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Adapting the *Rose* for New Manuscript Contexts: the Case of Poitiers, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 215

Abstract. This essay examines the different approaches to the adaptation of the *Roman de la rose* in a selection of late medieval manuscripts, both single item and multi-text codices. Analysing first methods ranging from the collection of a series of extracts to the abridgement of the whole work, we then focus on a fifteenth-century compilatory manuscript from Poitiers which contains 1931 lines of the *Rose* copied as short gnomic *sententiae* and longer passages of narrative, thus displaying the techniques of both extraction and abbreviation. The following questions are addressed in this essay: what type of material is retained or omitted; how does the Poitiers compiler deal with the questions of authority and voice; what effect might the use of rubrication have had on a contemporary reader; and how does the adaptation of the *Rose* sit with the other texts and extracts in this compilation?

The *Roman de la rose*, an allegorical dream narrative about the seduction of a young girl, was begun by Guillaume de Lorris in the 1230s and completed by Jean de Meun in the 1270s. This popular, highly influential work has survived in over 321 manuscripts and fragments, and because text and continuation run to nearly 22,000 lines, they usually appear in single-item codices.¹ When copied with additional texts in huge volumes they are often accompanied by other works attributed to Jean de Meun: his *Testament*, *Codicile* and *Trésor* (or *Les Sept Articles de la foi*, actually by Jean Chapuis), sometimes his translation of Boethius's *Consolation of Philosophy*.² However, the encyclopaedic nature of Jean's continuation, consisting mainly of dialogue between the lover/narrator and various interlocutors, results increasingly in the *Rose* being viewed as a vernacular authority and source of wise sayings. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in particular, we find evidence, as identified by Pierre-Yves Badel and Sylvia Huot, of discontinuous reading, the text being pillaged for its gnomic pronouncements and recopied into florilegia, along with other didactic material.³ This process of extraction correlates quite closely with the annotations made by late medieval readers of the *Rose* studied by Huot. However, another approach to the *Rose* was to abbreviate it, supplying summaries of some passages and omitting much of the dream narrative content, or conversely, suppressing the speeches in favour of action.⁴ In this way the *Rose* was rewritten for new manuscript contexts.

While the main focus of this essay is the anthology of texts and extracts found in Poitiers, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 215, whose last thirty-three folios consist of *Rose* material, it is important to contextualise the methodology of the Poitiers compiler by comparing some near contemporary approaches to the transmission and adaptation of this seminal work.

We shall begin therefore with a late fifteenth-century manuscript found in Princeton University Library, MS 153.⁵ Copied in France by two scribes, it falls into two halves, separated by four unwritten pages. The first, historical, section comprises a late redaction (1461) of the *Abregé des Croniques de France* by Noël de Fribois (fols 1r-88r); the second moralising compilation contains the *Audite celi* by Jean Juvenal des Ursins (fols 91r-141r), lines 1–2048 of Jean de Meun's *Testament* (142r-179v), the *Dits des philosophes* (180r-186v), and some excerpts from the *Rose* (187r-196r). Since the *Dits des philosophes* are proverbial in nature, John Moreau suggests that their proximity to the *Rose* extracts may have influenced the way the latter were read. In total there are 471 lines of text, mostly one- or two-line quotations, although there are some longer extracts of between ten to sixteen lines. The compiler seems to have worked at first chronologically through the *Roman*. He then appears to have started again, at first consecutively, but then quoting out of order. The list therefore seems to be the product of a series of readings, which has resulted in some repetition of the same material. The lines selected are mostly gnomic expressions, usually generalisations in the third person, although some speech in the first- and second- persons has been retained, thus allowing the reader of the manuscript to feel directly addressed by the interlocutors quoted from the *Rose*. The themes treated are the proper behaviour of lovers, misogyny and misogamy;⁶ allusion to classical authors is mostly suppressed, thus making these “petis extraictz du romant de la rose” authoritative in their own right, not dependent on classical wisdom. Moreau also notes that the ubiquitous contradiction and irony of the *Rose* have been suppressed, and gives the example of the jealous husband, whose slander of women is criticised by Ami/Friend in the original work, but whose voice becomes that of an authoritative *auctor* when his words are deprived of context.

A similar example of extraction is to be found in an early fourteenth-century manuscript in the Bruges State Archives, studied by Dirk Geirnaert.⁷ Excerpts from the *Rose* have surprisingly been copied into an account book belonging to a Burgher of Bruges, De Rikelike, whose entries relate to the years 1323–1336. According to Geirnaert, *Rose* excerpts in the *Memoriaal* consist of thirty-eight separate fragments, ranging from two to twenty-four lines, with the exception of one fifty-eight-line extract. Adopting a method similar to that of the Princeton compiler, the Bruges copyist, perhaps De Rikelike himself, seems to have returned to his exemplar seven times in his search for pithy aphorisms. Drawing anonymously on both Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, three quarters of the extracts deal explicitly with courtly love: especially the advice of Ami/Friend on how to outwit the guards of Bel Accueil/Fair Welcome and a series of rules for courtly lovers. Several other extracts are *sententiae* and sometimes they offer anti-feminist ‘truths’ or criticism of marriage. There is a definite correlation between the sorts of material chosen by the Princeton and Bruges compilers and by Huot's late-medieval annotators. Indeed, some *nota bene* signs highlight the exact lines chosen by these extractors of *bons mots*, and they may have been aided in their task by such annotations in their exemplars.⁸

A different approach was taken by the producer of Arras, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 845, who, according to Huot, attempted to rehabilitate and correct the *Rose* by placing carefully selected and modified excerpts from it in the context of Guillaume de

Deguilleville's three religious dream allegories, along with other devotional texts.⁹ This fourteenth-century compilation begins with an image (fol. 1v) of the Ten Commandments as ten arrows directed at man's soul, followed by a commentary on them. Next come two works copied side by side: "Ce sont les .x. commandemens de le roy," and "C'est le conseil du diable d'infer," (fol. 2r-v) each accompanied by an exhortation to readers to avoid damnation. These works set the interpretative framework for the whole codex, and its devotional nature is reinforced by what follows: Guillaume de Deguilleville's *Pelerinage de Jesus Christ* (fols 3r-65v), the *Sept articles de la foi* attributed to Jean de Meun (66r-73r), some short moral works, Guillaume's *Pelerinage de vie humaine* (74v-156v),¹⁰ the *Dit des trois morts et des trois vifs* (157r-v), a poem beginning "Le fil Adam..." (158r-159v), Guillaume's *Pelerinage de l'ame* (159v-222r), the *Testament* attributed to "M. Jean de Meun (*sic*)" (222r-228v), an extract from the *Dits des philosophes* (229r), a full page image of fortune and her wheel (229v), and a fragment of a French verse translation of the *Consolation of philosophy* (230r-250v; not a work by Jean, but the compiler may have thought it was by him).¹¹ After an image of the castle of Jealousy with the lover standing outside and the rubric: "Chi s'ensieut partie du livre de le roze, *scilicet* le capitile de raison, de nature, de faussamblant et viel amy" (250v), we then find lengthy extracts from the *Rose*, covering nearly twenty-five folios (251r-274v), the final folio sharing advice on hygiene and morality. The codex is completed by texts again on the Ten Commandments and the advice of the devil (274v), and finally the *Doctrinal aux simples gens* (275r-282r).

The *Rose* extracts, which begin on folio 251r, are accompanied by a small miniature showing the lover speaking with Reason, and there is a header over column b, which reads "Raison contre fol amour carnel" (preceded by a Nota mark, probably added later). The first line quoted has been adapted to its new context; instead of: "Qui en cel miroer se mire" (1575), we find "Cjeux qui en fol regart se mire", which turns a specific allusion to the dangers of Narcissus's pool into a generalisation about falling in love through the eyes.¹² The new moral perspective is also emphasised through the use of the term *fol* both here and in the header, suggesting condemnation of the lover's behaviour. The compiler then strings together excerpts, not necessarily in chronological order, to produce his own introduction: 1576–84, 1607–14, 2603–08 (taken from the god of love's words), 2965–70, 2955–57, one additional line, 4131–34. He then returns to line 2971, and henceforth copies consecutively, omitting lines he probably considered inappropriate. Thus, in Reason's chapter, reduced to circa 1710 lines,¹³ Huot notes that obscenities have been removed (for example, the reference to homosexuality in lines 4341–50 and Reason's use of crude language, including lines 7103–7230), the description of fortune's palace is absent, and references to pagan history, philosophy or mythology are suppressed.¹⁴ The compiler has also cut and pasted extracts from Faux Samblant's sermon and given them to Reason. Then he includes an interpolation on love, not his own innovation as it is found in other manuscripts too.¹⁵ In it, Reason recommends love of God and Christian charity above sexual love, thus reinforcing the overall message which this particular adaptation of the *Rose* conveys, especially through its juxtaposition with the works of Guillaume de Deguilleville. Not surprisingly, therefore, Reason's offer of herself as *amie* to the lover/narrator is absent.

The compiler has not completely suppressed the personification allegory, retaining, for example, line 2997, “Atant es vous raisons commence” (151rb). So his text does not function as a moral sermon in one, narratorial/authorial voice. However, the frame narrative has been largely effaced so that in “le capitle de Faussablant” (259r-261v), summarised in a mere seven hundred lines, the hypocrite’s speech serves only to criticise the mendicant orders and corruption; it is not employed to problematise the meaning of the whole text.¹⁶ Nature’s chapter is less radically abridged, as indicated by the rubric: “Chy sensuit grand partie du capitle de nature” (261v).¹⁷ The Arras codex includes much of her dialogue with Genius, significantly retaining the latter’s warning about revealing secrets to women, and preserves the scientific and philosophical material from Nature’s speech. However, her encouragement of procreation is deleted, although the compiler has added an eight-line attack on women who do not use their breasts for their proper role: to nourish children (270v)! The most radical example of cutting and pasting occurs in a chapter given to a new personification, Viel Amy (271r- 274r), which merges material from the speeches of Ami and Genius on the Golden Age topos. It is accompanied by the image of an old and a young man talking, and by the header “Viel amy parle du temps jadis” (271r). Even more radical is the insertion of words from Guillaume’s section (2053–56) into Jean’s description of Nature’s role, and consistent with the new pious conception of the hypotext, Genius’s words are modified to tell the lover to honour God and not just nature, as was the message in the original.¹⁸ The second half of this new chapter amalgamates material on women under the rubric: “Des femes et de leur atour” (272v; Of women and their ornaments/behaviour). Here the compiler brings together words, often antifeminist, originally spoken by Ami, Jaloux, Reason, Vieille and Jean de Meun (in his apology, see rubric on folio 273r: “Excusation de M. J. de Meun”). He even adds aphorisms from the *Dits et proverbes des sages*.

The compiler has thus pieced together related passages from various parts of the *Rose*, which shows his intimate knowledge of the text, enabling him to turn the romance, through selective extraction and modification, into a morally improving treatise which sits comfortably with the more devotional texts in the Arras manuscript. This didactic function is enhanced by the use of headers indicating the subject matter, and in the middle column, by the inclusion of the ‘chapter’ of the *Rose* from which it is taken.¹⁹ In line with the characterisation of the lover’s emotions as illicit sexual love, placing him at the mercy of fortune, folio 252v has the header:

de l’amour de dieu and folio 254r reads:	Raison	<i>Contre amour carnel,</i>
de amiste	Raison	<i>Contre amour de fortune</i>

These headers, discontinued after folio 264v, become increasingly, though not consistently, more informative; the header on folio 256r, for instance, summarises what Reason says: “Raison dit quamour vault mielx que iustice” (Reason says that love is better than justice). They clearly helped readers to navigate the codex, enabling them to read selectively what is in itself a carefully composed selection of *Rose* lore, reinterpreted for a new readership. Moreover, they served to influence the reception of this overtly pious and didactic

compilation.²⁰ However, Jean de Meun as a vernacular authority is not exploited extensively in this codex. Although the author is named in the introductory rubric to the *Testament* (fol. 222r) and in the explicit of the *Sept articles*, in which the *Rose* is also attributed to him (“M J de meun qui fecit Romanum de roza,” 73r), the lengthy extracts from this romance are authoritative in their own right, unaccompanied by paratext emphasising Jean’s *auctoritas*.

Another approach to adapting the *Rose* is to abbreviate it sequentially with very little recombining of material.²¹ This method is exemplified by Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, français 25524, an early fourteenth-century, small format manuscript studied by Leslie Brook. This is a single-item codex containing only a heavily pruned *Rose*: Jean’s section is condensed to a mere c. 3600 lines.²² In fr. 25542 much direct speech has been suppressed or shortened, but carefully so that it still makes sense. Like the Arras codex, this book has removed some of the obscenity: there is no mention of the proper language to describe Jupiter’s castration of Saturn, or of taking the girl by force if necessary, and it suppresses Jaloux’s misogynous words and Ami’s praise of the Golden Age. This compiler concentrates on action, therefore omitting Jean’s self-referential comment about poets of love, and the entire speeches of the Vieille, Nature and Genius. The battle against the castle is retained and so is Pygmalion’s story – not perceived as a digression but as an integral part of the seduction story. All irony, ambiguity and intellectual content is lost. Unlike the producers of the Princeton and Bruges manuscript, who practised extraction, this abridger has not concentrated on the poem’s antifeminism, and has produced an entirely different work, more in keeping with Guillaume de Lorris’s original conception than with Jean de Meun’s more ironic project.

A further single-text codex which exemplifies abbreviation is London, British Library, Royal MS 19 A XVIII.²³ Dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, its ninety-four folios contain 14,000 lines of the *Rose*, which reaches nearly 22,000 when complete. This copy spans the whole work, yet shortens it by including summaries for certain passages. It is preceded by a table of contents in a different hand, which lists subsections of the work or themes along with the relevant folio number. There is some correlation between the table of contents and the manuscript’s rubrics, but far from all the rubrics are reproduced, and there are frequent discrepancies between them.²⁴

The compiler’s method of abridgement at first is to copy the first 496 lines of the text, then simply to list what were probably rubrics in his exemplar, accompanied by capital Cs in either blue or red as chapter markers.²⁵ Thus we find on folio 5rb:

“C Oyeuse C lamant, C les gens de la karolle C courtoizie C Comme lamant se prent a la karolle C comme courtoisie prie lamant de dansser. Le dieu damours C la facon doulz regars.” (Leisure; the lover; the dancers in the ‘carole’; courtesy; how the lover joins the ‘carole’; how courtesy begs the lover to dance. The god of love; the nature of sweet looking).

Immediately after this list the text of the *Rose* resumes at line 935: “La milleur et la plus ysnelle/de ces fleches et la plus belle” (the best and the fastest of these arrows and the most beautiful). Not only have 440 lines been replaced by these rubric summaries, but the

narrative seems to continue *in medias res*, Cupid's arrows not having been mentioned until this point. One wonders what a reader could make of these lists. Perhaps they were aides-mémoire which presupposed knowledge of the whole work?

The scribe then continues to copy the text in full, omitting only lines 1879–80, thus indicating that he prefers to suppress large chunks rather than to prune carefully as he goes along. The frequent rubrics are informative, rather than morally tendentious, and often indicate a change of speaker (a feature shared by the Poitiers codex). When we reach the section where the god of love issues his ten commandments, there is a rubric for each commandment with accompanying text until line 2140, then the rubricator simply writes rubrics for the eighth, ninth and tenth on successive lines, without bothering to reproduce the narrative verse (folio 12rb). Perhaps the copyist simply thought a description of eight arrows sufficed to give a flavour of the romance? There follows immediately upon this, without introductory rubric, a generalisation about symptoms suffered by all lovers (2543–56), then another summary in the form of rubrics:

C lamant *parle* C Amours *parle* C le dieu *damours* C le second *bien* *damours* C le tiers *bien* *damours* C Bel *acuel* *parle* a lamant C lamant *parle* C Bel *accuel* *presente* une feulle a lamant C *Comment* lamant *racompte* lamour quil a eu au bouton C Bel *accuel* C *dangier* C lamant (fol.12rb; the lover speaks; Love speaks; the god of love; the second benefit of love; the third benefit of love; fair welcoming speaks to the lover; the lover speaks; fair welcoming presents a leaf to the lover; how the lover talks about the love he felt for the rosebud; fair welcoming; refusal; the lover)

This method continues right to the end of the codex and raises intriguing, but to my mind, unanswerable questions about the function of these summaries and how they were read.

It is difficult to find a reason for the verbatim retention of some passages and the suppression of others. Plenty of misogynistic material has been retained and highlighted paratextually, in the table of contents and rubrication. No distinction is made between Ami/Friend's pronouncements on gender relations (8455–66) and the views of the jealous husband relayed by him; the former are accompanied by the marginal rubric "C le ialoux" (40v), while the speech of the jealous husband (8467ff) is introduced by the rubric: "C *Comment* li ialoux *tance* sa *femme* et lui *demande* de ses *fais*" (40v; How the jealous man goads his wife and interrogates her on her activities). Lines 8467–9360 are liberally strewn with Notae signs and on folio 43r there is another marginal rubric: "C li ialoux", leading the reader to more antifeminist propaganda. A textual highlight, often illustrated in other manuscripts and condemned by Christine de Pizan in the debate over the *Romance of the Rose*, is clearly marked by the rubric: "C *Comment* le ialous *bat* sa *femme*" (46rb; how the jealous husband beats his wife).²⁶

Going against this trend, however, the Vieille's speech, containing material which hardly places women in a good light, is summarised: "C *Coment* *faulx* *semblant* *acompaigne* lamant. C La *vielle* *parle* a lamant. *Comment* la *vielle* *sermonne* *bel* *acueil*" (61ra). Then the scribe resumes his copying under the rubric: "Ci *apres* *est* *comment* *femme* *se* *doit* *maintenir* a *table*" (61ra; Next is how a woman should behave at table), which seems to presuppose a female reader. He nevertheless includes some less than favourable rubrics

concerning the behaviour of women, such as “*Comment femme doit plumer son amy*” (63ra; how a woman should fleece her lover). One can therefore discern no consistent approach to material which other copyists seem either to suppress or to underline.

As for the classical exempla which some adapters choose to omit, the producer of the London manuscript not only includes, for example, references to Virginius’s killing of his daughter and Lucretia’s suicide, but also rubricates these events (28v and 41v), and they appear in the table of contents too. References to the *auctores* are also retained, Theophrastus (8561) and Juvenal (8735) (fol. 43r) helping to bolster the authority of the jealous husband’s words. As in other manuscripts, the scribe does not always distinguish between the words of the lover/narrator, and those of his interlocutors, thus some of Ami’s words (9361–9500) are attributed to the author, judging from the marginal rubric on folio 46rb: “*C lacteur parle*”. However, as with the Arras manuscript, Jean himself is not invoked as a vernacular authority, appearing in the table of contents and in a rubric only at the point when the text contains a prayer (10623ff) to “*Maistre Jehan de meun*” (fol. 50v).

Although this intriguing manuscript merits more detailed analysis, what is clear is that the compiler’s strategies for abbreviating the *Roman de la rose* are unlike any of those examined above. We shall now turn to the Poitiers manuscript to consider how it fits into the copying traditions of the *Rose* in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Are we dealing with extraction or abbreviation? What is the effect of rubrication and the presence of other texts on the reading experience it offers? How does this manuscript deal with questions of authority and voice?

Manuscript 215 in the Médiathèque François Mitterand in Poitiers is a late fifteenth-century compilation of disparate material, which, I have argued elsewhere, could nevertheless be viewed as a carefully constructed anthology for the use of a young nobleman.²⁷ Its 149 folios seem to have been written by one scribe and then decorated throughout by one illuminator. There are two possibilities as to its original commissioner: one is that, given the local associations of some of its content, it was designed for an unnamed young aristocrat from the Poitou region. The second is that, as the monogram AM appearing in its decorated borders suggests, it could have been made for Aymon de Monfalcon, Bishop of Lausanne (1491–1517), a poet in his own right who moved in literary circles. It comprises the usual historical texts relating the deeds of the Trojans, Greeks, Romans and Franks, as well as more recent kings of France; extracts from the *auctores* – usually moral aphorisms from classical philosophers –; two lists of knights of the Round Table and other Arthurian material; ‘factual’ information (dates and measurements; biblical chronology and genealogy; rules for the election and coronation of emperors, kings, dukes, etc); religious poetry and letters relating to Christ’s life and passion; several epitaphs, poems or extracts on death; speeches, letters and eyewitness accounts; inscriptions; short, often witty poems on wine, women and song; satirical pieces against doctors and judges; moral advice in the form of lists of what to aspire to and what to avoid; and lengthy extracts from the *Roman de la rose* covering thirty-three folios at the end of the volume.²⁸ Many of its texts employ first- and second-person pronouns, thus seeming to address directly the ideal reader, probably an aristocratic male.

This codex falls roughly into two parts, the first containing mostly works in prose, written in one column, the second in verse, copied in two columns. After half a page has been left blank (91v), the poetry begins on folio 92r, and is accompanied by beautiful marginal decoration. A rubric on folio 92rb announces the author whose work will dominate this second half of the manuscript: “Maistre Jehan de mun.” However, Jean de Meun has already been introduced as an authority in the first part of the manuscript, where his *Testament* is quoted several times; first, but anonymously, on the subject of lechery (1797–1816; fol. 54r-v) and then, with the rubric: “Maistre iehan de mun dit en son testament” (fol. 54v), introducing antifeminist comments about the divinely ordained superiority of man over woman (1305–08), and then “Ledit de mun” (55r) on death (165–68).²⁹ This last quotation links with a four-line excerpt on death from Guillaume de Deguilleville’s *Pelerinage de la vie humaine* (13451–54), which precedes the first quotation from Jean’s *Testament* in this manuscript (fol. 54r).³⁰ However, although the Arras manuscript clearly considered Guillaume to be a worthy co-authority with the *Rose* continuator, he remains anonymous in the Poitiers manuscript, despite being quoted quite frequently.

On folio 55v, after some moral poetry, Jean’s *Testament* (1969–76) is again cited on the subject of punishments for “folle amour”, thus forming a thematic link with the following quotation: three couplets from Guillaume de Lorris’s section of the *Rose* (3403–08). These contain the words of Bel Accueil, who, prompted by Chastity, denies a kiss to the Lover, claiming that kisses quickly lead to other things! However, the rubric reads “Le dit iehan de mun” (55v). As in many other rubricated manuscripts, Guillaume’s work is subsumed under Jean’s authority, nor is any distinction made here between the appropriateness of the *Rose* and the *Testament* to convey moral teaching. The first half of the manuscript concludes with a series of texts, including letters, on chivalry, nobility and against lust, citing anonymous philosophers, Livy, and Statius as *auctores*. These works are all in prose, apart from a short poem on the death of the Duke of Milan, serving as a rhymed rubric (64r) to introduce texts on this event.

Having established Jean as an authority in the first half of the manuscript, the compiler turns to him in earnest in the second part. It opens (92ra) with the words of Charity from Guillaume de Deguilleville’s *Pelerinage de la vie humaine* (2395ff), but the compiler has transposed them into the third person, omitted the lines in which Charity names herself, and rearranged and reordered her teaching. He then paraphrases a further couplet. This method of cut-and-paste is reminiscent of that of the Arras manuscript, which favours Guillaume de Deguilleville’s works, though in the Poitiers codex Guillaume never appears in the ubiquitous rubrics. Jean, on the other hand, *is* named, and immediately afterwards (on 92rb) we find the rubric “Maistre Jehan de mun” introducing a couplet from his *Rose* continuation (8113–14), conveying the words of Ami on the subject of mendicant friars who feign poverty. Folios 92r–116r contain moral poems and aphorisms, but also worldly advice, especially about women. Some of this material is taken from Guillaume de Tignonville’s *Dits moraux des philosophes*, an early fifteenth-century compendium pillaged by both the Princeton and Arras compilers. Interspersed amongst this material are quotations from Jean with accompanying rubrics: one (14749–52) on how to be treacherous by adopting Faux Semblant and

Contrainte Astenance, and two extracts from the god of Love's speech against *vilenie* or foul language (2083–86; 2109–14), penned by Guillaume de Lorris, but again misattributed to Jean. At this stage, the Poitiers copyist seems to have operated in a similar fashion to the producers of the Princeton and Bruges books, and indeed two of these short extracts are identical with those in Princeton.³¹

On 116v, however, the systematic pillaging of the *Rose* begins, and from now on the compiler's method gradually evolves from the chronological selection of short moral sayings to the compositional technique of *abbreviatio* witnessed in the Paris and London manuscripts. Beginning with relatively brief extracts, the Poitiers manuscript moves towards ever longer quotations, culminating in very lengthy passages, each introduced by a rubric, but which have nevertheless been pruned here and there of what must have been deemed to be unnecessary detail. For this task of extraction and abridgement, the adapter clearly had at his disposal a complete copy of the *Rose* and not simply a list of extracts, although he may have been influenced by annotations in his exemplar, since there is a certain correlation between the passages he selected, those chosen by the Princeton and Bruges compilers, and the popular reader annotations listed by Huot (see Appendix).

It has not been possible to identify the manuscript family/ies to which Poitiers belongs, as the texts are sometimes garbled (although the transcription does improve as it goes along) and often contain variants not listed in Langlois's edition. On several occasions, though, readings contained in the sixteenth-century edition attributed to Marot or in Nicolas Lenglet du Fresnoy's 1735 publication (both of which relied heavily on Anthoine Vêrard's printings) coincide with verses in the Poitiers codex, so MS 125 reflects versions of the *Rose* circulating either in manuscript or early printed book form in the late fifteenth century.³² The brief, aphoristic extracts are often taken either from the beginning of a new section, marked in manuscripts by an initial, or from the final couplets of a paragraph. This is probably because they consist of either the introductory theme sentences or the generalising epitomes which summarise preceding arguments. Just like the Arras compiler, the Poitiers copyist has adapted the *Rose* carefully, to fit his agenda of teaching right behaviour and warning against vice, but he also retains the attention of his young reader through humour, rude language and a smattering of sexual titillation!³³

In MS 125, the *Rose* is stripped of its narrative elements, and counsel specifically relevant to the lover's situation is similarly suppressed. Concentrating instead on the moral and practical guidelines offered by Amant's interlocutors, the compiler retains advice on carefully choosing one's friends and counsellors, especially relevant if this collection of texts was put together by an older man for the instruction of his younger pupil. There are warnings about the avarice and covetousness of lawyers, the corruption of judges, the susceptibility of those in power to flattery; vainglory, avarice and other vices are to be avoided, although it *is* acceptable to trick tricksters, and sufficiency is promoted. Most of the extracts early on teach the correct conduct for a lover, while the later passages in the voice of the Old Woman and Genius reveal the dangers of women: especially their lechery and desire to fleece men. While some of the Vieille's advice is designed for the fair sex, in the context of this compilation it seems more likely to have been retained to warn a male reader of female

wiles, rather than for the benefit of women readers. In one such passage (14279–14310), after recommending open-air sex as deliciously dangerous, the Vieille tells women to close the windows so that their lovers cannot see their bodily blemishes. In another, although mutual pleasure during sex seems to be a rather modern recommendation, her idea that women should fake orgasms (14409–11) may have alerted a male reader to their potential deviousness. Similarly, while women are warned against giving expensive presents (14429–34), men are told to beware of women bearing gifts, as generosity is against their nature! Thus, the impression given by the codex as a whole that it was intended for a male reader is not necessarily undermined by this selection of *Rose* clippings.

Towards the end of the Poitiers excerpts, the focus is almost entirely on female vice. Indeed, folios 141–46 quote, with only a few lines suppressed, Genius's dramatic description of the dangers of revealing secrets to women (16365–16576). The compiler has abandoned collecting nuggets of popular wisdom in favour of reproducing almost verbatim and with the lively dialogue intact, the popular bedroom scene in which the wife employs female wiles in order to force her husband to be indiscreet. Continuing in this misogynous vein, the *Rose* passages are followed, in the closing folios of the codex, by selections from various antifeminist texts, including Guillaume Alexis's *Blason de fausses amours* and the anonymous *Grant Malice des femmes*.³⁴

Several controversial passages which were discussed at length by Christine de Pizan and her male clerical opponents during their debate on the *Roman de la rose* have been retained by the Poitiers compiler. For example, there are references to wifebeating: in the Jaloux's speech (9161–62) and in Genius's speech on holding one's tongue, for if secrets are revealed to one's wife, she gains the upper hand, thereby preventing her husband from beating her with impunity (16369–74). Unlike the London manuscript, which highlights this passage, the actual description of marital abuse is absent (9361 ff), but this may be because narrative is largely suppressed anyway, especially at this stage in the copying (fol. 135v). The use by Reason of crude language when discussing the castration of Saturn, which so exercised Christine and was unacceptable to the Arras and Parisian compilers, is also present in the Poitiers codex (6965–69). Moreover, although the compiler abbreviates the discussion on linguistic nominalism versus realism, he retains Reason's comic suggestion that the lover would be equally outraged if she had called testicles relics, as well as her listing of euphemisms for male genitalia (7103–46). It seems that the planner of this book, like Jean's Reason, enjoys talking dirty!

It is instructive to see what the compiler omits as well as what he retains: on the subject of Juvenal's account of Iberine's promiscuity (8287–8303), he claims that she was made of hot matter and that all women want to dominate and ruin their lovers. However, he stops quoting just at the point when Ami/Friend admits that Juvenal was only talking about evil women (8305). In this way, the compiler increases the misogyny of his source. Similarly, although he summarises the Friend's advice on how to keep a female lover by giving her a certain freedom (9714–24), he omits other advice, including the bit about allowing her to beat her husband if necessary (9743 ff)! Clearly, since it has been taken out of context and

the irony created by Jean's multiple voices has been lost, this teaching was too dangerous to keep!

Although the compiler tends to omit classical exempla and rhetorical *expolitio*,³⁵ he has retained, unlike his Princeton colleague, a fair number of *auctores* cited by the various personae. Among them are Cicero, Lucan, Horace, Juvenal, Plato (*Timaeus*), Solomon, Valerius and Theophrastes. He has also used rubrication to authorise the teachings he has selected. Unlike the producers of all the other manuscripts discussed here, Poitiers establishes Jean as an important *auctor*. The last reference to Jean, though, comes on folio 117va, "Maistre iehan de mun parlant aux amoureux" (Master Jean de Meun speaking to lovers);³⁶ from now on, rubrics dispense with the author, invoking the *romance* as authoritative, as in "Vieillesse/Pauvrete/Richesse au livre du rommant,"³⁷ and finally transferring *auctoritas* to the personifications who address the lover. Examples of this are "Jalousie au livre du rommant" (118ra), "Raison parlant aux mauvais juges" (122va), and many other rubrics which indicate a change of speaker. Only once is the term 'acteur' used to designate the author/narrator, along with 'chapitre' to identify sections of the *Rose* (as we saw in the Arras manuscript): "Lacteur au chapitre de la vielle" (138rb).

The compiler has used rubrics in the first instance to introduce each individual quotation from his source and even where rubrics have not been executed, gaps have been left for them. Later in the compilation, though, text which has not been quoted continuously, but which contains some silent omissions, has been gathered under one rubric. Conversely, in the case of Genius's long depiction of the seduction of a husband in bed, a rhymed rubric has been introduced into the middle of the quoted passage, breaking up a continuous quotation:

Comment ce fol mary couart
 Se met dedans son col la hart
 Quant son secret dit a sa femme
 Dont pert son corps et elle s'ame
 (144ra; how this cowardly, stupid husband places his neck in the noose when he tells his wife his secret, thereby losing his body and she her soul)

Many of the rubrics are designed to influence the reader. For example, the rubric: "Ledit amys donnant bon conseil pour enhardir les jeunes amoureux" (126rb; the aforementioned friend giving good advice to embolden young men in love) implies approval of the Friend's immoral techniques of seduction, especially the exhortation to apply force, for women say no when they really mean yes (7690–700)! And this attitude on the part of the compiler is supported by the fact that he omits the dialogue in which the lover is scandalised by the cynical advice of his friend. Similarly, the words of the jealous husband are not only backed up by famous authorities: "Le ialoux appelle a tesmoing boesse et aristote de ceste matiere" (131va–132va; the jealous man calls as witness Boethius and Aristotle on this matter), but the rubricator approves of his words: "Le ialoux parlant a sa femme en donnant ung tresbon et proufitable ensaignement a tous hommes" (131va; a jealous man speaking to his wife thereby providing very useful and profitable teaching for all men). Since the context for this speech has been removed, the reader of the Poitiers manuscript would receive it as

useful counsel rather than as the rantings of a deranged man of whom the friend disapproves. Moreover, one cannot help but think that the advice to young women in this section (13475–98), introduced by the rubric “Ensaînement pour les belles jeunes dames moult proufitable” (138va; very useful teaching for beautiful young women), would really be of most benefit to men. For young girls are told, in the interest of the species, not to delay too long before taking a lover, for it will be too late when they are old.

As we have seen, the compiler of Poitiers MS 215 developed his technique as he went along, beginning with short extracts from the *Rose* similar to those we have identified in the Princeton and Bruges manuscripts. Later, he progressed to the copying of lengthy passages, producing an abridgement of his source more reminiscent of the Paris and London codices, and less sophisticated than the Arras rewriting. Yet none of his predecessors discussed here offers a close model for his compilatory techniques, which seem to be unique to him. Passages for quotation have been carefully selected, sometimes modified, and are accompanied by rubrics ranging from the banal to the tendentious. Invoking first the continuator Jean de Meun, and then the romance itself (and its speakers) as a vernacular authority, the Poitiers compiler has used the *Roman de la rose* to complement the teaching offered by the rest of the manuscript. Depriving it of any real subtlety, or of the irony which was so fundamental to Pierre Col’s defence of the *Rose* during the famous debate, this manuscript uses it for homosocial purposes. Its moralising speeches seem to address the reader of the manuscript directly, encouraging him to behave correctly, in all matters, it seems, apart from his dealings with women. On this subject, the *Rose* quotations agree with the view of women expressed by the male voice in Guillaume Alexis’s *Blason de fausses amours*, which features in the final folios of the compilation: “Je dis si le chef est beguin/Que a la queue est le venin” (148r; I say that if the head is innocent, there is poison in the tail).³⁸ In the case of Poitiers MS 215, the sting is indeed in the tail for any female reader who happens upon its novel adaptation of the *Roman de la rose*, designed strictly for male consumption.

Appendix: Comparative Table of Extracts from the *Rose* in the Poitiers, Princeton and Bruges Manuscripts, and Annotations Identified by Huot.³⁹

Poitiers	Princeton, Moreau edn line nos	Bruges, Geirnaert edn line nos	Huot annotations
3403–08			
8113–14			
14749–52	408–11		
2083–86	308–11		
2109–14			
377–86			

Poitiers	Princeton, Moreau edn line nos	Bruges, Geirnaert edn line nos	Huot annotations
458–62			
1024–26			
1046–52			
2127–30			
2141–42	13–14		
2217–18, plus 2-line variant in 1735 edn		2216–24 = B, 234–42	
2245–46	24–25	243–44	H
Variant of 2263–64	34–35 has original reading, not variant	B, 251–52 has original reading, not variant	
2543–50	2549–50 = P, 42–43	2549–56 = B, 255–62	
2744–50			
3038–42			
3901–08			
4013–16			
4333–40	89–96		4333–34 = H
4411–28			
4463–68			
4495–96 ⁴⁰			
4545–53			
4563–78	4565–66 = P, 97–98; 4577–78 = P, 99–100; 4577–78 copied again in P, 296–97		4563–64 = H
4615–28	4627–28 = P, 453–54		
4693–4706			
4715–34			
4747–60			
4779–82			
4859–88			
4901–39			4930 = H
4975–78	107–10		
5041–47			
5063–64			

Poitiers	Princeton, Moreau edn line nos	Bruges, Geirnaert edn line nos	Huot annotations
5091-5100	114-22		
5106-18	123-24		
5183-5202			
5583-88			
5659-70	5661-62 = P, 129-30		5659-62 = H
5737-40			
5879-82			
5894-98			
6157-64			
6274-82			
6291-98			
6317-22			
6355-70			
6386-96			
6594-96			
6835-42			
6965-69			
7034-52			
7103-46			
7353-54			
7383-84	152-53		
7399-420			
7501-10			
7539-44		7525-48 = B, 37-59	
7555-58		7555-612 = B, 60-113	
7571-82			
7602-32			
7637-7704		7663-68 = B, 114-19	
7719-66	7763-66 = P, 154-57		
7827-34	158-61		
7970-82			
8003-41			8003-04 = H
8079-80	168-69		

Poitiers	Princeton, Moreau edn line nos	Bruges, Geirnaert edn line nos	Huot annotations
8155-78	8155-6 = P, 170-71		
8227-44	176-93		8227 = H
8257-80	8265-66 = P, 322-23		
8287-8303			
8330-36			
8561-8604	8563-64 = P, 338-39; 8579-80, 8583-84, 8587-88, 8597-98 = P, 348-55		8595-96 = H
8651-60	8659-60 = P, 356-57; 8653-54 = P, 368-69		
8667-86	8685-86 = P, 208-09	8685-86 = B, 122-23	8685-86 = H
8709-16	8707-16 = P, 461-70		
8735-58			
8957-77			
9008-70	9033-38 = P, 210-15; 9011-12 = P, 336-37		
9129-65			
4-line interpolation in Langlois edn after l. 9202			
9413-20	228-35		9413-16 = H
9437-42	9439-42 = P, 236-39; 9437-38 = P, 332-33		9437-38 = H
9609-9632			
9671-78	9677-78 = P, 334-35	9677-78 = B, 124-25	
9714-24	9717-24 = P, 240-47		
9903-50	9943-46 = P, 344-45; 9949-50 = P, 346-47		
9963-66			
10241-46, plus 4 extra lines	10245-46 = P, 252-53		
10253-56, plus 10 lines found in 'Marot' edn			

Poitiers	Princeton, Moreau edn line nos	Bruges, Geirnaert edn line nos	Huot annotations
10261-66			
11331-32	268-69, repeated in P, 422-23		
11529-30			
13368-82			13381-82 = H
13475-98	13481-82 = P, 3990-91		
13582-94			
13697-702			
13851-52		221-22	13850-52 = H
14092-14138			
14187-92			
14279-14310	14279-80 = P, 459-60	14279-80 = B, 217-18	
14409-11			
14429-34	14431-34 = P, 404-07		
15709-12	412-15,	208-11	
15875-76			
16323-52	16323-24 = P, 416-17; 16347-52 = P, 424-28; 16345-46 = P, 455-56		16330-52, is popular passage acc. to Huot
16365-76			
16389-428			
16432-676			
16541-676	16577-80 = P, 429-32; 16607-16 = P, 433-42; 16645-48 = P, 443-46; 16545-46 = P, 451-52		
18607-34			
18681-82			
18886-96		170-80	
19225-36			
21435-44			
21537-38			
1931 lines in total	471 lines in total	270 lines in total	

Endnoten

- 1 See <http://romandelarose.org/#corpus> for a full list of known *Rose* manuscripts and fragments, and http://www.arlima.net/il/jean_de_meun.html#ros for bibliographical information.
- 2 See Ernest Langlois, *Les Manuscrits du "Roman de la Rose": description et classement* (Lille: Tallandier; Paris: Champion, 1910), 213–18, for a list of works copied with the *Rose* in manuscripts, and Pierre-Yves Badel, *Le Roman de la Rose au XIV^e siècle: étude de la réception de l'œuvre*, Publications romanes et françaises, 153 (Geneva: Droz, 1980), 63–65.
- 3 Badel, *Le Roman de la Rose*, 135–44; Sylvia Huot, "Medieval Readers of the *Roman de la Rose*: The Evidence of Marginal Notations," *Romance Philology* 43 (1990): 400–20, here 400–03.
- 4 See Huot, "Medieval Readers," 413–14, for examples of fourteenth-century *Rose* abridgements, two of which are discussed below.
- 5 See John Moreau, "Une anthologie de vers du *Roman de la rose* du XV^e siècle (Princeton University Library, ms. 153)," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 36 (2011): 85–102, for an edition and more contextual detail.
- 6 Moreau, "Une anthologie," 85.
- 7 Dirk Geirnaert, "A Reader of the *Rose* in Bruges: Fragments from the *Roman de la Rose* in a Middle Dutch Manuscript," *Neophilologus* 90 (2006): 13–24.
- 8 See the table in my Appendix.
- 9 See <http://romandelarose.org/#book;Arras845> for a digitisation of the whole manuscript; Langlois, *Les Manuscrits*, 98–110, for a description of its contents, and Sylvia Huot, *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 231–38, for a detailed analysis, to which the following remarks are largely indebted.
- 10 This is the first version, itself a gloss on the *Roman de la rose*, which it mentions explicitly.
- 11 The accompanying rubrics use the term *partie* for extracts, for example, "partie du livre boece" (with no translator attribution) and "partie du livre de le roze" (250v).
- 12 All references to the *Roman de la rose* in this essay are to Ernest Langlois, *Le Roman de la Rose par Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, publié d'après les manuscrits*, 5 vols (Paris: Champion pour la Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1914–1924), which differs in general by thirty lines from the edition by Lecoy used by Huot (Guillaume de Lorris et Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Félix Lecoy, 3 vols, Les Classiques français du Moyen Âge, 92, 95 and 98 (Paris: Champion, 1965–1970).
- 13 Lines 1575–84, 1607–14, 2955–58, 2971–3072 and 4279–7102 according to Langlois, *Les Manuscrits*, p. 108, although the situation is far more complicated than he suggests if one compares this with my own analysis up to line 4597: 1575–84, 1607–14, 2603–08, 2965–70, 2955–57, one additional line, 4131–34, 2971–80, 2989–3072, 4279–88, 4293–4304, plus 6 lines found in the *B* tradition; 4305–14, 4317–40, 4351–58; 4377–4400; 4401, litany of love interpolation, 4402–06; additional couplet found in other mss, 4407–46, 4449–66, 4477–80, 4487–92, 4495–96, 4523–48, 4551–52, 4557–75, 4595–96; 4593–94; 4597, etc. So, the abridgement technique is detailed and thoroughgoing; the additional lines and later interpolation do not suggest an impulse in the opposite direction, as they were probably in the copyist's exemplar.
- 14 See Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 233–34, for further details.
- 15 This addition occurs in Langlois's second group of manuscripts and comes after line 4401; see Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 235, and 365–68 for a transcription. This passage is also present in the British Library manuscript discussed below (fol. 18vb).
- 16 Langlois, *Les Manuscrits*, 108, and Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 236.
- 17 Langlois, *Les Manuscrits*, 108, and Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 236–37. As we shall see, Poitiers abbreviates this section less too.
- 18 Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 237.

- 19 Jean de Meun refers to the sections of his work as chapters (see *Rose*, 15246–47) and later authors and scribes follow suit.
- 20 As we shall see, rubrics in the Poitiers codex can also be tendentious, but not pious.
- 21 See Leslie C. Brook, “The Pruned Rose: the Text of B. N. MS fr. 25524,” *Romanische Forschungen* 105 (1993): 94–101. While the compiler’s main method is straightforward and radical *abbreviatio*, Brook, 96–97, does show how Reason’s speech has been reconfigured in a more complex fashion.
- 22 See Langlois, *Les Manuscrits*, pp. 63–64; this is classified by Langlois as *Bi*.
- 23 For descriptions, see [http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002107588&indx=1&reclds=IAMS040-002107588&recldxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=1&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1431536961293&srt=rank&mode=Basic&dum=true&v1\(freeText0\)=Royal+ms+19+A+xviii&vid=IAMS_VU2](http://searcharchives.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?tabs=detailsTab&ct=display&fn=search&doc=IAMS040-002107588&indx=1&reclds=IAMS040-002107588&recldxs=0&elementId=0&renderMode=poppedOut&displayMode=full&frbrVersion=&dscnt=1&frbg=&scp.scps=scope%3A%28BL%29&tab=local&dstmp=1431536961293&srt=rank&mode=Basic&dum=true&v1(freeText0)=Royal+ms+19+A+xviii&vid=IAMS_VU2), and H. L. D. Ward and John A. Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 3 vols (London: British Museum, 1883–1910), I: H. L. D. Ward (1883), 885–87.
- 24 It is possible that the table of contents was influenced by one from another manuscript, or one that circulated independently.
- 25 It is likely that some of the rubrics listed also accompanied illustrations in other manuscripts. Although the first two quires, folios 2–16, are much damaged and the text has been corrected frequently by a later fifteenth-century hand in a more modern spelling, the approach to abridgement seems to be the same throughout the codex.
- 26 For information on the debate, see *Debating the “Roman de la Rose”: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Christine McWebb with Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York and London: Taylor & Francis, 2007), especially chapter 3.
- 27 See Karen Pratt, “Arthurian Material in a Late-Medieval French Miscellany: Poitiers, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 215,” *‘Li premerains vers’: Essays in Honor of Keith Busby*, ed. Catherine M. Jones and Logan E. Whalen (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011), 369–87, and id., “A Courtly Education? The Reading Experience Afforded by a 15th-Century Miscellany Manuscript, Poitiers 215,” *Cultures courtoises en mouvement*, ed. Isabelle Arseneau and Francis Gingras (Montreal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 2011), 321–31.
- 28 For a detailed list of contents, see Pratt, “A Courtly Education?,” 330–31.
- 29 References to Jean’s *Testament* are to the edition by M. Méon, *De la Rose*, 4 vols (Paris: P. Didot, 1814), vol. 4.
- 30 References to Guillaume de Deguilleville’s *Pelerinage de la vie humaine*, first version, are to the edition by J. J. Stürzinger, printed for the Roxburghe Club (London: Nichols & Sons, 1893), vol. 1. 14749–52 (P, 408–11); 2083–86 (P, 308–11), see my Appendix.
- 32 The Marot edition was really by someone called Guillaume Michel. For the publication history of the *Roman*, see Philippe Frieden, “Le *Roman de la Rose*, de l’édition aux manuscrits,” *Perspectives médiévales* [on line], 34 (2012), placed on line on Sept. 1, 2012 (last accessed on Aug. 9, 2015), <http://peme.revues.org/290>; DOI : 10.4000/peme.290
- 33 See Pratt, “A Courtly Education,” 327.
- 34 For editions, see Guillaume Alexis, *Blason de fausses amours* (Paris: Pierre Levet, 1486) but also found in *Les Quinze Joyes de mariage: ouvrage très ancien auquel on a joint Le Blason des fausses amours, Le Loyer des folles amours & Le Triomphe des Muses contre amour. Le tout enrichi de remarques & de diverses leçons*, ed. Jacob Le Duchat (La Haye: A. de Rogisart, 1794) at <https://archive.org/details/LesQuinzeJoyesDeMariage>, and *La Grant Malice des femmes, Recueil de poésies françoises des XV^e et XVI^e siècles: morales, facétieuses, historiques*, ed. Anatole de Montaiglon, 13 vols, vol. V (Paris: Jannet, 1856), 310–11.

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- 35 For example, the narrative of Virginia, daughter of Virginius (5589–658) is suppressed. If this was because her death had been told earlier in the codex (fol. 63v), this would imply very careful compilatory methods, but it may just reflect the normal abridgement techniques applied to the *Rose* in this book.
- 36 This is another misleading rubric, which falsely attributes to Jean the words spoken by Guillaume's god of love to the lover/narrator and also generalises their addressee.
- 37 At first, the exact source of these pronouncements is unclear in this codex: are these the words of personified abstractions or the generalisations of the lover/narrator on a series of themes? A reader with knowledge of the whole romance would, however, realise that we are dealing with the description of various uncourtly qualities depicted on the walls of Deduit's garden (377–86).
- 38 See Le Duchat edition, p. 256. The extracts from the *Blason* on folios 147v-148v which I have been able to identify are found on pages 223, 258, 255–56 of this edition. The Poitiers compiler has therefore copied excerpts out of order, preferring the words of the antifeminist monk to those of the gentleman who defends ladies.
- 39 All line references conform to the Langlois edition.
- 40 Cf. Morawski, *Proverbes français antérieurs au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1925), no. 1419.