

TRANSLATIONS

“Richeut”: A Translation

“Richeut” is an anonymous Old French poem about the innate superiority of women over men in doing evil.¹ Its two main characters, a mother and her son, are the archetypes of a war of the sexes waged at the lowest level of society—the underworld—by erotic means and for sociopolitical ends. The prostitute and procuress, Richeut, achieves economic domination over three men who represent the three estates of the world through lying, blackmail, and manipulation. Her son, the pimp Samson, wreaks havoc on women for the same purposes but is outwitted by Richeut in the end.

The first edition of the 1318-line poem was given by Dominique Méon in 1823.² Irville Lecompte’s 1913 version, on which a handful of studies and translations are based, was superseded in 1988 by Philippe Vernay’s monograph, based on direct scrutiny of the sole original manuscript, Berne 354, which neither Méon nor Lecompte had seen.³ The present translation is based on Vernay’s edition.⁴

“Richeut” was instrumental in creating the image of the *fabliau* as a mid-twelfth-century form since Bédier hailed it as the earliest example of that genre (1159), although Nykrog and the editors of the *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux* excluded it from the canon.⁵ The dating was modified to 1174–1177 by Foulet, then to 1157–1189 by Alberto Vârvâro, finally to the “last third of the twelfth century” by Vernay.⁶ The latter was unable, like his predecessors, to identify the author; “toutefois quelques témoignages à la rime permettent de préciser et de penser qu’il

pourrait provenir de l'Ouest de la France," while the copyist shows a Burgundian *scripta*.⁷

It is difficult to reconstitute in a modern language the elusive tenor of an atypical medieval text—one that belongs to no genre and creates its own vocabulary, if not its own prosody. The *rhythmi caudati*—octosyllabic verses followed by a tetrasyllabic nicknamed *cauda* or tail which introduces a new rhyme, for example on the pattern *8a 8a (8a) 4b 8b 8b (8b) 4c*—are used in only twenty-two Old French texts, including "Richeut" and nine poems by Rutebeuf.⁸ This traditionally hagiographic form is rarely found in secular Latin verse, and one is tempted to look for a parodic purpose when it is.⁹ Edmond Faral considered the poem a parodic hagiography on the basis of the meter, and a parody of the clerical life because of Samson's education and travels.¹⁰ A more likely explanation can be proposed on the basis of the following excerpt against fawning university masters, from a sermon made by a minorite called Richard on December 6, 1230:¹¹

Unde melius possunt vocari Richaudae quam magistri; gallice Richoux et dicitur Richaude qui caudam habentibus ridentes applaudunt.

Whence they can more aptly be called *Richaudae* than masters—in French *Richoux*, also said *Richaude*—those who smile and applaud the bearers of trains [*cauda*].

Using the *cauda* in "Richeut" thus shows elaborate wordplay on two linguistic levels. Morphologically, the name Richeut itself contains a *cauda*, as its Latin form shows (*Richauda*), as well as a *risus* (smile, laughter, Old French *ris*); semantically, Richeut's laughter is mentioned three times in the poem: "Richeut s'an rit" (660, 688), "Richeut se rit" (1019); and she proudly displays her own *cauda*, the train she wears to mass at the height of her success, which is mentioned three times in sixteen lines (469–471, 477–479, 486–487):

Mantel a ver, grant cœ trait . . .

"O prist ele si bon mantel,

Et cel chainse ridé novel

Qui si träîne?" . . .

Grant cœ trait par la podriere.

A few cruxes, mostly *hapax* or words occurring only once in the language, stand unresolved.¹² The erotic and gambling jargon may belong, like the *Coquille* three centuries later, to a vaster slang, "la langue des *lecheors* du XIII^e siècle" as Lucien Foulet termed it,¹³ which remains enig-

matic despite examples of it in "Le Credo au ribaut," "Des fames, des dez et de la taverne," and the tavern scenes in *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*.¹⁴ The erotic lexicon of "Richeut," however, is unparalleled in its wealth and difficulty (verses 932-977).

Bédier had pointed out the assumed familiarity of the text's audience with Richeut's life from the very first lines ("Sovante foiz öi avez / Conter sa vie," 3-4); his hunch that there existed something like a small "Richeut cycle" was verified by André Vernet, who discovered a fragment in which Richeut, also called *nostre nonnain*, arranges the murder of her seducer, a priest, after he slaps her in public, then summarizes her career to the murderers.¹⁵ Many traits of that career are evoked by the poem in passing, such as the seduction of Richeut ("J'estoie encor bien jovenete," 255), a Norman count's daughter ("Je sui nee de bone gent," 274) and nun ("Car de nonain reçut l'abit," 36), her elopement with the convent priest ("Ainz en mena o soi lo preste," 43), and her arranged mutilation and murder of the same priest ("Car il fu pris / O li, desmanbrez et ocis," 45-46). The same pattern of bodily seizure and mortal threat is applied by Richeut to Samson at the end of the poem, but he is spared.

The antifeminism of the poem is motivated primarily by economy. In "Des putains et des lecheors," God makes the nobility responsible for the *lecheors*, and the clergy for the prostitutes.¹⁶ But Richeut deceives all men (58-60, 392-394, 522-523), and all of society contributes to her welfare, including other prostitutes:

Richeut desjule [dupes] les cortois,
 Clers et chevaliers et borjois,
 Et les vilains.
 Par tot giete Richeut ses mains,
 Si deçoit les autres putains. (58-62)

The thrust of the attack is her capacity for deceit and robbery: it is for being thieves that prostitutes are to be feared the most. This is clear, for example, from the frequent mentions of the verb "to rob" (*raienbre* 201, *raant* 389, *raans* 723, *raam(m)e* 395, 727). Richeut is more devastating than a highway robber and plunderer (366-367, 1255), and will never let someone go until he has nothing more to give (520); the townsman, his trade (576), the knight, his inheritance (54), and the priest, all his possessions (609). She is a total parasite, "qui totjors quialt et rien ne seme" (397). Samson turns away from his three putative fathers because they have been completely impoverished by his mother (658). Rutebeuf's attack on the *filles-Dieu* (reformed prostitutes and unwed mothers) is couched

in terms such as *mensonge*, *folie*, *baras*, *tricherie*, and *decevoir* in a single stanza of his "Ordres de Paris."¹⁷ In the pornophobic (averse to prostitutes) proverbs of "De Marco et de Salemons," Marie-Thérèse Lorcin has counted twenty-nine accusations of greed, twelve of deceit and six of evil-doing, but none of mere lust.¹⁸ This attitude redoubles as an attack on all women in medieval discourse, in sayings such as "Feme aime ton bien et non pas toy."¹⁹

The official exclusion of the prostitute from mainstream society has typified Western legislative discourse from the earliest times. The *Digesta* or compendium of Roman laws define the *meretrix* ("she who earns," used twice in "Richeut," 984, 1207) as *mulier quae palam corpore quaestum facit*, a woman who publicly or indiscriminately (of manner, of place) earns money with her body; such a woman was excluded by law from legal testimony, inheritance, and marriage with a patrician.²⁰ Another negative representation is the animalization of the prostitute. The Romans called her *lupa*, "she-wolf," which prompted Augustine to muse whether Romulus and Remus had been raised by a harlot.²¹ *Lovier* in Old French stands for the female genitals, and *loudiere* for prostitute. In his *Synonymes*, Jean de Garlande defines *meretrix* as *lupa*, *capra* (she-goat), and *chimera* (part lion, part goat, part dragon) among others.²² Richeut and Hersant are the names of the wife of the fox and the wife of the wolf in *Le Roman de Renart*.²³ A twelfth-century Latin bestiary explained, "Wolves are known for their rapacity, and for this reason we call prostitutes wolves, because they devastate the possessions of their lovers."²⁴ Richeut is called a she-bear twice (216, 380), a bitch in heat (372), and an eel (380); Hersant's arousal and her vagina prompt comparisons to a fly (1273) and to a mare (1280-1281), respectively.

But Richeut defies marginalization. She seeks both social integration and upward mobility. She refers to her son with the courtly epithets *preuz et biaux et buens* (543) and has him baptized at the most prestigious abbey of Paris (447-449). She goes to Mass, acts in a stately manner, and, as mentioned, dresses far above her condition. She puts on loud colors (*mantel ver* 471) and a wimple (*guiple* 1077). A proverb in "De Marco et de Salemons" seems written for her: "Pute bien vestue / Se demostre en rue / Por ce qu'en la voie."²⁵ Hersant is now called *dame Herselot* (528). The theme of the whore who becomes a *meschine* (481), a marriageable young woman, would seem both comical and nightmarish in a society obsessed with class and pedigree. Richeut even reproduces a familial structure that excludes men: she plays the role of the breadwinner, while Hersant is successively housewife, errand boy, and cherished daughter to be given

away.²⁶ She advises Samson to choose whatever career he wishes (672-673), a choice normally inconceivable in the twelfth century, *a fortiori* to the bastard son of a prostitute.²⁷ All of this shows that Richeut in no way lets any form of social exclusion impinge on her actions or ways of thinking. She has no patience with the idea of toleration in lower society when her purpose is domination at all levels. She says and does exactly what she wants, and shows far more ability to do so than any of her male antagonists.

Samson, like his biblical namesake, symbolizes a form of cosmic male defeat. He receives a thorough education; his activities span more conditions than can usually be known to a single individual—poet and scholar, gambler, crusading knight, monk and priest, thief and pimp; "none was as subtle, no matter from what rank of society" (558). In other words, he is the fittest man on earth to stand up to Richeut, yet he is beaten as soon as he is put to the test. His undoing is a case in point to warn all men in their dealings with women, their enemies, because women are far stronger than they are. In the course of his career, however, Samson is reified as the avenger of men against all "bitches" (*pautonieres* 835), the "scourge of women" in a just cause ("Sansons a droit . . ." 848-851), even as he is knowingly heading for eternal damnation (886) with the narrator's blessing (970). Aside from his intended rape of Hersant (1266f.), Samson uses force mostly figuratively (e.g., 825f.), but he is explicit about his quest for power over women ("S'avré les fames . . ." 628-687, "Sa guere quialt" 1012); he "plunders" women (74, 942), and his seduction repeatedly leaves his victims no choice other than the brothel (641, 837, 925). But the greater guilt of Richeut is made very plain by the events following her self-questioning (1023-1025): "De nos .ii. est li plus crüex / O je vers omes, / O il vers fames?" In the end, she beats Samson at his own game (which was hers in the first place) and holds his life totally in her power (1314-1318), using the pressure she had threatened to apply to the knight (275-277). She is "the most cruel of the two": despite the happy ending (1318), despite Richeut's status as heroine and the poem's anticlericalism, there is this final judgment against her.

Samson is the embodiment of the vagrant scholar, the *clericus ribaldus* of the *vagi scholiarum*, who considered themselves the best of lovers, next to whom came the knights, their greatest rivals, then the *borjois*, and finally the despised *rustici*.²⁸ This "master in deceit" ("D'angignier ot il la maitrie," 963) is far more than a "prototype malsain de Don Juan," as Bédier called him,²⁹ because he specializes in robbing his victims in addition to seducing and exploiting them, like the seventeenth-century

Don Juan. Franz Rauhut has shown that the “donjuanesken Sanson” is an antithetical doublet of three characters of medieval life: the knight (Samson mocks patrilinearity, military values, and courtly love), the cleric (Samson is an anticleric), and the townsman (Samson undermines the legal foundations of economic life).³⁰ One episode (825–877) shows him as a twelfth-century landless *joven* who roams the land, applying the remedy of war to both poverty and celibacy.³¹ The leitmotif, however, is the rebellion against religious life, which characterizes both the goliards and the wandering scholars. Samson has mastered the arts of the *trivium* (555, 563–564, 619, 763, 793), and of the *quadrivium* only those of music (559–562, 793f.) and arithmetic (600). He knows the *bons autors* (695), of whom E. R. Curtius has drawn two typical twelfth-century curricula.³² He is twice characterized by his mother as *litteratus* (*cil qui sevent d’escri-ture* 699, *clerc d’escole* 721). But because of the attraction of the world, he is kept from reaching the higher ranks of his calling (772–782, 887–891). He is defrocked three times: from the lowest order of tonsure (*clergie* 680–681), from regular orders (895–919), and from the priesthood, the highest order (920–931). His systematic despoliation of religious houses and orders of both sexes from Clairvaux to Palestine and back to Winchester (895–931) makes him a monachophobic Antichrist of the kind described in the late twelfth-century *Apocalypsis Goliae*.³³

The womanizing cleric who loses interest in the religious life is an extensively documented fact of medieval life. At least three twelfth-century councils prohibit concubinage for the clergy.³⁴ When Geoffrey, the archbishop of Rouen, in a provincial council (November 1119) prohibited priests from any kind of intercourse with women, sedition broke out.³⁵ Married clerics and priests camouflaged their spouses as *matrona* (“lady of the house”), *coqua* (“cook”), *focaria* (“kitchen girl,” but “concubine” in *Codex Justiniani* 5.16.2), and *famula* (“servant”).³⁶ It is no surprise that the primary target of anticlericalism in the fabliaux should be the sexual activity of the clergy, a threatening hypersexuality that no medieval text has expressed better than “L’anel qui faisoit les vis grans et roides” (“The ring that made pricks large and stiff”).³⁷ As in the “Moniage Richeut” fragment, emasculation (threatened or actual), death, or cuckolding are the most frequent outcomes.³⁸ Samson’s undoing, however, is a far happier one.

TEXT

- [1-33] Be quiet now, and you who wish to hear the story of Richeut, listen.
 You've often heard the story of her life. She was a mistress of harlotry. She had many a woman in her sway. She lured them at will with her baits. None returns safe, and they all become each other's Richeut. No sooner would you see a young girl of good will than she would lie on her back out of need, for the price of a gift. There isn't one good woman in the whole world that will not join the party on the spot. Such is whoredom! They use cosmetics for their guile.³⁹ Each one takes care to dress up. When a young man has money in his pocket, they make themselves easy conquests in order to betray and madden him: lechery! But it's hereditary.⁴⁰ They're all mistresses of deceit, the whole lot of them, thanks to Richeut's teaching, she who has roamed the world far and wide. She taught each and every one of them well.
- [34-48] May our Lord confound Richeut, who has done so much evil! For she took the veil, but wore it very briefly. Hear, then, as God is your keeper, what befell her. She left the abbey where there were more than twenty nuns. She didn't want to stay there any more. Worse than that, she took the priest with her! She deprived him of the kingdom of heaven, for he was seized with her help, maimed, and slain. She put her friends to do this—she had many in the region.
- [49-64] Richeut has made beggars of the wealthy. With Herselot's help, she acquired a generous share of the priest's wealth. Many times then she played the knight for a fool. Even Lord William the heir,⁴¹ who was a pious man, she caused to drink away horse and harness. Richeut cheats the highborn, the clerics, the knights, the townsmen, and the peasants. She has a hand in every pocket. She even cheats the other whores. She is a handmaid to the masses. Hers is a fierce and shameless heart.
- [65-71] And now I will tell you, if I have your attention, a story about her surpassing all other stories, and I won't omit anything out of modesty; I shall tell everything. He who tells the tale of Richeut's life cannot speak in a courtly style.⁴²
- [72-85] She had a son who had a very keen mind. He ravaged many a woman. He was a handsome fellow. He took after his mother completely. Richeut never found out who his father was, and yet she imputed him to more than a hundred men. She reaped much gold and silver out of it. Now hear how he was conceived, born, fed, taught, and schooled, to what state he was destined, and what his name was.
- [86-142] One day, Richeut and Herselot were having a feast. Each contributed all she had. All night, they drank to their heart's content good wine from a steel-ringed barrel⁴³ and ate enough to sate them until Christmas.⁴⁴ They gossiped a lot about this and that. Richeut the harlot spoke first to her com-

panion: "By all the saints of Brittany, oh, how angry that priest makes me, cheating me so! All I got from him was a clasp, yet he's the richest man for miles around. He swore to give me, the other day, clothes and provisions until he could visit me again. But he doesn't care if I am hungry or thirsty. He lied. He hasn't shown up for eight days. By Saint Denis, he will be sorry for deceiving me, I'll see to that. Here's a wicked character indeed! What a miser! He wants to screw and pay nothing. Herselot, do you have some advice to give me on how I should take my revenge?"

"Cast on him, my dear, a spell of Lesser Periwinkle! Draw up a letter with blood and ink! Make up magic characters and pictures, now hot, now cold!"

Richeut answered: "I don't give two rotten pears for that kind of sorcery. No one, if you ask me, was ever conquered with magic letters. I have figured out by myself how to deceive him. It is better that I drink a philter of magic herb, then I shall fuck until I conceive. Then I shall blame the priest, that same hour. I shall order him to help me, and if he refuses, may Richeut lose everything that she has in the world if she doesn't drag him before the bishop. If the bishop summons him to court, he will not get away unscathed. That is what I'll do to have the priest tangled in my nets. Now let me start the plan without further ado. What do you say, Hersant?"

Herselot said: "Either I'm a fool, or this will work!"

[143-222] She didn't question Richeut's judgment. She went to look for a plant by the name of mandrake. Richeut drank some with hellebore.⁴⁵ After that, without delay, she starts screwing everybody. She went at it so much, topsy turvy, and she took so many blows and pushes, that she finally gets pregnant. Now her face is skinny and pale. Without a blink, she wants to make her complaint. She goes to see the priest. She holds her hand to her face, cries and sighs, loses her breath, and then she says, "A very bad promise you made me! But what follows will be worse, much worse, Sir Priest, as well you know."

"Richeut, something is wrong with you," the priest says, "you're giving me very dirty looks."

"What's wrong with me, sir? I'm quite angry! I'm enraged! But I'll be the dumbest fool, by Saint Paul, if I don't pay you back. We'll see if they don't call you a fool."

The gentleman puts his arms around her neck and kisses her softly. Richeut squirms out of his embrace, bursts into a torrent of tears, and speaks her threat: "Whether I tell you or I keep silent about it, I'm pregnant because of you."

"Richeut, I think you're lying to me."

"I am not, Sir Priest; by all the saints, this is no invention! Look at my belly: there's your proof."

The priest begs her to hide this secret.

“Richeut,” says he, “I don’t believe you; do you really believe it’s mine? Certainly not.”

Richeut answers: “I know full well that it is; may I lose everything, may I fall silent and be put to death, if I didn’t solemnly swear that *you* put into *me* that thing which made me fat and pregnant. Don’t think I’ll dump it in some ditch or in a monastery, if you refuse to help me.”

“Richeut, don’t say that, that’s not at all what I want. By my faith, Richeut, I promise you that if you desire anything of mine, I shall keep nothing that you might not have for yourself. Why would you blackmail me, or have the bishop bar me from saying Mass?⁴⁶ Now, hide this pregnancy for as long as you can, and when the child is born, blame it on someone else. So help me God, I shall not fail you in this, not one jot.”

Richeut whines and cries, and then she says to him:

“In truth, I do not love you a little; I love you very, very much! Before almighty God, if I didn’t love you so much, I would keep nothing, nothing secret!”

Listen to that dirty whore of a she-bear, how she baits the priest! She makes him dig into his pocket and dish out five sous as a token of help: “Take this for now; you will soon get more.”

And the priest gives her plenty of supplies.

[223–298] Richeut loads up. She’s quick to make a profit. She found the priest very generous for a mere embrace! She leaves with plenty of bread and other things well tucked under her arms. Bowed down under the weight, she goes home. There she fould Lord Geezer, a knight whose horse was being held while he flirted with Hersant.

“Ho there, Herselot!”

The latter jumps to attention when she hears her mistress. The knight is all smiles with Richeut and greets her. But she doesn’t say a word or return the greeting. She puts on a furious face. (At the same time she tells Herselot: “Put this in a safe place.”)

“I am seething with anger when I see you. You pledged your faith to me and you lied. Any woman who puts her arms around you must be out of her mind. There’s no one as stingy as you from here to Lincoln. What did I get from you once I gave you pleasure, the other day (alas!) in bed? A curse it brought me to lie down flat under you! A pox on your root that shoots off and dries up! I was a young girl then, and now no one cares to love me. You have knocked me up, and I do not care to hide it. I’m angry with you! Look at my belly swelling up! It won’t be long until I have a child. You’ve got to help me. So help me God, if you deny it’s yours, it will be your ruin! I say it in earnest. No matter how fortified, all of your castles shall be burned and reduced to ashes unless you acknowledge your offspring. I’ll sooner burn or hang myself—I tell you no lie—than let you go free. I come from a good fam-

ily! I have seven knights among my relatives. And I have friends that would slay their man in no time."

The knight bursts into laughter and answers her, "Richeut, the wine has gone to your head. I don't understand all these threats: why are you making them? Are you pregnant? Is it because of me?"

"Yes, my love."

"So be it. I don't deny it."

Herselot says, "My lord, help her out."

"With pleasure, my dear."

He takes ten sous from his purse and gives them to her with a happy face, and then he gives her a kiss. Pay a whore and she'll be quiet. Before he left, they had their fun under the cool snowball-tree.⁴⁷

"Send someone on the spot," he said afterward, "to fetch meat and vegetables and good Orléans wine."

Richeut replies: "Now that's courtly."

He leaves.

[299-368] Richeut has nothing on her mind except to organize spending on a grand scale. The day is ending. Together, Richeut and her handmaid set up the kitchen in a hurry. A great many men, that night, squandered their goods there. Then, Richeut goes to bed. The next morning, she gets ready. She's been prodigal, so she goes on the prowl. Richeut goes to see a valiant and courtly townsman who was very sad because he didn't have an heir. He was unable to have a child. Richeut looks around and sees him sitting at his window. She wants to tell him about her predicament. Placing her hand on his left shoulder, she says, "Dear sir, I'd like to tell you a secret."

The man is courtly; he doesn't get annoyed but answers her kindly. They go into the room together and sit down on a bed. Sitting there, Richeut looks pensive, then says, "Sir, I came here because I was pushed by a desperate need. I'll be honest with you. I have a complaint to make, and you yourself are the cause. For the time is not long when I shall enter into labor. Sir, I'm incensed at you because you made me pregnant!"

"I? You must be joking!"

"This is no joke, sir, by Saint Thomas!"⁴⁸

"Without doubt, Richeut, you told a lie."

She cries and whines, and holds her hand to her face: "Sir, don't you recall the entire day that you played hanky-panky with me upstairs?"

"Yes, Richeut, that much I know."

"Without a doubt, dear sir, that is where I got this burden."

"Shut up, Richeut, don't ever say it!"

"May God confound me if I keep silent about it!"

"Richeut, I don't know—I may well be the father. Let him be mine. If it's a boy, without fault, he'll inherit everything I own."

“My lord, I do hope you’ll get a male heir from me. But right now I must have some of your money. I need it.”

The other reaches into his money bag and hands her twenty sous. He’ll never be rid of her! Richeut has him going as if he were drunk. What a whore!

“Send someone over tomorrow,” he says, “and I’ll have meat, wine, and bread.”

She thanks him. Richeut leaves, beaming with joy. She conquers more through her deceit and flattery than the one who takes, snatches, and robs.

[369–402] Richeut acts graciously and nobly, wears fancy clothes, looks after herself, and eats to her heart’s content. She has more followers than a bitch in heat. She attracts them until she’s trapped them all. There is no man so prudent that she cannot obtain from him more than her due. She fleeces them and dupes them all. Richeut gets everything she sees. She’s found the golden goose! First she’s an eel, then she turns into a she-bear. She leads her man gently, then at full gallop with her lures. There is no one whom she doesn’t tell that she’s carrying his baby. “You’ve made me pregnant,” says she, “now give me some money.” Richeut stops them dead in their tracks. She catches young men and locks them up, then she ransoms them. She goes everywhere with her hands held out. She lives in the lap of luxury. There is no help for it: there is no peasant, vagrant, squire, or forester that she doesn’t ransom. Did you ever hear of such an evil woman, always reaping and never sowing? Perish the day she was born, she was destined to plague us! Perish her damned litter! Because of that seed, many a tear was shed.

[402–453] Richeut is now about to give birth. Now she lies down; now she gets up again; now she weeps; now she cries out; the time is near; too bad she didn’t croak then and there. It would have been a great joy! If only fair Herselot, who comforts her, could fulfill her mistress’s wish! Why delay my tale?⁴⁹ She gives birth to a male child. He cries and shrieks louder than a corncrake. Hersant takes him, bathes him, and swathes him, lulls him to sleep, puts him to bed, and tucks him in all the way up. Richeut is lying down. She stays in the birth bed. Herselot serves her without lagging. Faster than lightning, she goes to see the priest and finds him. “Sir,” she says, “God save you.”

“And you too, my pretty.”

“I have good news to tell you.”

“And what is that, my dear lady?”

“You have a son.”

“Hush, Hersant, speak softly; I know exactly what you want. Come over here.”

He loads her down with all kinds of goods, then makes her leave quietly. She goes back to the house, unloads her burden, and goes to see Geezer and the townsman. They give her a month’s supply of meat, vegetables, bread, and wine. As for Richeut, she stays in bed. She is in great pain after child-

birth, but she has everything as soon as she requests it. It suited her well, and Herselot gets all the food she wants. One is sick who plays sick.⁵⁰ After having eaten, Herselot takes Richeut's son to church to have him baptized, at Saint-Germain. The godmothers and godfathers baptize the son of the whore. He gets the name of his godfather, Lord Samson. Hersant returns home with the newly baptized boy.⁵¹

[454-486] Now Richeut has everything she wants, and Herselot serves her plentifully with meat, wine and claret, pepper sauce, fruit, cakes, pastries, and apples. Now she could primp herself in her bath. From everywhere money pours in. Richeut stays in bed, eats and drinks merrily until the day she must go to Mass.⁵² Her face was red and beaming, for she is extremely skillful with makeup to produce a fresh complexion. Richeut primes herself at the mirror and goes to church. She has a particolored coat and a long train. Every single *lecheor* watches her go and marvels at her. They all talk and ask each other whence she gets her apparel. "Her face is gleaming! Where did she get such a nice coat, and that new pleated skirt trailing behind her?" Giving birth brought her a profit! Richeut has become a marriageable young woman thanks to her goings-on. She makes her offering to God and hears Mass, then she goes back home to Herselot. Her long train is dragging in the dust.

[487-507] Richeut now shows herself haughty and proud. "I am not interested," she says, "if anyone asks to screw me." She pretends no one knows her. Richeut causes great anxiety among the men; she certainly worries them! She used to fuck for a *maille* rather than be totally destitute. She's puffing up with pride from stuffing her money belt.⁵³ He who would hammer on the anvil must now part with a *denier*.⁵⁴ Richeut has changed suits. What a face the lechers are making! She titillates them and fires them up with her sweet talk, and she receives them all, big and small. No one will ever be turned away. But she cannot bear the wailing of her son, Sansonnet, so she fetches him a wet nurse.

[508-534] In order to resume her life of prostitution, she goes to see the priest and entices him so much that she will leave him neither cross nor chalice if he trusts her. With this coercion she gets sixty sous—she needs them for her child, she claims. She comes running to the knight, and she gets the same amount out of him, then off to the townsman, from whom she gets a hundred mint Orléans coins. Richeut will never leave him alone until he is ruined. Richeut will have caused so much harm! Have you ever heard of such a roving whore who deceives everybody? There are few men that she doesn't get drunk and from whom she doesn't extort something. Now her purse is full. She comes home and makes a great fire. Dame Herselot is the cook. The place is overflowing with fowl and venison, and claret sweeter than a magic potion. Richeut attends to Samson with much care indeed. She has plenty of good food.

- [535–553] Richeut often swears to the priest that Samson looks a lot like him. It shakes his whole heart with joy, and every day the whore steals his goods. She repeats the message to the townsman, and she tells Geezer the knight that this is definitely his son. “He is very brave, very handsome and good-looking. If a count had sired him, he wouldn’t be more handsome.” Anything she wants Richeut gets for little Samson. She takes care to dress him well, and hands the bill to those who fathered him. No man is so wise that she doesn’t get his tribute, for she is a mistress of her art. Richeut ensnares everyone, everywhere.
- [554–572] Samson grows up and becomes a big boy. To learn correct speech, little Samson was enrolled in school. He had a very keen mind. None was as subtle, no matter from which rank of society. He learned his psalter in a flash. He sang in the choir for two years. His voice was far better than that of other children. He knows conductus and accompaniment.⁵⁵ He studies grammar, and after a year he could write beautiful poems. As he learns and develops his intelligence, he writes so much verse that he can imitate the various genres. There is no one in school so gifted. He learns extremely well—and the teacher reaps his profit, because he gets so much money from the wayward priest.
- [573–614] Richeut has blackmailed the priest so much that he now has only a grayish coat on his shoulders. And he’s wearing nothing under the wool!⁵⁶ As for the townsman, she’s after his banking business. And she has threatened, flattered, and begged the knight so much that he has pledged her everything, both land and fief. When Richeut goes to his place, she lets him hear tales about Samson: how he seems the son of a count, he is so manly; so nimbly does he ride his horse; he fears no mountain, hill, or valley; no, he hurls himself ahead, like a good vassal, for he fears no one. “My lord,” she says, “he is indeed your kin, for he is truly dauntless. He is like you in every respect. He sits firm in his stirrups and charges head first. No young noble in the whole country is smarter than little Samson.” Old Geezer swallows it all: he hands over what he owns. Then she tells the townsman that he should help his son, little Samson. . . . [Gap] “He counts like an angel!”—she tells him the truth, and he believes her. He’s not at all unhappy. Indeed, he will sign over his income! As for the priest, Richeut tells him that Samson is first in his class, and loves to be at school to learn more. The priest knows well she’s telling the truth, so he gives her all his possessions. Richeut takes and spends lavishly on herself—for the boy doesn’t spend money! . . . [Gap] Whoever believes Richeut and whoever fucks her is very unhappy.
- [615–630] Now Richeut has reduced her three lovers to poverty, thanks to her cunning. And little Samson has learned so much—he is so bright—that he has become a master of dialectic. He soon learned games of dice and debauchery. He does his utmost to mix with the best society. He can write ditties, *serventais* and *rotrouanges*.⁵⁷ He tricks women with his flattery. He decks his

sides and belt with long fringes. His coat has a long tail. He turns his whole mind to lechery. One reverts to his true nature.

[631-646] Samson roams the field. No woman is so inflexible that he couldn't defeat her, nor so wise that he couldn't tame her. He knows many a spell. He makes women hotter than fire. The most prudent he makes brazen and frolicsome. He makes them rage with lust under him! He has sent more than a thousand of them to the brothel, and put them to work. He knows how to seduce and cheat them to perfection. From here to Bar there's no match for him in lechery. He got this talent from his ancestry.

[647-734] His mother Richeut scolds him. "Samson, my darling son, tell me what life you plan for yourself. Go see the priest of Saint-Thomas. He will be delighted to have you visit. Or go see the townsman—you'll become a money changer—or go see Sir Geezer the nobleman, my dear son."

"By God, mother, it won't do to go see any of them. You've made them all paupers! I couldn't stand their grumbling."

Richeut hears this and laughs under her breath. Samson looks upset.

"Tell me now, mother dear, which one of these three is my father?"

"Dear son, I don't know. I have mated with each of the three, and with a thousand others. I am not ashamed to tell you. How can a woman that's been mounted by this kind of population be expected to keep count of her children? One doesn't know from whom she conceives nor when.⁵⁸ Just go to the richest of the three. Take your pick."

"Mother, I don't want any of them. I don't care to stay in these parts any longer; I want to leave. No one succeeds in his own backyard. I shall receive my courtly training in sumptuous courts. I've had plenty of clerical schooling. I want to learn chivalry. That way, I'll have the women and rich ladies of the courtly life. I'll break their hearts, I'll cause them to sin, and what's more, I'll get some of their booty, by deception and by love."

Richeut bursts into laughter. "Samson, my dear son, what are you saying? So young, and yet you already know all this sort of thing? You don't know the first word about women. They play men for fools."

"Mother, he who hears and understands his classics, knows women's wiles full well, because there he discovers everything about their mores and their nature."

"My son, academics love without moderation. He that is more learned falls in and out of love faster whenever he sees something he likes. He that is more learned is sooner overcome by a woman than those who are familiar with their ways, even if he's careful. A woman versed in evil ways knows well how to be both sweet and fierce with a fool."

"Mother, I know that practice very well. I'll make loose women of many of them yet. There's no one so well-behaved that she won't go to bed with me; and as soon as I've deflowered her, I'll take everything from her. I'll leave her nothing!"

“Ho, Samson! I know all that, and yet I don’t approve these words. I found no school cleric of yours, no matter how wise, that I couldn’t have in my power and rob from head to toe. Samson, dear son, I think you will soon lose your mind on account of some woman’s trick. I truly fear that she will rob you.”

He replies, “There is no beautiful woman in the country, no matter how besotted with her I may be, that could possibly make me poor—I am certain of that.”

“If you can manage that, Samson, I’ll know then that you are truly my son.”

[735–755] Richeut doesn’t stop at this point. She starts teaching little Samson how to flirt with a lass, and how to serve a lady in the bedchamber. . . . [Gap] Let him keep her bent in close contact, let him penetrate deep, let him kiss her tenderly, hold her very close to him as long as she likes. Charm always wins; let him promise everything, let him always be in their debt, let him always be at their service, and honey-tongued. Richeut knows the science of love thoroughly, and she wants to teach it to little Samson. And little Samson thinks he knows a lot, thanks to Ovid! His mother Richeut helps him with it. He spends the night, and then, in the morning, takes his leave from his mother, turns his back to his home, and goes to the court.

[756–824] Samson was no stupid fool. Quite the contrary, he became very popular. He was so learned that everyone great and small looks kindly on him. He had social grace and they found nothing he did unbecoming. He spellbinds them with his eloquence. By friendship and by cunning, Samson gets the means to outfit his travel horse. He struts like a rich man with a fine entourage. He knows how to speak before a king or a count: politely and in a courtly style, without embarrassment. What a pity he couldn’t achieve a higher station! But he cannot. He is driven by the same nature as his mother Richeut; it rules him and binds him. He can earn no high reputation since he will not renounce debauchery. He wouldn’t let it go for all the money in the world. He wouldn’t do it even if you gave him the papacy! He knows the *summa* of lechery. In no court can be found any, big or small, who knows it as well as he. He makes them all fall silent. Wherever he goes, he takes the place by storm. He knows many silly stories, proverbs, and jokes. And he has pretty hands: firm, not fat. He drives women wild. He has a nice voice. He sings and speaks well; he could even teach both of these arts, for he is an expert. There’s no instrument under the sky he hasn’t mastered. Samson knows many *rotouanges*, *conductus*, and melodies.⁵⁹ He can compose beautiful Breton lays. He can throw the dice better than any man born of woman. He could never, in any way, be cheated at that game. He towers over all his partners. He causes many to break out in a cold sweat at the gambling table, because he flays them. He has swallowed up many a sack of money, for he is good at this. Many of them he threw to the swine, or to whores more stinky and dirty than oil lamps. He

never lost anything by rolling fours; he never rolled two aces or triple twos; he always got fives, and on two of the three dice he often got six.⁶⁰ The *lecheors* unanimously made him their leader. He spurs them on, Samson; he traps them. Whoever he ransoms does not sleep a wink! Samson beats them. None is so clever that Samson can't best him before he takes his leave.

[825-877] From London to Mons there isn't a court Samson doesn't visit and corrupt. Samson is handsome. Against all these cities, these castles, these women, he wages epic love battles. He reduces to nothing all their money, fine clothing, and rings. He skins them with a knife he has, and that knife is seduction. It is Samson who avenges us all against the bitches who act so proud with us. He has turned more than a thousand of them into streetwalkers. The young woman he cannot tame is a wild beast. He causes a total change of heart among the ladies. When he gets started, none is so wise that he cannot take her for a ride. Samson jabs them to the bone! He makes them breathless, those unhappy creatures. He has depraved more than seven hundred, and left them after robbing them. Samson has every right to be the scourge of women. Richeut his mother deceives men and abuses them: little Samson embroils women. From here to Vienne he has no peer in betraying well. From Northumberland all the way to the Tiber, one would find no one more accomplished at deceiving the female flesh. Samson knows so much double-talk that he lures even the most sensible ones to the game. As soon as he gets the chance, he harms them. He may have no land nor fief, but he collects his toll from women in Germany, Lombardy, and Brittany. The French women he divests of everything. He even dares to go to England, the country surrounded by the sea; even in Ireland the ladies do his bidding. He went all the way to great India. There, he made many a conquest. Richeut's son is lord supreme of the whores. She who rejects him suffers.

[878-891] Samson is shrewd; he knows the customs of every court. He carries messages between lovers, in the courtly manner. He has paired off more than a hundred. It matters little to him if they're relatives. He marries them off; he takes none for himself if not for profit. He knows very well that this is a sinful life, but delight in the world overcomes him; it pleases him very much. He earns his living from it, and a good sustenance it is. He never cared to relinquish this kind of life.

[892-894] Now, I would like to tell you about some of the sins he committed—among the wicked ones.

[895-919] He became a monk at Clairvaux. White cloth: false monk, outlaw!⁶¹ He perjured himself before his brothers. Off he runs, and with him he takes a sorrel horse.⁶² He also whisks off the entire treasury, crosses and chalices of silver and gold, that madman, that drunkard!⁶³ He took with him sixty pounds' worth, for Samson the monk is a heavy spender, but not out of concern for serving God—he doesn't think much about that. From now on, he loots and spends in every place. Samson's cunning has caused many a heart

to mourn and lament. There's no holy house as far as the Jordan River, no monastery whose order he didn't join. As soon as he pleases, he knows how to squirm out, but he prefers to destroy his brethren first. He robs them all without exception. He fears neither sin nor infamy. He beats them all thanks to his flattery.

[920-931] He became a priest. It is said he was ordained at Winchester. He told the nuns there he wanted to be their chaplain. Believing him brought the nuns ruin, for he led most of them into whoredom before robbing them. He was so busy everywhere he went that he made more than a hundred of them lose their minds. He made an abbess pregnant and round; then she became a strumpet.

[932-977] Samson bewitches all of the women he gets to know. He fucks the niece and then the aunt, and last the sisters. He does it from the front and from the back. He is the lecher above all lechers. He cheats women better than the vixen catching a crow with her ruse. Samson burns and plunders women. He fucks the mother, then the daughter, and then the cousins. He fucks them all flat on their backs. He pushes their knees up to their chests. He screws sideways, and from the top, and from below. Samson screws especially doggy-style, and pissing-doggy-style! Samson knows even more ways than that, for he screws them folded over! Forgive us if we speak this way, you that understand our reasons: such is the story, we wish to add or remove nothing. To screw well was Samson's claim to glory, laud, and honor. He mounted many on their backs; he made their bones crack! Samson has never rested from his debauchery. He was a master of deceit. His depravity was unsurpassed. Samson knows everything. He knows one push and a shove. There is no whore, if he fucks her, that he won't get to say *tprot* from elsewhere than her mouth.⁶⁴ May he go to hell for doing this to them! The one he sleeps with, he robs unbeknownst to her. He took many a woman off the right path. At daybreak, she would find herself completely naked. That day she had to remain hidden. She did not show herself in public.

[978-987] Samson knows his skill for practicing such deceit and robbing the women he stays with. He resembles Richeut: he is his mother's son. He was never made a fool of—except by his own mother, Richeut the meretrix. Hear, my lords, how Samson was duped. I know the story well.

[988-1035] Samson, who was king over women, lived in Sicily seven years or more, then went toward Saint-Gilles, straight to Toulouse, the city much coveted by King Henry. There, he made many a young woman and many a wife unhappy. Once he got bored of staying there, he came to Berry, where his mother had reared him. He wants to see her, thinking she'd be where she usually amused herself. But Lady Richeut was not there. Samson leaves. He searches the castles one by one. He goes to Paris and stays there a fortnight. There he lives a life of joy and pleasure. He breaks the heart of many a whore. Then he comes to Beauvais where Richeut conducts her business. When he

arrived, the townspeople flocked to him. Everybody enquires how he is. Then he resumes his war on the whores. Richeut sees him, and comes straight to him. She greets him, and he returns her greeting without batting an eye. Samson didn't recognize her, because he hadn't seen her in twelve years. Richeut laughs to see him so preoccupied with his pleasures. She thinks and says to herself: "God's mercy! Of the two of us, who is the most cruel? Is it I toward men, or he toward women? For we are both very skillful at this art. Let little Samson listen and watch well, here at the crossroads!" Without further ado, Richeut goes home to see Herselot the whore.⁶⁵ The whole day she thinks of nothing but how to trick and dupe Samson.

[1036-1071] Richeut bathes Herselot, ties a beautiful and expensive coat on her neck, and laces her two sides and arms with orfrey. She puts some white ointment on her face and chin, and then some scarlet red over the white, for there were few natural colors. Hersant seemed beautiful, but she wasn't—in fact, she was marked with smallpox. Richeut hurries up before the coloring fades. She really looks like a count's daughter. Thanks to this, Samson will be hoodwinked, if Richeut succeeds. But they had to be careful. Richeut leaves the house with Herselot. They immediately go to Master Thomas's house on the other side of town. He was a rich draper. There was a very plump servant girl who worked there, an expert in shady deals. Richeut calls her. "Young miss, a word with you. I have good news for you. Help us out! If you want to be well paid, go upstairs with Herselot. Let none of your people hear about this."

She told her about the whole scheme. [Hersant] goes upstairs. Richeut leaves without further delay.

[1072-1190] As she was going out of the house, she looked around and saw Samson coming. She went to meet him and started talking to him. She acted like some ordinary person so that he wouldn't suspect anything, and she put her wimple over her face. First she speaks to get his attention; then she becomes honey-tongued in order to attract him: "Samson, you're not polite, by Saint Acarius, nor courteous, nor well-bred. You boast for nothing of knowing how to take care of so many women. But you don't come to see me, and you don't visit me! This is very naughty of you. You will go nowhere, neither up nor down the road, before you come to my home. Samson, do come! It's not so far away; you can see it from here. I pledge you my word, Samson, that if you wish to share what I have, I'll want nothing for myself. You shall have everything, because I like you a lot. Samson darling, come with me."

Samson hears her, he knows very well she's lying in order to entice him and take advantage of him. He doesn't fear her. Ah! what a nun and what a monk! Each of them is a past master in wiles and tricks. Samson asks her in a cool voice, "What is your name, sweet thing?"

"Lover, they call me Flora."⁶⁶

"Pretty Flora, God bless the young lady who addresses her friend as you

do. A thousand thanks for that kind invitation of yours. Already you say that you love me, and I love you.”

Samson, that lecher, was eyeing all around; on the upper floor, sitting at the window, he saw Herselot.

“Tell me, Flora, by Saint Sylvester, who’s that over there? Look at that body and that face!”

“Where?” said Richeut. He showed her.

“There, on the upper floor.”

“Oh!” Richeut said, “That’s of no interest! She is the daughter of a valiant and courtly knight who asked a townsman to take her in and teach her embroidery with his daughter.”

Little Samson wiggles with anticipation. He’s worth no more than a seashell if he doesn’t have his way with her. “Pretty Flora, go to work.”

“For whom?”

“For me. Convince that girl to follow me and be my lover.”

“Forget it! It’s useless!”

[But] Richeut pretends she will help him.

“My heart overflows with love for her. From here to Rome there’s none as beautiful as she. No, not from here to Bordeaux, around the harbor. Flora, go, invite her into the game. Help me get in the saddle, and I’m your man. You shall have whatever you want from me.”

Richeut goes into the house to perform her mission. Straightaway she tells the maid what they’ll do and how. She returns to Samson after a short while.

“Did you get anywhere?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

“I convinced her, poor young rosebud! But I am foolhardy and bold to try such a thing. By my faith and Saint Denis, all the goods of this country wouldn’t save me from the pain of death if the knight should hear of this. I have lost my mind! *Mea culpa*, miserable me! I have seduced that young girl. Please leave for now. Come back at vespers. If I can help it, she’ll be here, without delay. But she is from a very noble house: therefore, fine garments are in order, for such a rich thing as she to come down. Do you have any money?”

Little Samson hears her well. He’s aware she’s rolling him over to get at his money. He remembers, however, that he who refuses to give what he holds dear, in order to love, is bound to suffer. He loses his senses, and he gives her five sous. He even promises to give her more money if she needs it, and that he would have it upon his return. Samson thinks he is fooling her, and she’s fooling Samson. Richeut takes his offering. As agreed, Herselot thrusts forward her face and acts graceful. Then Richeut waves to her with her glove, and she goes back inside.

“Dear Samson, you have what you wanted. Go and come back.”

Samson leaves, and Richeut remains.

[1191–1210] She wastes no time in having a gown made. She's had many very fine garments made by others. Then Richeut goes to ask seven *lecheors* to help her manhandle someone. She describes the whole scheme and explains everything to them. When he comes back surreptitiously to see the young woman, let them rob him blind on the spot, but without touching him with a sword of steel or with a stick, for she knew full well it was Samson, her son, who until now couldn't be duped.⁶⁷ The meretrix wants to trick him now. They all agree, because they were all indebted to her. They send her merrily home.

[1211–1254] Richeut returns to the house, lights the fire. . . . [Gap] strews boughs and flowers on the floor. It is now evening. Here comes Samson. He bursts into the house a happy, handsome fellow.

"Flora," he says, "God save you, the Son of Mary!"

"Little Samson, God bless you."

"My beloved hasn't arrived yet?"

"Not yet, dear friend. What are you asking, Samson? You do rush things! She can't come yet; things are not ready."

Lo and behold, here comes Hersant. Little Samson catches her by the hand, and the whore's teeth start clattering:

"Ah! Flora, did you betray me?"

Samson replies: "Not at all, dearest, not at all, sweetie! But your love beckons me, my heart is aching in my breast with love for you. If I lose you, I don't believe I can recover. I shall never know joy again, ever." Herselot answers in the best way she can. She weeps and sobs in place of every other word, simulating everything: "Flora, you wronged me by acquainting me with Samson, but I hereby pledge my love to him, with your approval. I am brazen to dare it. I am stark raving mad!"

Richeut replies, "No one will ever know."

Samson kisses her and hugs her; she cries. Samson refrains from rushing her, but it was about time he fucked her. He would have done so by now if only Herselot had consented. But she jumps, trembles, and shakes like someone chaste.

[1255–1290] Richeut who takes all and spoils all has set the table. Hersant sits next to Samson. They ate to their heart's content and drank a lot of good, strong wine from a steel-ringed barrel. Herselot's face was all lit up by the candlelight. Her radiant red features seemed a sort of crimson wonder. Having eaten, Samson grabs her and whisks her away willy-nilly. He lays her on the bed, lifts up her dress. She fights him back to give the thugs enough time. Nevertheless, she was more eager to welcome him than a fly.⁶⁸ Samson dislocates himself trying to undress her. Into her mound—which seemed wet—he puts his tool, for the whore had all her pubic hair. As soon as he has hit on the bung-hole, he gallops away.⁶⁹ He found no more sides and bottom than he would have had in a mare.

Samson is shocked. He leaps back and screams.

“Ah!” he says, “you dirty owl, you had me going! I’m going to let you have it for doing this. You won’t have a thread on your back when I’m through with you. Try and cheat me out of that!”

He rises while she pulls him back down.

[1291-1318] Lo and behold, the whoremongers raid the place, swords drawn. What can one do against so many?

“Don’t you move,” the biggest one says.

They’ve got him now.

Richeut shouts: “My lords, mercy! Why have you assaulted him? This is madness!”

Says one of them: “Lady Flora, you have dishonored our relative, and both you and he shall pay with your lives.”

They taunt and threaten him, unlace the coat from his neck, shake him down from head to toe, [but] do him no serious injury. [But] Samson fears his hour has come. He asks them, “Why mistreat me, my lords?”

One of them replies, “Because of my sister, whom you have put to shame.”

Richeut begs them for charity’s sake not to slay him, but they refuse and laugh it off.

“Release him to me,” says Richeut, “upon my faith.”

The leader answers, “So be it.”

Now he is pledged for.⁷⁰

He goes to bed in the house, a very happy man.

Here ends *de Richaut*.

Gabriel Haddad

Gabriel Haddad is a doctoral candidate at Columbia University. He is presently working on a study of scatology in Old French fabliaux.

NOTES

1. I owe my gratitude to Kathryn Gravdal for her guidance during my work on "Richeut." Many thanks to my colleagues Shireen Murphy and Annette Houston Kittredge for their assistance in the later stages of the translation.
2. Dominique Martin Méon, *Nouveau Recueil de fabliaux et contes inédits des poètes français des XIIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles*, 2 vols. (Paris: Chasseriau, 1823), 1. 38-79.
3. Irvile C. Lecompte, ed., "Richeut," *Romantic Review* 4 (1913): 261-305. Philippe Vernay, ed., *Richeut* (Berne: Éditions Franke, 1988). I have not seen the Italian translation of R. Brusegan in *Fabliaux: Racconti francesi medievali* (Torino: Einaudi, 1980). The only English translation known to me is unpublished: Donald E. Ker, "The Twelfth-Century Poem of Richeut: A Study in History, Form and Content," Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1976, 185-239. Both translations follow Lecompte's text. Méon had worked on an eighteenth-century copy owned by La Curne Sainte-Palaye, now lost; Lecompte on a facsimile (cf. Lecompte 261-262).
4. Reviewed by A. J. Holden, *Modern Language Review* 85 (1990): 945-946.
5. For two reasons: unusual meter (all fabliaux are *aabb* octosyllabics) and inordinate length (a typical fabliau runs three hundred lines). Joseph Bédier, *Les Fabliaux: Études de littérature populaire et d'histoire littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 6th ed. (Paris: Champion; Geneva: Slatkine, 1982) 304-309, 373f. Canons: *ibid.* 436-440; Per Nykrog, *Les Fabliaux*, 2d ed. (Geneva: Droz, 1973) 311-324; Nico van den Boogaard, "Le Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux (NRCF)," *Neophilologus* 71 (1977): 333-346.
6. Lucien Foulet, "Le Poème de *Richeut* et le Roman de *Renard*," *Romania* 42 (1913): 321-330; Alberto Várvaro, "Due Note su 'Richeut,'" *Studi mediolatini e volgari* 9 (1961): 227-233; Vernay (n. 3 above), 50.
7. Vernay (n. 3 above), 39-40, 48.
8. "Complainte Maitre Guillaume de Saint-Amour," "Griesche d'yver," "Griesche d'été," "Mariages Rutebeuf," "Renart le bestourné," and so on. See G. Naetebus, *Die nicht-lyrischen Strophenformen des Altfranzösischen* (Leipzig, 1891) 185-189, quoted in Vernay (n. 3 above), 67 n.
9. Cf. "Olim sudor Herculis" in George F. Whicher, ed. and trans., *The Goliard Poets: Medieval Latin Songs and Satires* (Cambridge, Mass.: n.p., 1949) 36-41, and "Invehar in Venerem" in Edwin Zeydel, ed. and trans., *Vagabond Verse: Secular Latin Poems of the Middle Ages* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1966), 148-153.
10. Edmond Faral, "Le Conte de *Richeut*, ses rapports avec la tradition latine, et quelques traits de son influence," *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Cinquantenaire*, 230 (1921): 253-270.
11. Marie-Madeleine Davy, *Les Sermons universitaires parisiens de 1230-1231:*

Contribution à l'étude de la prédication médiévale, Études de philosophie médiévale 15 (Paris: Vrin, 1931), 364.

12. Twenty-one words and expressions on which there is no consensus, listed by Vernay (n. 3 above), 27.

13. In Lucien Foulet, review of “Richeut,” by I. Lecompte, *Romania* 43 (1914): 597–598.

14. Respectively in Etienne Barbazan and Dominique Méon, eds., *Fabliaux et contes des poètes français des XIe, XIIe, XIIIe, XIVe et XVe siècles*, 4 vols. (Paris: Warée, 1808) 4.445; *ibid.* 4.485; Jean Bodel, *Le Jeu de saint Nicolas*, ed. and trans. Albert Henry (Brussels and Paris: Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1980).

15. Bédier (n. 5 above), 305 n. 2; André Vernet, “Fragments d’un *Moniage Richeut*?” in *Études de langue et de littérature du Moyen Age offertes à Félix Lecoy* (Paris: Champion, 1973), 585–597.

16. Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud, eds., *Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, 6 vols. (Paris: Librairie des Bibliophiles, 1872–1890) 3.175–177; henceforward MR.

17. Rutebeuf, *Oeuvres complètes*, 2 vols., ed. and trans. Michel Zink (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 1989–1990), 1.232.

18. “De Marco et de Salemons” in Méon (n. 2 above), 1.416–436. Cf. Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, “La Prostituée des fabliaux est-elle intégrée ou exclue?” *Exclus et systèmes d'exclusion dans la littérature et la civilisation médiévale*, *Senefiance* 5 (Aix-en-Provence: CUERMA-Université de Provence, 1978), 111.

19. Eustache Deschamps, *Proverbes champenois avant le XVIe siècle* (Reims, 1851) 20. Cf. “Maint preudomme a esté trahi / par fame et par sa puterie” (“Les trois dames qui trouvèrent l’anel,” 94–95 in Willem Noomen and Nino van den Boogaard, eds., *Nouveau Recueil complet des fabliaux*, 5 vols. (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1983–1990), vol. 2, henceforth *NRCF*; “Par fame sont maint homes déceus” (in Deschamps 20). All this tradition is contained in Sirac 9, which warns of the economic loss brought to men by associating with prostitutes and women in general.

20. *Digesta* 23.2.43 pr. 1 in Adolf Berger, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), s.v. *meretrix*; cf. Vern and Bonnie Bullough, *Women and Prostitution: A Social History* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1987), 54; William W. Sanger, *The History of Prostitution* (New York: Eugenics Publishing Company, 1937), 67.

21. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 18.21: “Non desint qui dicant, cum expositi uagientes iacerent, a nescio qua primum meretrice fuisse collectos et primas eius suxisse mamillas (meretrices autem lupas vocabant, unde etiam nunc turpia loca earum lupanaria nuncupantur).”

22. In Faral (n. 10 above), 269.

23. *Le Roman de Renart*, ed. Mario Roques, 6 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1948–1963).

24. *The Book of Beasts: A Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, trans. T. H. White (London: Jonathan Cape, 1955), 56.

25. No. 24 in Méon (n. 2 above), 1.419. Another way to block the social integration of prostitutes was through sumptuary laws or restrictions of dress; cf. *Livre vert ancien du Châtelet* in Raoul Vèze [Jean Hervez], *Ruffians et ribaudes au Moyen-âge* (Paris: Bibliothèque des curieux, 1913), 257.

26. Cf. Marie-Thérèse Lorcin, *Façons de sentir et de penser: Les Fabliaux français* (Paris: Champion, 1979), 57-67.

27. For example, Gratian's *Decretum* prohibited the children of prostitutes from being ordained as priests: 56 *d.p.c.* 13 quoted in James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 249.

28. See Olga Dobiache-Rojdesvensky, *Les Poésies des goliards* (Paris: Rieder, 1931), 22-23, 162.

29. Bédier (n. 5 above), 308.

30. Franz Rauhut, "Sanson in der 'Richeut'—ein Don Juan des Mittelalters," *Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 207 (1970), 161-184.

31. Cf. Georges Duby, "Les 'jeunes' dans la société aristocratique dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XIIe siècle," *Annales E.S.C.* 19 (1964): 835-846, also in *La Société chevaleresque* (Paris: Flammarion, 1988), 129-142.

32. Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Williard Trask (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1953, rpt. 1973), 49-51.

33. In Dobiache (n. 28 above), 120.

34. The Great London Council in 1129 and the First and Second General Lateran Councils in 1123 and 1139. Philip Hughes, *The Church in Crisis: A History of General Councils, 325-1870* (New York: Hanover House, 1961), 196.

35. Dom Rémy Cellier, *Histoire des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*, 14 vols. (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1882), 14.2.1094.

36. Dobiache (n. 28 above), 122, 131-133.

37. "L'anel qui faisoit les vis grans et roides" in MR 3.51-53.

38. "Estormi," "Constant du Hamel" in *NRCF* 1; "Aloul," "Le bouchier d'Abeville," in *NRCF* 3; "Les perdris," "Le prestre crucefié" in *NRCF* 4, among others.

39. Verses 19-20 "Et lo fardet / Metent eles en lor aget." Vernay (n. 3 above) quotes "Des braies au cordelier" verse 9 (*MR* 3.275) and "Les trois dames qui troverent l'anel" verse 112 (*NRCF* 2.232), where the spellings *aguet* and *agait* are used. The condemnation of makeup (*fardet*) is an offshoot of the classical and patristic commonplace of female vanity. Both Richeut and Hersant use makeup to look less pale "Ele ot lo vis vermoil et cler . . ." 466f.; "Por ce que del natural sanc / Po i avoit" 1044-1045. Cf. St. Gregory the Great's sixty-fourth poem ("Against the luxury of women," *Patrologia latina* 37.884), immensely popular in the Middle Ages under the title *Sententiae*: "Painted women are among those

in whom God has caused cold blood to flow: the red on their faces stands for absent shame.” Quoted in Cellier (n. 35 above), 5.282.

40. Verse 27, “Mais il lor vient d’accesserie”: a frequent theme in the poem, cf. verses 630, 646, 734, 981–982. The whore’s inherently bad nature is the theme of such poems as “De Marco et de Salomons,” already mentioned. The thirteenth-century poem “Iussa lupanari meretrix exire” (“The whore, having been told to leave the brothel . . .”) similarly claims the unreformability of prostitutes: Zeydel, 241–245.

41. Verse 54, “Nes dan Guillaume l’eritier”; the manuscript’s *lerdefitier* (?) in Vernay (n. 3 above) is edited as is in Lecompte (n. 3 above), who reads also *ler-definer*: “Perhaps originally a noun and adjective or two adjectives of which the last was *fier*.” Méon’s text omits *ler*, whence G. Paris’s suggestion, “*Dan Guillaume de Simier* (ou quelque nom de pareil),” quoted by Lecompte.

42. Verses 70–71, “Qui de Richeut conte la vie / Ne puet parler par cortoisie.” A commonplace disclaimer anticipating obscenity in the text. This subversion of proper speech (*parler par cortoisie*) is illustrated by four fabliaux showing a *cortoise* or a gentrified *vilaine* preoccupied by dirty talk: “Porcelet,” “La damoisele qui ne pooit oïr,” “L’esquiriel,” and “La dame qui aveine demandoit,” respectively in MR 4.144–146, *NRCF* 4, MR 5.101–108, and MR 1.318–329. The apology betrays guilt, and the notion of guilt—sincere or affected—serves to enhance the conscious violence done to morals through language.

43. Verse 89, “Bons vins ferrez,” cf. verse 1260, “De bon vin ferré et estolt.” It is unsure what *vin ferré* refers to beyond the meaning “good wine.” A. Tobler cites no source for his definition: “Mit glühendem Eisen behandelter Wein. Die andere Deutung ‘in eisenbeschlagener Tonne lagernder Wein’ ist unwahrscheinlich. Behandlung des Weines mit Eisen ist Sachverständigen bekannt” (Adolf Tobler and Erhard Lommatzch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, 10 vols. and 1 fasc. [Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1925–1989], s.v. *ferrez*). In his manual *De vinis* on the seasoning of wine, Arnald of Villanova (1235?–1311) mentions the “quenching” (dipping of a hot metal into a liquid) of gold in wine: *The Earliest Printed Book on Wine*, trans. Henry Sigerist (New York: Schuman’s, 1943), 36–37. It remains for a historian of oenology to confirm that the quenching of the baser metals in wine was indeed practiced in the Middle Ages, as Tobler seems to suggest. Nevertheless, a clear confirmation of the interpretation he discards is given by a passage on medieval *futaye* (the technique and taxonomy of wine barrels) in Martine Maguin, *La Vigne et le vin en Lorraine: L’Exemple de la Lorraine médiévale à la fin du Moyen Age* (Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1982), 60, 63; in her glossary (290) Maguin lists “FERRE: tonneau cerclé de fer.”

44. Wine and food have a double moral connotation in medieval texts. Under the appearance of earthly abundance lurks the notion of contemptible gratification of the flesh. In the scale of deadly sins, gluttony (*gula*) came before lust, following early Christian moral physiology, since the body could turn to sex only after

its more primary appetites had been satisfied, and also because gluttony was the gateway to the original sin: B. A. Henish, *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976), 16. Gluttony and lust are one, as the belly and the underbelly are one: "La char autre viande quiert . . . / C'est ordure et avutere [adultery], / Fornications et luxure, / Ivrece, glotonie, usure . . . (*Bestiaire de Gervaise* 1209f., ed. Paul Meyer, *Romania* 1 [1872]: 420-443), whence the several proper and derived meanings of *lecheor* or *lechiere* (<Frankish *lekkon*), "Licker" "fawner upon flesh," "glutton," "depraved, sensual man," "parasite," and "jongleur," "ribald" and "whoremonger" in "Richeut." Food is important to Richeut not only to survive, but as currency, a measure of success in her trade. She is frequently paid in food and wine, and both she and Hersant revel in it (verses 103, 228, 295-296, 363, 436-437, 456-457).

45. Verses 144-146, "Ainz quist une herbe qui ot non / Mandaglore. / Richeut en but o elebore." The manuscript has *o ele esclaire*, another emendation considered "far too radical" by Holden (n. 4 above), 946. It was proposed before Vernay by Lecompte with this explanation: "If the copyist found [*o*] *elebore* separated *o ele bore* he might have changed the unintelligible *bore* into *esclaire*." Unamended, this would be the only rhymeless line in the whole poem. At any rate, the mention of these plants gives Richeut's actions an aura of medical efficiency. Hellebore stimulated creativity in antiquity: "Chrysippus three times cleared his wits with hellebore to improve his powers of invention" in Petronius, *Satyricon* 88, c.f. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 25.21, trans. W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press and Heinemann, 1980). The joint mention of mandrake and hellebore may be due to their comparative purgative virtues: Pliny, *Natural History* 25.94. Mandrake seems a more likely candidate as aphrodisiac and fertility drug: Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionnaire des symboles* (Paris: Laffont, Bouquins, 1982), 608-609.

46. Verse 202, cf. "De l'evesque qui benei lo con" in *MR* 3.178-185. Such a measure could be either temporary or final, and in the second case equivalent to a deposition from ecclesiastical orders.

47. Verse 293, "Soz l'obier frois." Glossed by Vernay as "viorne, boule-de-neige," *obier*, like *aubourne* (cf. Walther von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch: eine Darstellung des galloromanischen Sprachschatzes*, 25 vols. [Bonn: Klopp, 1928-1988], s.v. *viburnum* 406), *aubor*, and *auborc* (cf. *TL* s.v. *aubor* 662.37) comes from Latin *viburnum*, guelder-rose or snowball tree.

48. "Doubting Thomas," the disciple. St. Thomas is the name of the church the priest is serving; cf. verse 650, "Voiz lo preste de Saint Thomas."

49. Verses 406-410, "Mal soit de l'ore qu'el ne crieve, / Ce fust grant joie! / Herselot à la crine bloie, / Qui reconforte, sa dame oie! / Qu'atant je tant?" Verse 406 is translated as free indirect speech introduced by the mention of Richeut's crying and weeping (405), and *oie* (= *audiat*, cf. Méon, Lecompte, Vernay) is an optative, uttered by the narrator, as are verse 407(?) and 410.

50. Verse 443, “Malede est qui malade trait.” From Latin *trahere*, *traire* may be used here in the sense of “tend to,” ‘draw on (a certain shade or color).’ It is glossed “faire” by Vernay and translated “act” by Ker. This proverb is not listed in the compilations of Morawski, Leroux de Lincy, or Samuel Singer.

51. Verses 452–453, “Hersanz en revint en maison / A tot l’aubé.” Cf. *FEW* s.v. *albus*: “*desauber* ‘dépouiller de la robe blanche du baptême,’ *desaube*, ‘fête où l’on ôtait la robe blanche aux nouveaux baptisés,’ *desaubage*, ‘repas qui se donnait huit jours après le baptême d’un enfant.’” Vernay glosses *aubé* “le nouveau baptisé,” citing *TL* s.v. 661.19–20 (“Täufling”).

52. Verse 465. The ritual of *relevailles*, thanksgiving after giving birth, was often forbidden to women in the early and high medieval church, let alone prostitutes: “Gratian cited a passage ascribed to Pope Gregory I that grounded the prohibition on the proposition that the pains of childbirth [twice referred to in “Richeut,” 403f., 439] were retribution for the pleasure experienced in sexual intercourse”; Brundage (n. 27 above), 240.

53. Verses 495–496, “Enorgoillir / Se vialt Richeut à engorllir.” *A = ab. Engorllir*, found only here, means to fill the *gorle* < Frankish **gurdil* (*FEW* s.v.), money belt.

54. Verses 493–498. A *maille* is half a *denier*. Richeut now earns double the usual price for a “trick,” cf. “De Marco et de Salemons” 48, “De loing aperçoit / Pute de cui doit / Traire la maaille,” in Méon (n. 2 above) 1.423; “Le ‘Dit de la Maille’ nous apprend que pour une maille on peut avoir une *grandisme putain*” (Philippe Ménard, *Fabliaux français du Moyen Age* [Geneva: Droz, 1979] 146 n. 193).

55. Verse 562, “Mout sot et conduiz et sochanz.” The last word is glossed “chants (produits avec voix de soprano?)” by Vernay without explanation for his rejection of the interpretation of Méon, Lecompte, and Ker, which is the one adopted here. For the conductus, a savant musical form developed in Parisian clerical circles and adopted by the jongleurs as a monophonic genre in French, see Christopher Page, *Voices and Instruments of the Middle Ages: Instrumental Practice and Songs in France 1100–1300* (London and Melbourne: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1987), 50–52, 68, 85–87.

56. Verse 575, *Or est au lange*. Cf. “Le Mariage Rutebeuf,” verse 65, “Or me covient froteir au lange,” where the expression denotes both poverty and mortification: Rutebeuf (n. 17 above), 1.487 n. 10.

57. Verses 623–624, “Sonez set faire et servantois / Et rotruanges.” The last two lyric forms are originally Occitan, the *serventés* and the *retroensa*: Joseph Anglade, *Histoire sommaire de la littérature méridionale au Moyen Age* (Paris: Boccard, 1921), 39f., 48. See also note on verse 799.

58. Verses 668–671, “Fame sor cui tex pueples monte / Conmant savroit tenir lo conte / De ses enfanz? / Ne sai de cui conçoit ne qanz.” Cf. “Pute ne tient conte / Qui sor son cul monte, / Tuit li sont ignel.” “De Marco” 34 in Méon (n. 2 above), 1.421. Vernay (n. 3 above): “Nous croyons que *savroit et conçoit* de

669/671 appellent logiquement *sait* = 'elle ne sait pas' (graphié pourtant *sai* par le copiste . . .)." There is no mistake, however, if *ne sai* stands for Latin *nescio*, an impersonal expression often translated without the first person pronoun, as in *nescio quomodo*, "somehow or other," *nescio quis*, "someone or other," etc. Cf. verse 162, "Richeut, ne sai que vos avez."

59. Verse 799, "Rotrüanges, conduiz et sons." "The *suns* are probably instrumental melodies, for *so* (< Latin *sonus*) in the sense 'a tune, a melody' is attested in numerous troubadour lyrics. . . . In Old French literature the term *son* is often associated with melodies from Occitania or the border between north and south" C. Page (n. 55 above), 22, 31. *Sonet* in verse 623 (see note above) is therefore a diminutive and does not have the formal sense given it, after Italian usage, by Melin de Saint-Gelais in the Renaissance.

60. Verses 813-816, "Onques rien ne perdi en quernes, / N'a enbesa, n'a .ii. en ternes, / Totjorz a quines; / En .ii. des .iii. bouez ot sines." The translation follows Vernay's very clear note on these lines: *enbesa* = *ambes as*, *bouez* = "dice" is a conjecture.

61. Verses 896-897, "S'ot les blans dras, c'ert moines faux / Et tot sans loi." "White monk" = Cistercian. "After tonsure, [clerics] paid no secular taxes, performed no military service, could not be tried in a secular court, and . . . were not subject to the death penalty" Zeydel (n. 9 above), 16.

62. Going on horseback (cf. as an ex-cleric 765-767) rather than on a mule was contrary to the monastic spirit: St. Francis made it a formal transgression in his Rule, "unless obliged by sickness or by some pressing necessity": "Première règle de saint François" 15, trans. A. Masseron, in *Règles des moines* (Paris: Seuil, 1982), 157.

63. Verse 903, *Li fox, li ivres*. Cf. "Monachorum grex devotus / omnis ordo, mundus totus, / bibunt ad aequales potus / et nunc et in saeculum" ("The devout flock of monks, every order, the whole world, drink in large draughts, now and forever"), quoted in Dobiache (n. 28 above), 205. Winebibbing monks are a frequent target of secular Latin literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

64. Verses 967-969, "N'i a putain, sē il la fout, / Que ne li face dire 'tprot' / D'el que de boche." A scatological representation of the completion of sexual intercourse, cf. "De Marco et de Salemons" 56: "Pute bien corbée / Est bien aprestée / De f . . . tre et de poirre" ("A whore well bent is made quite ready to f*ck and to fart") in Méon (n. 2 above) 1.424. In the fabliau "Gauteron and Marion," the bride's fart on her wedding night is claimed by her as proof that she was only then losing her virginity. (*MR* 3.49-50).

65. Verses 1030-1031, "Vient à l'ostel, / Herselot trova la jael." Like *jäelice* (verse 508, prostitution), *jäel* (prostitute) is found in Godefroy and *TL* (s.v.), from Frankish **gadailo* (*FEW*, s.v.) which explains spellings such as *gaalise* (cf. Tobler, "Etymologies françaises et provençales," *Romania* 2 [1873]: 236-239, cited by Lecompte [n. 3 above]).

66. Verse 1105, "Amis, an m'apele Florie." The *modus florum* is the "lying mode." The unfaithful whore in Hugh of Orléans's *Quid luges, lirice* (an imitation of Catullus 8?) is named Flora: Zeydel (n. 9 above), 236-241.

67. Free indirect speech.

68. Verses 1271-1273, "Si estoit ele nequedant / En grant engoisse / De'l recevoir plus que n'est moisse." Other than to represent the prostitute, the simile with the fly, *moisse* < Latin *musca*, is not clear. Cf. Lecompte's citation of *Le Roman de Renart* (n. 23 above), 1b.3133-3134, "Qar plus estes pute que moche / Qui en esté la gent entoche."

69. Verses 1275-1279, "Par lo peignil, qui sanble moisse, / Li mist l'outil, / Car la pute ot tot son penil. / Des qu'il s'ahurté au dusil, / Au corz abrive." Vernay (n. 3 above) quotes three translations: "Through the clit which seems moist, / He puts his tool, / For the whore begins to move her body, / As soon as he hits the bung, / She is off at a gallop" (Ker). "Sanson si precipita a slacciarla, / le mette l'arnese per la potta / che sembra bagnata: / anche la puttana ha la sua potta. / Appena s'imbatte sul canale, / si lancia dentro al corpo" (Brusegan, in Vernay). "Sanson se dépêche de la délayer; / par la vulve, qui semble humide,(?) / Il lui enfle son outil, / Car la pute a bien, elle, sa vulve (?). / Dès qu'il tombe sur le vagin, / il se lance en avant" (Vernay). Lecompte quotes *Renart* 22.684-692, which alludes to the (vain) practice of epilation among prostitutes: "Meslëure [a compound] n'autre pelains [depilatory] / Que metre i vuelent ces putains, / Ne lor vaut riens: que touz jorz croit / Plus dru apres qu'avant n'estoit." The word *pénil* (< Vulgar Latin *pectiniculum* or Latin *pectinem*) still exists in modern French and Canadian usage and is defined "saillie médiane inférieure du pubis (appelée aussi *Mont de Vénus*)" by the *Grand Robert de la langue française*, ed. Alain Rey, 2d ed., 9 vols. (Paris: Le Robert, 1985) s.v. The poem "Le sentier battu" (MR 3.247-251) suggests that epilation was by no means exclusive to prostitutes, at least in the fourteenth century. *Dusil* or *doisil* (cf. Godefroy, s.v.) < Latin *duciculum*, applies to barrels and is glossed "penis" by *TL*, who quotes "Richeut," perhaps after *Gargantua* 3: "Si le diavol ne vult qu'elles engroissent, il fauldra tortre le douzil, et bouche close" (quoted by Lecompte). As Vernay says, "*dusil* désigne ici le vagin et non . . . le sexe masculin." Notwithstanding the mixed metaphor with *dusil*, the equestrian expression of verse 1279 anticipates the simile that immediately follows.

70. Verses 1314-1317, "'Plegiez lo moi, / Ce dit Richeut, desor ma foi.' / Dit li plus maistres: 'Je l'otroi.' / Or est plegiez." In exchange for Samson's custody, Richeut "gives her faith," that is to say, pardons the debt that the *lechëors* owed her (cf. verse 1209, "Car si detor trestuit estoient").