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# *Translatio Studii* as Literary Innovation: Marie de France's *Fresne* and the Cultural Authority of Translation

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**ABSTRACT**

Medieval translations can be a shaping force in emerging vernacular literatures, as Marie de France's *Fresne* and its Old Norse and Middle English translations demonstrate. While Sif Ríkharðsdóttir highlights that each version is adapted to its target literature, these texts also draw on the cultural authority of *translatio studii* to legitimize innovation. This article traces each text's influence using Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, having determined their position within the literary polysystem through textual and manuscript contexts. Each version constructs its own cultural authority to reshape the polysystem for different ideological purposes, thus producing texts that differ both from their source material and the norms of their target literatures. This is most apparent in their representations of courtliness: by invoking *translatio studii*, the Anglo-Norman *Fresne* establishes an exemplar of sincere interiority-based courtesy, whereas the Old Norse *Eskia* instrumentalizes French prestige to legitimize a performative ideal of courtliness in Norwegian literature. Conversely, the Middle English *Lay le Freine* uses *translatio* to reinvent its genre as the socially inclusive Middle English Breton lay, where courtliness is primarily a literary effect. Intervernacular translations therefore emerge as a key source of innovation in vernacular polysystems, pointing towards a new approach to comparative medieval literature.

**KEYWORDS**

Translation; polysystem theory; vernacular; comparative medieval literature; Marie de France; *Strengleikar*; *Lay le Freine*

As theories of translation become increasingly central to medieval literary studies,[1] they offer new ways for us to chart the development of vernacular literatures. The concept of *translatio studii*, a geographical and linguistic "transfer of learning" from the Classical East to the medieval West, provides a useful framework for understanding how the cultural authority of Latin was transferred to medieval vernaculars (see Copeland 1991). Its general applicability, however, is increasingly being challenged (see Campbell and Mills 2012a, 10–11; Nelson 2013). This is especially the case for translations from one vernacular into another. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir has emphasized the way in which intervernacular translations from Old French to Old Norse or Middle English subvert the cultural imperialism of *translatio*: they depart from their exemplars to adapt the translated texts to Old Norse or Middle English literary culture (2012, 164). Yet intervernacular translations may still invoke the prestige of *translatio studii* to legitimize not only cultural

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adaptation but also individual innovation, which can be traced using Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory (see Even-Zohar 1990a).[2] The example of *Fresne*, one of Marie de France's twelfth-century *Lais*,[3] powerfully illustrates the innovatory potential of intervernacular translation. The different versions of the *lai* consciously draw on the prestige of *translatio studii* while exploiting the freedom of intervernacular translation to produce literary change, whether to establish courtly literature in Norway or to rework the genre of the *lai* for non-courtly English audiences.

*Translatio studii* is central to the translation processes described by Rita Copeland: by adopting the practices of exegesis and commentary, vernacular translations use this notion of a transfer of knowledge to assume the cultural authority of Latin (1991, 106–7). While Copeland explicitly does not extend her model to intervernacular translations like those of the *lais* (1991, 5), *translatio studii* is also prominently invoked in the Arthurian romance *Cligès* by Marie de France's contemporary Chrétien de Troyes:

> Ce nos ont nostre livre apris
> Qu'an Grece ot de chevalerie
> Le premier los et de clergie.
> Puis vint chevalerie a Rome
> Et de la clergie la some,
> Qui or est an France venue. (1994, 30–5)

> Our books have taught us this:
> That in Greece chivalry
> And learning were first prized.
> Then chivalry came to Rome,
> Together with the sum of learning,
> Which has now come to France.[4]

In describing the geographical and linguistic *translatio studii* from Classical Antiquity to twelfth-century France, Chrétien blends *chevalerie* [chivalry] with *clergie* [learning] and consistently puts *chevalerie* first. *Translatio studii* thus also comes to include the transfer of courtly culture. As Sif Ríkharðsdóttir has it, Chrétien co-opts the idea of *translatio studii* as "a formal means of ordering authoritative transmission" (2017a, 141), giving legitimacy to vernacular chivalric romance. As we shall see, it is on this kind of vernacularized *translatio studii* that Marie de France and her translators draw.[5] By offering to explicate courtly culture, they frame their works within a broader process of cultural transfer from prestige languages into less prestigious vernaculars.

Such a transfer of courtly learning also lies at the heart of Marie's *Fresne* itself, in which the eponymous protagonist is abandoned as a baby before gradually reacquiring her courtly status. Since *Fresne* has also come down to us in an Old Norse and a Middle English translation, it thus provides an ideal object for comparative study.[6] In the thirteenth century, *Fresne* was translated into Old Norse as *Eskia*, part of the Norwegian *Strengleikar*, while the early fourteenth-century *Lay le Freine* survives in the Auchinleck Manuscript. Sif Ríkharðsdóttir sees the Old Norse and Middle English *lais* as essentially products of their own culture: far from participating in a straightforward transfer, they integrate "the material into an existing tradition rather than supplanting that tradition" (2012, 35). This focus on cultural adaptation situates the translated *lais* in their cultural contexts, or, for Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, "reading communities": a diverse grouping including patrons, scribes and intended as well as actual audiences for original

texts, translations and later manuscript copies (2012, 11–13). It thus becomes possible to distinguish the various layers of cultural adaptation that the translations of *Fresne* undergo as they move across vernaculars, from Old French to Old Norse and Middle English. But this strong focus on reception also carries the danger of generally perceiving texts as manifestations of culture reflecting pre-established conventions, which in turn makes it easy to overlook the comparative prestige of translated texts. The case of *Fresne* and its translations shows that it is only by considering texts within their wider literary culture that we can reveal the cultural impact and instrumentalization of *translatio studii*.

To this end, we may draw on Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, which conceptualizes the literary polysystem as "a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap" (1990a, 11). Each system, such as genre, is dependent on other systems, which it can influence and by which it is in turn influenced. Within the polysystem, the most prestigious repertoires stand at the center of a socially determined hierarchy (Even-Zohar 1990a, 17). If great cultural value is accorded to a translation, it consequently finds itself at the center of this hierarchy and "participates actively in shaping the center of the polysystem" (Even-Zohar 1990b, 46). This provides a framework to describe the combined effect of the cultural authority of *translatio studii* and the freedom of intervernacular translation, as well as explaining why translation is ideally suited to ideological instrumentalization. In the case of *Fresne*, the first step is to determine the place of each version within its literary polysystem by using textual and manuscript evidence—where available—to estimate the type of authority each text constructs. How this authority is employed will then become most apparent through a closer study of the *lais*' representations of courtliness, which lies at the heart of the notional transfer of courtly culture, demonstrating which textual elements are adapted and amplified in each version. This will reveal these texts as individual ideological tools rather than as representative elements of vernacular culture. The courtliness imagined in the Anglo-Norman *Fresne*, based on a sincere relationship between interiority and performance, becomes almost exclusively performance-based in the Old Norse *Eskia* and a mere literary fiction in *Lay le Freine*. *Fresne* and its translations thus become more than simple products of their culture: they become themselves producers of culture and sources of literary innovation.

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To understand the degree of cultural authority deployed in *Fresne*, we must start by considering how Marie de France's *Lais* generally draw on the prestige of translation. It is worth taking into account the available manuscript evidence, although this is only of limited use: composed in the late twelfth century, the *Lais* predate the earliest extant manuscripts by nearly a century. The only manuscript to contain all twelve *lais*, London, British Library, Harley MS 978, dates from the mid-thirteenth century. This small but neatly copied compilation also contains Marie's *Fables*, various pieces of music including the Middle English "Sumer is icumen in," medical texts, pious and satirical verses in Latin and Anglo-Norman, a fragmentary Anglo-Norman treatise on hawking and the Latin *Song of Lewes* (see Taylor 2002, 76–136; Pickens 2006). Andrew Taylor identifies its possible owner as William of Winchester, monk of Reading and briefly sub-prior of Leominster after 1280, who led a notoriously worldly life; to him, the manuscript may have served as a "courtesy book from which its owner could acquire social graces and useful knowledge" (2002, 133). Within the multilingual polysystem of thirteenth-century

England at least, a "courtesy book" from which readers could gain cultural prestige would, itself, likely have carried some cultural authority. Harley 978 tells us relatively little, however, of the status of the *Lais* among their earliest reading communities, for which we have to rely on Marie's own claims to prestige in her twelfth-century *Prologue*. Not only does Marie dedicate her *Lais* to King Henry II; she also explicitly presents her texts as translations, akin to stories translated "de latin en romaunz" [from Latin into Romance] (2018a, 30).[7] Since French only began to rival the literary authority of Latin in the thirteenth century (Burrow 2008, 18), Marie's *Prologue* here appears to echo Chrétien's invocation of *translatio studii*: the prestige of translation is used to transfer authority to her vernacular texts.

Yet Marie does not claim written Latin texts as her sources, but the vernacular and decidedly oral musical *lais*: "Des lais pensai, k'oïz aveie" [I thought of the *lais*, which I had heard] (33). This leads Marianne Fisher to conclude that Marie situates herself outside conventional structures of *translatio studii* (2012, 197); yet there is, as Fisher also argues, still a calculated element of prestige in invoking a genre that is then specifically tied to the Bretons. It must be noted that although some attempts have been made to retrace the *Lais*' Celtic origins (see particularly Sergent 2014), these remain unconvincing. Of course, Marie's *Lais* may really be translations. *Fresne* in particular appears to have circulated previously in some form: a partial analogue of the story occurs in the contemporaneous *Explanatio in Prophetia Merlini Ambrosii* by Alain de Flandres (2015, 116). But as Mortimer J. Donovan notes of Marie's elusive sources: "How she reshaped these is more important than where she found them" (1969, 61). In this sense, her reference to the *lais* seems above all designed to engage Anglo-Norman reading communities. On the one hand, as Fisher remarks, Marie deliberately exploits the "common failure of medieval vernaculars to distinguish between Breton and Briton," establishing a geographically indeterminate precursor civilization for Normans on both sides of the English Channel (2012, 201). Above all, however, Marie's references to the Bretons also recall Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, composed in the first half of the twelfth century and itself presented as the translation of "quendam Britannici sermonis librum uetustissimum" [a very old book in the British language] (2007, 5), which traces the ancestry of the Britons back to Troy. Similarly, Geoffrey positions the British language as the original language of Troy, also called "curuum Graecum" [crooked Greek] (2007, 29). Following Geoffrey's model, Marie can thus capitalize on an expanded understanding of *translatio studii* that includes this British vernacular as a source of cultural learning for Anglo-Norman literature, inserting her translation of the *Lais* into a "crooked" but distinctly Anglo-Norman-styled *translatio studii*.

This transfer, moreover, is a double process. Not only does it trace the authority of the *Lais*' sources, but it also establishes their contemporary applicability by providing an updated reading in the commentary tradition that is so integral to *translatio studii* (see Copeland 1991, 87). Marie references the Latin grammarian Priscian, to whom she ascribes the pronouncement that ancient authors wrote obscurely, so that later writers "peüssent gloser la lettre/E de lur sen le surplus mettre" [should be able to gloss the text and add their own understanding to it] (15–16).[8] In presenting her work as both translation and gloss, Marie explicitly frames translation as a hermeneutic process, in which *gloser la lettre* [glossing the text] allows her to produce new *sens* [understanding] for a current context. Consequently, Logan E. Whalen argues that the *Prologue* functions

as a “brief apology of the process of *inventio*” (2011, 4). This newly established authority allows Marie to produce the self-confident female narrative voice with which she introduces *Fresne*: “Le lai del Freisne vus dirai/Sulunc le cunte que jeo sai” [I will tell you the *lai* of the ash, according to the story that I know] (2018b, 1–2).[9] The emphasis shifts to Marie’s own act of telling and her own knowledge, underlined by the—grammatically unnecessary—first-person pronoun in the second line. As Nathalie Koble writes, “la translation fait d’elle une autrice” [translation makes her an author] (2015). Translation thus gives legitimacy and relevance to Marie’s own voice, establishing her capacity for innovation within the literary polysystem.

As we now turn to the manuscript and textual contexts of the Old Norse *Eskia*, they reveal a similar process of invoking cultural authority. In the mid-thirteenth century, Marie’s Norwegian translators clearly aimed to capitalize on the prestige of the *Lais*, albeit very selectively. The *Strengleikar*, a collection of twenty-two *lais* by Marie and other anonymous authors, survive in only one manuscript: Uppsala, Uppsala universitetsbibliotek, De la Gardie 4–7, dated to c. 1270 (see Cook and Tveitane 1979, ix–xi; Bandlien 2014). As a near-contemporaneous copy, De la Gardie 4–7 provides a better witness to the status of the *lais* it contains than Harley 978. It was probably copied at a large scribal center, which suggests a degree of cultural importance (Eriksen 2013, 48). De la Gardie 4–7 consists of two parts, of which the second contains the *Strengleikar* as well as Old Norse translations of a Latin drama, a Latin philosophical dialogue and an Old French *chanson de geste*. Stefka Georgieva Eriksen and Karl G. Johansson argue that this part of the manuscript, providing an Old Norse anthology of Latin and Old French texts, reflects the aspirations of Old Norse literature to appropriate the prestige of Latin and French material (2012, 40). They situate its readership among the secular aristocracy and suggest it may have belonged to the same man who owned the first part of De la Gardie 4–7, the influential Norwegian nobleman Snara Aslaksson (Eriksen and Johansson 2012, 42). Bjørn Bandlien concludes that this kind of manuscript served “to support the making of an identity for a self-conscious elite” (2014, 271). As a collection included in a culturally important manuscript designed for politically important reading communities, the *Strengleikar* can safely be assigned a central position in the Old Norse polysystem.

This position is cemented by the fact that the *Strengleikar* form part of a large-scale translation program commissioned by King Hákon IV Hákonarson (1204–1263). In an addition to Marie’s prologue, the *Forrœða* [Prologue] presents the collection as one of the works that “hin*n* virðulege hacon k*onon*gr let norrœna or volsko male” [the esteemed King Hákon had translated into Norse from the French language] (*Strengleikar* 1979, 4).[10] The verb used for translation is *norrœna*, literally “Norsify”; Hákon’s program of Norsification aims to adapt and appropriate prestigious French material in order to shape a new Norwegian literature. On a stylistic level, Old French octosyllabic verse is translated into Old Norse prose, but its poetic quality is retained in the new “court style,” which is markedly more embellished than other Old Norse genres (Goeres 2019, 78).[11] The instrumentalization of prestige is also visible in the elision of Marie’s voice. Instead, the *lais* are ascribed to “skolld i syðra brætlande er liggr i fran*n*z” [poets in Brittany—which is in France] (4). Sif Ríkharðsdóttir rightly remarks that this is part of a “deliberate reassertion of a masculine narrative voice” (2012, 33).[12] But at the same time, it also misrepresents Brittany’s semi-independent status, allowing the *Strengleikar* to profit

from the cultural prestige of France without focusing on a Celtic Brittany that would have found little resonance in Norway. Instead, the authority underlying the Norsification of the *lais* is that of male, French poets.

Another shift in the construction of cultural authority occurs in the Norse version of Marie's reference to Priscian. Perhaps because the authority of the grammarian is not needed to support a male voice, the prologue omits Priscian's name. It merely states that the ancients left their meaning obscure for later men, "at þæir skylldo lysa með lioso*m* umrœðo*m* þat se*m* hin*ir* fyrro hofðo mællt" [that these should explicate in lucid discourse that which their forbears had said] (6). Eriksen notes that the image of textual transmission and glossing is replaced by a focus on orality and retelling (2012, 193). Consequently, private study gives way to public instruction. The adaptation also, however, removes all reference to the addition of modern *sens* [understanding], down-playing the importance of *inventio* within the hermeneutic process of translation. Thus, the *Strengleikar* obscure the process of adaptation while stressing their link to their French source. *Eskia*, the Old Norse version of *Fresne*, accordingly ends with a reminder of this link, stating that the Bretons "kallaðo þætta æskio lioð. en i valsko lai de fræðni" [called this lai "Eskia," in French "lai de fræðni"] (62). Marie's authority is, as Sif Ríkharðsdóttir states, "appropriated and simultaneously reconstructed … by rejecting its origins, i.e. the presumed feminine voice" (2012, 46). Instead, the Old Norse *lais* rely on a male and distinctly French-inflected *translatio studii* to assert their social prestige and a concomitant central position within the polysystem.

All this contrasts sharply with *Fresne*'s Middle English adaptation and the degree of cultural authority it exerts. *Lay le Freine* is found in Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Advocates MS 19.2.1, also known as the Auchinleck Manuscript, although the ending of the *lai* is lost. This large, expensive, but not *de luxe* text was probably produced in London between 1330–1340, and Derek Pearsall suggests it would have appealed to "the aspirant middle-class citizen, perhaps a wealthy merchant" (2016, 13). The Auchinleck Manuscript is an anthology of texts written almost exclusively in Middle English, from saints' lives to a large collection of romances. *Lay le Freine* is the only one of Marie's *lais* to be included, although there is another Middle English Breton lay, *Sir Orfeo*. The significance of this choice of language is addressed in the romance *Of Arthour and of Merlin* in the same manuscript:

> Riȝt is þat I[n]glische vnderstond
> Þat was born in Inglond.
> Freynsche vse this gentil man
> Ac everich Inglische Inglische can. (1973, 21–4)
>
> It is right that they should understand English
> Who were born in England.
> French is used by noble men
> But every Englishman knows English.

Precisely what this means is debated: while Nicholas Watson asserts that "the English language self-consciously invents itself … as England's sole vernacular" (2008, 89), Patrick Butler argues that, in *Of Arthour and of Merlin*, English is "neither the preferred means of expression nor the most beneficial language available" (2016, 55). Significantly, however, the extract does establish English as the most widely comprehensible vernacular

in England. Consequently, while the evidence points only to a moderately prestigious position within the polysystem for *Lay le Freine*, it is part of a varied, specifically English-language corpus designed to appeal to middle-class audiences.

This is a corpus that coexists with the more prestigious Anglo-Norman literature. As Elizabeth Archibald shows, the French *lais* were still in circulation in England (2000a, 63–5): *Fresne* is included in a list of sixty-seven *lais* from the late thirteenth century recorded in Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury School, MS 7, fol. 200$^{r}$. In *Lay le Freine*, however, the genre of the lay is reframed through a prologue, which also prefaces *Sir Orfeo* in two fifteenth-century manuscripts but, as John Beston argues (1976, 161), was probably composed for *Lay le Freine*:

> We redeth oft and findeth ywrite—
> And this clerkes wele it wite—
> Layes that ben in harping
> Ben yfounde of ferli thing. (1995, 1–4)[13]

> We often read and find it written—
> And scholars know it well—
> That lays set to the harp
> Are composed about marvelous things.

While acknowledging its supposed oral origins, this explicitly inserts the *lai* within a chain of written transmission. The genre accordingly "carries with it the aura of authority attaching to the idea of translation" (Field 2008, 298), reproducing Old French octosyllabic verse in rhyming tetrameter and drawing on French prestige through this written claim to *translatio studii*. In fact, this may have influenced some critics who view *Lay le Freine* as an essentially faithful translation of *Fresne* (see McCreesh 1999, 386; Furnish 2007, 93). Yet the authority it constructs is demonstrably different from that of both Marie's *Lais* and the Norwegian *Strengleikar*, as it underpins not so much the imagined geographical transfer of courtly culture as its popularization in multilingual England.

The prologue situates the plot "In Breteyne bi hold time" (13), which as in Marie's *Lais* blurs the distinction between Brittany and Britain to draw on the "cultural cliché" of a generically Celtic background (Carruthers 2015). But this is also used to subsume French culture: "Freyns" is called "the language of Breteyn" (231–2), only for the poem to state afterwards: "In al Inglond ther was non/A fairer maiden than hye was on" (239–40). Celtic and Anglo-Norman Britain and Brittany are thus condensed into a single mythical location contained by fourteenth-century England. As Furnish argues, "the tradition of the lay is transformed literally from antique, Celtic, French, or otherwise foreign poetry into English poetry" (2007, 117). Yet even as English-language poetry claims its place in the multilingual polysystem of England, the applicability of its subject matter is reduced. Marie underlines the potential for *translatio studii* between Britons and Normans, and the *Strengleikar* present French courtly literature for public instruction. But the Middle English Breton lay as a genre is claimed to be predominantly concerned with a magical otherworld: "mani ther beth of fairy" (10). Carolyne Larrington's assertion that this essentially links supernatural and courtly subject matters (2013, 142) is therefore striking, since *Lay le Freine* itself contains no supernatural elements worth speaking of. While it notionally participates in a transfer of courtly culture, the lay thus also relegates the courtly culture it depicts to the fairy realm. The Middle English Breton lays consequently appear less grounded in social reality, containing no clear element of courtly instruction

for middle-class reading communities. As we have seen, *translatio studii* can thus be used to generate varying degrees of cultural authority and social applicability within an imagined cultural transfer of courtly learning. The next section will show how these are employed in the reshaping of Marie's *lai* and, consequently, the literary polysystem.

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In a sense, courtly culture lies at the center of this vernacularized *translatio studii* as a broad cultural transfer. Accordingly, the treatment of courtliness in the different versions of the *lai* most clearly demonstrates the potential for innovation inherent in intervernacular translation. In *Fresne*, Marie uses the authority she has generated through *translatio studii* to present a socially applicable courtly narrative. Its didactic potential has been recognized by Chantal Maréchal, who connects it to the genre of the *exemplum* as a kind of social and moral case study (1992, 135). Indeed, despite Marie's claims for its ancient Breton origins, *Fresne* operates within a twelfth-century aristocratic environment (Flori 1987, 206). This is particularly important early on in the story: a Breton lord's wife accuses her neighbor's wife of having slept with two men because she has had twins, only to then give birth to twins herself. Her ensuing complaint both illustrates the *lai*'s social grounding and provides an excellent point of comparison with later translations, since it has been particularly heavily adapted in the *lai*'s Old Norse and Middle English translations. The mother begins by exclaiming: "Jamés pris ne honur n'avrai!" [Never again will I have respect or honor!] (74), thus immediately conceptualizing the consequences of her earlier uncourtly slander in terms of social recognition. The following lines similarly emphasize the likely reaction of her husband's family and friends through the rhyming verbs "crerrunt" [they will trust] (77) and "orrunt" [they will hear] (78). As Maréchal argues, these background characters function almost like a chorus, giving insight into the *lai*'s value system and orienting the audience's moral understanding (1992, 140). In this way, the moral problem of *Fresne* is laid out within a framework of social judgment.

At the same time, however, the mother's complaint supplements this external perspective by presenting itself as a sincere expression of her internal state: "Mut durement en est dolente,/A sei meïsme se desmente" [she is sorely afflicted and laments to herself] (71–2). Graham Williams records this as an early example of interest in the affective dimension of courtly characters, which is particularly important since sincere affective language became a marker of courtly speech in the twelfth century (2018, 180–1). It is noteworthy, however, that the mother's sincere speech is addressed exclusively "A sei meïsme" [to herself] (72), which is highlighted by the grammatical inversion placing the phrase at the beginning of the line. This creates a separation between the complaint's sincere interiority and the mother's reputation among others, a separation she seeks to maintain by ridding herself of one of her children:

> Pur mei defendre de hunir,
> Un des enfanz m'estuet murdrir;
> Mieuz le voil vers Deu amender
> Que mei hunir e vergunder. (91–4)

> In order to avoid being dishonored,
> I must murder one of my children;
> I would rather make amends for it to God
> Than to dishonor and shame myself.

Syntactically, this links the rhyming verbs *hunir* [dishonor] and *murdrir* [murder], reputation and action: social recognition is maintained through performance. Conversely, the following two lines juxtapose *amender* [make amends] and *vergunder* [shame], the mother's private relationship with God and her public perception by others. Having created an opposition between private guilt and public shame, the mother chooses guilt; although her second daughter is not killed, she is secretly sent away. The split between interiority and performance fundamentally threatens notions of sincerity and thus courtliness in general.

This initial disjunction creates a tension that must be resolved through the return of the daughter, Fresne, in a continuation of the *lai* that is not present in its Latin analogue. Taken away by a handmaiden, Fresne, named after the ash tree in which she is found, is brought to the abbey porter's daughter and the abbess, before becoming Gurun's lover and eventually being reunited with her mother. This transfer has frequently been described in terms of *translatio*: Michelle A. Freeman calls it a "female-styled *translatio studii*, that is itself represented metaphorically and dramatically at the level of narration" (1987, 9).[14] At the beginning of this transfer, the mother gives her daughter a precious embroidered cloth and a ring with an engraved inscription as markers of social authority: "Bien sachent tuit vereiement/Qu'ele est nee de bone gent" [so that all should know with certainty that she was born of a good family] (133–4). But as in Marie's *Prologue*, this initial authority will not stand on its own. At Gurun's castle, Fresne must *gloser la lettre* [gloss the text] of her origins through her behavior in order to secure her social position, at least temporarily: "N'i out un sul, petit ne grant,/Pur sa franchise ne l'amast/E ne cherist e honurast" [there was not a single one, of low or high rank, who did not love her for her nobility of character and did not cherish and respect her] (310–12). The operative word is *franchise*, which can generally mean "nobility (of character)" or specifically "generosity" (*Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, "franchise"). In this term, being and action become one; over the course of her *translatio*, Fresne's courtly identity is expressed through courtly performance, thus bridging the gap opened up by her mother's complaint.

It is also an act of *franchise*, in its narrower sense of "generosity," that leads to the *lai*'s conclusion, just as it seems that courtly behavior will not help Fresne regain her status. She is set aside to allow a legitimate match between Gurun and a neighboring lord's daughter, but nevertheless uses her embroidered cloth to decorate the wedding bed "Pur lui honurer" [to honor him] (405). Her selfless generosity allows the new bride's mother to see the cloth and therefore recognize Fresne as her own lost daughter. At this point, the spheres of private guilt and public shame are reconciled by the mother's exclamation before everyone: "Oiant tuz dist, nel ceile mie:/'Tu es ma fille, bele amie!'" [within hearing of all, she did not hide it: 'You are my daughter, fair friend!'] (449–50). Here, the very public nature of her utterance contrasts sharply with the mother's complaint to herself. The very limited sincerity of the complaint is then balanced out by her eventual confession to her husband: "Pardun li quiert de sun mesfait" [she asks to be forgiven for her wrongdoing] (459). Williams notes that while such "affective-linguistic rituals related to apology and forgiveness" are still rare in twelfth-century literature, they help position "sincerity as a communicative ideal" in courtly language (2018, 141). In fact, the promotion of an ideal form of courtliness lies at the heart of the *lai*. Glyn S. Burgess argues: "The nub of Marie's story in *Le Fresne* is thus the alignment of noble qualities with noble birth"

(1985, 76). More precisely, the movement of Fresne's *translatio* combines innate nobility, courtly interiority and courtly performance, creating an *exemplum* of sincere courtesy.

By presenting *Fresne* as a product of *translatio studii* that simultaneously demonstrates the potential of *translatio* as an engine of courtliness, Marie thus shapes her own ideal of courtesy, encoded in her own voice and genre. This authority does not simply allow her to reproduce social and literary norms, but to create them. Williams remarks that expectations of courtesy shaped through romance "dictated how one was meant to speak and act at court" (2018, 187); in this light, the *Lais*' later inclusion in Harley 978, William of Winchester's thirteenth-century "courtesy book" (Taylor 2002, 133), seems very logical. But Marie's innovatory influence is particularly visible within her literary polysystem. Koble (2015) argues that the authority of Marie's voice empowers the *lai* as a new productive genre, a narrative form independent from the musical *lais* of the Bretons. This can be observed in the late thirteenth-century manuscript Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. fr. 1104, containing twenty-four *lais*, only nine of which are Marie's. Rupert T. Pickens notes: "now her *lais*, and not just those of ancient Bretons, are regarded as originals to be imitated" (2011, 355). This influence even extends beyond the narrative genre established by Marie: the form of the *lai* in general has been identified as a short narrative source for Arthurian romance motifs (Koble and Séguy 2018, 43; Walter 1994, 1172), while *Fresne* itself was reworked into the longer romance *Galeran de Bretagne* in the thirteenth century. Marie's individual construction of cultural authority through *translatio studii* thus becomes a vehicle for innovation within Old French courtly literature. Perhaps most interestingly, it is this same potential that is then appropriated by *Fresne*'s later vernacular translations.

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Although the Old Norse *Eskia* broadly follows *Fresne*'s exemplary function by drawing on French prestige, its vision of courtliness is quite different. Marianne E. Kalinke rightly remarks that it is difficult to make direct comparisons between texts: since the Anglo-Norman source manuscript of the Old Norse translation is unknown, certain changes may have occurred between redactions (2011, 26).[15] Even allowing for textual discrepancies and adaptation to the Old Norse "court style," however, the mother's complaint displays a consistent pattern of amplification, significantly strengthening the emphasis on social recognition. In *Fresne*, the complaint is marked by a concern for the loss of "pris ne honur" [respect or honor] (74). In *Eskia*, the equivalent phrase reads: "alldri man ec fa sœmd ne soma heðan af. virðing ne vinsælld frægð ne lofsælo" [never again will I get esteem or honor, respect or popularity, good report or praise] (46). The sheer repetitiveness of these alliteratively linked pairs, typical of "court style," places additional weight on social judgment. This pattern is repeated when the social repercussions of the mother's slander are later amplified again and imagined as also affecting her husband's social status: "bonde min*n* man hu*er*vitna vera ropaðr hafnaðr ok hæddr oc hataðr frændr minir ok vinir manu iafnan næita mer. ok næikuæða ok alldri vinir minir vera" [My husband will be maligned and despised and derided and detested everywhere. My kinsmen and friends will reject me and renounce me and never be my friends) (46). This addition can be read as reflecting pre-existing social and literary norms, in what Sif Ríkharðsdóttir calls "a conscious effort by the translator to adapt the foreign text to the collective psyche of his readers" (2012, 35). Yet in terms of the moral function Maréchal assigns to background

characters in *Fresne* (1992, 140), these amplifications of social repercussions also actively construct a value system based emphatically on the collective performance of social status.

As a result, the *lai*'s clear split between internal guilt and external shame is overshadowed by this concern for social recognition. While Eriksen describes the choice offered to the mother in *Eskia* as one between "God and eternal judgment, on the one hand, and social norms and humiliation, on the other" (2014, 186), the actual text is more unbalanced:

> hælldr vil ec þætta mandrap bœta við guð en v*er*ða fyr*ir* hatre ok hafnan allra min*n*a ættingia. ok ropi allz folksens. fyr*ir* þui at son*n*u ef þetta kœmr upp fyr*ir* un*n*asta min*n* ok frændr þa man ec æiga allzængan vin. (46)

> I would rather atone for murder before God than suffer the spite and scorn of all my kin and the slander of all people, because truly if this comes to the attention of my dearest one and my family I will have no friend at all.

It is noteworthy that amplifications and alliterations occur exclusively in those parts of the complaint concerned with reputation, while the mother's private relationship with God is dealt with in one short clause. Similarly, the attendants' attempts to dissuade the mother from murder do not rely exclusively on private guilt: "mandrap er hin*n* hœste hofuð glœpr. hættr fyr*ir* mon*n*um en haske fyr*ir* guði" [murder is the worst capital sin, dangerous before men and a peril before God] (46–8). Social and divine repercussions are set in parallel in two alliteratively linked phrases. Consequently, the disjunction between interiority and performance that opens *Fresne* is greatly reduced in importance. The problem in *Eskia* derives less from the threat that a mismatch between interiority and external performance poses to courtesy than from the difficulty of correctly performing courtliness in speech and action.

That this is not simply an adaptation to existing expectations, but an intentional element of King Hákon's cultural policy, is suggested by the nature of Eskia's own *translatio*, figured primarily as an instruction in courtesy. When Eskia leaves the abbess's care, the Old Norse *lai* has the abbess remind Eskia that she has "lært þæc goðom kenningo*m* hœverskri ok kurtæsri kuensku" [taught you the good forms of polite and courteous womanhood] (54). Inherent nobility of character is thus replaced by acquired behavioral norms. Indeed, the dual meaning of *franchise* is subsequently split in the description of Eskia's position at Gurun's castle: she wins the hearts of all his people "af gnogo*m* goðlæik hœverski sin*n*ar. ok orlæik." [with the beautiful benevolence of her courtesy and liberality] (54). But both courtesy and liberality express mainly the performative dimension of *franchise*; again, performance outweighs interiority. Interestingly, the early form of the noun *hœverski* [courtesy], rather than *hœverska*, is only found in two texts (*Dictionary of Old Norse Prose*, "høverski"): the *Strengleikar* and *Konungs skuggsjá*, a piece of speculum literature that has been called "arguably the best source to King Hákon's political ideology" (Beistad 2017, 302). *Konungs skuggsjá* provides explicit instructions in courtesy (1983, 38–66), which, as Jens Eike Schnall demonstrates, is primarily defined as acting according to courtly etiquette (2000, 84). It is then tempting to see the two texts as representing the same ideological program. As Eskia's *translatio* allows her to acquire the outward forms of courtesy, so the authority of *translatio studii* allows the *Strengleikar* to promote courtesy as a behavioral norm to the Norwegian court.

This courtesy, however, takes a form that deviates significantly from that found in Marie's *Lais*.

In *Eskia*, the reshaping of courtesy is clearly part of a wider program to establish a certain idea of courtliness and chivalry, regardless of how much Norwegian reading communities already knew about European courtly practices. Another major instance of amplification occurs at a point in the narrative at which *Fresne* mentions Gurun's participation in a tournament. *Eskia* additionally explains what a tournament entails: "atræiðar þar se*m* Riddarar at riðaz æinir imote oðrum. at rœyna riddaraskap sin*n*" [a tournament, where knights ride singly at each other to test their knighthood] (52). The choice of the noun *atreið* for "tournament" is potentially significant: remarking on its use in *Parcevals saga*, Suzanne Marti suggests it would have been "more easily understandable for an audience with little familiarity with chivalric practices," unlike loanwords like *burtreið* or *turniment* (2013, 63). But this amplification still serves a purpose even if some Norwegian reading communities were already familiar with chivalric behavior. This becomes clear when the translated *lai* further specifies that, at the tournament, Gurun is "frægr ok sigrsæll" [famous and victorious] (52). Rather than explaining what chivalric behavior *is, Eskia*'s idealized depictions of high-status courtly activities aim to demonstrate what chivalric behavior *should be*.

Ultimately, it is also an act of social performance that leads to the translated *lai*'s resolution. Where, in the Old French, the Archbishop of Dol is simply mentioned as officiating at the wedding, *Eskia* adds an emphasis on status and display: "biuggu þæir ser rikaN bunað vapna ok goðra klæðna. þui at Erkib*y*scop var þar fyr*ir*" [as the archbishop was in charge, they made themselves ready with splendid accoutrements of weapons and good clothes] (56). The archbishop is then also the direct cause of Eskia's decision to put out her embroidered cloth: "þui at hon vissi at h*err*<a> Erkib*y*scop myndi þar koma at signa rekkio þæirra. sua sem samði tign hans ok vigslu" [because she knew that the lord archbishop would come there to consecrate their bed, as befitted his honor and ordination] (58). While this latter connection is also established in *Fresne*, the repetitive use of *þvi at* [because] in *Eskia* greatly emphasizes the centrality of the archbishop's status. Partly, this could reflect an attempt to support the authority of the Norwegian Archbishops of Niðaróss: the incumbents of this comparatively recent see had a troubled relationship with King Hákon (Beistad 2017, 303), and so clerical translators may have used this opportunity to emphasize the archbishop's power. More generally, however, it fits perfectly into the translated *lai*'s focus on social display. *Eskia* thus functions as an *exemplum* about social status and the appropriate performance of courtliness.

The *Strengleikar*'s actual didactic function remains controversial. Larrington notes that this debate has long been characterized by a problematic "either/or dichotomy of entertainment versus education" (2011, 93), to which the translated *lais* cannot easily be reduced. On one side, Ingvil Brügger Budal rejects a didactic purpose on the basis that the *Strengleikar* lack specific elements of instruction (2014, 149); Eriksen, meanwhile, defends the notion that the *Strengleikar* were commissioned by King Hákon "in order to Europeanise his own court and image and ... to legitimate a transformation of his kingship, from a local Norse type to a more European type" (2007, 99). The collection's prologue itself somewhat formulaically presents them "til skæmtanar. ok margfrœðes viðr komande þioða" [as entertainment, and as a source of great learning for posterity]

(4). But this may well be taken at face value: by drawing on the prestige of French courtly culture to present a narrative predicated on social codes of behavior, *Eskia* can act both as courtly entertainment and courtly model to be emulated. Significantly, this preoccupation with French literary culture in Norway was specifically characteristic of Hákon's reign (Irlenbusch-Reynard 2011, 387). It is, then, to his influence that we may ascribe a conscious translation strategy to reshape Marie's *Lais* into a social and literary exemplar of a new Norwegian kind of courtliness.

This method of innovation through translation bears some resemblance to a dynamic uncovered by recent studies on emotion in Old Norse literature. The treatment of emotions in translated sagas and the texts modeled on them differs noticeably from other Old Norse prose genres. As Daniel Sävborg argues (2012), the *riddarasögur* are consciously differentiated as a genre by their extensive engagement with love and explicit emotions. Foreign texts provide emotional codes that can serve as literary models; or, in the words of Larrington, "the translated sagas taught Icelandic saga-writers how to deal with emotional expression, display, and performance" (2015, 91). Yet in *Emotions in Old Norse Literature*, Sif Ríkharðsdóttir also maintains that the Old Norse translations "offered a novel emotive script that deviated from both the emotive coding inherent in the source materials as well as those contained in the pre-existing literature," thus "establishing novel emotive literary identities" (2017b, 56). The same process operates in the case of *Eskia*: the translated *lai* offers a new form of courtliness that deviates both from its source and from pre-existing Old Norse texts, thereby establishing a novel courtly ideal.

This type of courtliness emphasizing performance and display can accordingly be identified as a shaping force in the Old Norse polysystem. While the *lai* never took hold as a distinct Old Norse genre, elements reminiscent of the *Strengleikar*'s version of courtliness can be found in a range of sagas. Larrington highlights the fact that in the thirteenth-century *Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*, composed by the Icelander Sturla Þórðarson, "courtesy, ostentatious display, and formality are foregrounded, perhaps imitated from the translations made for Hákon" (2009, 523). Similarly, Massimiliano Bampi notes that courtly elements typical of translated *riddarasögur* can even be found in the legendary *fornaldarsögur* (2017, 10). Bampi describes the texts participating in the invention of Norwegian courtly ideology "both as mirrors of social needs and political interests and as 'tools of power' employed by those groups which are able to control and manage the canonized repertoire" (2012, 196). This formulation is very apt in the case of *Eskia* and the *Strengleikar*: the cultural prestige of *translatio studii* affords them a central position within the polysystem, which in turn makes them particularly suitable as vehicles to establish Hákon's own version of courtliness in Norwegian literature. In this case, Sif Ríkharðsdóttir's conception of the "text as product as well as witness of the culture that created it" (2012, 7) does not quite capture the whole picture: through the instrumentalization of *translatio studii*, the *Strengleikar* become producers of culture in their own right. The act of translation from Old French into Old Norse thus allows the creation of a distinct ideal of courtliness that comes to pervade the Old Norse polysystem.

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In *Lay le Freine*, meanwhile, the more limited prestige involved in the shaping of a Middle English literary corpus equally authorizes a distinct reworking of the image of courtliness. Even though it is generally taken as a faithful translation of *Fresne*, the

Middle English *lai* also displays a conscious strategy of adaptation and amplification.[16] Once again, this is illustrated in the mother's complaint at the opening of the *lai*: while Donovan does not include the complaint in his list of significant additions or changes to the Middle English text (1969, 134), this version greatly reduces the importance of the interplay between interiority and social environment. For a start, it does not begin with the mother's fear of social repercussions, but with a generalized moral injunction: "Forboden bite ich woman/To speken ani other harm opon" (91–2). Beston rightly argues that the poem displays a "moralistic sort of mind" quite unlike Marie's (1976, 154); the mother's plight is immediately subsumed into a general case. In the same way, the mother's subsequent assessment of possible solutions is much more ordered and methodical than that in *Fresne*, reducing the complaint's affective impact. Thus, *Lay le Freine* moves away from *Fresne*'s focus on the complex relationship between interiority and social recognition. As A. C. Spearing has it, the Middle English *lai* depicts "not a drama of consciousness but one of event and speech" (1990, 133).

At the same time, however, action and speech do not translate equally into social performance, as in the Old Norse *Eskia*. When the mother lays out the options available to her, she establishes a clear distinction between speech and action. The possibilities of either claiming to have a lover or admitting to slander, introduced in parallel by "Or ich mot siggen" (97) and "Or ich mot sigge" (99), are set against the murder of her child. She then concludes: "On of this thre thinges ich mot nede/Sigge other don in dede" (103–4). The main opposition is one between *siggen* and *don*, speaking and acting. Interestingly, it is only speech that is subsequently connected to social recognition: the parallel clauses beginning with "Yif ich say" (105) and "yif ich knaweleche" (109) introduce possible social repercussions, that she be "Held . . . wer than comoun" (108) or "Behold leighster and fals of tong" (112). In contrast, the active deed of murder remains unconnected to social factors: "Yete me is best take mi chaunce,/And sle mi childe, and do penaunce." (113–14). The *lai* thus adapts the split between interiority and social performance found in *Fresne* but applies it instead to different *modes* of social performance. Within this frame, the mother's social status in courtly society becomes purely an effect of language, disconnected from actual behavior. This inherent distrust of the language of courtesy can be connected to a wider trend described by Williams, as in fourteenth-century romance, courtly performance was no longer generally understood as a reliable indicator of sincerity (2018, 190). To middle-class English reading communities, the courtliness displayed in *Lay le Freine* becomes a literary effect rather than a socially applicable behavioral norm that they themselves aim to adopt.

Consequently, Freine's *translatio* is represented not as her instruction in courtesy but as an exercise in courtly display divorced from actual social rank: "To riche and pouer sche gan hir dresse/That al hir loved, more and lesse" (307–8). The two antithetical pairs framing this display, *riche* and *pouer* as well as *more* and *lesse*, emphasize that this artificial courtliness can be deployed irrespective of social status. Spearing identifies this kind of social inclusivity as a central characteristic setting the Middle English *lai* apart from its Anglo-Norman source, suggesting an orientation towards non-aristocratic audiences (1990, 127–8). Conversely, *Lay le Freine* eliminates instances of exclusively aristocratic behavior that *Eskia* uses to idealize courtliness. Where the Old Norse expands on the topic of the tournament, the Middle English version transforms this courtly activity into a mere pretext Guroun uses to visit Freine at the abbey: he "bad his man

sigge verrament/He schuld toward a turnament" (261–2). This performance of courtliness remains linguistic, and no courtly action really takes place. All this is encoded in the phrase that narrates Freine's departure from the abbey on the last stage of her *translatio*: Guroun convinces her "With his gloseing atte lest" (290). The verb *glosen* can mean both "gloss," "falsify," and "flatter" (*Middle English Dictionary*, "glosen"). In the Middle English *lai*, the process of *gloser la lettre* thus becomes one of falsification and flattery. The *translatio* dramatized in *Lay le Freine* is primarily a transfer of literary and linguistic codes, a consciously fictional image of courtliness appropriate for a text that cannot claim the status of an *exemplum*.

Unfortunately, the folio containing the ending of *Lay le Freine* was at some point cut out of the manuscript, and so its conclusion is lost. In 1810, Henry Weber reconstructed the missing text, based on the initials left on the stub of the manuscript leaf, by faithfully retranslating Marie's *Fresne* into Middle English (*Lai le Freine* 1810). His text is usually included in modern editions of the *lai* and even occasionally quoted by critics.[17] Yet in light of *Lay le Freine*'s consistent reshaping of Marie's text, it is dangerous to rely too much on Weber's reconstruction. To make any pronouncements about the *lai*'s conclusion, we must "assume that Freine behaves like her French counterpart" (Archibald 2000b, 45–6). Since, however, issues of courtly behavior and speech lie at the heart of the changes effected in the Middle English *lai*, such an approach is fraught with peril. The remaining text of *Lay le Freine* clearly illustrates a method of composition that fundamentally deviates from those of both *Fresne* and *Eskia*: the cachet of translation does not serve to establish an exemplar of courtly behavior for social and literary emulation. Instead, this vernacular *translatio studii* works to abstract a literary image of courtliness and refashion it into a much less exclusive and authoritative genre, in which courtliness, far from being socially applicable, is consciously presented as a literary fiction.

Considering *Lay le Freine*'s more modest position within the multilingual English polysystem, alongside the high-status Anglo-Norman literature, any pronouncements on its literary influence must necessarily be more limited. It certainly could not yet hope to displace the *lais* in the more prestigious Anglo-Norman still in circulation at the time. For instance, although Laura Hibbard Loomis posited that Geoffrey Chaucer had access to and used the Auchinleck Manuscript for his *Franklin's Tale* and *Wife of Bath's Tale* (1941), Archibald has more recently argued that he was in fact referencing the French tradition (2000a, 68–9). Yet *Lay le Freine* does help to establish the Middle English Breton lay as a distinct genre within the multilingual polysystem. This genre, while drawing on both Celtic and Anglo-Norman authority, exists as a more accessible alternative to the Anglo-Norman *lais*. As Mireille Séguy puts it, "la légitimité littéraire de l'anglais se construit non pas *contre* la langue française mais *à côté d'elle*" [the literary legitimacy of English does not construct itself *against* the French language, but *beside it*] (2014). In this way, the Middle English Breton lay emerges as a similar but nevertheless independent genre: it is noticeably less courtly, reflecting a widening readership beyond the nobility (see Phillips 2008, 58). Once again, it is through translation that literary innovation takes place, reshaping the landscape of Middle English vernacular literature.

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The case of Marie de France's *Fresne* and its Old Norse and Middle English translations thus illustrates the important role intervernacular translation plays in the fashioning of vernacular polysystems. In effect, each version of the *lai* makes judicious use of

what Charles Burnett calls the “tension between the authority of the translation and the invisibility of the translator” (2016, 53). By drawing on a vernacularized *topos* of *translatio studii* as a broad cultural transfer, the three texts each construct an individual position of authority within their literary polysystem. This authority in turn allows them to introduce innovatory elements that help shape the development of their respective literary repertoires. In *Fresne*, Marie invokes an Anglo-Norman version of *translatio studii*, which gives her the authority to establish the *lai* as a social and literary exemplar of sincere courtesy. The *Strengleikar* set themselves within a French-inflected *translatio studii: Eskia* can thus instrumentalize French cultural prestige to legitimize a performative ideal of courtliness in Norwegian literature. Finally, *Lay le Freine* draws, to a more limited extent, on the authority of translation to popularize the Anglo-Norman *lai* as the more socially inclusive Middle English Breton lay. This provides a fictionalized version of courtliness rather than offering courtly instruction to its less socially elevated reading communities. Each text therefore lays claim to a different kind of literary prestige and adopts a different translation practice, producing material designed to appeal to and shape different reading communities. In all three cases, however, it is their status as translations and the notion of *translatio studii* that allows them to carefully manage questions of textual authority and innovatory potential.

In this way, *Fresne* and its vernacular translations do more than “demonstrate the fundamental uniqueness of each system,” as Sif Ríkharðsdóttir argues (2012, 52). Above all, they actively set out to reconfigure their individual literary systems. The application of polysystem theory allows us to recognize that intervernacular translation is “an integral part of innovatory forces, and as such likely to be identified with major events in literary history while these are taking place” (Even-Zohar 1990b, 46). Indeed, though on a smaller scale, *Fresne* and its translations mirror the dynamics that had led to the rise of Old French as a literary language from the twelfth century on. As has been argued by Serge Lusignan (2012) and Antoine Berman (1997), it is the authority of *translatio studii* that allowed Old French to reinvent itself as a language of science and culture that could rival Latin. Meanwhile, it is that same authority, coupled with the adaptational freedom offered by the process of intervernacular translation, that allows each version of the *lai* to reinvent parts of its literary polysystem and thus claim an important role in the development of its vernacular literary culture.

The study of intervernacular translation therefore necessitates a comparative perspective, both across and within different literary polysystems, as well as a wider awareness of related literary developments. In consequence, this approach to intervernacular translation processes can form the basis of a “comparative medieval literature” of the kind imagined by Hélène Tétrel which requires a thorough study of literary contexts across translational networks (2013, 40). As Michelle R. Warren also argues, translation theory can thus be the key to forging a modern comparative literature of the Middle Ages (2019, 171). An awareness of the dynamics of cultural authority and literary innovation is crucial for situating vernacular texts, genres and literatures within the social and literary context of a larger European polysystem. At the beginning of this process, however, stands a re-evaluation of *translatio studii* and intervernacular translation as potential shaping forces in the development of emerging vernacular literatures. It is through the innovatory yet authoritative act of translation that vernacular literature comes into its own.

## Notes

1. Medieval translation is the subject of several recent essay collections (Galderisi with Agrigoroaei 2011; Fresco and Wright 2012; Campbell and Mills 2012b; Beer 2019) as well as the focus of the Cardiff Conference on the Theory and Practice of Translation in the Middle Ages, whose proceedings have been published since 1996 as *The Medieval Translator*.
2. Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, initially launched in 1970, is only now becoming increasingly popular among medievalists (see Bampi 2012; Even-Zohar 2013; Bampi 2017).
3. The author we know as "Marie de France" may really be a modern conglomeration of several contemporary authors named "Marie," variously responsible for the *Lais*, the *Fables*, the *Espurgatoire seint Patriz*, and the *Vie de sainte Audrée* (see Wogan-Browne 2020); nevertheless, I retain the name under which the author of the *Lais* is traditionally known.
4. Unless otherwise specified, translations are my own.
5. The translated *lais* have previously been set in the context of *translatio studii* (Goodwin 1988); for a study of the concept of *translatio studii* in medieval francophone literature, see Galderisi with Agrigoroaei (2011).
6. Another one of Marie's *lais, Lanval*, also survives in a fragmentary Old Norse version and two different Middle English versions; this slightly more complicated textual history, however, would require more space to explore.
7. All further references are to this edition.
8. The significance of these lines is still a matter of debate: it remains unclear whether Marie means that ancient authors deliberately left their meaning obscure for others to gloss, or whether this obscurity is due to imperfect knowledge on the ancients' part (see Whalen 2011, 9–14).
9. All further references are to this edition.
10. All further references to the *Forrœða* and *Eskia* are to this edition; translations are the editors'.
11. On Old Norse "courtly" prose style, see Kalinke (2011, 37–44); see also Larrington (2011, 80–1).
12. For a detailed treatment of the gender implications of the Old Norse translation of Marie's *Lais*, see Goeres (2014).
13. All further references are to this edition.
14. Similar but separate interpretations of Fresne's movement as a form of *translatio* are given in Brown (1989), as a gradual process of interpretation or glossing with Fresne as its object; de Looze (1990), as a symbol for textual transmission; and Pickens (2018), as a parallel to Marie's translation practice.
15. For a synoptic edition and commentary of the *Strengleikar* and Marie's *Lais*, see Budal (2009).
16. The same caveat applies as in the case of the *Strengleikar*: the translation's source manuscript is unknown, and any changes may therefore predate the translation. As in the case of the *Strengleikar*, however, the pattern of amplification is distinctive enough to deserve comment.
17. Weber's additions notably feature in the TEAMS edition used here; on the danger of mistaking them for authentic lines of the medieval *Lay le Freine*, see Spearing (1990, 126).

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No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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