

## 1. Abstract

This article examines an early-thirteenth-century short verse narrative that calls itself a lay but contains features that strongly remind us of fabliaux, mainly the use of uncouth elements and/or the ridiculing of some characters, despite its courtly setting. A close linguistic and narratological analysis of the text will explore how the narrator's framing and reporting of his characters' gendered discourses can both help and hinder the listener-readers to adjust their *horizons d'attente* with regard to this rather atypical narrative, thereby interweaving the notions of gender and genre.

## 2. Introduction

In the *Lai d'Ignaure*, also called the *Lai del Prison*<sup>2</sup>, the eponymous knight conducts concurrent affairs with twelve married ladies, who, when finding this out, demand that he pick only one of them as his lover. Unfortunately, the twelve wronged husbands also find out about their shame; they take Ignaure prisoner, dismember him, then trick their hapless wives into eating his heart and his penis before boasting about it. The ladies subsequently starve themselves to death.

The narrative is 665 lines long and appears in a single manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS f. fr. 1553 (previously Regius 7595), alongside didactic texts and religious stories, saints' lives, Rutebeuf's *La Vie dou monde*, verse romances such as the *Roman de la violette* and romances that embed collections of fables such as the *Roman des Sept Sages* and *Barlaam et Josaphat*, as well as other lays such as the *Lai de l'espine* and the *Lai de l'Ombre*. The manuscript also contains misogynistic texts such as *L'Évangile des femmes* as well as several fabliaux, one of which is entitled 'lai', despite being called a fabliau in its epilogue, 'Li lais de dame Auberee', and one play, also called 'lai': 'Li lais de Courtois' (i.e. *Courtois d'Arras*).<sup>3</sup> It will be of particular interest to explore the interplay that potentially existed between *Ignaure* and this variety of texts, notably its links with lays and fabliaux but also with didactic and religious texts.

The text's epilogue labels it clearly as a lay (6 occurrences of the word) but scholars have held different views about its genre. Mortimer Donovan, for example, calls it a

‘dignified *conte à rire*’ (p. 91), in which he notices the ‘influence of the fabliau, as well as of the didactic lay’, and he notes that the text ‘ends with the tone of a fabliau’.<sup>4</sup> Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook, the latest modern editors of the text, summarise and discuss various views regarding its literary genre, and come to the conclusion that it offers a ‘mixture of lay and fabliau ingredients’.<sup>5</sup> An earlier editor, Rita Lejeune, spoke of this lay as illustrating a ‘genre en décomposition’ and saw the reference to genitalia as typical of the author’s idiosyncratic style and his ‘penchant vers une certaine forme de pornographie’, akin to that of the fabliaux, which made the text a mere ‘agréable fantaisie’.<sup>6</sup> Marie-Noëlle Le Toury notes that the courtly atmosphere evoked at the start of the text turns little by little into a fabliau so that the drama ‘porte une coloration burlesque en même temps qu’une très vive satire de la *fine amor*’.<sup>7</sup> However, Martina Di Febo, while acknowledging a ‘contamination des registres’ which integrates elements from fabliaux language, states that the author of the text ‘ne compose pas de travestissement, il dévoile les paradoxes du système courtois tout en restant à l’intérieur des genres “sérieux”’.<sup>8</sup>

This article will show that the narrative can be divided into specific episodes that each display very distinct uses of reported discourse, based on the gender of the characters speaking, and therefore subtle narrative strategies (including the narrator’s own self-presentation) that play with the listener-readers’ expectations. It will take as theoretical framework the previous research **I carried out** on a large corpus of lays and fabliaux ranging from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> c. which identified broad trends for each literary genre with regard to its framing and use of reported discourse while also acknowledging that these trends varied substantially from text to text **(see section 3 below)**.<sup>9</sup> **The corpus includes 32 lays and 62 fabliaux, which are listed in the annex and additional information are offered in the endnotes.**

The notion of literary genre used here is based on Hans Robert Jauss’ view that medieval genres are continually evolving and constantly defining themselves against other genres, thereby also constantly playing on – and changing – their readers’ *horizons d’attente*.<sup>10</sup> Jauss saw genres as constituted by dominant characteristics that could evolve over time. In previous research, I have shown for example that there was a correlation between distinct categories of Speech and Thought Presentation and their frequencies which created strategies linked to specific literary genres that were subject

to change in time.<sup>11</sup> It was also possible to identify dominant characteristics based on the position of the narrator in the texts and the point(s) of view through which the stories were told, that of the narrator and those of the characters.<sup>12</sup> This article explores the mixture of lay and fabliau features in *Ignare* through a study of gendered reported discourse strategies. Of special interest is how the mix of features calls into question our modern attempts to classify such a text neatly into specific literary genres.

### 3. General Trends in lays and fabliaux

#### 3.1. Framing of Reported Discourse in lays and fabliaux

How characters are described by the narrator affects how their discourse is perceived by the listener-readers. Previous research has shown that lays tended to devote significant space to describing the physical appearance and moral status of their main characters while fabliaux were much more laconic. In line with the importance of courtly ideology in the lays, characters – whether male or female – need to fulfil the listeners-readers’ expectations with regard to their courtliness. In fabliaux, the characters’ status is not as important as their cleverness, which is revealed through their words rather than their looks or virtues. It has also been shown that both fabliaux and lays are set in a hierarchical patriarchal world where male characters – and their social status – are usually introduced before female characters, whatever their relative importance in the narrative will be.<sup>13</sup>

As shown in the figure below, both fabliaux and lays tend to refer more often to male rather than female characters in the third person (in the narrative part of the text) but this difference is more pronounced in the lays, especially in the anonymous ones. In the table below, the percentages represent the numbers of third-person references (i.e. pronouns and verb endings) for women and men each, divided by the overall number of third-person references in the text.

Third-Person References and Gender	Women	Men
Average use of 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. ref. in fabliaux	36%	64%
Average use of 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. ref. in lays (All)	30%	70%
Average use of 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. ref. in lays (Marie) <sup>14</sup>	36%	64%
Average use of 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers. ref. in lays (Others)	27%	73%

It would thus seem that female characters hold a less important position than men overall, but this might be counterbalanced by the amount of space devoted to Speech and Thought Presentation in the texts, as will be shown below.

Fabliaux often offer generalising moralistic comments criticising women, sometimes also directly addressing a male audience (but never vice versa). This is not the case in the lays, which rarely comment on women's behaviour (or for that matter on any character's behaviour) and also seldom offer explicit moral comments for their audience. Thus, in the fabliaux, the characters' actions and, very importantly, their speech and thought are framed by rather visible interventions on the part of the narrator, especially when it comes to women. On the contrary, once the narrative proper starts in the lays, the narrator becomes rather inconspicuous and one can be puzzled as to how to interpret certain tales, especially when the *merveilleux* is involved. The lays do not seem to show any need or desire to make explicit judgements about the characters in general or the female gender in particular. However, this judgement can sometimes be created from confronting what is happening in the lays with what was prescribed by courtly ideology and/or by contemporary society.

### 3.2. Speech and Thought Presentation in lays and fabliaux

On average, fabliaux devote more space to presenting their characters' speech and thought than the lays, especially when it comes to the *Lais de Marie*. Moreover, the fabliaux also devote more space to Direct Discourse (DD) than the lays, and again especially so compared to the *Lais de Marie*. Characters are thus quoted in their own words, instead of transposing them within the narrator's discourse as would be the case for Indirect Discourse (ID) which also uses subordination, or Free Indirect Discourse (FID) which does not.<sup>15</sup> In the following table, the length of Reported Discourse (RD) is calculated as the number of octosyllabic lines of RD divided by the total number of lines in the text.

Length of RD	DD	ID	FID	Total RD
Average fabliaux	38%	4%	1%	43%
Average lays (All)	30%	4%	2%	36%

Average lays (Marie)	22%	5%	5%	32%
Average lays (Others)	34%	3%	1%	38% <sup>16</sup>

When looking at the average frequency of Speech and Thought Presentation, it is plain to see that fabliaux mostly use DD, with some ID and very little FID, while many lays, although still using a slight majority of DD, nevertheless use quite a bit of ID and FID. In the case of the *Lais de Marie*, DD is less frequent than the combination of ID and FID, which therefore shows a preference for the characters' discourse being transposed into the discourse of the narrator rather than expressed directly. In the following table, the frequency of a specific category of reported discourse is calculated as the number of occurrences of that category divided by the overall number of occurrences of reported discourses in the text.

Frequency of RD	DD	ID	FID	Total RD
Average fabliaux	77%	21%	2%	100%
Average lays (All)	57%	32%	11%	100%
Average lays (Marie)	38%	41%	21%	100%
Average lays (Others)	66% <sup>17</sup>	28%	6%	100%

In general, women tend to talk less often and at lesser length than men in both sets of texts but this difference is more pronounced in the lays. The average length of text devoted to male reported discourse is barely greater than that devoted to female discourse in the fabliaux but it is substantially more in the lays (although slightly less so in *Lais de Marie*).<sup>18</sup>

Reported Discourse and Gender	Women	Men
Average Length of RD in Fabliaux	20%	22%
Average Length of RD in Lays (All)	14%	22%
Average Frequency of RD in Fabliaux	45%	55%
Average Frequency of RD in Lays (All)	33%	67%

While lays in general, and the *Lais de Marie* in particular, are more likely to transpose the characters' discourse than the fabliaux are (cf. frequency of ID and FID), this is

noticeably less true for female reported discourse. So women in the lays are more likely to use DD than ID and FID compared to men:

Frequency Distribution Per Gender	Male Characters				Female Characters			
	DD	ID	FID	Total	DD	ID	FID	Total
Average All Lais	37%	23%	7%	67%	20%	10%	3%	33%
Average Fabliaux	42%	12%	1%	55%	35%	9%	1%	45%

As already mentioned, male characters tend to be referred to in the third person more often than female characters in both lays and fabliaux. However, this difference is more pronounced in the lays, especially in the anonymous ones. As shown in the table below, the ratio of Reported Discourse per third-person reference is bigger for women in the fabliaux, i.e. they are more likely to talk than men, all things being equal. The difference in ratio between men and women is less marked in the lays. So, generally, women are more likely to be referred to and to talk in the fabliaux than in the lays.

Ratio of RD per Third-Person References	Women	Men	Women more likely to talk
Average in Fabliaux	1 RD per 6 ref.	1 RD per 7.6 ref.	1.27
Average in Lays (All)	1 RD per 11.4 ref.	1 RD per 12.7 ref.	1.11

These generic trends in the framing and representation of female and male discourse in lays and fabliaux will now be used to identify what makes *Ignoure* such a peculiar and interesting text. In this article, examples of DD in the excerpts will be in bold letters, ID will be underlined and FID will be italicised. When necessary, detailed numbers (averages and percentages) will be offered in the endnotes.

## 4. Textual Analysis

### 4.1. Overview

The text starts in a manner typical of a lay, with the narrator talking in the first person and discussing the necessity of offering in fine words something that people can learn from, which is why he will begin his tale of ‘une aventure molt estraigne que, jadis, avint en Bretagne’ (‘a very strange adventure that happened once in Brittany’, lines 15-16).<sup>19</sup> As R. Howard Bloch notes, in this incipit, the author ‘participates in what is a virtual topos among courtly poets, one that is also encountered among the Latin

satirists of the High Middle Ages – the impossibility of silence and the compulsion to reveal (...) The poet is an agent of indiscretion within the drama of speech and silence that the tale narrates around the figure of Ignaure (...).<sup>20</sup> The narrator/author's desire to offer a story one can learn from also chimes with the numerous didactic texts that populate ms BnF f. fr. 1553, and especially with the *art d'aimer* texts that alternate with lays and fabliaux in the second part of the manuscript, as noted by Amy Suzanne Heneveld.<sup>21</sup>

On the whole, the setting of the text is definitely that of a lay rather than of a fabliau: castles, secluded gardens (*vergier*), references to the month of May and Ignaure's nickname of *Lousignol* (nightingale). The characters are all noble, which, while not impossible in fabliaux, is typical of lays.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the lengthy description of Ignaure at the start of the narrative (lines 17-37 and 56-64) is more reminiscent of lays than fabliaux and so is the attention paid to the ladies' looks and expensive dresses. The man who betrays the ladies' affairs with Ignaure to their husbands is called 'losengier' by the narrator, another term typical of courtly texts, not of fabliaux (lines 378-79).<sup>23</sup>

The first character introduced is male and is also, as in most lays, the eponymous main character of the text, Ignaure. Then the husbands are introduced and, only after them, their wives. As is common in both lays and fabliaux, careful attention is paid to the social status of the male characters: Ignaure is a knight of great fame and prowess but not of high nobility (line 23), and the husbands are '.XII. pers a estage ... riche erent de terre et de rente' ('twelve peers ... brave and wise knights ... rich from their lands and income', lines 39-41). The female characters in the text are first introduced as wives, i.e. depending on male characters, and then in terms of their family status: 'feme bielee et gente de haut linage de grant gent' ('wife, fair and noble, of high lineage and from a powerful family' lines 42-43).

Throughout the text the narrator presents Ignaure in a positive light despite his rather uncourtly womanising and despite the subtle hint that he would have very little income if it weren't for the ladies' generous gifts (lines 60 to 64).<sup>24</sup> While the ladies are largely presented positively, the narrator does use a couple of words typical of the negative characterisation of women's behaviour in fabliaux, when he refers to their ambush of Ignaure as 'engien' (line 226) and 'trahison' (line 249).

On the whole, the text makes more references to male characters than to female characters (52% of third-person references vs 48%) but the difference is rather minimal and therefore closer to the average found in the fabliaux than in the lays.

*Ignoure* devotes more space to reported discourse than lays do on average (46% of narrative compared to 36% for all lays<sup>25</sup>), which brings it closer to a fabliau (42% on average for all fabliaux). It also uses DD more frequently than the average lay does, which again makes it more similar to a fabliau.<sup>26</sup> However *Ignoure* also uses FID more frequently than most fabliaux, a trait that will prove important for understanding the text's narrative strategies (see *infra*).<sup>27</sup> In the narrative, women's reported discourse is generally more frequent and longer than men's, contrary to what happens in a vast majority of lays and in many fabliaux, too.<sup>28</sup> Women are referred to slightly less (48% of third-person references vs 52%) but they are more likely to talk, if one compares the ratio of third-person references per reported discourse, a trait more reminiscent of fabliaux than lays.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the ladies in *Ignoure* do not have a propensity to use DD more than ID or FID like female characters in most of the lays and especially in the *Lais de Marie*. On the contrary, the ladies use the full range of RD categories, and twice more FID than men (5 occurrences versus 2) and we will see that their use of ID and FID is particularly meaningful.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, the atmosphere and characters of *Ignoure* resemble more closely what one would expect of a lay, despite a few dissonances such as, for example, the number of references to male and female characters. However, if the general framing of Speech and Thought presentation appears courtly, the length, frequency and categories of reported discourse used gives a more nuanced picture that links the text to both literary genres, with a rather idiosyncratic focus on female discourse.

The text can be divided into two main parts:

- 1) The ladies' discovery that *Ignoure* is everyone's lover and how they subsequently deal with him: they ambush him to kill him but, mollified by his words, they decide that he has to choose one of them as his lover.
- 2) The husbands' discovery of their wives' affairs and how they deal with them and their lover.

A closer look will show that the narrative can be further divided into specific episodes that each display very distinct uses of gendered reported discourse (i.e. depending on the gender of the characters whose speech and thoughts are represented) and therefore subtle narrative strategies.

#### **4.2. Confession (lines 65-225)**

After a rather tongue-in-cheek description of Ignaure as a paragon of courtliness, the text starts with a wonderfully witty dialogue (or at times polylogue) amongst the twelve ladies who are in love with the young knight, which takes place in a secluded garden, supposedly protected from eavesdropping (lines 65-225).<sup>31</sup> One of the ladies pretends to be a priest and hears in confession each of the other ladies to find out the name of their secret lover, in order to decide which lady has the best lover of all. Little does she know that this name will be the same for everyone, including herself. 65% of this passage consists in DD,<sup>32</sup> vividly portraying the fake confession, often in a language parodying religion, which must have been very shocking – and thus deliciously amusing – for a medieval audience. The text also amusingly refers to the lady as ‘li prestre’ (the priest) and the dialogues include hilarious play on words such as ‘coupe’/’crupe’ (lines 123-26) and innuendos about lightning-bolts (lines 181-91), which are reminiscent of the metaphors used in the most renowned fabliaux.

Lines 123-26

Une autre revient maintenant;  
A la destre main batoit sa coupe.  
‘Douche suer, mais batés la crupe,  
Ki vous fait daire les pechiés  
Dont vostre cors est entechiés.’

(Another lady came at once, beating her breast with her right hand. ‘Sweet sister, beat your bum, which is the source of the sins with which your body is tainted.’)

Lines 181-91

‘Cest cil dont li país resonance;  
On le doit nommer quant il tonne,  
Ja puis ne carra cos en l’estre.’  
‘Fali avés’, che dist li prestre.  
‘Vous l’avés nommé pluisours fois;

Onques por çou n'eüstes defois  
Que le caus sour vous ne kaïst.  
Ja li nons ne vous garesist,  
Mais ne fu pas brisiés li caus.'  
'Dex me ramaint a iteus caus,  
Ne plaaigne pas la bonne fuison.'

(‘It is the man with whose name this land resounds. We should invoke his name when it thunders, then the lightning bolts would not strike us.’ ‘You are mistaken,’ said the priest. ‘You have called his name often enough, but that did not prevent a bolt from striking you. His name would never have protected you and the bolt was not destroyed.’ ‘May God bring such bolts back to me, and may I not complain that there are too many of them!’)

Di Febo notes that the timing of the pseudo-confession scene is meaningful as ‘l’ambiance ludique de la fête de la St Jean entraîne une certaine liberté de langage’, which she also connects to the ‘revanche des femmes’ in the May feast (‘le cycle de mai’), a time when women would meet in a freer atmosphere than usual.<sup>33</sup> Burgess and Brook also note ‘the religious parody, with twelve female “disciples” in thrall to one charismatic male and the election of a mock female priest to hear confession, not of sins but of the delights and charms of their illicit sexual partner’.<sup>34</sup>

The religious language used in the ladies’ discourse and by the narrator’s framing of it resonates with the numerous religious texts found in ms BnF f. fr. 1553, but interestingly also with the title of some misogynistic texts found in the same manuscript, such as the *Li epystles des femes* (folios 505 a / b - c) and *Li ewangilles des femes* (folios 520d-521b).

This particular episode ends with the outrage of the ladies at such scandalous womanising behaviour on the part of Ignaure and their plan to ambush and kill him.

#### **4.3. Ambush (lines 226-365)**

The next episode also takes place in a secluded garden where Ignaure, surrounded by ladies equipped with sharp knives and ready to kill him, mollifies them by talking to them and then accepts their ultimatum of choosing only one of them as his lover (lines 226-365). That this passage is important for the listener-reader is emphasised by the fact that this is the subject of the only illustration of this text in the manuscript, in the

historiated initial starting the narrative (folio 485ra).<sup>35</sup> Once again, a medieval audience would have been shocked but interested in hearing of and seeing ladies holding knives and ready to kill, a most uncommon and un-ladylike behaviour, both in lays and in fabliaux.



This is actually the only passage where Ignaure speaks at length (always in DD), but even so, his speech is equally matched in terms of space and frequency by that of the ladies, whose speeches seem initially as sharp and menacing as their knives. This episode, which devotes 53% of its lines to DD, ends with the first FID of the text and the second unanimous resolution of the ladies, who swear to leave Ignaure in peace with the one lady he ends up choosing:

Lines 360-62

Namporquant toutes afierent

Qu'eles jamais ne l'ameront;

*Tout em pais cuite li lairont.*

(yet they all swear that they will never love him; they will leave him to her, freely and in peace.)<sup>36</sup>

The use of ID (underlined) and FID (italics) in the above excerpt shows a first example of the ladies speaking in unison ('they all swore') rather than in separate DD. This is a pattern that will be repeated in later episodes.

Up until this point (more than half of the text, 54%), the husbands have only been mentioned once in passing, at the start of the text, and have never spoken. After this, women's discourse will amount to a very small part of the text, and mostly not in DD.

#### 4.4. Of Mice and Men

At this point, the narrator makes his first comment about the narrative, and a rather paradoxical one at that: because Ignaure is now obliged to see only one lady, his behaviour will be more easily noticed by potential *losengiers*:

Lines 371-73

Par le trop aler fut dechus

Et enginiés et percheüs;

Soris ki n'a c'un trau poi dure.

(Because of these frequent visits, he was betrayed, tricked and found out. A mouse with just one hole cannot last long.)

This remark is made in the guise of a proverb, which is most unusual for a lay but reminiscent both of fabliaux (for their pseudo-moral value and its possible sexual *double-entendre*<sup>37</sup>) and of fables (for its reference to an animal). The proverb is later reiterated by the narrator in a slightly different way, when he describes how easily Ignaure will be captured by the vengeful husbands:

Lines 480-81

La soris ki n'a c'un pertuis

Est molt tost prise et enganee.

(The mouse that has just one hole is very soon captured and trapped.)

The narrator thereby points out, albeit indirectly, that the ladies' ultimatum will eventually cause Ignaure's demise, and therefore, we infer, their own. As noted above, while the narrator refers to the ladies' ambush as 'engien' (lines 226) and 'trahison' (line 249) he consistently presents Ignaure in the best light despite his rather uncourtly womanising.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4.5. Revenge (366-575)

Predictably, it turns out that the ladies' discussions had been overheard; a *losengier* notices the suspicious behaviour of the knight and reveals the whole affair(s) to the

husbands who happen to be all eating together. This episode (lines 366-575) ends with the revenge of the husbands, who capture Ignaure *in flagrante delicto*, dismember him and make their wives unwittingly eat his penis and his heart, thereby partaking in a sadly ironic communion after their parody of confession. While the motif of *cœur mangé* is recurrent in medieval literature, that of an eaten penis is not.<sup>39</sup> Despite some scholars like Donovan bizarrely completely overlooking this element,<sup>40</sup> it is clearly at the core of the husbands' vengeance: the first thing they plan to remove and serve to their wives before mentioning the heart:

Lines 541-45

'Au quart jor prendons le vassal  
Tout le daerrain member aval,  
Dont li delis lor soloit plaie,  
Si en fache on .I. mangier faire;  
Li cuer avoec nous meterons.'

(In four days' time let us remove from the vassal his lowest member down below, the delights of which used to please them, and have it made into a meal, with the heart put into it as well.)

Despite the use of periphrasis, the theme of genitals strongly links the text to the world of fabliaux rather than lays.

Unsurprisingly, this part of the narrative contains a lot of male discourse, mainly in DD (46% of the lines, including 41% for DD), but very little female discourse (5% of the lines), most of which is reported in ID (3%).<sup>41</sup> Here, men seem to have reclaimed their power in terms of presence, actions and words while women's only recourse is to swear in common (in ID) that they will fast until they know more about the fate of Ignaure.

We note the continued trend for the ladies to act and talk in one voice as advocated by the lady who played the role of the priest in the first episode and was then the one with whom Ignaure chose to remain. The only female DD of this passage is hers and it advocates a unison which is then enacted by the women making their fasting vow in ID:

Lines 518-30

La dame en est en grant torment.  
As autres dames fist savoir

De son contraire tout le voir,  
Si con Ignaures fu sospris.  
'Ne sai s'il est u mors u vis,  
**Et chascune en ot trestout son voel;**  
**Or m'aidiés a faire mon doel.**  
**Ensi con joie e not chascune,**  
**Si nous soit la dolors commune.'**

Au message creantet ont  
K'eles jamais ne mangeront.  
Desci qu'eles poront savoir  
S'il est u mors u vis por voir.

(The lady, who was gravely tormented, let the other ladies know the whole truth about her predicament and about how Ignaure had been caught. 'I do not know whether he is alive or dead, and each of us has had from him all she desired. Now help me in my hour of grief. Just as each of us has had pleasure from him, let the grief be shared.' They all promised the messenger that they would never eat again, until they had found out for certain whether Ignaure was alive or dead.)

The ladies' words, however, are both few and ineffectual since eventually the narrator tells us that the husbands praised the dish so much that they convinced their wives to break their fast and eat it.

Ignaure, despite being a core element of the plot, only speaks once – pleading for mercy and apologising (DD, lines 494-97), but his words are completely useless (in stark opposition to his previous words to placate the ladies).

#### **4.6. Communion (lines 576-616)**

The final episode of the narrative *per se* is devoted to the ladies' final decision to fast to death after learning what they ate, and to their tragic laments praising their dead lover (lines 576-616). The husbands are entirely absent from this last part, in terms of both third-person references and reported discourse. Despite the men's triumphant assertions of victory and vengeance, the ladies once again reclaim the narrative on their own terms: they all swear to God in one voice (ID, line 584-86) that they will never eat again, which means that they in fact commit suicide, another act which, if far from rare in medieval literature, is however shockingly against the actual teaching of the church (despite their vow to God). And their words – contrary to their previous threats in the text – do come into effect.

Lines 584-88

A Diu fisent toutes .I. veu

K'eles ja mais ne mangeroient.

Ne presieus mes n'av[r]oient.

S'eles disent, tres bien le fisent.

(They all made a vow to God that they would never eat again and would never again have a meal of such quality. They carried out their promise, just as they had made it.)

This episode, which is much shorter than the others, offers mainly narrated discourse,<sup>42</sup> ID, and FID. The use of transposed discourse seems very striking here because it is in stark contrast with the rest of the narrative (and especially the first two episodes), which mainly uses DD. It gives an impression of communion amongst all the ladies, despite them being separated in space. First, they make ONE vow in ID all together (see above). Thereafter, even though the text lists different ladies, each praising Ignaure and lamenting his death ('li une plaignoit... l'autre plaignoit... et la quarte... et l'autre... ', 'One of them mourned ... another one mourned... and the fourth one... and the other... ', etc.), the use of ID and FID obviates any potential first-person reference in the ladies' discourse and therefore builds up a continuous picture of Ignaure in what seems to be a global lament ('complainte en fisent', 'they composed a lament for him', line 588), which will soon be transformed into a lay, i.e. into a narrative. Additionally, the only DD in the episode (lines 599-602) emerges in the gradual passage from narrated discourse (line 597) to FID (line 598) and uses the form 'nous' instead of 'je', which means that the lady speaking does so on behalf of them all. The last occurrence of reported discourse in the narrative is a summary in FID (line 608).

Lines 584-620

A Diu fisent toutes .I. veu

K'eles ja mais ne mangeroient.

ID

Ne presieus mes n'av[r]oient.

S'eles disent, tres bien le fisent.

En lor vivant complainte en fisent:

Narrated Discourse

Li une plaignoit sa biauté,

Narrated Discourse

Tant membres biaux et bien molé

Que lait erent tout li plus biel;

*Ensi disent dou damoisiel.*

FID

L'autre plaignoit son grant barnage

Narrated Discourse

Et son gent cors et sa largeche,  
Et la quarte les iex, les flans,  
K'il ot si vairs et si rians.

Et l'autre plaignoit son douch cuer;

Narrated Discourse

*Jamais nul n'en ert de tel fuer.*

FID

**'Lasse, que vous avons cangié!**

Passage from FID to DD

**Trop se sont cruelment vengié**

**Li jalous, mais ne mangerons;**

**En tel guise nous vengerons.'**

Et l'autre plaignoit ses biaux piés,

Narrated Discourse

Si bien seans en ses estriers.

*Sor tous hommes ert couvignables*

FID

*De ciens, d'oisiaus, et delitables.*

Toutes plaignoient son delit;

Narrated Discourse

*Ki de lui ert si bons eslit?*

FID

Pour la douleur d'eles plouroient

Tout cil ki les regrés ooient.

[Ne] pour amis ne pour parentes

Ne voloient mangier les gentes.

Lor dru ne vont pas oubliant;

Molt aloient afoibloiant.

Adiés detorgoient lor mains

Et sospirent et jetent plains.

D'eles .XII. fu li deus fais,

Et .XII. vers plains a li lais

C'on doit bien tenir en memoire

Car la matere est toute voire.

(They all made a vow to God that they would never eat again and would never again have a meal of such quality. They carried out their promise, just as they had made it. While they still lived, they composed a lament for him. One of them mourned his beauty and his limbs, which were so fair and shapely that the very finest were ugly in comparison. *This is what they said about the youth.* Another mourned his great valour, his noble body and his largesse, and a fourth his eyes and his flanks. His eyes were so sparkling and merry. Another mourned his tender heart; *there would never be one of its kind again.* **'Alas, how we have changed you! The jealous ones have avenged themselves very cruelly, but we will not eat again. In this way we will take our revenge.'** Another mourned his fine feet that sat so well in his stirrups. *He was more accomplished than anyone else at hunting with dogs and birds, and more charming. They all mourned the pleasure he gave. Who could be more perfect than he was?* All those who heard these lamentations wept on account of their grief. Neither their friends nor their relatives could persuade the noble ladies to eat. They did not forget their lover and quickly began to waste

away. They wrung their hands, sighed and uttered lamentations continuously. Everyone grieved over their death. The lay, which should be remembered by everyone, has twelve full stanzas, for the subject matter is entirely true.)

On the one hand, Ignaure's body, which has been literally cut into pieces, remains symbolically fragmented and reified through the separate lamentations of each lady. On the other hand, he is put together again in what forms a continuous complaint, a little bit like a puzzle or to use a medieval comparison, a stained glass window.<sup>43</sup> Here, the voices of all of the women beautifully merge together and are transposed, via the FID, into the voice of the narrator, who will subsequently talk about both the making and title(s) of the lay and his own Lady who has inspired the text.

#### 4.7. Epilogue (lines 617-665)

The ending of *Ignaure* offers the typical references to a lai's sources, title(s), and dissemination. We are also given the author's name, Renaut, like Jean Renart for the *Lai de l'Ombre* or Henri for the *Lai d'Aristote*.<sup>44</sup> In addition, there is an unusual 28-line-long mention of the poet's beautiful lady, who has imprisoned him with chains of love (lines 629-56). Of particular interest is the rather cryptic link between the lady in question, the making of the lay itself and its title. After telling us that the lay originates in the twelve ladies lamenting Ignaure's death (i.e. their 'complainte') and asking God to pity them all, the narrator also calls for God's blessing:

Lines 627-30

Et benie soit ki le fist faire

Cest lai ki as amans doit plaire.

Cele m'a si fort atachié

Que n'en puis ester deslachié.

(may there be a blessing on the lady who has had this lay written, which must be pleasing to lovers. She has bound me so firmly that I cannot be untied.)

In the manuscript, we find the masculine form 'benis' instead of the feminine 'benie' but the pronoun 'cele' and the syntax seem to justify Burgess and Brook's translation: 'And a blessing on the lady who had this lay written'.<sup>45</sup> This Lady thus seems to act both as a patron and as a powerful courtly lady who keeps the narrator/author prisoner, thereby perhaps also justifying the title *Lay del Prison* which competes with *Lays*

*d'Ygnaure* given in the *explicit*: the poet merges with Ignaure into the figure of 'prisoner of love'.<sup>46</sup>

Lines 655-60

Molt sui en tre[s] douche prison;

Issi n'en quier par raenchon.

C'est la matere de cest lay;

Ichi le vos definerai.

Franchois, Poitevin et Breton

L'apielent le lay del Prison.

(I am in a very sweet prison and have no desire to escape from it through ransom. That is the subject matter of this lay. I will bring it to an end for you. The French, the Poitevins and the Bretons call it the *Lay of the Prisoner*.)

## 5. Conclusion

Our close linguistic and narratological analysis, which took into account previous research on reported discourse in lays and fabliaux, has shown that the narrator's framing and reporting of his characters' gendered discourses subtly played with the listener-readers' *horizons d'attente*, thereby interweaving the notions of gender and genre and cautioning against modern attempts to classify medieval texts into distinct literary genres.

While the text strikingly combines gendered reported discourse strategies, pseudo-proverbs and humorous elements more typical of fabliaux, its subtle use of transposed discourse is very reminiscent of the lays, as are the settings and the themes of love and death. The attention paid to the composition of the narrative and the connection to a female patron are also core elements of lays. In fact, the combined ingestion of heart and penis serves as a perfect metaphor for the narrative's artful combination of genres: lays and fabliaux.<sup>47</sup> Women in the text are the 'vessel' ingesting and mixing these two elements, the sources, creators, and patrons of the text.

The parallel between the *I*-poet and Ignaure as 'prisoners of love' can also be drawn between the poet's lady and the twelve ladies of the story, thereby highlighting the power of women as lovers in *and* sources of the poem. The twelve ladies are the reason why Ignaure dies and why the lay exists in the first place. This is particularly evident

when looking at the importance of female speech and female third-person reference in the text. That the story is ultimately about women's power is confirmed by the husbands' first reaction at hearing of their wives' affairs:

Lines 449-50

'De cest chastiel avront dangier

Se nous ne nous pouvons vengier'

('They will have control over the castle if we cannot avenge ourselves')

This communion of the ladies in both the body of their lover Ignaure and their 'complainte' as the source of the *Lai d'Ignaure* can also be viewed in the context of ms BnF f. fr. 1553. Indeed, the verse narrative seems to embody the manuscript itself through its artful *mélange* of the courtly topoi associated with lays, romances and didactic *arts d'aimer* as well as the coarse elements of the *fabliaux* or various misogynistic texts, but also through the religious discourse that runs through both the manuscript and the text.<sup>48</sup>

## ANNEX: CORPUS

### Lais

The texts were mostly taken from the electronic database of Champion's 'Corpus de littérature médiévale des origines à la fin du 15<sup>e</sup> siècle' ([www.classiques-garnier.com](http://www.classiques-garnier.com)), which sometimes offers several versions of the same lay. The chosen version is indicated in the notes as well as the separate editions used<sup>49</sup>.

<i>Lay d'amours</i>	Girart
<i>Lai d'Aristote</i>	Henri
<i>Austic</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Bisclavret</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Chaitivel</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Chievrefueil</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Lai du conseil</i>	
<i>Désiré</i>	
<i>Doon</i>	
<i>Dous Amanz</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Eliduc</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Lai de l'épervier</i>	
<i>Equitan</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Lai de l'espine</i>	
<i>Fresne</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Graelent</i>	
<i>Guigemar</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Guingamor</i>	
<i>Haveloc</i>	Gaimar
<i>Ignare</i>	Renaut
<i>Lanval</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Lecheor</i>	
<i>Mantel Mautailié</i>	
<i>Mélion</i>	
<i>Milun</i>	Lais de Marie
<i>Nabaret</i>	
<i>Lai de l'Ombre</i>	Jean Renart
<i>Trot</i>	
<i>Tydorel</i>	
<i>Tyolet</i>	
<i>Vair Palefroi</i>	Huon le Roi
<i>Yonec</i>	Lais de Marie

### Fabliaux

The first column gives the fabliaux's titles. The texts were taken from the electronic database of Champion's 'Corpus de littérature médiévale des origines à la fin du 15<sup>e</sup> siècle' ([www.classiques-garnier.com](http://www.classiques-garnier.com)), which sometimes offers several versions of the same fabliau. The chosen version is indicated in the second column<sup>50</sup>.

<i>Le Flabel d'Aloul</i>	MR, 1
<i>Auberée</i>	CF
<i>De Berengier au lonc cul</i>	MR, 4
<i>De Boivin de Provins</i>	FF
<i>De la Borgoise d'Orliens</i>	FF
<i>Du Bouchier d'Abbeville</i>	MR, 3

<i>De Pleine bourse de sens</i>	MR, 3
<i>Des Braies au cordelier</i>	MR, 3
<i>De Brifaut</i>	MR, 4
<i>De Brunain la vache au prestre</i>	MR, 1
<i>De Celle qui se fist foutre sur la fosse de son mari</i>	MR, 3
<i>Du Chevalier a la corbeille</i>	MR, 2
<i>Du Chevalier a la robe vermeille</i>	CF
<i>Du Chevalier qui fist sa fame confesse</i>	MR, 1
<i>Du Chevalier qui recovra l'amor de sa dame</i>	MR, 6
<i>Romanz de un chivaler et de sa dame et de un clerc</i>	MR, 2
<i>Du Clerc qui fu repus deriere l'escrin</i>	MR, 4
<i>De la Coille noire</i>	MR, 6
<i>De la Crotte</i>	MR, 3
<i>De la Dame escolliée</i>	MR, 6
<i>De la Dame qui fist entendant son mari qu'il sonjoit</i>	MR, 5
<i>De la Dame qui se venja du chevalier</i>	MR, 6
<i>De la Damoisele qui n'ot parler de fotre qui n'aüst mal au cuer</i>	MR, 5
<i>De la Damoisele qui ne pooit oïr parler de foutre</i>	MR, 3
<i>De la Damoisele qui sonjoit</i>	MR, 5
<i>De l'Enfant qui fu remis au soleil</i>	MR, 1
<i>D'Estormi</i>	FF
<i>De l'Evesque qui beneï lo con</i>	MR, 3
<i>Du Fèvre de Creeil</i>	MR, 1
<i>De Frere Denise</i>	MR, 3
<i>De Gauteron et de Marion</i>	MR, 3
<i>Gomers</i>	FF
<i>De la Grue</i>	MR, 5
<i>De Guillaume au faucon</i>	MR, 2
<i>De Jouglet</i>	MR, 4
<i>Du Jugement des cons</i>	MR, 5
<i>Do Maignien qui foti la dame</i>	MR, 5
<i>Del Munier et des II. clers</i>	FF
<i>Do Mire de Brai</i>	FF
<i>Le Dit des perdriz</i>	CF
<i>Du Pescheor de Pont seur Saine</i>	MR, 3
<i>Du Porcelet</i>	MR, 4
<i>Du Prestre et d'Alison</i>	FF
<i>Du Prestre et de la dame</i>	MR, 2
<i>Du Prestre qui ot mere malgré sien</i>	CF
<i>De la Pucele qui abevra le polain</i>	MR, 4
<i>De la Pucele qui vouloit voler</i>	MR, 4
<i>Des III prestres</i>	MR, 6
<i>Les III souhaiz Saint Martin</i>	MR, 5
<i>Du Segretain ou du moine</i>	MR, 5
<i>D'une Seule fame qui servoit C. chevaliers de tous poins</i>	MR, 1
<i>De Sire Hain et de Dame Anieuse</i>	MR, 1
<i>Li Sohaiz desvez</i>	MR, 5
<i>Du Sot chevalier</i>	MR, 1
<i>Des Tresces</i>	FF
<i>Des III bossus</i>	MR, 1
<i>Des III dames qui trouverent l'anel</i>	CF
<i>Des III dames de Paris</i>	FF
<i>Du Vallet qui d'aise a malaise se met</i>	MR, 2
<i>La Veuve</i>	MR, 2
<i>De la Vielle qui oint la palme au chevalier</i>	MR, 5
<i>Du Vilain de Bailluel</i>	MR, 4

<sup>1</sup> This article was written during a sabbatical leave that unfortunately coincided with Covid-19 and library closures. I am immensely grateful to colleagues who helped me with finding some of the primary and secondary sources, especially Glyn Burgess, Olivier Collet and Marion Uhlig. I presented my research at two online seminars which participants' questions and comments were very insightful: the summer seminar convened by Miranda Griffin and Luke Sunderland and the seminar convened by Nadine Henrard and Nicola Morato at the Université de Liège, which invited me as guest professor for two trimesters. I thank them all. The edition and translation of the *Lai d'Ignaure* used here is taken

---

from *The Old French Lays of Ignaure, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess & Leslie C. Brook (Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The text refers to the ‘Lay del Prison’ at lines 660 and 661.

<sup>3</sup> This manuscript is seen by Marion Uhlig as a dynamic collection ‘dont les composantes, toujours dynamiques, s’articulent, s’enchaînent et se répondent à la faveur d’un perpétuel déplacement dans l’espace et dans le temps’ (Marion Uhlig, *Le Prince des clercs: “Barlaam et Josaphat” ou l’art du recueil*, Publications romanes et françaises 268 (Geneva, 2018), pp. 317-375). For further discussions of ms BnF f. fr. 1553, see in particular: Amy Suzanne Heneveld, ‘“Chi commence d’amours”, ou commencer pour finir: la place des arts d’aimer dans les manuscrits-recueils du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle’, in *Le Recueil au Moyen Âge*, ed. Yasmina Foehr-Janssens and Olivier Collet (Turnhout, Belgium, 2010), pp. 139-156; Olivier Collet, ‘Du “manuscrit de jongleur” au “recueil aristocratique”: réflexions sur les premières anthologies françaises’, *Le Moyen Âge*, 113: 3-4 (2007), 481-499; Olivier Collet ‘“Textes de circonstance” et “raccords” dans les manuscrits vernaculaires: les enseignements de quelques recueils des XIII-XIV siècles’, in *Quant l’ung amy pour l’autre veille. Mélanges de moyen français offerts à Claude Thiry*, ed. T. Van Hemelryck and M. Colombo Timelli (Turnhout, Belgium, 2008), Texte, Codex & Contexte V, pp. 299-311.

<sup>4</sup> Mortimer J. Donovan, *The Breton lay: a guide to varieties* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1969), p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> *The Old French Lays of Ignaure, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Burgess & Brook, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> Renaut [de Beaujeu], *Le Lai d’Ignaure ou Lai du prisonnier*, ed. Rita Lejeune (Brussels-Liège, 1938), pp. 36-38, 44.

<sup>7</sup> Marie-Noëlle Le Toury, ‘La Fine amour en question: *Ipomedon* et *Ignauré*’, in ‘Contez me tout’: *mélanges de langue et de littératures médiévales offerts à Herman Braet*, ed. Catherine Bel, Pascale Dumont and Frank Willaert (Louvain, Paris and Dudley, MA, 2006), pp. 341-353 (p. 351).

<sup>8</sup> Martina Di Febo, ‘*Ignauré*: la parodie “dialectique” ou le détournement du symbolisme courtois’, *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales*, 5 (1998), 167-201 (p. 170).

<sup>9</sup> For a description of the corpus and the results of my research on speech and thought presentation in lays and fabliaux, see Sophie Marnette, ‘Énonciation et Locuteurs dans les *Lais* de Marie de France’ *Op. cit., revue des littératures et des arts*, 19 (2018), updated: 03/12/2018, <https://revues.univ-pau.fr/opcit/427>; Sophie Marnette, ‘L’Énonciation féminine dans les *lais* médiévaux’, *Le Discours et la langue*, 8:1 (2016) 97-120; Sophie Marnette, ‘Oralité et locuteurs dans les *lais* médiévaux’, *Diachroniques*, 3 (2013) 21-48; Sophie Marnette, ‘Voix de femmes et voix d’hommes dans les fabliaux’, *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales*, 22 (2011) 104-122.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Robert Jauss, ‘Littérature médiévale et théorie des genres’, *Poétique*, 1 (1970), 79-101; Hans Robert Jauss, ‘Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature’, in *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, Theory and History of Literature, 2 (Minneapolis, 1982), pp. 76-109.

<sup>11</sup> Sophie Marnette, *Speech and Thought Presentation in French: Concept and Strategies* (Amsterdam – New York, 2005), p. 189.

<sup>12</sup> Sophie Marnette, *Narrateur et points de vue dans la littérature française médiévale: Une approche linguistique* (Bern, 1998), pp. 202-204.

<sup>13</sup> 28 lays out of 32 and 51 fabliaux out of 62.

<sup>14</sup> The title *Lais de Marie* refers to the 12 lays present in ms Harley 978 (see appendix). While this collection seems to present some common trends in terms of reported discourse, which is why it is treated separately in the above tables, I share Richard Baum’s caution in saying that ‘rien n’autorise à penser que tous les poèmes conservés dans le recueil de Londres représentent l’œuvre de Marie, rien n’autorise à croire que ce recueil regroupe l’ensemble de ses poèmes’ (Richard Baum, *Recherches sur les œuvres attribuées à Marie de France* (Heidelberg, 1968), p. 58). I also take the view that the qualification ‘de France’, often given to Marie is not necessary as it is mentioned in her fables, not her lays, and it indicates where she comes from rather than her actual name. For a closer discussion of my views on the matter, see Sophie Marnette, ‘L’Énonciation féminine dans les *lais* médiévaux’, pp. 100-101.

<sup>15</sup> For an exhaustive description of Speech and Thought Presentation in Medieval French, see Marnette, *Speech and Thought Presentation in French: Concept and Strategies*, pp. 179-223; Sophie Marnette, ‘Forms and Functions of Reported Discourse in Medieval French’, in *Research on Old French: The State of the Art*, ed. Deborah Arteaga, Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory (Dordrecht, 2013), pp. 299-326.

<sup>16</sup> The average for ‘other lays’ would be 34% (i.e. closer to the *Lais de Marie*), if we were not counting the *Lai d’amours* (62%) and *Lai du conseil* (84%), which both behave more like *jeu parti* and consist mainly in a dialogue between a Lord and a Lady. This would also put the average for ‘all lays’ to 33%. All ‘other lays’ devote 50% or less of the text to reported discourse. Similarly, if we disregarded these two lays, the average of space devoted to DD would be of 29.5% for ‘other lays’ and 26% for ‘all lays’.

<sup>17</sup> As mentioned in the previous note, if one disregards the *Lai d'amours* and *Lai du conseil*, the average frequency of DD in 'other lais' falls to 51% (instead of 66%) and in 'all lais' to 47% (instead of 57%). However, in addition to these two texts, several lais do offer a high frequency of DD: *Conseil* (100%), *Espervier* (92%), *Aristote* (85%), *Ignauze* (80%), *Mantel* (79%), *Ombre* (78%), *Tydorel* (70%), *Tyolet* (66%), *Désiré* (65%), *Amours* (62%), *Austic* (60%).

<sup>18</sup> Male 19%, female 13%.

<sup>19</sup> For a discussion of the use of the word 'aventure' in lais' prologues, see Glyn S. Burgess, 'Marie de France and the Anonymous Lays' in *A Companion to Marie de France*, ed. Logan Whalen (Leiden, 2011), pp. 117-156 (pp. 119-120).

<sup>20</sup> R. Howard Bloch, 'The Lay and the Law: Sexual/Textual Transgression in *La Chastelaine de Vergi*, the *Lai d'Ignauré*, and the *Lais* of Marie de France', *Stanford French Review*, 14 (1990), 181-210 (pp. 196-197).

<sup>21</sup> Amy Suzanne Heneveld looks at the presence in the second part of the ms (ff. 438 and following) of didactic texts which she calls 'art d'aimer', i.e. texts that teach about courtly love: *Li flours d'amours*, a dialogue between the body and the heart, *Dou capiel a .vij. fleurs*, a description of the qualities of the beloved Lady, *Dou vrai chiment d'amours*, a text criticising multiple relationships and comparing love to the concrete used in buildings, and *Dou dieu d'amours*, where a lover dreams that he ascends to the Paradise of Love with a Lady who has lost her *ami*. She notes these texts' intermingling with the three lais that start this part of the ms (*Ignauze*, *Espine*, and *Ombre*) as well as prayers, fabliaux and misogynist texts such as *Li ewangilles des femes*. In her view, the *mélange* of these texts teaches the reader through their contrasts: 'Tous les arts d'aimer de cette partie insistent sur l'exclusivité amoureuse. Après le *Lai de l'ombre*, *La capiel a .vij. flours* décrit les vertus qu'Amour donne à l'unique bien-aimée, le *Chiment d'amour* explique la nécessité de l'unité d'un amour réciproque, et *Dou dieu d'amours* raconte les difficultés d'une femme qui perd son amant. Textes multiples pour dire l'importance du lien singulier que tisse l'amour, à l'opposé de la fantaisie des histoires d'amants tragiques, ils dévoilent une des leçons-clés, et des plus pratiques, pour la maîtrise du désir: s'il ne faut pas dire non à une femme, tout bon amant et toute dame sait qu'il ne faut pas non plus dire oui à plusieurs.' (Heneveld, 'Chi commence d'amours', p. 152).

<sup>22</sup> Courtly settings and noble characters are of course not entirely absent from fabliaux, as can be seen in the following texts included in my fabliaux corpus: *Chevalier a la corbeille*, *Chevalier a la robe vermeille*, *Chevalier qui fist sa dame confesse*, *Chevalier qui recovra l'amor de sa dame*, *Dame qui se venja du chevalier*, *Guillaume au faucon*, *Du Sot chevalier*, *La Vieille qui oint la palme au chevalier*, *La Dame escolliee*, and *Une Seule Fame qui a son cors servoit cent chevaliers de tous poins*.

<sup>23</sup> He is also called 'lechiere' (rogue, line 386) and 'trahitres' (traitor, line 390).

<sup>24</sup> See *The Old French Lays of Ignauze, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Burgess and Brook, pp. 38-40. Di Febo notes other dissonances in the description of Ignauze such as the fact that he is not a typical solitary and pensive knight (such as Lanval or Guigemar) but walks around in the woods with several *jongleur* (Di Febo, 'Ignauré: la parodie "dialectique" ou le détournement du symbolisme courtois', p. 7). Similarly, she highlights the humour of his nickname of nightingale since he is not as faithful as the bird is supposed to be (p. 173). The humour and significance of the nightingale nickname is also noted in Glyn S. Burgess, Leslie C. Brook, *Twenty-Four Lays from the French Middle Ages* (Liverpool, 2016), p. 147, note 2.

<sup>25</sup> This would be 33% if one does not count *Amours* (62%) and *Conseil* (84%), two outliers.

<sup>26</sup> The frequency distribution is 81% DD, 13% ID and 6% FID in *Ignauze* compared to the lais' average of 53% DD, 36% ID, 11% FID and the fabliaux' average of 77% DD, 21% ID, and 2% FID.

<sup>27</sup> 6% of FID in *Ignauze* compared to 2% in the fabliaux and 11% in the lais (5% in lais others than the *Lais de Marie*).

<sup>28</sup> There are only 3 lais (*Fresne*, *Lecheor* and *Ignauze*) where women's reported discourse is more frequent than men's (vs 28 texts for men's RD and equal amount in 1 text). Note, however, that, as discussed here, *Ignauze* is a rather unusual lay and so is *Lecheor* where courtly ladies unabashedly use the crude word *con* (for female genitalia). In 20 fabliaux (32%), women's reported discourse is more frequent than men's (vs 35 texts for men (56%) and equal amount in 7 texts). The space devoted to female RD is greater than that devoted to male RD in only 10 lais (out of 32). Out of 62 fabliaux, exactly half devote more space to female RD and half to male RD.

<sup>29</sup> The distribution is as follows:

Ratio of RD per Third-Person References	Women	Men	Women more likely to talk
Average in fabliaux	1 RD per 6 ref.	1 RD per 7.6 ref.	1.27
Average in lais (All)	1 RD per 11.4 ref.	1 RD per 12.7 ref.	1.11

Average in <i>Ignauré</i>	1 RD per 4.2 ref.	1 RD per 6 ref.	1.41
---------------------------	-------------------	-----------------	------

<sup>30</sup> The distribution of RD categories is as follows:

Frequency Distribution Per Gender in <i>Ignauré</i>	Male Characters				Female Characters			
	DD	ID	FID	Total	DD	ID	FID	Total
Percentage	85%	11%	4%	100%	77%	15%	8%	100%
Occurrences	39	5	2	46	48	9	5	62

<sup>31</sup> Regarding the notion of ‘polylogue’, see Corinne Denoyelle, ‘Polylogues masculins et polylogues féminins dans la littérature médiévale’, *Le Discours et la langue*, 8:1, (2016), 15-30.

<sup>32</sup> In addition to 1% of ID and 0% of DD.

<sup>33</sup> Di Febo, ‘*Ignauré*: la parodie “dialectique” ou le détournement du symbolisme courtois’, p. 175.

<sup>34</sup> *Twenty-Four Lays from the French Middle Ages*, transl. Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook (Liverpool, 2016), p. 147.

<sup>35</sup> There are relatively few illustrations in this manuscript, most of them appearing in historiated initials.

<sup>36</sup> Note that I have departed from Burgess and Brook’s translation here in order to keep closer to the future tense used in the Old French text (‘ameront’, ‘lairont’) as well as the fact that the FID is not subordinated to the *verbum dicendi* (‘afierent’), as shown by the semi-colon used in the edited text as opposed to the conjunction *and* used in the modern translation: ‘yet they all swore that they would never love him and would leave him to her, freely and in peace’ (*The Old French Lays of Ignauré, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess & Leslie C. Brook, pp. 83-84).

<sup>37</sup> The ‘trau’ or ‘pertuis’ could be understood literally (a mouse’s hole) or metaphorically (i.e. a woman’s vagina).

<sup>38</sup> See *The Old French Lays of Ignauré, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess & Leslie C. Brook, pp. 38-40.

<sup>39</sup> See *The Old French Lays of Ignauré, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess & Leslie C. Brook, pp. 22-35, for a corpus of eaten heart tales and p. 36 for the rare mentions of eaten penis. Also see Di Febo, ‘*Ignauré*: la parodie “dialectique” ou le détournement du symbolisme courtois’, pp. 167-8.

<sup>40</sup> Donovan, *The Breton lay: a guide to varieties*, pp. 91-94.

<sup>41</sup> The frequency of male and female discourse in this passage is 90% vs 10% (men use 70% of DD, 12.5% of ID and 7.5% of FID, women are left with 2.5% DD and 7.5% ID).

<sup>42</sup> A narrated discourse is a reference to a speech or thought event that does not include what was said or thought. It can be more or less extended/detailed. See the excerpt below for examples in this text.

<sup>43</sup> I would like to thank Dominique Lagorgette for suggesting the images of the puzzle and stained glass window.

<sup>44</sup> Di Febo believes that the name Renaut in *Ignauré* is the same as the Renaut the Beaujeu, author of *Le Bel Inconnu* because of the similarities between the two texts, notably the presence of the Poet’s ‘je lyrique’ and the mixing of registers (e.g. romance/lai and fabliau) in both (Di Febo, ‘*Ignauré*: la parodie “dialectique” ou le détournement du symbolisme courtois’, p. 168).

<sup>45</sup> However, ‘made’ would seem a preferable translation to ‘written’.

<sup>46</sup> Note that we were told at the start of the lay that *Ignauré* walks around with *jongleurs* playing music and celebrating May; links with lyric poetry are also evoked through *Ignauré*’s nickname *Lousignol* (nightingale, line 37). The offer of competing titles for the lay reminds us of Marie’s *Chaitivel* which the lady composing it originally called *Quatre doels*, and of Marie’s *Eliduc* where the narrator says that although this title was first given to the lai, it has since been changed into *Guildeluëc ha Guilliadun*, who were the two ladies who loved him.

<sup>47</sup> See *The Old French Lays of Ignauré, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Burgess and Brook, pp. 63-66, for a summary of the discussions about the text’s literary genre, which ends by mentioning the blend of the two organs and that of the two genres.

<sup>48</sup> The place and relevance of *Ignauré* in the ms BnF f. fr. 1553 can therefore be understood through what Amy Suzanne Heneveld says about another collection, that of Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS f. fr. 837: ‘Mais il est aussi possible que l’esthétique d’unité qu’englobe la proportionnalité permettait aux lecteurs d’un recueil d’éprouver une satisfaction grâce au va-et-vient entre les éléments contrastés que celui-ci mettait en scène. Parler d’amour – malgré ce que la critique a parfois dit au sujet de “l’amour Courtois” – veut dire parler du haut et du bas, du spirituel et du corporel, et il semblerait que les compilateurs des recueils, peut-être en vue d’une résolution finale entre pôles oppositionnels, aient voulu communiquer cette oscillation à leurs utilisateurs. Il se produit ainsi une juxtaposition récurrente dans la matière amoureuse du ms. fr. 837, entre autres, entre les textes sur l’amour et les

---

prières mariales. Comme les motets qui, à la même époque, confrontaient, par la polyphonie, des chansons d'amour profane avec des prières religieuses, **le recueil paraît aussi jouer sur cette idée de contrepoint**' (Heneveld, 'Chi commence d'amours', p. 145).

<sup>49</sup> 'Lai d'Aristote', in *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, ed. A. de Montaiglon and G. Raynaud (Paris, 1883), t. V, pp. 243-262; 'Lais inédits de Tyolet, de Guingamor, de Doon, du Lecheor et de Tydorel', ed. G. Paris, *Romania*, 8 (1879), 29-72; 'Le Lai de l'épervier', ed. G. Paris, *Romania*, 7 (1878), 1-21; 'Le Lay de l'espine', in *Feitschrift Für Romanische Philologie*, dir. G. von Gröber (Halle, 1893), pp. 240-255, 'Un lay d'amours', ed. G. Paris, *Romania*, 7 (1878), 409-415; Huon Le Roi, *Le Vair Palefroï avec deux versions de La Male Honte par Huon De Cambrai et par Guillaume. Fabliaux du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. A. Lungfors (Paris, 1927), Jean Renart, *Le Lai de L'Ombre*, ed. F. Lecoy (Paris, 1979); 'Le Lai du Conseil', ed. A. Barth, *Romanische Forschungen*, 31 (1912), 799-872; *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. Jean Rychner (Paris, 1983); *The Lays of Desiré, Graelent and Melion*, ed. Margaret E. Grimes, Institute of French Studies (New York, 1928) [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1836], *Three Old French Narrative Lays: Trot, Lecheor, Nabaret*, ed. Glyn S. Burgess and Leslie C. Brook, Liverpool Online Series Critical Editions of French Texts (Liverpool, 1999); 'Ignaure', in *The Old French Lays of Ignaure, Oiselet and Amours*, ed. Burgess & Brook.

<sup>50</sup> Gaston Raynaud de Lage, *Choix de fabliaux* (Paris, 1986) [CF], Philippe Ménard, *Fabliaux français du Moyen Âge* (Genève, 1979) [FF], A. de Montaiglon and G. Raynaud, *Recueil général et complet de fabliaux* (Paris, 1872-90), 6 volumes, [MR].