Samson never had any respite
From lechery.
He was a master of duplicity,
He beat every one in lechery.

Samson knows everything:
He knows a twist and a drive,
There is no whore, if he screws her,
Whom he doesn't make say "tprot"
From elsewhere than her mouth.

Cursed be Samson who goes after them like this.
The one who goes to bed with him is robbed
In secret.
He must have dealt with many that way,
And when daybreak came

She found herself naked.
On that day she must hide away
And not show herself in the street.
Samson knows much, he who deceives
And who steals this way

From all those with whom he couples.
He is much like Richeut his mother
Because he was her son.
Never was Samson beaten
Except by Richeut the archwhore.

Milord, listen
How Samson was gulled,
I know well how to tell it.
Samson, who was master over women,
Was in Sicily seven years or more,

Then he went through Saint Gille [du Gard] and
Straight for Toulouse
Which King Henry wants so badly.
There many a maid and many a wife
He caused to suffer.

When he did not care to stay any longer,
He came to the Berry,
La o sa mere l'ot norri:
Veoir la veut,
Cuïda fust la o hetier sueut.

1000 N'i estoit pas dame Ri.;
Sanson s'an torne,
*Les chastiax vait cerchant a orne,
A Paris vient, iluec sejorne
Une qui[n]zaine,
Grant joie et grant deduit i moine,
*Mainte putain i mist en poine.
Vient a Rieuvez,
Iloques tient Ri. ses plaiz.
Qant Sansons vint, mout fu destroiz

1010 *Des citeains;
Tuit li demandent s'il est saïns.
Sa guere quialt vers les putains,
Ri. lo voit,
A lui est venue tot droit;

1015 El lo salue,
Il li rant mais ne se remue.
Sanson ne l'a pas conëue
Car .xii. anz a ne l'ot vëue.
Ri. se rit

1020 Des deduiz que faire li vit.
A soi mêisme panse et dit.
"Si m'ait Dex,
*De nos .ii. est li plus cruex
*O je vers ome[s]

1025 *O il vers fames? car mout somes
*Saje de l'art.
*Sansons fet escot et esgart
*En cel carorge."
*Ri. n'atant plus, ainz s'ap[r]och

1030 Vient a l'hostel,
*Herselot trova la jael.
*Tote jor n'antandoit a el
Fors au panser
Commant porroit Sanson gaber

1035 Et engignier.
Ri. fait Herselot baignier,
Au col li mist hon mantel chier,
D'orfrois li lace
*Les .ii. costez et en rebrace.

1040 *De blanchet li poroi[n]t la face
Et lo menton.
El "is asist lo vermeillon
Desor lo blanc
Por ce que del natural sanc

1045 Po i avoit.
*Hersanz pert bele, mais n'estoit,
There where his mother had nurtured him;  
He wants to see her,  
He thought she would be there where she used to sport  
Lady Richeut was not there; herself.  
Samson goes away;  
He goes searching out the castles roundabout,  
To Paris he comes, there stays  
A fortnight,  
He finds there great joy and great delights,  
Many a whore he causes to suffer.  
He comes to Beauvais,  
There Richeut has her snares in place.  
When Samson came, the townspeople were  
Greatly distressed;  
They ask him if he is sane.  
He carries his war to the whores,  
Richeut sees him,  
She comes straight up to him;  
She greets him,  
He returns her greeting, but without changing expression.  
Samson has not recognized her,  
For it had been 12 years since he had seen her.  
Richeut laughs  
At the amorous games she saw him playing.  
She thinks and says to herself,  "God help me,  
Which of us is more cruel,  
I toward men  
Or he toward women? For we are the  
Very masters of the art.  
Samson is looking around and listening  
In the town square."  
Richeut hesitates no longer and starts home,  
And arrives at her place,  
There she found Hersent the whore.  
The whole day long they discussed nothing else  
But the idea  
Of how to hoodwink Samson  
And catch him.  
Richeut has Hersent bathe,  
Then on her shoulders puts an expensive coat  
Bordered with embroidery  
Along both sides and the arms.  
She covers her face and chin  
With white powder.  
Then applies a rouge to her face  
Over the white,  
Because of natural blood  
She had little.  
Hersent appears beautiful, but is not,
228

*Ainz ert boschiee.  
Ri. se hate ainz que s'an chiee  
Cele color.

1050  
Bien sanble fille de contor.  
Par li [i]ert Sansons en error  
Se Ri. puet.  
Cointemant ovrer lor estuet;  
Ri. c Herselot s'esmuet,

1055  
Vont s'an lo pas  
De l'autre part chies dan Thomas  
Un riche marcheant de dras.  
Une beasse  
Avoit en la maison mout grasse

1060  
Qui de trîpot sot une masse.  
*Ri. l'apele:  
"Parlez a moi, ma damoisele.  
Direz vos sai bone novele.  
Or de l'aidier

1065  
Se tu viax avoir bon loier,  
Monte laissus en cel solier  
O Herselot,  
*Que vostre gent n'en sachent mot."  
Tout li a conté lo trîpot.

1070  
Or monte sus;  
Ri. s'an ist, n'i tarda plus.  
*Ensi con ele issoit de l'uis  
De la maison,  
Garde, si voit venir Sanson.

1075  
*Encontré l'a, mist l'a raison,  
Tint sci mout simple,  
*Qu'il ne s'averte, mist sa guimple  
Sor son viaire.  
*Primes parole por atraire,

1080  
Aprés soef por miaux aîtâïr:  
*"San. n'ies pas, par Saint Alaire,  
Frans ne cortois ne debonaire,  
*Por noiant te vantes  
Qu'antremetre te sez de tantes.

1085  
N'a moi ne viens, n'a moi ne antes.  
Mout par fais mal.  
Ja tant n'iras n'amont n'aval  
Que tu vieignes a mon ostal;  
Sanson, vien i,

1090  
*Il n'est pas loin, voiz lo de ci.  
*La moie foi, Sanson, t'afi,  
*Se vialx do mien  
Ja ne voldras iclele rien  
Que tu n'aies, car je t'ain bien.

1095  
Amis Sanson, avoc moi vien."  
Sanson's l'antant,
But she was well made up.  
Richeut hurries before the color  
Comes off.  

1050 She certainly looks like the daughter of a count.  
By her will Samson be fooled  
If Richeut can manage it.  
They had to work skillfully;  
Richeut goes out with Hersent,  

1055 They walk together  
To another part of town to the house of Mr. Thomas,  
A wealthy cloth merchant.  
There was in the house  
A servant girl, soft and juicy,  

1060 Who knew a lot about the ways of love.  
Richeut calls to her:  
"Come talk with me, miss.  
I have good news to tell you.  
Help me now,  

1065 If you want to have a nice sum of money,  
Go up there in the upper room  
With Hersent  
And do not say a word about this to your people."  
She told her the whole affair.  

1070 Now she goes up;  
Richeut went out and didn't waste any time.  
Thus as she was coming out of the door  
Of the house,  
She looks around and sees Samson coming.  

1075 She met him, started talking to him  
Standing very naturally,  
So that he would not get wise, she pulled her wimple  
Down over her face.  
First, she chats to get his interest,  

1080 Then gently to catch him better:  
"Samson, by St. Alaire, you are not  
Frank nor courtly nor chic,  
You boast for nothing  
That you can make so many women.  

1085 You don't come to me, you don't visit me.  
You hurt me greatly.  
You'll not go anywhere else  
Until you come to my house.  
Samson, come,  

1090 It's not far, you can see it from here.  
I give you my word, Samson,  
If you want money from me  
You'll never want anything  
That you won't have, because I really love you.  

1095 Friend Samson, come with me."  
Samson listens to her,
Bien aperçoit qu'ele li mant
*Et sel trait a decevemant;
*Ne la resoigne.

1100
*Hai, quel nonain et quel moine!
*Mout set chascuns [d'els] de faloine
Et de boidie.
San. li dist a voiz serie:
"Commant avez vos non, amie?"

1105
"Amis, an m'apele Florie."
"Florie bele,
*Benoi(e)te soit tex daimoisele
Qui son ami ensin apele.
Merciz et grez

1110
Del bel apel que fait m'avez.
Ja dites vos que vos m'amez
Et je ain vos."
*San. garda, li avrillox,
*Amont sor destre,

1115
Vit Herselot a la fenestre.
*"Florie, di por Saint Selvestre
*Qui est ce la?
Voiz quel cors et quel vis ele a."
*"Ou?" dist Ri. Il li monstra.

1120
*"En cel solier."
*"A! dist Ri., ce n'a mestier.
C'est la fille a un chevalier
Preu et cortois,
Qui l'a mise chies un borjois

1125
Qui l'aprant a ovrer orfrois
Avec sa fille."
*San[sonez] d'angoisse fretille.
Or ne se prise une co(r)quille
*S'il ne se leue.

1130
*"Florie bele, car te leue."
*"Vers cui?" "Vers moi, qu'ele me seue
Et qu'ele m'aingt."
"Ostez, dist ele, a rien n'ataint."
*De lui aidier Ri. se faint.

1135
"S'amors, dist il, lo cuer m'estraint
Desoz l'aissele.
De si qu'a Rome n'a si bele,
*Non de si q'as porz de Bordele.
*Florie, va de lieu, l'apele.

1140
Se tant fais que mete ma sele
Je sui tes hom.
*Si pran del mien tot a bandon."
Ri. en vait en la maison
Faire proiere.

1145
Trestot dit a la chamberiere
Con lo feront, en quel meniere.
He is aware that she is lying to him.
And that she is trying to deceive him;
He is not afraid of her,

1100 Wow! What a nun and what a monk!
Each of them knows all about tricks
And deception.
Samson says to her in a serious voice:
"How are you called, friend?"

1105 "They call me Florie, friend."
"Pretty Florie,
Blessed be such a girl
Whose friend calls her thus.
Thank you very much

1110 For the sweet way you called me.
You say you love me already,
And I love you too."
Samson, the sensual, looked
Up on his right,

1115 And saw Hersent at the window.
"Florie, by St. Sylvester, tell me
Who is that there?
Do you see what a body and what a face she has?"
"Where?" asks Richeut. He showed her.

1120 "In that upper room."
"Ah!, says Richeut, that has nothing to do with us.
She is the daughter of a brave and
Courtly knight,
Who placed her in the house of a bourgeois

1125 Who is teaching her to embroider in gold thread
With his daughter."
Samson quivers with excitement.
He does not value himself at a shell
If he does not procure her.

1130 "Pretty Florie, go to her."
"To whom?" "To her, and have her follow me
And make love to me."
Forget it, says she, there is no way to get to her."
Richeut pretends to help him,

1135 "Her love, says he, makes my heart pound
In my breast.
From here to Rome there isn't a girl so beautiful,
Nor from here to the ports of Bordeaux.
Folie, go right away and call her.

1140 If you manage to get her in bed with me,
I'm your man
And I'll let you take all I have."
Richeut goes into the house
To make entreaties.

1145 She tells the chambermaid all about
How they will do it and by what means.
A Sanson s'an revait arriere
*A po de pose.
"Avez rien fait?" Oïl. "Quel chose?"

"Vaincue l'ai, la flor de rose,
Mais mout par sui herdie et ose
Que ç'ai enpris.
Par la foi que doi Saint Denis,
Trestot l'avoir de cest païs

Ne me garroit,
Se li chevaliers lo savoit,
Que n'auisse de mort destroit.
Mout sui desvee,
*Moie corpe, malaüree!

Je ai la meschine enjannee.
Mais or t'en va;
*Sanpres a vespres revien ça,
Car, se je puis, ele i vanra
Nastivemant.

Mais el est mout de haute jant,
Si coivient bel atornemant
*La ou si riche rien descent.
*Avroies tu nes pas d'argent?"  
Sansonez l'or,

Bien aperçoit qu'ele l'anclot
*Puisque do suen vialt faire escot,
Mais lui sovient
*Qui ne done ce que chier tient
*A ce qu'il aime a poine vient.

Sansons foloie,
.V. sous li done de monoie.
*Et si li dit que plus acroie
S'an a mestier,
*Il sora tot au repairier.

*San. la cuide engnignier
*Et el Sanson.
*Ri. a receu son don;
*Par convenant
Herseloz trait son vis avant,
Si li a fait .i. bel sanblant.
Ri. la cine de son gant,
El se retrait.
"Amis Sanson, tu as ton plait,
*Va, si revien." Sanson s'an veit,

Ri. remaint.
*Del conroi faire ne se faint,
Del autrui en a el fait maint
*Des biax ators.
Et Ri. quiert .vii. lechéors

Qui li venissent a secors
D'un home prandre.
She returns again to Samson
In a short time.
"Did you do anything?" "Yes." "What then?"

I won her over, this rose in bloom,
But I am bold and most rash
For what I have undertaken.
By the faith that I owe Saint Denis,
All the wealth in this country

Would not protect me
If the knight knew,
Why do I risk my life?
I am completely out of my mind.
Mea culpa, unfortunate girl that I am!

I have tricked the maid.
But now go away;
After vespers come back here,
For, if I can, she will soon be here.

But she is of a very noble family,
So much fine array is required
There where such a rich person is received.
"Wouldn't you have a little silver?"

Samson would,
He was well aware that she was trapping him
Because she wanted to party on his money,
But he is reminded
That he who will not give up what he prizes
For what he loves comes to grief,

Samson goes crazy,
He gives her five sous pieces.
And promises to give more,
If she needs it,
He will pay out all he has afterward.

Samson thinks he has her fooled,
And she Samson.
Richeut accepted his gift;
As agreed
Hersent shows her face

And gives him a welcoming look.
Richeut gives her a sign with her glove,
She goes back in.
"Friend Samson, you have your deal,
Go, then return." Samson goes off,

Richeut stays.
She does not wait to get things ready,
She has made many such fine arrangements
For others.
And Richeut sends for 7 lecheors

To come help her
Catch a man.
Tot lo tripot lor fait entandre,
Tot lor aprant:
Qant il vanra celeemant
A la meschine,
Tot lo despoillent par ravine,
*Nel tochent d'espee acerine
Ne de baston,
*Qar bien savoir que c'ert Sanson,
1200
Ses fiz,
Qui ainz ne pot estre escherniz.
Gaber lo vialt la meretriz.
*C[i]li] li otroielt,
Car si detor trestuit estoient.
1205
*A l'ostel liie l'an envio[nt].
Ri. repaire,
Vient a l'ostel, lo feu esclaire
*Jons et flors espandre par l'aire
Et li jors faut.
1210
Ez vos Sanson, en l'ostel saut
Qui mout estoit et liez et baut.
"Florie, fait il, Dex vos saut,
Li fiz Marie."
*"Sanson[et], Dex te beneie."
1215
*"Don n'est [enc]or venue m'amie?"
*"Nenil, amis.
*Que diz, Sanson? Trop ies hastis,
*Encor ne puet, n'est mie asis."
Ez vos Hersant,
1220
Sansonez par la main la prant,
La pute tranble dant a dant.
"Avoi! Florie,
Avez me nos donques traë?"
*San. li dist. "Nenil, amie,
1225
Nenil, ma bele.
Mais vostre amor mout me favele;
Li cuers m'estraint desoz l'aissele
Por vostre amor.
*Se je pert vos, n'en ai retor;
1230
*Ja n'avra[i] mais joie nul jor."
Et Herselot
Li respont au miauz qu'ele sot;
*Flore et sanglote mot a mot
*Tot par faintié:
1235
*"Florie, mal as exploitië
*Qui a Sanson m'as acointié,
*Maïs or li otroi m'amistië
Par vostre lox.
*Herdie sui qant faire l'ox,
1240
Mout par sui folë."
Dit Ri., "Ja n'en iert parole."
She lays out the whole strategem,
She explains every detail to them:
When he comes in secret
To the maid,
They are to take everything he has on him by force,
And not touch him with a sword of steel
Nor a club,
For it was made known that it was Samson,
Her son
Who never could heretofore never be bested.
The meretrix wants only to work a deception on him.
They agree to this,
For they were all such rascals.

They are to take everything he has on him by force,
And not touch him with a sword of steel
Nor a club,
For it was made known that it was Samson,
Her son
Who never could heretofore never be bested.
The meretrix wants only to work a deception on him.
They agree to this,
For they were all such rascals.

She is happy as she sends them to the house.
Richeut returns,
She arrives at the house, builds up the fire,
Strews bouquets and flowers around the place
And daylight wanes.

Then Samson comes rushing into the house,
Who was gay and bold.
"Florie, God son of Mary
Save you."
"Samson, may God bless you."

"So my friend has not yet come?"
"No she hasn't, friend.
What are you saying, Samson? You are surely in a great
She cannot yet, it's not yet settled."

Here comes Hersent,

Samson takes her by the hand,
The whore trembles and her teeth chatter:
"Hey!, Florie,
Have you betrayed me then?"
Samson says to her, "Not at all, my love,
Not at all, my pretty one.
But your love is saying something to me.
My heart is bursting in my breast
For your love.
If I lose you, there is no remedy for it;
I will nevermore have any joy in my life."

And Hersent
Answers to him the best she knew how,
She cries and sobs through her words,
All of it put on:

"Florie, you have taken cruel advantage of me
In bringing me together with Samson,
But now I give him my friendship
By your law.
I am rash in daring to do it,
I have taken leave of my senses.
Says Richeut, "Not a word will get out about it."
Et Sansons la baise et acole,
Et ele plore.
El haster Sanson se demore,
Mais del fountre estoit tans et ore;
Ja li feist
Se Herseloiz li consantist,
*Mais el tressaut, tranble et fremist
Con s'el fust chaste.
1250
Ri., qui tot prant et tot gaste,
La table a mise.
Lez Sanson s'est Hersanz assise,
Des mes mangerent a devise
Et burent mout
De bon vin ferré et estoit.
Herselot avoit cler lo volt
A la chandoille;
La face avoit clere et vermoille,
*Pert que ce soit une mervoille
1260
Del vermeillon.
Aprés mangier la prist Sanson,
Si l'an moine, o voille o non;
El lit l'estant,
Les dras li lieve, el se deffant
1265
For les lechëors qu'ele atant.
Si estoit ele nequedant
En grant engoisse
*Del reçoivre plus que n'est moisse.
*A deslongier Sansons s'esloisse,
1270
*Par lo peignil, qui sanble moisse,
*Li mist l'outil,
*Car la pute tot son penil.
*Des qu'il s'ahurte au dusil,
*Au cors abrive;
1275
Il n'i trova ne fonz ne rive
*Plus qu'i[1] feist en une (h)ive.
San. s'esmaie,
Arriere saut, si se desraie,
"Ahi! dist il, pute fresaie,
1280
Escharni m'as.
Mauvais seraï, s'ensi t'an vas;
Einçois me laisseras tes dras.
Certes ja me m'an gaberas."
Il lieve sus,
1285
Et Hersalot lo retrait jus.
*Ez vos les lechëors a l'uis,
Traient les branx.
Que feist uns encontre tanz?
"Ne vos movez," dit li plus granz.
1290
*Ce dit Ri., "Seignor, merci!
And Samson hugs and kisses her,  
And she begins to cry.  
Samson keeps on pressing matters,  
1250 But there was plenty of time left for screwing;  
He would do it already  
If Hersent let him,  
But she shakes, trembles, and quivers  
As though she were chaste.  
1255 Richeut who steals and plunders everything  
Has the table set.  
Hersent sat down next to Samson.  
They ate to their hearts content  
And drank a lot  
1260 Of stout and good wine from casks.  
Hersent seemed nicely rounded and fresh  
By candlelight.  
Her face was fair and rosy,  
She appears as a miracle  
1265 Of rosiness.  
After eating Samson took hold of her  
And, whether she wanted to or not, led her away,  
Stopping her at the bed,  
He raises the sheets for her, she stalls  
1270 For the lecheors she is expecting.  
She was, nevertheless,  
Really afraid  
Of receiving him too much like a bawd.  
Samsons hurries to unlace himself,  
1275 Through the clit which seems moist,  
He puts his tool,  
For the whore begins to move her body,  
As soon as he hits the bung,  
She is off at a gallop;  
1280 He found there neither banks nor bottom,  
No more than he'd have found in a mare.  
Samson is astounded,  
He jumps back and rants,  
"Ho!, says he, rapacious owl and whore,  
1285 You have made a fool of me.  
I shall be hard on you. If you get away that way,  
First you will hand over your linens.  
You'll surely not take me in again."  
He gets up,  
1290 And Hersent pulls him down again.  
Now the lecheors are at the door.  
They draw their swords.  
What would one do against so many?  
"Don't move," said the biggest one.  
1295 They seized him.  
"Lord, mercy!" says Richeut,
Por quoi l'avez si asailli?
Ce est folie."
*Li uns respon, "Dame Florie,
1300 Nostre parante avez honie
Et vos et il perdroiz la vie."
Mout lo menacent,
Lo mantel del col li delacent,
Tot lo despoillent,
1305 Ne li font mal don il se doille.
San. crient que mort ne recoille,
Demande lor,
*"Por coi me honissiez, seignor?"
*Ce dit li uns, "Por ma ser[or]
1310 Que avez traite a desenor."
Ri. lor prie par amor
Qu'il ne l'ocient,
Et cil ne font mais que s'an rient.
"Plegiez lo moi,
1315 *Ce dit Ri., desor ma foi."
*Dit li plus maistres, "Je l'otroi."
Or est plegiez,
En la maison se gist toz liez.
Why have you attacked him thus?
This is madness."
One answers, "Dame Florie,
You have brought shame on our kinswoman
And you and he may lose your life."
They threaten him greatly,
They unfasten his cloak from his neck,
And strip him naked.
They thrash him soundly.
Samson cries out for them to spare his life
And asks them,
"Why are you bringing this shame upon me, Sires?"
Says one, "For my sister
Whom you have dishonored."
Richeut begs them for love
Not to kill him.
And they just laugh at that.
"Give me your word on it,
Says Richeut, upon my faith."
"I grant it," says the leader.
Now is it guaranteed,
And everyone in the house is merry.
APPENDIX B

NOTES ON THE TEXT

The asterisk in front of a given verse of the text indicates that there is a note bearing on that verse in this section. Below is a code which indicates the sources of such notes.


F. Lucien Foulet, J. Alfred Jeanroy, and


K. My own commentary.

Méon's edition is based on an eighteenth-century copy of the Bern MS 354 made for Sainte-Palaye. In the preface to his edition, this scholar frankly warned his readers that the copy was defective. Scholars have generally lauded Lecompte's edition for being a better reading of the manuscript. It was thus a surprise to note that, where the two editions differ, it is much less often the result of a more careful reading than of an attempt to give the text coherence. Many of the solutions which Lecompte adopted are based on the conjectures of Bédier, Tobler and
Paris, particularly Bédier. Very frequently Lecompte's own reading of
the manuscript supports the Méon edition, even where he chose to edit it
differently. It is my conclusion that the Sainte-Palaye copy (now lost)
was a faithful, if slavish, rendition of Bern MS 354, at least as far
as Richeut is concerned.

Bédier's notes are based on both the Méon edition and the Bern
manuscript. Where he is proposing his own direct reading of the latter,
it is noted ms., and where it is a matter of interpretation, there is no
notation. The suggestions of Tobler and Paris are based on the Méon
edition. It would appear that Paris had already seen Tobler's article
before composing his own, because both seem to isolate the same verses
for comment and to neglect the others. None of these three scholars
had seen the Lecompte edition, of course, at the time of their writing,
and their comments are intended to improve the Méon edition.

Foulet, Jeanroy and Roques had available all of the foregoing,
although none seems to have consulted the Bern manuscript itself. The
starting point for their reflections is the Lecompte edition.

Below is a concordance of the verse numbers in the two editions:

a. Lecompte, vv. 1-436; Méon, no difference. M. does not have
   the L. v. 437.

b. L., vv. 438-572; corresponding verses in M. are numbered one
   unit lower. M. has eleven verses between his numbers
   560 and 570.

c. L., vv. 573-701; M. is numbered two units lower. M. has only
   nine verses between 690 and 700.

d. L., vv. 702-1118; M. is one unit lower. M. has a lacuna of
   two verses.

e. L., vv. 1119-end; M. is three units lower.

I have aligned the numbering in Méon on Lecompte. Therefore,
when a scholar refers to a line in Méon, the number it bears is that of
the Lecompte edition. Where possible, my sources are quoted in the
style they themselves used.

The indented numbers along the left-hand column correspond to
verses in the text.
P. maintes. L. MS*: mainte. (MS indicates that this is the way Lecompte read the word in the Bern manuscript as noted in the footnotes to his edition; an asterisk means that it is his alteration incorporated into the text, as in this case, where he wrote mainte[s].)

M. Qu'ele atrait tot a sa guise. L. Evidently in the guise of the ms. the copyist intended a sa guise, but the rhyme indicates a fault. I am inclined to take que as a conjunction and correct:

Que les atrait totes et guie
Par son atrait.

A sa guise also suggests itself (cf. Provençal guia, guida in the sense of guidance). Guie in French seems to be always masculine and to designate the person, not the action. However, it doubtless originally designated the action and we might have here a remnant of an older use of the word as a nom d'action. Cf. G. Paris, Romania 29:42.

L. Richeut seems to be used here in the general sense of entremetteuse.

L. en means on.

L. en means on.

Si croi, se Diex me beneie,
Que famé qui ainsí se lie
Et se desguise
Et son chartois tant aime et prise,
N'est pas de grant bonté esprise
Dedenz le cuer.

(Des Cornetes, Jubinal, Jongleurs et Trouvères, 90, 91) Cf. also Li marriages des filles au diable, Jubinal, Nouveau Recueil, I, 287; Roman de la Rose, 14238ff., and Romania, xxix, 70. J. Se lient a la corone, "se joignent à la troupe" (des "lecheresses").


R. Le mot raget n'est pas attesté ailleurs... On croirait volontiers qu'il faut lire en lor aget (c.-à-d. agait "artifice, ruse," avec une rime è:ai).

J. prest[r]e.

M. Car il fu pris, O li demanbrez et ocis. P. Car il fu pris O li, d. et o.

49-50  L. I have adopted the punctuation suggested by G. Paris. It would be possible, however, to read, with Mêon, period after 50 and no punctuation after 49.

54-55  M. (Nes dan Guillaume definer Qui ere atornier à Deu proier). B. Lire: k'ert atorniez a Deu proier. P. Suppr. les () et l. dan Guillaume de Simier (ou quelque nom pareil) pour definer. L. MS: Guill'; qui ere; The verse is evidently corrupt. The ms. reads either lerdefitier or lerdefiner. Perhaps originally a noun and adjective or two adjectives of which the last was fier. I am unable to suggest a satisfactory correction. The suggestion of G. Paris . . . was made on the basis of Mêon's text which omits ler. Cf. v. 742, Qu'est debonairest tot jors vaint. J. lerdefitier, corr. l'eir d'Ytier(?); ere, corr. ert. Alberto Vârvaro, "Due note su Richeut," Studi medio-latini e volgari 9 (1961):228, n. 4, l'eritier.

58  M. desingle. B. desjuggle.

63  M. Richaut sert moult. P. seit. L. MS: sert; Perhaps Ri. s'ert mout, "she was indeed a Richeut."

65  M. Or diroie sa voie, escout. B. Or diroie, s'avoie escout, De li . . .

68  M. Et si ne laira pas por honte. B. Le ms. donne exactement: Et si je ne lairai por honte. L. Bédier's statement . . . is probably a misprint.

74  M. Mainte fames mist a essil. L. MS*: mainte; or mainte fame(s).

76  M. lor mors. P. les mors. L. MS: lo mors.

79  M. So mist-el. B. Lo mist el. L. But so = si lo.

88  L. The following verses seem to require Au feu orent plus que .i. pot, unless n'avoir qu'un pot au feu can mean here "make common cause," "eat together."

101  L. For examples of soi for lui, see R. Warnecke, Die Syntax des betonten Reflexivpronomens in Franz., 1908, p. 116.

104  M. Ainz q'a venir poist à moi. P. qu'avener. L. Avenir is used in the same sense in Le Meunier d'Arleux, Montaiglon et Raynaud, II, 43.

Car sachies il m'anuie forment
Chou que il avint a ma feme.

108  M. mar mi tricha. B. mar m'i tricha.
111 M. Si est avers. L. MS*: avers; Perhaps aver(s), accusative for nominative in the predicate.

115 M. Charmiez li chiere par la vanche,. T. par la u anche (ebenso 1002 enchant, s. in Hollands Ausgabe des Ch. Lyon su 2503; dagegen 998 henter). L. MS: vache; Tobler intends by anche, a form from engier of which he would see the present participle enchant 1002 . . . But 1002 should read cerchant a orne and 999 . . . hetier (haitier). I therefore retain par la vanche and see in vanche the vinca minor, sometimes called la violette des sorciers. Herselot is proposing the ordinary magic with which she is familiar. In G. Paris' copy of Mémon is the marginal note on 115, Charmes li quiere por vengeance.

116-18 L. These verses refer to the practice, often mentioned in classical and medieval literature, of making figures of wax or lead which, when subjected to fire or placed in boiling water, cause the person whom they represent to burn with passion, suffer from fever or waste away. On this sort of sympathetic magic see Horace, Satires, I, viii, 29, Vergil, Eclogues, viii, 80, Theocritus, II, 28, 29; for the Middle Ages Heinrich Ploss-Max Bartels, Das Weib in der Natur und Volkerkunde, 9th ed. (1908), I, 646, and Hansen, Geschichte des Hexwahns, Bonn, 1901, where (p. 552) is quoted a report of a trial for sorcery at the Chatelet in 1309 which gives a detailed account of this method of vengeance. For a general bibliography on sympathetic magic cf. Zeitschrift des Vereins für deutsche Volkskunde, XXIII (1913), Heft I, p. 14.


123 L. MS: n't.

124 M. A moi méismes. B. l. a moi meîsme. L. Here and 329 the regular oblique form meîsme is assured by the meter; in 1021 either form can stand. For the form with s assured by rhyme see Foester, Yvain, 3d edition, v. 65, note.

126 M. Miauz est que atorne herbe boive. B. Miaux est que atorne herbé boive (il vaut mieux que je prepare une boisson d'herbes magiques). L. One could read also, atornë herbe boive.

135 M. Il perdra aizn qu'i s'an tort. B. Lire avec le ms.: Il i perdra aizn qui s'an tort.

136 M. S'ansi lo fez.. B. Ms. S'ainsi lo faz.

141-42 M. Dit Herselot, je mantirat Se tot bien non. B. Lire Je n'i antant Se tot bien non.

145-47 M. Mandagloire: / Richaut en but, o ele escairè; / Puis n'i ot guieres demoré,. T. (v. 146) o le clarè. P. Il faut s. d. Mandagloirè; (v. 146) o le clarè. L. It seems to me doubtful that a copyist would have changed o le clarè into the unintelligible o ele.
esclaire, and Mandagloiré is surprising even to force a rhyme. The ot of Méon's text is not in the ms. I should prefer to correct
La mandagloire.
Ri. en but o elebore (electoire),
Puis n'i fist el guieres demore.
If the copyist found elebore separated o ele bore, he might have changed the unintelligible bore into esclaire. Hellebore was a sort of cure-all for the ancients during the Middle Ages. Among its many uses was as a stimulant for the organs of reproduction. Cf. U. S. Dispensatory, 15th edition, p. 1662. The mention of mandaglore for this purpose is frequent. See Poème moralisé, II, 32ff., Romania, xiv, and Recettes médicales en Provençal, Romania, xxxii, 280. K. The manuscript seems to read bele esclaire.

150 M. Et a retrait, sofert et boz. T. retraiz sofert et boz (d. h. a sofert retraiz et boz). P. Et a retraiz sofert et boz.
L. MS: retrait.

154 T. vient.


156 T. soffe et jient (vgl. 337).

161 M. Sire Preste, bien la savez. B. Ms. bien lo savez.

164 B. Ms. moult me monstrez.

L. MS: pol.


179 M. lo ventre. L. MS: lo vintre.


187 L. MS: coie.

188 M. Se je n'an portoie un joisse. T. Se je n'an feroie un jüise. L. A correction does not seem to me necessary. Porter un jüise is common and the imperfect tense here does not seem impossible.

194 J. Point d'interrogation après ce vers.
200 & 202  B. Mettre un point après prendre [instead of a comma] et un point d’interrogation après desfendre [instead of a semi-colon].

209  J. s’i, lis. si.


221  M. des miens. L. MS: des miens. F. Conservez, peut-être, la leçon du ms.

227  T. sozaisseele 'unterstutzt' (vgl. 'unter die arme greifen').

228  M. De pain et d'el Ploiant s'an veit à son ostel. O ele trova . . . B. Ponctuer: De pain et d’el. Ploiant s’an va a son ostel O ele trova.


233  T. A un serjant. P. Mettre un point après donoier.


241  L. MS: a saproche; for the pleonastic adjective cf. Vermischte Beiträge II, 79. (K. This must refer to v. 245, la toe foi.)

242  L. Richeut evidently addresses this verse to Hersent as she hands her the booty obtained from the priest. The following verses are addressed to Seignor Viel.


250  M. Dès que fis l’autrier ton bien? P. Des que je fis l’autrier ton bien.

250-51  L. The correction and punctuation is that of G. Paris.
251 M. Lasse moi cline! T. Lasse meschine. P. (Lasse moi!) cline? L. Cline = submissive? It would also be possible to read feis and perhaps interrogation after 250, connecting 251 with the following verse.

252 M. Mar mi cocha soz toi sovine. P. m'i.


273 M. Que n'en aüssié longuement. T. ësus vengement. P. aüssiez. L. I take longuement as a noun = delay, as Se consolier l'an doiz, n'i met pas longuement. J. Bodel, Sax. Lvi. See Godefroy. F. que n'en aüssiez longuement je laisserais à longuement le sens adverbial et je comprendrais "que vous n'eussiez des ennuis" (cf. encore aujourd'hui "il vous en fera").

277 M. Si tost auroie ome ocis. B. Corriger, malgré le ms.: si tost aurolent ome ocis. T. Qui tost avroient. L. MS: Si tost avroie; If we admit the hiatus the ms. reading can be retained with ocis as predicate participle, but si may well be a mistake for qui due to the si of the preceding verse.

281 M. Ne sai de ces menaces sont. B. ne sai de ces menaces sont; sic dans le ms.; que ces menaces sont. L. MS: ne sai de ces; perhaps Ne sai de ces menaces c'ont (qu'ont).

281-83 R. Ne sai que ces menaces sont. / Di moi por quoi. / Es tu ençainte? Est ce de moi? Le ms. a De moi, la correction est de G. Paris, elle n'est pas indispensable; la ponctuation est de M. L. et je la crois imparfaite: quelque sens que l'on donne à por quoi, la question, ainsi posée, est naïve; je mettrais un point après por quoi.


284 M. Oïl amis; et je l'otroi. P. Oïl, amis. Et je l'otroi.

287 P. Point après chiere [instead of comma].

288 M. Dis sax a trait de s'aumoniere. J. atrait, lis. a trait.

289 M. Puis li done à liée chiere. T. Puis si li.

292-93 R. Après une conversation, amicalement terminée, entre le chevalier Vïel et Richeut, Ainz qu'il s'an tort firent leur aise Soz l'obier frois. C'est une lecture de Mémon conservée par M. L. qui dit au glossaire: "obier 293, espece de viorne, boule-de-neige." Notons qu'obier ne paraît pas se trouver ailleurs avant le XVIè siècle, et qu'est-ce que
Richeut et son amant peuvent bien faire de cet arbuste? Malgré la rime en -s, je pense qu'il faut entendre Soz lo bierfroi, le "beffroi" pouvant être le dais ou baldaquin du lit.

293 M. Sor l'obier frois. T. soz.


297 P. Point [instead of comma].

300 M. Fors d'atorner iche despanse. T. riche.

301 M. Luors decline. B. Lire le jors decline.

305 M. Il laisserent la nuit del lor. P. I laisserent.

L. MS: il. R. I laisserent.

306 M. an jor. B. l. au jor.


324 P. Asisse l'a. L. I have preferred assise là because of asis se sont of the preceding verse.

331 M. iert. T. ier.

337 M. Et plore et gient. B. El plore.

343 M. OiI, Richeut, de ce te veu. T. t'aveu. L. MS: de ce te veu.

344 M. Cestes, biau sire, en icel leu. B. Certes.

P. l'aveu.


355 M. Mais il m'estuet de vostre avoir. P. dou vostre.

359 M. Ja n'en s'an verra mais delivre. T. (nach 360) ne se verra.

360 P. Point.

361 P. Point d'exclamation [instead of :].

365 M. Richaut s'an vait tost estosie. T. tote esjoie.

L. MS: tost estosie.

366 L. MS: ele.
249

368 M. Que cil qui prant et robe. B. Ms. Que cil qui prant et tost et robe.

372 L. Godefroy suiant (?), and quotes this passage. Sivanz is perhaps a case of present participle with passive meaning (see Tobler, Vermischte Beiträge I, 36ff.). For en gest the meaning given by Godefroy, en gestation, does not give a very satisfactory sense. Perhaps en chaleur. I have found no other examples of the word. J. Sur gest, cf. la note de M. A. Thomas, ci-dessus, p. 70. [K. Antoine Thomas demonstrates that en gest means "en rut, chaleur, tolle, chace."].

374 M. Tant qu'il les a mis en son plait. P. qu'el.
L. MS: qu'il.

377 M. Bien les enplume et decoit. T. et les decoit.
L. On enplumer = decevoir, Foerster's note to Cliges 4532 and Eberling, Auberee, p. 88.

379-81 M. La grosse borse Enguil se fait, puis devient orse. Lo pas moine home, et puis la torse Par . . . T. A grosse borse Agnel se fait, puis devient orse, Lo pas moine home et puis l'acorse. L. I see in La grosse borse! an expression applied to richeut to emphasize her capacity for taking "tout quanqu'el voit."

380 M. Enguil. L. MS: Enguil.


389 M. raaint. L. MS: raaint.

390 M. pars. L. MS: pars.

395 M. Que nel' mainne. T. Qui nel (= ne ja) mesame.
P. Qu'ele ne m. L. The corrections of P. and T. are unnecessary; the ms. reads raamme not mainne. Cf. 726.

400 M. Mar perist-il ceste ventrée! P. p. iceste v.
L. Ms: il.

408-10 L. The passage is not clear. It is possible, of course, to take oie as subjunctive present and translate, "Let H., who comforts, hear her mistress," making 419 an exclamation of the author. It makes, however, a rather strained construction and one would expect Qu'atant je tant to be an expression of impatience on the part of Herselot or Richeut. The suggestion of Tobler A reconforter se cointoie does not seem to me satisfactory and I have nothing better to offer. Perhaps, Ce fust grant joie Herselot a la crine bloie, Qui reconfortë et amoie. (?)
Il crie et braie plus d'un rasle. B. Ms. Il crie et braie plus fort d'un rasle.

Baigne, conroie et asoeve. B. Ms. baigne et conroie.

acline may be either verb or adjective.

qui. T. que. L. MS: qui; Qui for que is found, but chiefly in the 13th century and after and then with transitive verbs; with intransitive verbs it is rare and as far as one can judge of the date of its appearance seems to be later than with transitives. Cf. Fahrenkamp, Die Syntax der substantivischen Interrogativa-pronomina, p. 68.

Descharge soï, vait al viel. P. Vitalem, et non l'adj. viel. K. I would prefer al viel.

Perhaps Cil li chargent et char et pois, or tot demanois.

L.'s v. 437 is missing in M. Corresponding verses in Méon are numbered one unit lower than in L. from L. v. 438 to 572.

Porte Herselot à un mostier. P. Porte H. au m.

The number of sponsors was not fixed until the Council of Trent.

A tot l'aube. T. aubé. P. l'aubé.

A variant of the common costeîr et baignier.


Point [instead of comma].

Luns a l'autre dit et consoille, O el prant don, s'aparoille. B. Lire: L'uns a l'autre dit et consoille: "O el prant ce dont s'aparoille?"

These verses seem to be a direct quotation of the words of the lecheor.

Virgule [instead of ?].


?

Reporter les guillemets du v. 479 au v. 480.

Puis s'en repert a Herselot. T. repere.
251

488 L. MS: fait il.

493 M. Ele. T. El. P. El.

495-96 L. S'enorgoillir a engorllir, "to take pride in putting money in her gorle (money-belt, purse)," in setting a higher price than formerly on her favors.

508 M. taelice. T. jaelice (G. Paris, Rom. II, 239, Anm.), dahinter keine Interpunktion. P. jaelice. L. jaelice here is masculine. It is usually given as feminine, but in its most frequent use in the expression en jaelice there is no way of determining its gender.

509 L. MS: En vient. F. Conserver, peut-être, la leçon du ms.


518 J. ensache, lis. en sache.

520 L. [i]ert ou val, until he shall be reduced to the last extremity, utterly impoverished. Although we should expect the subjunctive with encois que, the indicative is found. That ert should be subjunctive of errer, 'engager en donnant des arrhes' and val = 'valeur,' does not seem to me possible.

524 L. MS: qui.

524-25 M. Po sont des homes qui n'en boive, Et do queque soit reçoive. T. que n'emboive (denen sie es nicht anthue), Et don que que soit ne reçoive.

525 P. Et do quel que soit.

528 M. Dame Herselot est queu. T. Dame H. c'a por queu(?). P. Dont d.


536 L. Ressembler with the accusative. Cf. Cliges 6456, Erec 433, 770.

541 M. viel. P. Vitelem, et non l'adj. vieil.

543-45 F. Mettre entre guillemets.

549 M. Et a toz cez soie lo met. B. Lire: Et a toz ces sore lo met.

550 M. do ele. B. dont el n'ait.
552 M. art.  P. d'arz.  L. MS: art.

555 T. Par la parole Fu (dem Gerede nach) [instead of colon] oder Por la parole (um des Geredes willen).  L. I would correct Por la parole (pour apprendre à bien parler).

558 M. toz les rans.  L. MS: tot.

564 L. en = annum.

568 M. N'ot en l'escole si.  B. N'ot en l'escole si, sic dans le ms.; lire si sachant.  P. M. B. propose de lire [see above], mais la rime doit être en ers; je ne vois pas le mot à supprimer, porvers n'irait pas bien.

571 M. Tant la Richaut feru el mol.  P. l'a.

574 M. Blank space after grisset.  T. Unclear.

575 L. The ordinary expression is se froter au langa.  Guillaume de Dole 2849. Le mariage de Rutebeuf, 95.


577 M. Et par menace, et par blanje.  T. Que par m. que par blanje.  L. I have not corrected the ms. reading because I am not convinced that the author may not have written the sentence as it stands, the first et connecting the two clauses and the second arising through the influence of the first. The whole would then be equivalent to Et, que par m. que par b. que par p[roier].

591 M. Car moult est fiers et sages.  T. fiers et moult est.  P. Car moult est fiers (suppr. et sages).  L. MS: e. m. e. f. et sages.


597 M. Viex acroit, . . .  P. Vitalem, et non l'adj. vieil.

599 L. (& F.) There is evidently a lacuna of several verses after [599].

600 M. Del conter fait à grant esploit.  T. De conter set (auf das Rechnen versteht sich der Junge).  L. The sense seems to me clear as it stands. It is Richeut "qui fait grant esploit del conter"
in talking to the borjois who is evidently a money-changer. Cf. 576, 653.

606 M. Moult aime. T. Et mout. L. If we admit hiatus the correction is not necessary.

612 M. nes. B. pas nel despant. L. MS: nes.

613 T. et qui la sant (zu spüren bekommt). P. Lacune après 612.

616 T. sor fusiaus (auf die Spindeln, nämlich die leer). L. MS: P. s. e. fin f. m.; The only other case of this expression known to me is found in Noack, Strophenausgang in der Altfr. Lyrik (Ausg. und Abhand. XCVIII), uneröfflichte Refrainlieder I, 24, p. 99: Les riches les povres metent aus fusiaus. Jeanroy in Romania XXX, p. 428, has noted the editor's mistaken explanation of the passage: "Dans l'expression 'metre aus fusiaus,' fusiel ne signifie certainement pas 'boyau, culier, derrière.' Elle signifie simplement, et l'origine en est claire, 'reduire à la pauvreté.'"


631 T. Unclear. L. revate. Godefroy, revater, "battre le pavé," d'après Mémon. Mémon's definition is taken from Sainte-Palaye. This seems to be the only example of the word and it may be a copyist's mistake.

638 M. Sor soi. B. Ms.: soz soi. L. MS: sor soi.

641 M. mise. B. mises.

653 M. T'an vas, si changeras à pois. B. T'an va. L. On a pois, cf. Auberee 294 Je te vueil rendre tout a pois, and Ebeling's note to this verse. Richeut means that Samson will take up the business of a money-changer.

654 M. Ou à dan viel lo cortois. P. Vitalem, et non l'adj. vieil.

658 M. apovrez. B. Ms.: apovriz.

659 M. de groz. T. degroz (Subst. zu degrocier).

661 T. Nach here ein Punkt [instead of comma].


672 M. ses. L. MS: ses.
675  M. En cest païs plus ne n'estois.  T. ne m'estois.  
P. nen.

676  L. The necessity of traveling to become prodhom is mentioned in Cliges 154ff.

677  B. ; after soil.  L. Or n'iert for ms. n't.


682  L. Or savré.

686  B. Se puis encor de lor, sic dans le ms. Lire: Se puis encor avoir del lor.  L. One can supply either avoir or prendre.

691  B. (& F.) Mettre un point au lieu du point d'interrogation.

693  M. Les fames font tenir por sot.  T. Els te feront.  
L. MS: homes.

695  M. ators.  T. autors.  L. MS*: ators.


701  P. Pas de ponctuation [instead of comma at the end].
L. Perhaps better correct que que, "however much."  K. Meon's text is numbered one unit below that of L. from here to L. v 1118 because he has only nine verses between 690 and 700.

702  M. tost et.  B. et plus tost het.

703  M. qui li agree.  B. qui li agret.  P. agret.

719  M. te la.  B. Ms.: Encor la te repoverai.

722  J. mise, corr. mis.

723  M. toz.  L. MS: tor (?).

727  M. qu'ele ne se raame.  B. Corriger, avec le ms.: qu'ele ne te raame.


730  M. Qui tant fusse du lui espris.  T. Que tant fusse de li.  L. MS: de lui.
Après 738 lacune.

The subjunctives are due to some expression of advice or command in the omitted portion.

De soi servir bien s'antremete. De lor servir. L. MS: de sor servir.

Qui moult en cuide. T. Et mout. P. Que.

Qui moult en cuide. T. Et mout. P. Que.

Voit s'an à Cort. B. Ms.: Veit s'en. P. corz.

lors. L. MS: lors.

Sore = soire. From Glossary: sore (soldre), fut. sora (v. 1179), se soumettre aux lois de. Cf. Deschamps, Le miroir de mariage, v. 130–

Et li oiselet ne sont leat
Chascun an de lerus niz niser
Et par nature eulx aviser
De pondre, couver et exclorre
Leur poucins, pour nature sorre
Qui cest entendement leur baille
Afin que leur forme ne faille.


del lechers. B. des. P. del lechois (non des lechers).

Il nel' laïroit. P. laïroit.

Por trestot l'avoir qu'il avoit. B. Ms.: que il voit.

Ne trove ne si lonc ni si cort. T. troeve si lonc.

O qui viegne soe est la place. B. Ms.: O qui veigne.

Maine a beles, ne plaines, non gordes. T. beles, plaines. P. Suppr. ne. L. MS: m. a. b. ne plaines non g. J. Virgule après plaines.

Deux points après afole; virgule après Voiz a.
793 M. Voiz a; bien chante et farin parole. B. Lire peut-être, malgré le ms.: et bien parole. L. MS: farin parole.


802 M. Plus que homme de mere nez. B. Ms.: Plus que nus hom.


808 M. Englootie a mainte coille. T. Unclear. P. Englootie a mainte coille. L. The verses [808-13] are not clear to me and I do not understand Gaston Paris' correction. What is coille?


816 P. a [instead of à]. L. bouez? No word remotely resembling this appears in Semrau, Wurfel und Wurfelspiel im Alten Frankreich, who, p. 63, note, says of this passage: "Richaut rühmt vom ihrem Sohne Sanson dass er der beste Spieler der Welt sei: onques rien ne perdi[t] en quernes, N'a ambesas (= ambesas) n'a deus en ternes, Totjorz a quines (De Richaut 812, Meon I, 38). Wie der Sansons spielt, bleibt dahingestellt; doch dürfte deus en ternes 3 x 2 sein, so überraschend der Gebrauch von ternes auch sein mag. Das Gefühl, den Sinn des Distributiven ("je zwei") wiedergeben zu müssen, schlug sich auf 3, da für 2 keine Distributivzahl zur Verfügung stand." Semrau says nothing of the following verse, but, p. 48, note 2, says, "en deus" = 'auf zweiien' (Jus St. Nich. 904, 1116), wenn nämlich im ganzen drei im Spiele sind. Ebenso ib. 1131: es (en les) autres .II., wozu näheres S. 51, unten." The passages from Li Jus de Saint Nicholai read,

Mais j'en ferai bien .XI. en deus
Et li autres soit deboutés. (905, 905)

Giete; Diex te doinst .VII. en deus. (1116).

If we accept this meaning for en deus in our passage, bouez can mean the dice themselves. On the other hand it may mean "throws," or it may be a past participle. With regard to en ternes I am of the opinion of Tobler and would correct n'a ternes, the copyist's mistake being due probably to en quernes of the line above. I would also correct the second quines to sines and bouez to sovent, thus,

Onques rien ne perdi en quernes,
N'a enbesas, n'a deus, n'a ternes,
Totjors a quines;  
En .II. des .III. sovent ot sines.

I would translate, "He never lost by throwing fours, nor aces nor threes; he always threw fives and on two of the three he often had sixes."

820  L. The only examples of the expression metre en la cor-  
beille with which I am familiar is in the story of Vergil in the basket.  
Cf. Comparetti, Virgil im Mittelalter, and DuMeril, Mélanges archéolo-  
giques, p. 429, note 4. From this story the expression may have taken a  
genera] use in the sense of "keep in fear and anxiety."

825  M. Des Londres jusq'as Monz n'a Cort.  L. MS: Des L.  
jusq'as monz.  J. De, le ms. a des qu'il faut garder.

830  J. tost, corr. tolt.


851  M. Et ses alume.  P. adame (?).  L. MS: alume.

852  T. enjanê.

855  M. Del Noagre de ci a Coivre.  B. de ci c'a.  P. de ci  
c'au Toivre.  L. MS: a coivre.

856  M. N'aira qui miaux.  B. N'avra.  L. MS:aira; or  
N'an a.

863  M. lo toneu.  B. lo tonleu.  L. MS*: toneu.

883  F. Virgule au lieu de point virgule.

884  M. Ces espose.  L. MS: ces.

889  M. De ce ce vit, de ce ce paist.  L. MS: de ce ce v.  
de ce ce p.


896  M. c'ert moines faux.  L. MS: c'ert; I correct s'ert  
since there are several cases of c for s in the ms., a not infrequent  
trait in an Eastern copyist. The first s = si, the second, sic.


907  M. De fuir tant ne se panse.  T. Unclear.  P. De Deu  
servir (?).  L. MS: de suir or fuir.

908  M. Mais despensant.  L. del presant (?).
258

918 M. ne porbre. T. ne oprobre. P. oprobre.
L. MS: porbre.

920 F. prest[re].

934 M. I f..t la niece. P. Il. L. MS*: I fout.

945 L. "Non omnes una figura decet ... 
Mille modis veneris."
Ovid., De Arte amat. 772ff.

948 M. a saposte. B. Ms.: a soposte. T. Unclear.

949 R. Pas de virgule.

950 M. A bacher. L. A brachet (?). J. brachet (?);
dans ce vers A est la forme lorraine de au.

953 L. MS: parlant.

953-56 L. Cf. Chaucer's mock apology for his Miller's tale at the end of the prologue of that tale.

956 M. acroire. L. MS: acroire. K. The substitution of aoire for acroire is not justified.

961 M. Sansons. P. Sansonès.

963 M. maître. P. maistrie.


975 M. Trovoit sovine. T. & P. soi nue.

1006 B. Il li rant. K. Bédier's correction must be to v. 1016, which M. corrected in his errata.


1023 L. MS: oruex.

1023-28 M. De nos deus est li plus cruex,  
O je vers ome, o li vers fames,  
Car nous semes  
Saje de l'art.  
Sansonet escot et esgart  
En cel carrage.

T. De nos deus qui est plus cruex  
O je vers omes O li vers fèmes?  
Car mout somes  
Saje de l'art.  
Sansons fet escout et esgart  
En cel caroge.

1024 P. O je vers omes.

1025 B. Car mout semes. P. O il vers fames, car mout somes. L. MS: semes.


1027 M. Sansonet escot. L. MS: Sansonet escot.

1028 M. carrage. P. caroge.

1029 L. ainz here preposition? That is, "before approaching Sanson."


1032 L. On tote jor see Friewagner, La Vengeance Raguidel, v. 90, note, and the literature there given.

1039 T. Unclear.

1040 M. De blanchet li povoit la face. B. li poroit.  
T. poroint (wie vermutlich auch Bédier annimmt). L. MS*: poroit.

1046 M. Hersanz part bele, pas n'estoit. B. Ms.: bele, mais n'estoit. L. MS: pt.
1047 M. boschiée. T. beschiee (narbig). L. This is the only example of boschiée given in Godefroy or found anywhere to my knowledge. Tobler's correction is perhaps to be adopted.

1061 P. Deux points [instead of comma].

1068 M. Que vostre gent n'en sache mot. B. n'en sachent mot. P. Point [instead of comma].

1072 M. l'ius. P. de l'uis.

1075 M. Encontre l'a mist la raison. T. & P. Encontré l'a, mist l'à raison.

1077 M. Qu'il ne saunte mist sa guimple. T. s'äunte (ahonte). L. In the ms. the line above a vowel to indicate a nasal and the hook to indicate er are often so similar as to be indistinguishable.

1079 M. Primes parole por atraire, Après, soef, por miaux atraire,. T. Primes parole par contraire, Après sœf por miex atraire. L. The original may have had atraire in both places with a slight difference of meaning, 1079 attirer, 1080 séduire, tromper.

1081 M. S. Alaire. T. Ilaire oder Acaire?

1083 M. Por noiant. P. nient.


1091 P. Virgule après Sansons.

1092 T. Komma nach mien [instead of period].

1098 M. trais. B. trait.

1099 M. Ne l'araisone. L. MS: raisone.

1100 J. hai, lis. hai.


1107 M. Benoiete. T. benoite. L. MS: benoiete.

1113 M. aurillox. P. avrillox.


1116 M. Florie, dit. B. di.
1117 M. Qui est cela? P. ce la.

1119-21 P. Lacune après 1119. L. Il li monstra, En cel solier. A! dist Ri. is omitted by Mémon and the omission not noted by Bédier. The lacune noted by G. Paris is therefore in Mémon, not in the ms. K. Hereafter Mémon's text bears numbers three units below those of the corresponding verses in Lecompte.

1127 M. Sanson d'angoisse frecille. T. toz fretille; coquille. P. toz fretille. L. I have preferred to read Sansonnez for the ms. San.

1129-31 M. S'il ne se leve. / Florie bele, car te leve. / Vers cui? vers moi, qu'éle me seve. T. a 'aliue; te liue: me sïue. P. leue, lïue, seue (le second leue est loca, mais je ne comprends pas le premier; p.-œ corr. S'il ne s'i jeue?).

1134 L. MS: fait.

1138 M. porz de bordele. T. & P. Bordele.


1148 M. Po de chose. T. Et il la chose (er dringt in sie). L. MS: Po de chose.

1159 M. Moie corpe malaûrée. P. Virgule après corpe.


1167 T. (& P.) Punkt nach descent.

1168 F. C'est sans doubt une erreur de transcription qui lui a fait écrire ainsi le v. 1168 "Avroies tu nes pas d'argent?" Mémon, qui imprime "point d'argent," avait, comme je m'en suis assuré, reproduit correctement le texte du ms. Le changement a son importance pour qui se préoccupe de l'histoire de la négation et de l'article partitif dans la vieille langue: nous croyons qu'au XIIe siècle et dans la première moitié du XIIIe, -- peut-être même dans la seconde moitié aussi--on ne trouve jamais (quand il s'agit d'un de partitif) pas de, mais toujours point de.

1171 T. Punkt nach escot.

1173 M. Qu'il ne. T. Qui ne. P. Qui. L. MS: qu'il ne done.

1174 P. Pas de virgule après aime.
1177 M. Et cele dit que. T. Et si li dit. L. MS: Et cele.

1179 L. See note for v. 776.

1180-81 Y. Sansons la cuide engignier. Et ele Sanson. T. Sansonez la c. e. Et el Sanson. L. I prefer the hiatus to Tobler's reading.

1181 M. ele. P. el. L. MS: ele.

1182 P. Point.

1183 M. Par ton tenant. T. Par covenant. P. Par con-tenant. L. MS: ton tenant.

1189 M. Va, si revient. B. revien.

1191 M. Del couroi faire. B. conroi.

1193 M. acors. T. ators.

1202 M. Nes tochent. B. nel tochent. L. MS: nes.

1204 M. Qar bien savoit. T. sachent. L. The correction is unnecessary; the subject of savoit is Richeut.

1208 M. Ci li otroient. P. Cil. L. MS*: Ci li.

1210 M. l'an envoie. P. envoient. L. MS*: envoie.


1219 M. Sanson, Dex te benëie. T. et dex te benëe. P. et Dex.

1220 M. Don n'est encor venue m'amie? T. n'est or venue. P. n'est or. L. MS*: or [for encore].

1221 P. Point [instead of comma].

1222 M. Que diz? Sanson trop ies hastis. P. Que diz, Sanson?

1223 T. Unclear.

1229 P. : après dist [instead of comma].

1234 M. par vos. L. MS: pt.; Either par or pert gives a satisfactory sense. Cf. 1264 where the ms. has p. for pert (paroir).
This passage, . . . , has several difficulties. Plus que ne moissee is not clear. In Chansons et dits artésiens du xiii siècle, A. Jeanroy et H. Guy (fascic. II de la Bibliothèque des Universités du Midi), no. xx, 56-58, we find

Au rover eue mout grant angoisse,
Ja n'est il nule poignans moissee
Avers rover ne tel mal face.

The glossary gives "Moisse xx, 56? Voyez d'autres examples de ce mot dans Godefroy (s.v. Penil), et dans une fratriasie anonyme (Jubinal, Nouveau Recueil II, p. 220). Remacle (Dict. Wallon) traduit moissee par pierres dans les chaîncs des murs plus larges que celles de dessus et de dessous, pierres d'attente. Ce sens ne peut guère convenir ici." The passage in Godefroy under Penil is the passage from Richeut. The example from Jubinal reads

Quatre rat a moissee
Faisoient monnoie
D'un viez corbillon,
Uns moines de croie
Faisoit mout joie, etc.

Evidently the correct reading is rat a moie. However, in Mots obscurs et rares, Romania xxxiii, p. 578, is given "Moisse, mouche xiv. s. Et ki est plus chetis cors que li cors des gens ki sovent est mis a mort par moisse et par autre petite bestelette. J. LeBel "Li Ars d'Amour, pp. Petit II, 315." The meaning mouche is satisfactory in the chanson quoted above and I am inclined to accept it as the probable meaning for moissee of v. 1273. That mouche should be used in such a comparison is not surprising and a passage from the Roman de Renard lends some support to this view. Hermeline and Hersent are accusing each other of lack of chastity and Hersent says (Ib, 3133-34),

Qar plus estes pute que moche
Qui en esté la gent entoche.
1274 L. This is the only case known to me of the verb esloissier (exlusier) used reflexively in the sense of se hâter, se précipiter (?). J. Dans ce vers a est la forme lorraine de au; esloissier (soi), non "se hâter," mais "se disloquer, se mettre en quatre" (ex-luxare; voy. Godefroy eslochier).

1274-79 J. Ponctuer Car la pute tot (= tollit) son penil, Des qu'il s'ahurte, au douzil. R. C'est un passage fâcheux; le commentaire qu'en donne M. L. est plus curieux que convainquant, la ponctuation qu'il propose est mauvaise; je ne pense pas non plus que celle que propose ci-dessus M. Jeanroy donne un sens très satisfaisant; la ponctuation de Méné était meilleure. Je mettrai un point après 1274, une virgule après 1277; le sujet de au cors abrive "lance au galop" est la pute, laquelle était en grand encoisse del recoivre (1272-73); tot son penil est régime de abrive.

1275 L. moisse (mucceus, a), moîte.

1277 L. I would correct Car la pute a (or ot) tot son penil, understanding the verse as parenthetical and explaining it as referring to a custom mentioned in the Roman de Renard xxii, 684-92:

La hure aver toute la pel
Li a de teste sevree
Et autourt le con si plantee
Q'ainz puis ni la pot nus oster
Por ongyn c'on peust trover;
Ne gluz ne chauz ne poileçon
N'i valent mie troi boston.
Meslëure n'autre pelains,
Que mettre i vuent ces putainz,
Ne lor vaut rients: que touz jorz croit
Plus dru apres qu'avant n'estoit.

1278 L. Cf. Rabelais, Gargantua, chap. iii. Si le diavol ne vuelt qu'elles engroissent, il faudre tortre le douzil, et bouche close.

1279 M. corz. L. MS: corz.

1281 M. Plus qu'i feïst en une huie. T. Plus qu'il ne feïst en une ive (S'ïte). P. hive (est-ce l'angl. hive, "rîche," ou faut-il lire Plus qu'il ne feïst en une ive?).

1284 L. Fame est la nuit chauve-souris,
Fame est huans, fame est fresaie,
La nuit se muc, le jor s'egaie.

(Le blasme des fames, Jubinal, Jongleurs et Trouvères, p. 80.)

1291 M. l'iues. P. l'uis.
1295  M. I l'ont saisi.  P. Il.  L. MS*: i l'ont.


1299  M. Li uns respont, Florie.  B. Li uns respont: Dame Florie.  P. Li uns respont: Taisiez, Florie.  L. MS: dame Florie.

1308  P. Por coi me honissiez, [instead of ?] seignor? [instead of comma].

1309  P. : après uns [instead of comma].

1315  M. Ce dit Richaut; desor ma foi.  P. Le dit Richaut, desor ma foi.

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