

PIRAMUS ET TISBÉ

Edited and translated by

Penny Eley

**Liverpool Online Series
Critical Editions of French Texts**

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Piramus et Tisbé

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Timothy Unwin
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Contents

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Acknowledgements | 6 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Critical Edition and Translation | 33 |
| Rejected Readings and Notes | 72 |
| Bibliography | 80 |
| Transcriptions | 85 |
| Manuscript R | 87 |
| Manuscript B | 109 |
| Manuscript C | 129 |
| Manuscript A | 145 |

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Introduction

Manuscripts, Editions and Translations

*Piramus et Tisbé*¹ exists in twenty-two MSS, which fall into two distinct groups: (1) nineteen MSS, dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, of the early fourteenth-century *Ovide Moralisé* (*OM*), a vernacular adaptation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and (2) three autonomous MSS from the thirteenth century. The author of the *OM* introduces the tale by saying that he will present the story 'just as another has told it, without adding to it, changing it or leaving anything out'.² The very close resemblance between the *OM* MSS and one of the autonomous versions confirms that the *OM* poet simply incorporated a pre-existent Old French poem into his work when he reached Book IV of the *Metamorphoses*. He did the same for the story of Philomela in Book VI, which he attributes to 'Crestiens', a figure usually identified with Chrétien de Troyes. The surviving *OM* MSS fall into two main groups, χ and υ ; one subgroup of χ , composed of two MSS in the Bibliothèque municipale in Rouen, is generally considered to represent the most reliable tradition.³ Scholars have consistently taken the view that the better of the two is Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale 1044 (0.4) (hereinafter R), which has formed the basis for the most important previous editions of *Piramus*: by Cornelis de Boer (1911 and 1921),⁴ Francesco Branciforti (1959), Raymond Cormier (1986) and Emmanuèle Baumgartner (2000).

Despite its comparatively late dating, R offers a more coherent and less obviously 'edited' text than any of the three thirteenth-century MSS, suggesting that it

¹ In the base MS used for this edition the names of the protagonists are spelt Piramus or Pyramus (the first being the more common form) and Tysbe. Given that the form Tisbé (found throughout MS C) has been adopted for the sake of consistency in most English-language criticism, I have followed suit in my introduction and translation, but have maintained the form Tysbé in the Old French text of the edition.

² *Ovide Moralisé*, Bk 4 (vol. II), 224-28. Full details of all works referred to by author's name or short title can be found in the Bibliography.

³ I follow Branciforti's classification of the *OM* MSS, which differs significantly from that originally proposed by de Boer; see his edition of *Piramus*, pp. 100-31.

⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, subsequent references to de Boer are to the 1921 edition, which incorporates a significant number of revisions proposed by Faral in his review of the 1911 text.

was based on a reliable earlier witness. Of the extant earlier MSS, Paris, BNF fr. 19152 (B) is very closely related to R, but contains more scribal errors and omits virtually all of the disyllabic lines in the lyric sequences. Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Hamilton 257 (C) is more carefully executed, but presents an abridged text (679 lines as compared with R's 891)⁵ with omissions of passages of up to thirty lines found in R, B and/or A. It also differs significantly from R and B in some of the lyric sequences. Paris, BNF fr. 837 (A) is the most idiosyncratic of the three, with significant evidence of scribal rewriting, omission of a third of the disyllabic lines and a large number of obviously corrupt passages. It is also incomplete, the closing lines having been lost when a folio became detached from the MS at some point in its history.⁶

The question of the relationship between the four principal witnesses is a vexed one. The very large number of readings common to R and B indicates that they probably derive from a common source, which Branciforti designates as β . He also argues that C and A derive ultimately from a common archetype, but this view has been questioned by Favati (pp. 444-45), and the combination of idiosyncrasy and carelessness in A makes it almost impossible to draw reliable conclusions about its relationship to the other MSS. The fact that both B and A omit disyllabic lines with a greater or lesser degree of consistency further complicates matters by raising the possibility of contact between these two witnesses at some stage in the evolution of the text. Previous editors have tended to assume that the three autonomous MSS are independent of one another, but we cannot discount the possibility that one or more of these scribes had read or heard another version of the tale in addition to the one from which he was working, and that he combined elements from a second text with his primary source. Indeed, Faral (*Recherches*, p. 220) concluded that in the case of the debate poem *Florence et Blancheflor*, which is also found in both MSS, the scribe of BNF fr. 19152 had drawn on the tradition represented by Hamilton 257 as well as another, more direct predecessor, so cross-contamination between our MSS B and C is by no means out of the question. C offers coherent readings in several places (e.g. vv. 168, 402, 708) where RB are obviously defective, and differs from them in a number of

⁵ Counting the disyllables in C as separate verses, although they are normally written on the same line as the preceding (or occasionally following) octosyllable.

⁶ The missing folio contained the final lines of Tisbé's last monologue, the concluding narrative sequence and the epilogue.

others (e.g. vv. 178 ‘Quant ie plus pleing et meins me vaut’, 275-76 ‘Por vos ai ge le vis pali/ La char tremblant le cors freidi’, and 879-92, which offer a completely different version of Tisbé’s last words to Piramus). We cannot be certain, however, whether these represent the readings of the original version of *Piramus*, lines borrowed from an alternative tradition, or editorial work by a scribe faced with a corrupt source.

The editions by de Boer, Branciforti and Cormier are all reconstructive in approach, taking the view that agreement of two or more of the autonomous versions against R indicates a ‘better’ reading which brings us closer to the original version of the tale. De Boer dismissed B as ‘une mauvaise copie du texte conservé par O [i.e. his reconstructed text of *OM*]’ (p. iii), and consequently emended wherever CA agreed against R; in addition, he occasionally adopted other readings from C where these seemed to him to make for more elegant phrasing. Branciforti recognised the importance of B as a control for R, but assumed that agreement of BC or BA against R indicated an original reading; he also incorporates lines from CA where there is no obvious lacuna in RB. Cormier rejects some of the emendations made by both de Boer and Branciforti, but still prefers readings from C and/or A on a number of occasions where R and/or B are not obviously corrupt.⁷ Branciforti and Cormier include translations with their editions (the former into Italian, the latter into English), but it must be noted that both contain errors which raise questions about their understanding of the text, and consequently about their approach to emendation (see Favati pp. 446-47, and Cormier’s translation of vv. 69-72, 191, 202-03, 283-84, 309-311, 417-19, 558, 661, and 791-95).

The present edition takes a more conservative approach, though not as conservative as Baumgartner, who reproduces the text of R without reference to the other MSS.⁸ In view of the complexity of the MS tradition, no attempt has been made to reconstruct earlier stages in the transmission of the poem. The text of R is presented as it appears in the MS, emended only where there is an obvious lacuna (as indicated by an

⁷ Cormier’s editorial policy is not entirely consistent, and a significant number of his emendations are inaccurate, e.g. v. 420 (v. 404 in the present edition) where he signals an emendation from ‘Sui pris’ to ‘Sorpris’, although ‘Sorpris’ occurs in R and ‘Sui pris’ only in C.

⁸ Baumgartner does, however, include a small number of emendations borrowed from de Boer and Branciforti, and omits a number of lines found in R but rejected by previous editors. Her edition has its own lacuna: eight lines are missing after v. 421 (vv. 426-33 in the present edition). In addition, there are some three dozen transcription errors, and half-a-dozen emendations that are not signalled in the ‘Leçons rejetées’.

incomplete phrase, logical inconsistency, or absence of a disyllable in the lyric sequences) or scribal error (e.g. reading a word or phrase from a contiguous line). In three instances (vv. 387, 467 and 817) the presence of a line in B which is not in R has been taken as evidence of a lacuna, even though the text of R makes reasonable sense as it stands. In each case, a similar line occurs in at least one of the other MSS, and without it the transition between ideas is sufficiently abrupt to suggest that something is missing. Given that R and B are so closely related, and that B consistently abridges rather than expands, the balance of probability is in favour of these lines having been omitted from R through carelessness. In two out of the three cases (vv. 467 and 817), the fact that the line occurs in a passage which is obviously corrupt in R supports the argument for a scribal omission.

Emendations are normally taken from B, whether or not these readings are supported by C and/or A. Readings from CA are used only where both R and B are deficient, with preference being given to C in cases of non-agreement between the two (for this reason variants are listed in the Notes and Rejected Readings in the order B-C-A). Because of the possibility of cross-contamination outlined above, agreement of BCA against R has not been taken as *prima facie* evidence for emendation. A very small number of editorial emendations have been made; these and other changes to the text of R which are not self-evident are discussed in the notes, together with a number of points of interest arising from the MS tradition. Lines supplied from other MSS are printed in italic type and their source indicated along with all other alterations under the Rejected Readings. The relatively small number of case errors have not been corrected (except in one case, for the sake of the rhyme), but abbreviations have been expanded, word division has been regularised and capital letters and accented characters introduced in line with normal editorial practice.

The line-by-line translation aims to provide a straightforward Modern English version of the poem for non-specialist readers. The tenses of the original have been maintained as far as possible, although I do not always distinguish between the Old French perfect and simple past where doing so produces unnatural English. I have attempted to preserve something of the flavour of the lyric sequences by translating the disyllabic lines by a two-syllable word or phrase wherever possible, and by using slightly more ‘poetic’ language where this reflects the tenor of the original.

Outline of the Story

In the city of Babylon, two noble families live in adjacent palaces. Their children, Piramus and Tisbé, are the same age and equally matched in beauty and good qualities. The children are struck by Love's arrow before they reach the age of seven, but they continue to play together until a servant notices their behaviour and reports it to Tisbé's mother. Concerned about the possible consequences, she confines her daughter to the palace and forbids her to see Piramus. Shortly afterwards, a bitter feud between the youngsters' fathers puts paid to their hopes of being allowed to marry. Piramus and Tisbé suffer the torments of frustrated love until one day Tisbé discovers a crack in the party wall between their homes which allows them to talk to one another. The next morning Tisbé tells Piramus how she has dreamed that the gods have commanded them to leave the city. They are to escape separately under cover of darkness and meet outside the city walls by a spring under a mulberry tree. That night Tisbé slips out of the palace and, undaunted by sinister omens, makes her way to the meeting-place. There she is frightened by a lion that has just killed a flock of sheep, and runs off to hide, dropping her wimple on the ground. The lion plays with the wimple before leaving the scene. Piramus arrives, recognises the lion's tracks in the moonlight, sees the bloodstained cloth and concludes that Tisbé has been killed and eaten. He stabs himself with his sword; his blood spatters the mulberry tree, turning its white fruit black. Tisbé returns to find Piramus dying, draws the sword out of his wound and stabs herself, after praying that their parents will have them buried in the same tomb.

Date and Author

There are no references in the poem to people or events that would enable us to date the poem with certainty, nor are there any specific allusions to this version of the story in other works whose dates are known to us. However, there is a general consensus among scholars that the subject matter of our poem (a classical tale) and certain features of its style (such as very limited use of the *brisure du couplet* in its narrative sequences) belong to an early period of development of Old French courtly fiction. It almost certainly dates from around the same period as the *romans antiques*: that is, between about 1155 and 1170. Faral places *Piramus* after the *Roman de Thèbes* (c. 1155), but before *Enéas* (1160-65), giving a date of c. 1160, adopted by Kibler. Genaust dates our

poem closer to 1165 than 1160, but agrees with the view of previous scholars that *Piramus* influenced the *Lais* of Marie de France. If, as Bédier and Branciforti argue, the reference to a ‘lay [...] about Noble Thisbe of Old Babylon’ in the *Tristan* of Gottfried von Strassburg⁹ was present in the version by Thomas d’Angleterre on which it was based, this might also be taken as evidence for the existence of the Old French *Piramus* before 1170.¹⁰ As we shall see, the appellation ‘the lai of Thisbe’ is peculiarly well suited to the form and thematic orientation of our poem.

That there was a particular vogue for vernacular adaptations of Ovid in the third quarter of the twelfth century is shown by the inclusion in *Eneas* of the story of Mars and Venus (*Metam.* IV); by the existence of an Old French Narcissus poem (*Metam.* III) which is usually thought to date from before 1170; and by Chrétien de Troyes’s references in the prologue to *Cligés* (c. 1174-76) to his lost versions of ‘les comandemanz Ovide’ and the tale of Pelops (*Metam.* VI), as well as to a poem about Tereus, Procne and Philomela (*Metam.* VI), which is almost certainly the *Philomena* preserved in the *Ovide Moralisé*.¹¹ The allusion to Piramus as an archetypal lover in line 3803 of Chrétien’s *Chevalier de la Charrette* (c. 1178)¹² is not specific enough to prove that the author must have had our poem in mind, rather than Ovid’s version of the tale, but it does suggest that he was writing for a non-clerical audience which was already familiar with the story – and the existence of a vernacular poem about Piramus and Thisbe would provide a logical explanation for that familiarity. In a poem by the troubadour Giraut de Cabreira, quoted by Faral (*Recherches*, pp. 9-10), the story of Piramus ‘who suffered death for Tisbé outside the city walls’ is included in a list of works that every good *jongleur* should know, indicating that one or more vernacular versions of the tale were certainly in wide circulation by the end of the twelfth century.

Unlike some of his contemporaries, the author of *Piramus* does not name

⁹ Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, trans. by A. T. Hatto (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967), p. 90.

¹⁰ See Thomas, *Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas*, ed. Joseph Bédier, SATF, 2 vols (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1902 & 1905), I, 52-54; de Boer, ‘Le “lai de Tisbé”’, and Branciforti, pp. 3-6. The reference does not figure, however, in the Old Norse *Tristrams saga* or the Middle English *Sir Tristrem*, which were also based on Thomas. Thomas’s poem was probably composed between 1170 and 1175.

¹¹ In all probability there was also an Old French *lai* of Orpheus, now lost, which was one of the sources of the Middle English *Sir Orfeo*.

¹² Ed. and trans. by Jean-Claude Aubailly (Paris: Flammarion, 1991). In Chrétien’s *Erec et Enide* (c. 1170) the heroine attempts to kill herself with the hero’s sword when he collapses in front of her, apparently dead. This may be another echo of our poem, although there are significant differences between this scene and Tisbé’s suicide.

himself in the text, nor is an author's name associated with the poem in any of the surviving manuscripts in which it is found. There are no compelling stylistic or other reasons to attribute this work to any of the writers of the period whose names we know, such as Chrétien, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Wace or Marie de France, or even to any of the anonymous composers of narratives such as *Eneas* or *Partonopeus de Blois*.¹³ There are a number of close verbal parallels between *Piramus* and the so-called *lai* of *Narcissus*, which might suggest common authorship of the two, although these similarities could also be explained by the author of one poem having read or heard the other and recalling particular phrases when similar contexts presented themselves in his own work. It is worth noting, however, that the prologue to *Narcissus* presents a rationale for the poem as a cautionary tale about the dangers of *fole amor*, a rationale that is also peculiarly applicable to *Piramus*. Although the two tales are not juxtaposed in any known manuscript, two of the three earliest witnesses of *Piramus* also contain the text of *Narcissus*.

The place of composition of our poem is equally difficult to establish with certainty. De Boer argued that the particular combination of linguistic features found in the text suggested that the author was a native of Normandy, and belonged to the 'véritable école d'imitation de l'antiquité' that flourished in north-western France under the Plantagenets (pp. x-xi). Branciforti tentatively proposed a Picard origin, while noting that *Piramus* is one of the 'least provincial' products of Old French literature (pp. 152-53). Genaust prefers the western hypothesis, but also notes the 'supra-regional' nature of the literary language adopted by the author ('Bemerkungen', p. 525). Whatever his exact place of origin, there is no reason to disagree with Cormier's conclusion that 'the *Piramus et Tisbé* poet was trained in and imbued with the Latin classics, particularly Ovid, and that he had studied both Latin and vernacular composition, versification and thematics' (p. 3).

Sources and their Treatment

The main source for *Piramus et Tisbé* is lines 55-166 of Book IV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Composed shortly before 8 A.D., the *Metamorphoses* is a 'vast and

¹³ Gaston Paris suggested that *Piramus* might be attributed to Chrétien, but his hypothesis has not been generally accepted; see 'Chrétien Legouais et autres imitateurs d'Ovide', *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, 29 (1885), p. 497.

elaborate tapestry'¹⁴ made up of approximately 250 skilfully interwoven tales of transformation drawn from Greek mythology. Along with Ovid's earlier works, the *Amores*, the *Heroides* and the *Ars Amatoria* (the Art of Love), the *Metamorphoses* were widely studied throughout Europe from the twelfth century onwards, both as models of Latin verse and as an inexhaustible fund of stories about love, ambition, jealousy and other aspects of human psychology. There is some evidence to suggest that the names Pyramus and Thisbe were originally associated with a Greek river myth;¹⁵ how they then came to be linked to the mulberry tree is unclear. Whether this was Ovid's own invention or not, his version of the story was destined to become the definitive model for later writers.

The Old French *Piramus* faithfully reproduces the outline of Ovid's tale, but differs substantially from its source in terms of the weighting given to individual elements of the narrative, the characterisation of the protagonists and a large number of incidental details. Like the *romans antiques*, which were also based on well-known classical or post-classical sources, it is an adaptation rather than a translation in the modern sense of the word, although it does contain a number of direct renderings of phrases from the Latin original (e.g. vv. 316, 626, 721-22, 745).¹⁶ As Branciforti and Kibler have shown, the process of adaptation involves extensive use of a range of rhetorical techniques, chief amongst which is *amplificatio*.¹⁷ Branciforti claims that many of these amplifications were inspired by the glosses on one or more annotated MSS of the *Metamorphoses* from which our poet was working. However, Favati argues that it is not necessary to posit the existence of an intermediate text – the glossed MS – in order to account for any of the passages in which the French poet expands and develops his original.¹⁸ The techniques our poet uses were all routinely taught in the

¹⁴ *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. Mary M. Innes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955), p. 13. Line numbers are taken from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ed. and trans. Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1916).

¹⁵ See Schmitt-von Mühlenfels, pp. 15-16.

¹⁶ Line 316 'Quel chose est ce qu'amours ne sent?' either represents a misreading of *Metam.* IV, 68, 'quid non sentit amor' ('what doesn't love see?'), or indicates that the *Piramus* poet knew Ovid in a MS that read 'quid non sentit amorem'.

¹⁷ Branciforti, pp. 13-65; Kibler, pp. 276-91. Genaust notes the complementary use of *abbreviatio* alongside amplification: see *Struktur*, pp. 32-35, and 'Bemerkungen', pp. 529-30.

¹⁸ Some of Branciforti's arguments are based on lines that do not appear in RB, and may represent scribal interpolations. While the case for the original poet's having used a glossed MS remains unproven, it may be possible to see some of these 'extra' lines in CA as the work of a *remanieur* who had been in contact with an annotated MS. However, in the case of one such line, at least (Branciforti's v. 771), it is very difficult to see how a *remanieur* could have arrived at the French text via a gloss that says almost the

schools and adopted by the authors of *Thèbes*, *Eneas* and *Troie*. Just as they recreated Statius, Virgil and Dares/Dictys for their own time, so the *Piramus* poet rewrites Ovid for a new audience, adapting the story to contemporary social conditions, and using it as a vehicle for exploring aspects of human behaviour of interest to his public.

Details are added or altered in order to recontextualise the action, setting it in a world which is clearly not that of a twelfth-century court, but which has enough in common with it for a court audience to identify with what they are hearing. Whereas Ovid says nothing specific about his protagonists' social status, the French poet makes his hero and heroine into the children of noble families, whose rank and connections are constantly emphasised in the opening lines of the poem. He introduces a range of secondary characters who would have been familiar to his public: the servant who spies on the two young people, the *chamberiere* who is charged with ensuring that Tisbé does not leave the house, and the watchman who sees her making her way through the city at night. The inclusion of the watchman may also be an example of our poet introducing a certain *vraisemblance* into his story: it would have been difficult for a twelfth-century Tisbé to make her way through the streets of a fortified city without being spotted by guards. The same may be true of the breach in the city wall that allows her to escape into open country: siege warfare was so prevalent in the twelfth century that damaged fortifications would have seemed quite normal to any audience. Tisbé's costume is also characteristically medieval: she has a belt with a *pendant* which she is able to slip through the crack in the wall, and wears a wimple, in contrast to Ovid's Thisbe, who covers her head with a loose veil which she drops when fleeing from the lion.

More significant than these cultural details is the fact that the *Piramus* poet changes the whole dynamics of the story, in order to focus attention on the psychology of love and the figure of the heroine. In Ovid, only 38 lines out of 112 are concerned with events preceding the lovers' elopement; almost half of the story is taken up with the final scene of suicide under the mulberry tree. In *Piramus*, on the other hand, 589 out of 912 lines are devoted to the earlier stages of the narrative, while the *dénouement* occupies less than 250 lines. Ovid includes only three passages of direct speech: a short speech through the crack in the wall, attributed to both the lovers, and their individual

opposite (see Favati, p. 444; Favati does not note, however, that this line appears only in CA, and is corrupt in both). Tyssens adopts Branciforti's thesis, but does not appear to have read Favati's review.

laments in the suicide scene. The French poet creates two new laments before the discovery of the crack, and expands Ovid's single speech at the wall into four separate monologues, two for each protagonist. The predominantly narrative treatment of the story in the Latin text is replaced by a much more lyrical approach in which the exploration of feelings and motives is more important than the sequence of events to which they give rise. While giving much more space to the analysis of emotional states, our poet also compresses the time-frame of the intrigue. In the *Metamorphoses* we are told that the lovers hold frequent conversations through the wall before deciding to leave the city; in *Piramus* they discover the crack one day, speak to one another again the following day, and then escape that night. This has the effect of highlighting the impetuous, irrational nature of young love: under the influence of *Amor*, the hero and heroine take no time to consider their situation.

Another important change is the fact that the French poet attributes the finding of the crack in the wall and the formulation of the escape plan to Tisbé, while in Ovid both events are presented as joint actions involving hero and heroine. Our poet also dramatises Tisbé's escape from her father's palace by adding in two elements not found in Ovid's story: the evil omens that fail to deter her from leaving, and the watchman who decides not to accost her on the grounds that only a supernatural being would be abroad alone at that hour. The idea of the departure accompanied by omens was probably copied from the story of Myrrha in Book X of the *Metamorphoses*, although the nature of the omens is quite different in our poem. Tisbé puts her left foot forward as she leaves her father's house, an earth tremor shakes the palace and the moon turns dim, while in the Myrrha story the moon hides behind the clouds, the heroine stumbles three times as she approaches her father's dwelling and the screech-owl calls three times. The first omen in *Piramus* derives from the widely-held view that the left side (*sinister* in Latin) was unlucky: taking a first step with the left foot is an inauspicious start for any enterprise. The second and third omens are almost certainly conscious or unconscious reminiscences of Revelation 6.12, where the breaking of the sixth seal, heralding the end of the physical world, is marked by an earthquake and eclipses of the sun and moon.¹⁹ This association with the end of the world and the day of judgement

¹⁹ The references to the *pie senestre*, earth tremor and dimmed moon are common to all the MSS, but C and A also include a thunderclap in v. 630, and a couplet featuring the owl takes the place of our vv. 633-34. It is possible, as previous editors have believed, that the original version of the poem contained the

may also explain why the hero's final monologue begins with an echo of the *Dies irae* ('Nuis de dolour, nuis de torment', v. 702), which, as Payen noted, 'est toujours associé, dans les oeuvres du moyen âge, à des réminiscences apocalyptiques' (p. 49).

Other versions of the story

The popularity of the story of Piramus and Thisbe is attested by the existence of at least six twelfth- and thirteenth-century Latin poems devoted to the lovers,²⁰ as well as a number of vernacular reworkings of the tale composed after, and possibly in response to, our *Piramus*. A fragment of 123 lines from a thirteenth-century French poem probably represents 'an attempt to repeat the success of the earlier *P. et T.* by the composition of a new vernacular version, which shows signs of a return to the Latin source as well as a willingness to borrow selectively from its French precursor.'²¹ It is closer to Ovid in that the lovers continue to communicate through the wall for a considerable period of time before leaving the city; it also reverses the gender roles of our *Piramus* by having the escape plan put forward by the hero rather than the heroine. The mid-thirteenth-century *Roman de la Poire*²² alludes to a radically different version of the central episode in the story, in which the two lovers exchange long-distance kisses through a straw pushed through a hole in the wall that separates them. This text also features a more active hero than our poem: Piramus explains that he and Tisbé were able to communicate because he had chiselled through the wall to make room for the straw. The way in which the allusion is introduced does not suggest that this is an original invention by the author of the *Roman*, but rather an alternative version of the tale with which at least some of his audience would be familiar;²³ there is also some

full range of omens, and that MSS R and B derive from a tradition that chose to discard two of them. It is equally possible, however, that the original featured only three omens, and that CA represent an interpolated version, a *remanieur* choosing to gild the lily by adding extra omens drawn from the Myrrha story and Revelation 6.1, where the breaking of the first seal is accompanied by a sound like thunder. Curiously, both C and A describe Tisbé *seeing* birds of ill omen (C *vit le huan vit la fresaie* A *vit la chancre et la fresaie*) rather than hearing their cries, while in the Myrrha story the owl is heard and not seen.

²⁰ See Glendinning, who describes these poems as being 'of scant literary merit' (p. 51).

²¹ van Emden, 'A Fragment', pp. 249-50.

²² *Le Roman de la Poire par Thibaut*, ed. by Cristiane Marchello-Nizia, SATF (Paris: Picard, 1984), vv. 161-80.

²³ A second allusion to the story in lines 715-40 ends with the statement that both the fruit and the branches of the mulberry turned black, and that they did so as a result of the tree's roots soaking up Piramus's blood as it fell from his wound. Ovid refers to the role of the roots, but does not say anything about the branches changing colour as well as the berries.

iconographical evidence for such a variant.²⁴ This version may have influenced the 217-line translation of Ovid's story found in the late-thirteenth-century *Bible* by Jehan Malkaraume, which also seems to feature some kind of tube pushed through the wall.²⁵

It is fairly clear that, in the century following the composition of our text, rival versions of the Piramus story were circulating in much the same way as rival versions of the Tristan story are known to have circulated during the twelfth century. The popularity of the story in the thirteenth century is also attested by the *chante-fable* of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, the earlier sections of which represent a comic reworking of our version of *Piramus*. There are unmistakable similarities between the two works: both feature young lovers separated by their parents, a spirited girl escaping from confinement in an upper chamber in her father's house, talking to her lover through a crack in a wall before climbing through a breach in the city walls by moonlight, and a watchman who fails to alert the guard when he sees her. Aucassin, like Piramus, is a young man much given to lamenting while his female counterpart takes the initiative in bringing about their reunion. The exaggeration in *Aucassin* of the male-female role reversal suggested in *Piramus* fits very well with the idea that this aspect of the original had already attracted adverse criticism, and had started to spawn 'revisionist' versions of the story in which Piramus played a more appropriately active role.

Form, Structure and Versification

Piramus is unique amongst surviving twelfth-century narratives for its mixing of three different metrical forms. It is made up of nine narrative units in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, alternating with eight lyric sequences consisting of monologues attributed to the two main protagonists. The two shortest lyric sequences (seventeen and twenty-three lines respectively), are in monorhymed octosyllables; the remaining six (from fifty-three to ninety-two lines long), consist of groups of between one and six rhyming octosyllables introduced by a disyllabic line on the same rhyme. Octosyllables are found alternating with shorter metres in Old French lyric poetry, and in a number of other non-lyric texts, including the early fabliau *Richeut*, but nearly all of these use a four-syllable line rather than a disyllable, and the short line tends to be placed at the end of the rhyme

²⁴ The two lovers are portrayed communicating through a tube on an ivory casket discussed by Lehmann, p. 104, and Tafel III. See also Smeets, 'Le duis'.

²⁵ *La Bible de Jehan Malkaraume*, ed. by J. R. Smeets, 2 vols (Assen: van Gorcum, 1978), vv. 7726-942.

group rather than the beginning. Only the *dit* of *Dan Denier* uses a disyllabic line (and sometimes a monosyllable) which often repeats a word from the preceding line in the same way as lines 181, 224, 235, 251, 267 etc. of our poem (Faral, *Recherches*, p. 9, n. 1).

Although octosyllabic couplets eventually became the dominant metre for courtly narrative, the earliest phase of vernacular romance writing was marked by considerable variety of form. In the period up to and around 1170 we find texts composed in octosyllabic rhyming couplets throughout, such as the romances of *Thèbes*, *Eneas* and *Troie*, Wace's *Brut*, and the *Lais* of Marie de France; in hexasyllabic rhyming couplets (Robert Biket's *Lai du Cor*); in decasyllabic or dodecasyllabic laisses (Lambert le Tort's *Alexander* and the *Roman de Horn* respectively), partly in hexasyllables and partly in octosyllables (Philippe de Thaur's *Bestiaire*) and partly in octosyllables and partly in dodecasyllables (Wace's *Roman de Rou*). The exact combination of metres found in *Piramus* may be unique, but our poem clearly belongs to a period of formal experimentation in vernacular narrative.

The alternation of narrative and lyric sequences in *Piramus* raises the question of how this work was presented to an audience. Like all narrative compositions of the period, it was intended for oral presentation rather than private reading, but there is a strong possibility that the lyric sequences may have been sung, perhaps to instrumental accompaniment, while the narrative passages were recited. The disyllabic lines, in particular, are rather awkward when recited, since they do not form a coherent rhythmic unit (the four-syllable lines in *Richeut*, for example, are much easier to integrate into a spoken text because they form a complete hemistich). Set to a repeated two-note musical phrase, they would have been considerably more effective. *Aucassin et Nicolette* consists of alternating verse and prose sections, and we know that the former were sung while the latter were spoken. The strict alternation of lyric and narrative sections is so similar to what we find in *Piramus*, and the author of *Aucassin* drew on so many narrative elements from our poem, that it is tempting to assume that he also copied its form – in other words that *Piramus* offered a model of story-telling in which recitation alternated with sung interludes. The available evidence indicates that this pattern was also characteristic of the Breton *lai*,²⁶ which Marie de France and other

²⁶ See de Boer, 'Le "lai de Tisbé"', p. 238.

writers of Old French narrative *lais* transformed from a mixed-media performance into a simple recitation. We are left with the intriguing possibility that this classical tale, derived from Ovid, is the closest thing we have, in terms of form, to the lost compositions of medieval Brittany.

By the time our manuscripts B, C and A were copied in the thirteenth century, the form of *Piramus* was clearly felt to be anomalous, by some scribes at least. The scribe of B systematically removed the disyllabic lines in the lyric sequences, either omitting them altogether, expanding them to create a new octosyllable, or incorporating them into reworked versions of the following lines. The end result is a ‘narrativised’ version of the story, whose origins are nonetheless apparent in the clumsiness of some of the reworkings. The scribe of A removed some of the disyllables and retained others in an apparently haphazard fashion, while the scribe of C retained them all, but wrote each one on the same line as the preceding octosyllable. Only in R does the poem have a visual form that mirrors its acoustic form, with the disyllables set out on separate lines.

Piramus et Tisbé shows every sign of being carefully crafted by a poet who had a real talent for vernacular versification. The alternation of narrative and lyric sequences is maintained throughout, while the monologues themselves are also arranged in symmetrical pairs: two laments by the separated lovers, two short speeches through the crack in the wall, two long speeches leading up to the escape plan, and two laments over the death (imagined or real) of the other party. Tisbé’s monologue is always the second in each pair, but far from creating an impression of her as someone who is purely reactive, this tends to give her speeches added force, as they come over as ‘the final word’ on each topic. The heroine also has a higher proportion of the lines in the lyric sequences: 54.1 % as against 45.9 % for Piramus. Under the original conditions of performance, her voice would have been noticeably more insistent than that of the hero.

The *Piramus* poet goes to great lengths to introduce phonic variety into his composition, using almost 100 different rhymes, and varying the rhyme schemes of the lyric sequences in particular. The two shortest disyllable sequences have no repeated rhymes, while the four longer ones have no more than four. At the same time, our author is aware of the dramatic potential of repeated patterns, which he exploits in the two sequences of monorhymed octosyllables that express the hero and heroine’s breathless excitement at discovering the crack in the wall that will allow them to

communicate. At the end of the poem, the drama of Tisbé's death is heightened by a quasi-lyric sequence of 22 lines (vv. 877-98) that begins and ends with the same rhyme (–*ele*) and in which every other couplet rhymes in –*ie*, with the rhyme words *amie*, *vie* and *esmarie* all being repeated in order to emphasise the impossibility of the heroine's living on after the death of her *ami*.

In other respects the versification of *Piramus* has been described as 'conservative' (de Boer, p. vii), but this is truer of the strictly narrative sequences than of the lovers' monologues. In the former, broken couplets are rare, and the percentage of *rimes riches* is very low (less than 4%). In the sequences of monorhymed 'stanzas' introduced by a disyllable, however, a rather different picture emerges: almost 40% of the stanzas contain at least one *rime riche*, and over a quarter of the lines in these sequences have 'rich' endings. Some stanzas have as many as four lines which exceed the basic requirements for *rime suffisante*. This careful phonic patterning may provide additional evidence for the lyric sequences having been sung rather than declaimed.

The Question of Genre

Critics have always experienced some difficulty in positioning *Piramus et Tisbé* in relation to other forms of Old French literature. As an adaptation of a well-known classical source, it has obvious affinities with the *romans antiques*, but it is very different from them in terms of length (just over 900 lines as compared with more than 10,000 for *Thèbes* and *Enéas*, and 30,000 for *Troie*) and subject matter: *Piramus* is exclusively a love story, with none of the military and political preoccupations that characterise the longer works.²⁷ To this extent, it has more in common with the *romans idylliques*, a subset of romances, including *Floire et Blancheflor*, *Floris et Liriopé* and *Cristal et Clarie*, that focus specifically on the separation, trials and reunion of young lovers.²⁸ Here, too, its length is problematic: *Floris* is almost twice as long as our poem, while *Floire* is over 3,000 lines long, and some other *romans idylliques* run to several thousand lines of verse. In terms of both length and subject matter, *Piramus* is probably

²⁷ Ellen Constans calls *Piramus* a 'roman antique', but suggests that its subject matter aligns it more closely with texts such as *Tristan* and *Aucassin et Nicolette*, which she sees as precursors of the modern *roman sentimental*. See *Parlez-moi d'amour: le roman sentimental. Des romans grecs aux collections de l'an 2000* (Paris: PULIM, 1999), pp. 50-62. Cadot sees the non-lyric sections of our poem as essentially 'romanesque' (pp. 447-58).

²⁸ Interestingly, the hero's seduction of Liriopé in *Floris* is made easier because reading the *romant* of Pyramus and Thisbe has awakened her interest in love.

most similar to the *lais*, short narratives whose principal topic is love, and which often include accounts of quasi-magical transformations.²⁹ The active and sexually uninhibited heroine of our poem also recalls the figure of the fairy mistress, intimately associated with the *lai*.³⁰ In terms of form, however, *Piramus* is unlike any extant *lai* in Old French, while the use of a classical subject and location (Babylon) sets it apart from tales like *Guigemar*, *Graelent* and *Desiré*, which draw on Celtic folklore and a recognisably northern European geography.

The question of genre is further complicated by the performance aspects of the text outlined above. Aubailly argues that *Piramus* is organised into a sequence of ‘acts’ and ‘scenes’ that strongly suggest some kind of dramatised presentation. This might have involved three members of a group of *jongleurs*, with two playing the roles of the hero and heroine, singing the lyric sequences and possibly miming to the other sections, while the third acted as a ‘récitant-présentateur’ declaiming the narrative.³¹ Here again, the evidence of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, with its clear indication of multiple performers, is highly suggestive.³² Aubailly’s description of *Piramus* as a ‘lai dramatisé’³³ may be as close as we can get to categorising this highly unusual work.

The Power of Love

At its simplest level, *Piramus et Tisbé* is a story about the irresistible force of *Amor*. Love is first introduced in line 14; its universal power is then evoked in a rhetorical sequence of eighteen lines (vv. 23-40) which function as an embedded prologue, drawing the audience’s attention to one of the major themes of the work. The terms the poet uses to describe the power of love are drawn from a well-established pool of literary topoi, many of them ultimately derived from Ovid, but rapidly becoming part of the stock-in-trade of vernacular poetry. In the ‘prologue’ love is an archer whose arrow sets the lover on fire, and makes him sigh, beg and resort to all sorts of stratagems before he can taste the sweetness of fulfilment. Elsewhere it is a god, a feudal overlord, a falconer using hunger to control his hawk, an angler hooking a hapless fish, a hunter

²⁹ Genaust, *Struktur*, argues that *Piramus* also has the same kind of narrative organisation as the Old French *lais*.

³⁰ Aubailly, ‘Pyrame et Tisbé au théâtre’, p. 5.

³¹ Aubailly, ‘Aux sources du théâtre’, pp. 20-28.

³² The initial rubrics for the prose sections all contain plural verbs (‘or dient et content et fabloient’).

³³ ‘Pyrame et Tisbé au théâtre’, p. 5.

with his net, and a torturer. The experience of love is described as a wound, an illness, a torment, and likened to being burnt alive. As in *Enéas*, attention is drawn to the physical as well as to the psychological effects of frustrated love: constant unhappiness and loss of sleep sap the lovers' vitality, the hero's youthful colour is replaced by a sickly pallor, and the heroine suffers palpitations and hot flushes. The commonplace that love will find a way is illustrated by Tisbé's finding a crack in the wall that has passed unnoticed for years, and the poet comments 'Amours la fist trouver, / Vers cui riens ne se puet celer' (vv. 314-15). The Virgilian tag *amor vincit omnia* ('love conquers all') is quoted directly in lines 363-64, as the poet describes Tisbé's reaction to her first sight of Pirus through the newly-discovered crack: 'En tantes guises la destraint / Amours, qui toutes choses vaint'.³⁴

As in the case of troubadour and *trouvère* lyric poetry, the careful blending of well-known ingredients can produce very effective results. For all its debt to Ovid, the *Pirus* poet's picture of young love is coherent and convincing. He traces Pirus and Tisbé's development from unselfconscious children, allowed to play together all day long, but already perhaps experimenting with things their parents disapprove of (vv. 59-60), to frustrated adolescents whose monologues contain seeds of violence as well as self-pity. The dramatic mood swings of youth are well observed: Pirus describes how he oscillates between joy and despair (v. 194); one moment Tisbé is unable to speak to Pirus, while the next she is teasing him for his 'heroic' failure to spot the crack in the wall.

Overall, the psychology of the heroine is more carefully explored than that of the hero. The contradictions of youth are well represented in the figure of Tisbé, who is depicted as both impulsive and thoughtful, impetuous and slightly afraid of her own daring. One moment the rebellious adolescent declares that no one has a right to criticise her if she gives herself to Pirus; the next, the dutiful daughter determines (briefly) to accept her father's choice of a partner (vv. 255-66). Having made up her mind to elope, she then attempts to displace responsibility for the decision by attributing it to the gods, speaking to her through a nocturnal vision of Pirus. Later, however, we see her leaving her parents' house under cover of darkness without a second thought for

³⁴ We should note that the phrase is used here in its original sense of 'love is stronger than anyone or anything', rather than its more optimistic modern interpretation as 'love overcomes all obstacles'.

the sinister omens that accompany her departure. There is no equivalent scene of Piramus's escape from the city, nor is there any insight into his thoughts or feelings until the dramatic moment when he spots Tisbé's wimple lying on the ground and jumps to the tragic conclusion that she is dead. The poem ends with Tisbé in the spotlight, embracing the already lifeless body of her lover, and it is the strength of her love that attracts a final comment from the narrator ('Se demoustre veraie amie', v. 905). In comparison, Piramus comes across as rather passive, given to lyric outbursts rather than action, and one is tempted to wonder whether there is not a hint of narratorial criticism in the words 'Si fete amour a mort le simple!' (v. 773) which close the scene of his suicide. The less than forceful presentation of the hero may have been the inevitable consequence of the poet's foregrounding of the heroine (see below for possible reasons behind this), but one can certainly see where the author of *Aucassin et Nicolette* found the seeds of his (or her?) comic portrayal of an ineffectual but not unsympathetic young nobleman.

One curious effect of our poet's preoccupation with the emotional analysis of his protagonists is that it leads him to enhance the role of the pagan gods, rather than to attenuate it like the authors of the *romans antiques*. Ovid mentions the gods on only one occasion, at the very end of his tale, while the hero and heroine of *Piramus* repeatedly call on them to witness their suffering (vv. 170, 178-79, 189, etc.). Many of these appeals take the form of purely conventional phrases such as 'Por dieu', or addresses to the God of Love, which might be expected in extended passages of direct speech, and might not have been perceived as explicit references to non-Christian deities. However, our author also introduces four unequivocal prayers to the classical gods (vv. 202-06, 298-303, 487-89, and 758-63) which do unmistakably draw attention to the pagan context.³⁵ While this certainly emphasises the intensity of the young lovers' passion, it may also be designed to raise more fundamental questions about the nature of their love. Is an emotion placed so explicitly under the tutelage of 'dame Venus' (vv. 202 and 488) to be regarded as a positive value by a twelfth-century Christian audience?

³⁵ Cadot argues that the religious practices evoked in our poem are clearly based on Christian models of prayer, which are overlaid with a thin veneer of paganism (pp. 439-46).

A Cautionary Tale

Given its unmistakable emphasis on the power of love, it may be tempting to see *Piramus* as an ‘exaltation de l’amour passion’, a Romeo and Juliet tale of innocent lovers whose tragic deaths could have been avoided with better timing and a little less obduracy on the part of their parents.³⁶ This may, however, be an anachronistic reading, which risks privileging the individual’s right to emotional fulfilment in a way that was alien to the early medieval public. The structuring of the story and the poet’s treatment of certain elements within it suggest rather that it may have been intended as a *mise en garde*, designed to highlight the dangers of sexual love rather than to enhance its appeal to the audience. This is, in many respects, a tale of transgression, which invites us to beware the consequences of crossing societal boundaries under the influence of passion – while at the same time providing the *frisson* of enjoyment that comes from experiencing transgression at one remove, through the medium of fiction.

The *literati* amongst our poet’s audience would have known, as he did, that the story of Pyramus and Thisbe occurs in Ovid in a context of transgressive behaviour. It is told by one of the daughters of Minyas, who refuse to attend a solemn festival of Bacchus, and are subsequently transformed into bats as punishment for their lack of reverence. Moreover, it is framed by tales of death and sexual *desmesure*: Book III of the *Metamorphoses* ends with the dismembering of Pentheus, who also refused to honour Bacchus, while the second story in Book IV concerns the adulterous liaison between Mars and Venus. Educated listeners might also have been familiar with the passages devoted to the story in Saint Augustine’s *De ordine*. Augustine tells how he warned his pupil Licentius of the spiritual dangers inherent in the composition of love poetry and advised him to approach the subject of Pyramus and Thisbe with care. He should shun Ovid’s ‘hideous sensuality and poisoned ardour’ that bring about the death of body and soul, and retell the story as a tale of pure intellectual love leading to salvation.³⁷

In some respects, the French *Piramus* reads almost like a gloss on Augustine’s response to Ovid, emphasising as it does the disturbing link between Eros and Thanatos,

³⁶ See Cadot, pp. 438 and 447. Laurie also takes the view that ‘the events which prevent the lovers from attaining perfect happiness are purely external’ (p. 29). On our poem’s influence on later authors, including Shakespeare, see Diverres, and van Emden, ‘La Légende’, ‘Sources’, and ‘Shakespeare’.

³⁷ Augustine, *De Ordine*, I, 8, 12, 21, and 24-25; *Patrologia Latina*, 32, cols 982-89. For further discussion of this reference, see Battaglia.

the protagonists' sexuality and the physical manifestations of desire. The initial evocation of Piramus and Tisbé's love is swiftly followed by an anticipation of their deaths (vv. 41-44); the narrator describes their growing passion as a 'mortel arдор' (v. 134); both hero and heroine refer to their love as a mortal wound (vv. 398-400, 496-98); both see death as the only possible outcome if they are unable to be together (vv. 165-68, 407-08, 440-41, 531-32).³⁸ This final point is further emphasised by a subtle change to Ovid's account of their plan to leave the city. In the *Metamorphoses*, the lovers agree to meet at Ninus' tomb and hide in the shade of a tree (vv. 88-90). The choice of meeting-place clearly anticipates the lovers' deaths and the sealing of their ashes in a single urn, but the tomb itself is not the main focus of these lines. Pride of place is given to the mulberry tree and the cool spring with which the description ends; as a result, the reader is left with an impression of a *locus amoenus* rather than a place of death. The French poet reverses the order of these elements: Tisbé mentions the spring and the tree first; the final words of her speech evoke 'the place where Ninus was buried', where Piramus is sure to find her (vv. 580-83). What remains uppermost in the audience's minds in this version is the inevitability of death if the two young people go ahead with their plan.

The cautionary nature of the tale is signalled in the very first line of our poem, which identifies the lovers' city as Babylon.³⁹ In the Bible, Babylon is synonymous with licentiousness: for the medieval audience, the name of the city could not fail to evoke the 'mother of harlots and abominations of the earth' of Revelation 17.5. The geographical setting immediately establishes a moral context, the implication being that any love-affair taking place in the city of the original scarlet woman will be characterised by sinful excess. This suspicion is confirmed by the foregrounding of Tisbé's sexuality at the beginning of her first monologue. After briefly bewailing her plight (vv. 212-15), the heroine laments the fact that she has so far been unable to think of a way of subverting her parents' ban on her talking to Piramus:

En quel guise prendrai conroi,
Amis douz, de parler a toi?

³⁸ For a fuller discussion of the foregrounding of *mort*, *morir*, etc., see Lefay-Toury, pp. 20-27.

³⁹ Ovid does not name Babylon at the beginning of his tale, identifying the location periphrastically as 'the city that Semiramis is said to have encircled with brick walls' (vv. 57-58), and it is not until line 99 that the heroine is described as 'Babylonia Thisbe'. The French poet consciously foregrounds the city's name and brings all its scriptural connotations into play at the outset.

Parler?
 Tysbé, fole, veulz tu desver
 Et ta chastee violer
 Et ton lignage vergonder? (vv. 222-27)

Tisbé clearly has sexual converse as well as conversation in mind here, and the voice of her rational self immediately reminds us that the social consequences of such illicit activity are personal shame and family dishonour; she would rather die a hundred deaths than incur such disgrace. That voice is soon silenced, however: twenty lines later we find Tisbé offering her virginity to her lover as a *gage* to make amends for momentarily allowing reason and honour, rather than love, to guide her conduct. For an audience who saw young women as being rightly subject to the absolute authority of their parents, and female sexuality as a disruptive force requiring rigorous social controls, even in its literary expression, this would have been doubly disturbing.⁴⁰ The subsequent repetition in lines 259-92 of this pattern – the wish to avoid dishonour swiftly followed by a determination to break all the rules of sexual conduct – reinforces the picture of Tisbé as an essentially transgressive figure.

This impression is confirmed in the next episode, where it is Tisbé who finds the crack in the party wall that allows the lovers to communicate and ultimately to plan their escape from the city. The possibility of undermining parental authority symbolised by this weakness in the fabric of their dwellings is recognised and exploited by the young woman, while the hero's eyes apparently remain closed to it. Responsibility for this first step on the road to tragedy is explicitly attributed to the heroine in a speech by Piramus in which he credits her with the *bele aventure* of finding the hole in the wall and draws attention to his own inability to see it (vv. 334-38).

The spatial dynamics of the story also highlight the presence of boundaries and the dangers of overstepping them.⁴¹ The two protagonists enjoy relative freedom during their childhood, going out to play during the day with the other children of the city, but returning to the safe and well-defined space of the parental home in the evenings (vv.

⁴⁰ Female desire is often negotiated in twelfth-century fiction by being associated with a supernatural fairy-mistress figure, such as the unnamed lady in Marie de France's *Lanval*, or her classical counterparts Medea and Circe in the *Roman de Troie*. It is worth noting that Ysmeine's explicit expression of her desire for Athon in the *Roman de Thèbes* is rapidly followed by the latter's death in battle, creating a vernacular literary model for the linking of tragedy with unrestrained female sexuality that is further reinforced by the Dido episode in *Eneas*.

⁴¹ On the importance of the tension between safe interior spaces and the outside world in Ovid, see Segal, pp. 388-91.

51-58). As puberty approaches, however, the rules governing Tisbé's conduct become more restrictive. Her confinement in the house represents the inevitable (and indeed appropriate, for a medieval audience) narrowing of a young girl's sphere of activity as she enters adolescence, so as to safeguard her chastity, the loss of which could jeopardise her chances of making an honourable marriage. Her decision to leave not only the house but also the city to be with Piramus marks a total rejection of societal constraints that leaves her at the mercy of unpredictable and dangerous forces in the unprotected zone beyond the city walls.

Those forces are most clearly embodied in the lion, which emerges from the unknown world of the mountains (or forest, in Ovid) into the marginal space between city and wilderness. In the *Metamorphoses*, Thisbe's encounter with the lion seems to represent a confrontation between urban civilisation and 'the bloody savagery of wild nature'.⁴² In *Piramus*, however, its symbolic function is rather different, as revealed by the changes the French poet makes to both the animal's gender and the nature of its recent victims. Ovid's lioness 'dripping with the blood of freshly-killed cattle' (vv. 96-97) becomes a male lion covered with the entrails and wool of a whole flock of sheep. The Biblical connotations of sheep and lambs immediately invite us to see this slaughter in terms of the destruction of innocence, while the associations of the male lion imply that the innocence lost here is sexual. The lion was often used as a symbol of virility, and could represent male sexuality in a negative sense as well: Hildegard of Bingen, for example, defends her sex against accusations of lechery by accusing men of being the real offenders, whose desire is as fierce as a (male) lion.⁴³ The connection is also made, significantly, in Book X of the *Metamorphoses*, where Atalanta and her lover Hippomenes are transformed into lions as a punishment for the young man's excessive lust.⁴⁴

While the *Piramus* poet clearly intends to foreground his heroine's sexuality, as we have seen, he is also at pains to emphasise the force of the hero's desire throughout the section of the text leading up to the appearance of the lion. We find Piramus yearning to hold Tisbé in his arms (vv. 189-90), threatening to take her by force if he

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 391.

⁴³ Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias sive Visionum ac Revelationum Libri Tres*, II.3; *Patrologia Latina*, 197, col. 461.

⁴⁴ In Bérout's *Tristan*, Iseut dreams about being pulled in opposite directions by two lions, who represent her husband Mark and her lover Tristan and their competing claims on her.

cannot marry her (vv. 163-64),⁴⁵ lamenting the fact that he has loved her for so long without being able to *faire son talent* (vv. 421-23), and fantasising about tearing the wall apart with his bare hands and dragging her into his chamber (vv. 452-56). Lucken suggests that the lion should be seen as the hero's double, representing the *ardor* that he has only been able to express verbally up to this point. Not only does the animal arrive at the meeting-place instead of the hero, it also engages in a symbolic deflowering of Tisbé's wimple, which functions as a metonym of the heroine's sexual self (p. 386).⁴⁶ On finding the bloodstained wimple under the mulberry tree, Piramus accuses the lion of being sated with her flesh (vv. 723-24), a phrase which is clearly open to a sexual as well as a carnivorous interpretation. This displacement of the sexual act into the metaphorical sphere allows the poet to preserve the outline and the pathos of Ovid's tale, in which the lovers die without ever having been together, while at the same time linking illicit sex with death, as the lion's defilement of the wimple is the direct cause of the protagonists' double suicide.

A similar cautionary note is sounded by another aspect of nature symbolism in the text. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the purpose of the tale is to provide a poetico-mythological explanation of a natural transformation, namely the fact that the fruit of the mulberry tree is whitish when immature, but ripens to a deep blackish red colour. In the Old French text the focus is displaced from metamorphosis to moral behaviour, and there is a corresponding shift in the significance of the tree under which the tragic *dénouement* takes place. The mulberry here is paired with the almond tree in whose shadow Tisbé takes refuge from the lion (vv. 666-67; in Ovid, Thisbe hides in a cave rather than under a tree). Both trees had strong symbolic associations in the Middle Ages. The almond tree was often regarded as a herald of spring, since it is the first flowering tree to bloom and forms fruit earlier than any other. However, because its precocious blossoms are more liable to be destroyed by frost, it also came to be seen as

⁴⁵ Lucken interprets these lines as an expression of desperate desire (Piramus will force himself upon Tisbé if she does not give herself to him willingly), as well as a threat to take her away from her parents (p. 380).

⁴⁶ The wimple's shape (a tube of cloth placed over the head) and strong association with married (and hence sexually active) women make it an appropriate symbol for Tisbé's *ardor*. It may also have another symbolic function in this context. Given that a wimple was normally worn with one open end secured around the face, it is difficult to imagine how Tisbé could have dropped hers unless she had already removed it before the lion appeared. If we are intended to infer that this is what had happened, we can see the removal of the headdress as a sign that by leaving her father's house and city the heroine has deliberately renounced her membership of society and the role she would have been expected to play in it.

a symbol of undue haste, heedlessness and indiscretion. The mulberry, by contrast, flowers much later, normally when all risk of frost is over, and so became linked with wisdom, but also with slowness and delay.⁴⁷ The proverbial expression ‘between almond and mulberry’ indicated the middle way between hastiness and slowness, the golden mean that avoids dangerous extremes.⁴⁸

It is surely no coincidence that in *Piramus* the almond tree is associated with the heroine, who not only arrives first at the rendez-vous, but also sets in train the whole tragic course of events with her impulsive plan to leave the city. The hero, on the other hand, is inextricably linked to the mulberry whose fruit is permanently coloured by his blood (there is no mention of Tisbé’s blood spattering the tree when she stabs herself). His lateness leads to the fatal misunderstanding about the wimple, but he was also slow to spot the hole in the wall, and signally failed to take the initiative at any stage in the unravelling of the story. Ironically, the roles are reversed in the very last scenes of the narrative: Piramus concludes too hastily that Tisbé is dead, and kills himself before she reappears, while she waits too long before returning to the spring, out of fear of the lion (vv. 690-93), and so arrives too late to prevent him taking his own life. The implication for the audience is clear: where love is concerned, the correct path lies between almond and mulberry. *Amor* is a powerful and dangerous force, to be approached with caution and due regard for *mesure*. Combined with feminine indiscretion, masculine inertia, and adolescent impetuosity, it can have terrible consequences.

The Question of Suicide

The nature of those consequences also takes on a new significance in the transition from Ovidian tale to courtly narrative. In Ovid’s society, suicide was not regarded as transgressive; indeed, it was often regarded as an honourable response to an intolerable situation. In the Christian Middle Ages, the situation was very different: suicide was a sin for which there was no forgiveness, ‘the ultimate act of religious defiance [that] renders the suicide God’s enemy’.⁴⁹ It was also, according to St Augustine, contrary to

⁴⁷ This second interpretation was probably encouraged by the fact that *morus* in Latin meant both a mulberry tree and a fool or simpleton. It is interesting to speculate whether the portrayal of Piramus was also influenced by this second meaning of the name of the tree with which he became associated.

⁴⁸ See Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery*, 2nd edn (Amsterdam & London: North-Holland, 1976), and Gertrude Jones, *Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols* (New York: Scarecrow Press, 1961).

⁴⁹ Alexander Murray, *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), I, p. 12.

divine law (*nefas*) even to suggest that it might ever be an appropriate course of action.⁵⁰ This in turn made its representation in narratives problematic, since they might be construed as somehow justifying the unjustifiable simply by acknowledging its existence. Some vernacular authors negotiated the question of a Christian's refusal to live under certain circumstances by having God grant him or her an immediate natural death, as in the case of Roland's fiancée Aude in the *Chanson de Roland* or the betrayed heroine in the thirteenth-century *Chastelaine de Vergi*. This latter text also illustrates the fact that, when it is represented, suicide tends to be reserved for the guilty: while the lady dies naturally, her unfortunate lover, who has been manipulated into betraying her confidence, runs himself through with his sword on hearing of her death.

Depicting the suicide of non-Christians in remote times and places was potentially less problematic, but even here we find a strong association between suicide and transgression. The *Eneas* poet underscores the message that Dido's suicide is the direct consequence of her *fole amor*, which offended gods and men alike. In *Narcisus*, the same phrase is associated with Dané, who kills herself by deliberately embracing the dead hero so tightly that she suffocates.⁵¹ Throughout this latter text the narrator repeatedly draws attention to the heroine's lack of *mesure* in love, which leads to her leaving her father's palace alone, dressed only in a shift and a mantle, and throwing herself at the hero. Interestingly, the death of Narcisus is not presented as suicide: he is allowed to die naturally, after having repented of his earlier hard-heartedness towards Dané. If the author of *Piramus* chose to preserve the double suicide of the *Metamorphoses*, this may be more than a simple mark of respect for Ovid's authority (after all, he seems to have felt no qualms about radically altering other elements of the story). It may well be intended to emphasise the transgressive behaviour of the lovers, both of whom have broken societal taboos and paid the price for it.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵¹ The prologue says that a man (*cil*) who is prey to *fole amor* should not be spurned by the woman (*cele*) he loves, but it is clear that this curious distribution of gender roles is determined by the rhetorical use of *cil* (= anyone) in the preceding lines. In the main body of the text it becomes obvious that Dané fulfils the first role and Narcisus the second; the hero himself calls Dané 'fole' and accuses her of 'grant folie', while the narrator introduces the 'love makes fools of wise men' topos as a comment on the heroine's behaviour, not the hero's.

Transcriptions

The four principal witnesses of *Piramus et Tisbé* are so different from one another that it is extremely difficult to form an accurate picture of MSS B, C and A from the variants and notes in a conventional critical edition based on R. As the earliest surviving texts of the poem, these MSS occupy a central place in the MS tradition, and provide valuable evidence of changing conditions of reception.⁵²

B presents a text in which the disyllabic lines in the lyric sequences have been systematically suppressed, resulting in a ‘narrativised’ version of the poem. This process may be analogous to the way in which Marie de France and other composers of Old French narrative *lais* remodelled the mixed-media (i.e. sung and recited) Breton lays from which they took their material. More detailed study of B is needed to understand the *remanieur*’s approach to remodelling, and his assumptions about how far coherence could be sacrificed to ease of transfer from lyric to narrative form. C presents an abridged text, whose internal dynamics are significantly different from those of the non-abridged MSS. The choice of passages for omission, and the effect of those omissions on narrative structure and characterisation deserve to be more fully examined. C also contains a number of important variants, particularly towards the end of the poem, which need to be taken into account in any discussion of *Piramus*. A is highly idiosyncratic: in some places it presents a narrativised text similar in approach to that of B; in others it contains perhaps the most convincing readings of any of the principal MSS; in others again it is almost completely incoherent. The processes by which such a mongrel text came into existence would certainly repay further investigation.

As a first step towards clearer understanding of the evolution of the poem, full transcriptions of each of the four principal witnesses are given in the second part of this volume, together with brief details of the MSS in which they are found. It is hoped that this will enable scholars to study the variant versions of the poem in more detail, and to appreciate the degree to which previous critical discussions of *Piramus et Tisbé* based on the de Boer and Branciforti editions need to be seen as critical discussions of one (reconstructed) version of *Piramus et Tisbé*.

⁵² See Branciforti, pp. 105-15, 132-44. Branciforti does not, however, provide the kind of detailed discussion of MSS B, C and A outlined below.

Critical Edition and Translation

f. 91v col. a

En Babilone la cité
Furent dui home renomé,
De grant valour, de grant hautesce,
De parenté et de richesce.
5 Li riche home orent deus enfans
D'une biauté et d'uns samblans;
L'uns fu vallés, l'autre meschine;
Tant biaux n'orent rois ne roïne.
Deus enfans orent li riche home,
10 Qu'Ovides en son livre nome
Et dist qu'il furent apelé
L'un Piramus, l'autre Tysbé.
Ancois qu'il eüssent set ans
Toucha Amours les deus enfans,
15 Et navra plus en lor endroit
Que lor aëz ne requeroit.
Li pers aëz, l'igaulz corages,
Lor grans biautez, lor grans parages,
Les paroles, li ris, li jeu
20 Et li aaisement del leu
Et li entreveoir souvent
Lor donnerent espirement.
Haÿ, Amours, devant tes iex
Ne puet durer joenes ne viex;
25 Il n'est jouvente ni aëz
Qui de ton dart ne soit navrez.
Contre ton dart n'a nulle essoigne
Double haubers ne double broigne.
Ta saiete ne set faillir:
30 Vers lui ne puet nulz homs garir;
Sans douleur fait traire souspir,
Sans sanc expandre fait palir.
Li fers de ton dart porte feu,
Souspirs la fleche dou mileu,
35 *Li penon engiens et priere,*
Douce amors la coche d'arriere.
Li fers navre dou regarder
Et la fleche coule el pensser,
Li penon font les apareulz,
40 La coiche ajouste les conseulz.
De tel saiete et de tel lance
Navra Amours en lor enfance
Le jovencel et la meschine,
Tresque la mort lor fu voisine.
45 Encor ne sevent riens d'Amours,
Si les a mis en grans freours.
Ja lor plaist par matin lever
Et l'un de l'autre porpenser,

In the city of Babylon
 There were two men of great renown,
 Of great valour and high rank,
 Wealthy men from noble families.
 5 These wealthy men had two children
 Alike in beauty and appearance;
 One was a boy, the other a girl:
 No king or queen had such beautiful offspring.
 Two children were born to these wealthy men,
 10 Whom Ovid names in his book
 And says that they called
 The boy Piramus and the girl Tisbé.
 Before they were seven years old
 Love laid his hand on the two children
 15 And inflicted a deeper wound on them
 Than would be normal for their age.
 Their being of the same age and disposition,
 Their great beauty, their noble birth,
 Their conversations, laughter and games,
 20 And their delightful surroundings,
 And being able to see one another frequently
 All predisposed them to love.
 Ah, Love, no one, young or old,
 Can withstand your gaze;
 25 Neither youth nor old age
 Can avoid being wounded by your arrow.
 Against your arrow neither
 A double hauberk nor a double byrnie can prevail.
 Your arrow cannot miss its mark:
 30 No man can protect himself against it;
 It makes him sigh without causing any pain,
 It makes him turn pale without shedding any blood.
 Your arrowhead carries burning desire,
 The shaft in the middle sighs,
 35 The feathers wiles and entreaties
 And the nock behind the sweetness of love.
 The arrowhead inflicts its wound through the eyes,
 The shaft slips into one's thoughts,
 The feathers prepare the way,
 40 The nock makes two people of one mind.
 With such an arrow and such a dart
 Did Love wound
 The boy and girl when they were children,
 And bring them to the brink of death.
 45 As yet they know nothing of love,
 Yet they have been profoundly disturbed by it.
 Already each finds pleasure in rising in the morning
 And thinking about the other,

f. 91v col. b

Et jeüinent plus que lor droit
50 Et lor aëz ne requeroit.
Par matinet chascun s'en emble,
Si vont le jour jouer ensamble,
Dedüient soi o les enfans
De lor aëz et de lor tans.
55 Le jour pensent d'eulz esgarder,
Qu'il ne s'en pueent saoler;
Tart revienent a lor ostaulz
Quar li departirs lor est mauulz.
Plaist lor a faire mainte chose
60 Dont l'en moult les manace et chose.
Tant com jaspes sormonte voirre,
Et or argent, et primevoire
A la marouste sormonté,
Tant sormontoient de bonté
65 Et de valour et de biauté
Cil dui tous ceulz de la cité.
Par grant conseil et par grant cure
Et par grant sens les fist Nature.
Tant com lor aëz fu contraire
70 A ce qu'Amours requiert a faire
Et il furent dedens dis ans,
Fu assez lor licence grans
D'aler ensamble et de parler,
D'esbanoier et de joer.
75 Li douz regars, li simples sens
Et li non convenables temps,
Et que nulz biens n'est sans envie
Et nes uns sers sans felonie
Les fist departir et garder,
80 Qu'il ne porent ensamble aler.
Uns sers perçut lor contenance
Et dist: 'Or sai je sans doutance
Que moult s'entraiment cil enfant,
Et se il fussent auques grant
85 Et il eüssent tel lesir,
Griez chose fust dou departir.'
A la mere a la damoisele
Porta li sers ceste novele
Et cele dist: 'Des or t'en tes,
90 Quar il n'assambleront ja mes!'
Puis dist a une chamberiere:
'Garde, se tu m'as de riens chiere,
Que Tysbé n'isse fors de l'us
Et quel ne voie Piramus.'
95 Adont leva uns maltalans
Entre les peres aus enfans,

And they go without food more than they should
 50 and more than is normal at their age.
 Early in the morning each one slips away,
 And they spend the day playing together,
 Enjoying themselves with other children
 Of the same age as themselves.
 55 During the day, they are engrossed in gazing at one another,
 And they can never have their fill of it;
 It is late when they return to their homes
 Because parting is painful for them.
 They take pleasure in doing all kinds of things
 60 For which they are often threatened and scolded.
 Just as jasper is superior to glass
 And gold is superior to silver, and the primrose
 Has proved superior to the mayweed,
 So these two were superior in virtue
 65 And in valour and in beauty
 To all the others in the city.
 It was after great deliberation and with great care
 And great wisdom that Nature created them.
 For as long as their age prevented them
 70 From doing what Love demands,
 And they were under the age of ten,
 They had considerable freedom
 To be together and talk to one another,
 To enjoy themselves and play together.
 75 Their loving looks and guileless minds,
 And their inappropriate age,
 And the fact that nothing good fails to arouse envy,
 And that no low-born servant is ever free of treachery,
 Caused them to be separated and kept under watch,
 80 So that they could not be together.
 A servant noticed the way they behaved
 And said: 'Now there is no doubt in my mind
 That these children are deeply in love,
 And if they were a little older
 85 And had the opportunity,
 It would be very hard to keep them away from one another.'
 The servant took this news
 To the young girl's mother,
 And she said to him: 'Now say no more about it,
 90 For they shall never be together again!'
 Then she said to a chambermaid:
 'If you have any regard for me,
 Make sure that Tisé does not leave the house
 And that she does not see Píramus.'
 95 At that time great ill-feeling arose
 Between the children's fathers,

f. 92r col. a

Une tençon et une envie
Qui puis dura toute lor vie.
Ceste chose fist destorber
100 Les deus enfans a aprimer
Et d'assambler par mariage,
Et d'envoier entr'eulz message.
Li dui enfant sont en destroit;
Li uns n'ot l'autre ne ne voit:
105 Moul't lor samble griez la devise
Que lor parens ont entr'aulz mise.
Mes ce que l'en les garde plus –
Tysbé n'ose issir fors de l'us
Ne Piramus vers lui garder –
110 Fet plus lor amour aviver.
Andui croissent selonc lor tens:
Croist lor aëz et croist lor sens,
Croist lor ardours et croist lor plaie,
Et croist li feus que riens n'apaie,
115 Croist lor amours et lor aëz,
Et ja orent quinze ans passez.
Et puis qu'il vindrent en jouvent
Et il choisirent escient
Et lor aëz s'ahert au cours
120 Ou nature choisist amours,
Adont nes lessent plus guerir
Li lonc penser, li grief souspir,
Les grans dolors, li fort complaint;
Li durs tormens au cuer lor maint.
125 Dementent soi et nuit et jour;
Toute lor vie est en dolour;
Plorent, plaignent chascuns par soi,
Ne sevent d'eulz prendre conroi,
Ne ne pueent trouver remire
130 Ne par mecine ne par mire.
Li feux lor siet dedens les os,
Qui ne lor lesse avoir repos,
Ains les travaille jor et nuit
Et de mortel ardor les cuit.
135 Cil feux et cele flame seule
Retrait les ners et art la meule,
Tault la vertu, change biauté,
Et chace tout alegiereté.
Piramus est plains de tristour,
140 Plains de souspir et plains de plour,
Plains de penser et plains de cure.
Demente soi en tel mesure:
'Hé, las!' fet il, 'chetif dolent,
Soufferrai longues cest torment?
145

A quarrel and a source of hatred
 That lasted for the rest of their lives.
 This business prevented
 100 The two children from being united
 And brought together in marriage,
 And from sending messages to one another.
 The two young people are in dire straits;
 Neither can see or hear the other:
 105 The separation that their parents have imposed on them
 Seems very harsh to them.
 However, the fact that they are more closely guarded –
 Tisbé dare not leave her house
 And Piramus dare not look in her direction –
 110 Makes their love burn more fiercely.
 Both of them grow up as their age dictates;
 As they grow older, so they grow more knowledgeable,
 As their desire grows, so their suffering increases,
 And the fire that nothing quenches grows too,
 115 Their love grows as they get older,
 And soon they reached the age of fifteen.
 And when they entered adolescence
 And reached the age of reason
 And their lives entered the period
 120 When nature becomes aware of love,
 Then they no longer had any escape
 From lengthy rêveries, bitter sighs,
 Great suffering, loud laments;
 Cruel torment never leaves their hearts.
 125 They lament night and day;
 Their whole lives are filled with suffering;
 Both of them weep and groan to themselves,
 They can see no way out of their predicament
 Nor can they find relief
 130 Through either medicine or doctor.
 The fire burns deep in their bones,
 That will not let them rest,
 But torments them day and night
 And consumes them with a fatal flame.
 135 This fire, this flame alone
 Shrivels the nerves, burns the very marrow,
 Saps strength, mars beauty
 And puts all cheerfulness to flight.
 Piramus is full of sorrow,
 140 Full of sighs and full of tears,
 Full of sadness and full of care.
 This is how he laments:
 ‘Alas’, he says, ‘poor sorrowful wretch,
 Am I to suffer this torment for long?

f. 92r col. b

145 Tous tens ai duel, joie noient,
Et com plus me duel, plus m'esprent
Amour.
Je mens, certes, ains est ardour
Qui ensi vient de jour en jour,
150 Si taint ma face et ma coulour,
Com fait la fueille la froidour.
Hé las!
Hé, Piramus, quel la feras?
En quel guise te contendras?
155 Haÿ, pere qui m'engendras,
Pourquoi
N'as tu ore pitié de moi?
Se tu ne prens autre conroi,
Ou par enging ou par desroi
160 Ferai,
Tysbé, bele, que te verrai,
Ou se ce non pour toi morrai.
Saches, se par amours ne t'ai,
Que par force te ravirai.
165 La mort
Iert mon refuge et mon confort,
S'aulques me tient cis malz si forz
Ou se longues m'est fais cis torz
Torz fais?
170 Hé, dieux, pourquoi n'est fais cis plais
Que nos parens fussent em pais?
N'eüssons mie tant d'agais.
Gaitier?
Ne je ne puis tant exploitier
175 Que je trouvaisse messagier
Que je li peüsse envoier.
Cui chault?
Ne monte riens, se dieux me sault.
Haÿ, peres qui mains en hault,
180 Estain le feu qui si m'assault,
Le feu
Qui m'a tolu et ris et jeu.
Ne puis guerir en nesun leu.
Amie,
185 Pour vous est ma coulour perie,
Mon cors navré, ma chars percie.
Bele, pour vous despens ma vie
En plours.
Consente moi li dieux d'amours
190 Qu'encor la tiengne nuit ou jours,
Ou a leesce ou a dolours!
Pasmer

145 I am always grieving, never joyful,
 And the more I grieve, the more I am inflamed
 By Love.
 I lie, indeed, it is not love but a fire
 That recurs in this way day after day,
 150 Drains the colour from my face and my complexion
 As frost drains the colour from a leaf.
 Alas!
 Ah, Piramus, what will you do?
 How will you behave?
 155 Oh, father who sired me,
 Why
 Do you not take pity on me now?
 If you do not change your mind,
 Then either by cunning or by recklessness
 160 I will make sure,
 Lovely Tisbé, that I see you,
 Or if not, I will die for you.
 Know that if I do not have you by consent
 I will take you away by force.
 165 Death
 Will be my refuge and my comfort
 If this terrible sickness afflicts me for much longer
 Or if I suffer this injustice for long.
 Injustice?
 170 Ah, God, why is some agreement not made
 Whereby our parents might be at peace with each other?
 We would have fewer people spying on us.
 Spying?
 I cannot even manage
 175 To find a messenger
 Whom I could send to her.
 What matter?
 It is no use, so help me God.
 Ah, father who dwells above,
 180 Put out the fire that besets me so,
 The fire
 That has deprived me of laughter and enjoyment.
 I cannot find a cure anywhere.
 My love,
 185 Because of you the colour has left my cheeks,
 My body is wounded and my flesh has turned pale.
 Fair one, because of you I spend my life
 In tears.
 May the God of Love yet allow me
 190 To hold her in my arms by night or day,
 Either in joy or in sorrow!
 Faint,

f. 92v col. a

195 M'estuet errant; ne puis parler.
Or sui hetiez, or vueil plorer,
Ore ai grant chault, or vueil trambler.'
Ains qu'il peüst son duel fenir
Li prist la face a empalir;
En lermes et en plorement
Cheÿ pasmez ou pavement.

200 Empres grant piece est relevez,
Tous tristes, tous descolorez,
Vait s'ent au temple Veneris,
Couche soi sus le marbre bis,
Une priere a commencie

205 Qu'ele li doinst avoir baillie
De parler a Tysbé s'amie.
Tysbé rest la dedens enclose:
Fors dou palais issir nen ose.
Souvent remembre ses amours,

210 Souvent mue le jour colours,
Souvent se plaint et sovent plore:
'Lasse', fet elle, 'Com male ore
Fui nee!
Hé, diex, com male destinee,

215 Com dure vie m'est donee!
Ains mes ne fu nulle esgardee
En vie,
Qui par savoir ou par voisdie
Ne seüst engigner boisdie,

220 Fors moi.
Mes quant je plus pens et mains voi,
En quel guise prendrai conroi,
Amis douz, de parler a toi?
Parler?

225 Tysbé, fole, veulz tu desver
Et ta chastee violer
Et ton lignage vergonder?
Non faire!
Garde Raison, qui t'est contraire.

230 Ne te chaille entour toi atraire
Corage
Par quoi tu faces itel rage.
Onques feme de ton lignage
Ne fu reprise de putage.

f. 92v col. b

235 Reprise?
Non serai je, par nulle guise.
Miex vueil estre cent fois ocise.
Tysbé,
Ou as tu pris icest pensé?

240 Tost as Pyramus oublié!

I cannot help but do so now; I cannot speak.
 One moment I am cheerful, the next I weep,
 195 One moment I am burning hot, the next I feel like shivering.’
 Before he could finish his lament
 The blood began to drain from his face;
 Weeping and crying
 He fell in a dead faint upon the paved floor.
 200 After a long while he rose to his feet,
 All sad and wan,
 He takes himself off to the temple of Venus,
 Prostrates himself on the grey marble
 And began to pray
 205 That she might grant him an opportunity
 To talk to his beloved Tisbé.
 Tisbé for her part is confined indoors:
 She dare not leave the palace.
 Often she recalls her love,
 210 Often her colour comes and goes each day,
 Often she laments and often weeps:
 ‘Alas!’ she says, ‘On what an ill-starred day
 I was born!
 Ah, God, what a wretched fate,
 215 What a harsh life has been assigned to me!
 Never before was there a girl kept under guard
 Alive
 Who could not devise some ruse
 Through intelligence or cunning,
 220 But me.
 But when the more I think the less I see,
 How shall I find a way,
 Sweet love, of speaking to you?
 Speaking?
 225 Tisbé, you fool, are you losing your mind?
 Do you want to compromise your virginity
 And bring shame upon your family?
 No, indeed!
 Heed Reason, who opposes you in this!
 230 May you never be tempted to entertain
 Any desire
 Which might make you commit such madness.
 No woman from your family
 Was ever accused of wantonness.
 235 Accused?
 I shall not be, in any shape or form.
 I would rather suffer a hundred deaths.
 Tisbé,
 Where did you come up with that idea?
 240 You have forgotten Píramus soon enough!

Amis,
Onques a certes ne le dis.
Or poez dire, ce m'est vis,
A droit
245 Qu'en amours de feme n'a foit.
Biaux douz amis, prenez a droit
Le gage:
Tenez, sire, pour cest outrage
Vous otroi ci mon pucelage.
250 Trop iere ore de fier corage.
De fier?
Vers vous doi ge bien supploier.
Moult avroie le blasme chier
Se m'en ooie reprochier.
255 Contraire,
Si com me samble, a mon viaire,
Nulz hom ne m'en devoit retraire,
Ne reprendre de cest afaire.
Desvee!
260 Tes toi, fole desmesuree!
Quel corage vous a muee?
Moult estes ore forsenee.
Lerai
Tout cest pensé que je ore ai;
265 Par le conseil mon pere avrai
Autresi gent ami, bien sai.
Si gent?
Merveil se Piramus m'entent.
Oïl, je tramble, bien le sent.
270 Si mar le dis, or m'en repent.
Hé, biaux!
Rose tendre et lis noviaus,
Flors de tous autres damoisiaus,
Merci!
275 N'aies cure de quanque di;
De paour ai le cuer marri.
Jamais n'avrai nul autre ami
Que vous,
Mes vos parens sont enviaus
f. 93r col. a 280 Et li mien sont de moi jalous.
Cui chault?
Ne monte riens, se diex me sault.
Or sens mon cuer, ore ai trop chault,
A poi ferai pour vous un sault.
285 Hé, lasse!
Que ai je dit? Riens ne me passe
Li maulz qui si souvent me lasse.
Dolente!

My love,
 I never meant what I said.
 Now, it seems to me, you can say
 Rightly
 245 That there is no constancy in a woman's love.
 Fair sweet love, duly accept
 The pledge:
 Here, my lord, for this transgression
 I now grant you my virginity.
 250 I was too proud-hearted just now.
 Too proud?
 I should bow my head before you.
 I would hold the censure dear
 If I heard myself being blamed for this.
 255 No one,
 So it seems to me, and as I see it,
 Should pass censure on me
 Or denounce me in this matter.
 Insane!
 260 Be quiet, you foolish, shameless girl!
 What impulse has brought about this change in you?
 Now you are completely taking leave of your senses!
 Away
 With all these thoughts I have now;
 265 With my father's counsel I shall have
 Another lover just as fair as him, I know.
 As fair?
 I shudder to think that Piramus may hear me.
 Yes, I am trembling, I can feel it.
 270 I was wrong to say it, and now I regret it.
 Fair one!
 Rose bud and newly-opened lily,
 Flower of all other youths,
 Have mercy!
 275 Take no notice of whatever I say;
 My heart is led astray by fear.
 I shall never have any other love
 But you,
 But your parents are hostile towards me
 280 And mine guard me jealously.
 What matter?
 It does not matter, so help me God.
 One moment I feel my heart pounding, the next I am too hot;
 I am on the brink of taking the plunge for you.
 285 Alas!
 What have I said? This sickness spares me nothing
 Which so often saps my strength.
 Poor wretch!

Li diex d'amours le me consente,
290 Ou bon me soit, ou m'en repente,
Qu'entre mes bras encor le sente
Par termes.
Ci fenirai ma plainte en lermes.
Pasmer m'estuet, ore est li termes.
295 Ensi
M'estuet faire par chascun di:
Tel fief tieng je de mon ami.
La pucele est trois fois pasmee,
Et quant elle s'est relevee
300 Ansdeus ses mains vers le ciel tent:
Aus diex prie moult humblement
Qu'il li doignent conseil trouver
Qu'a son ami puisse parler.
Prochain furent li dui palais
305 Et par tele maniere fais
C'une parois et uns murs seulz
Estoit devise d'ambedeus.
Endroit la chambre la dedens
Ou mains conversoient de gens,
310 Ou la pucele iert enfermee,
Fu la parois un peu crevee.
La crevace n'ert gaires grans,
Si fu celee par mains ans,
Desi qu'Amours la fist trouver,
315 Vers cui riens ne se puet celer.
Quel chose est ce qu'amours ne sent?
Li dui amant premierement
Aperçurent celui pertus:
Primes Tysbé, puis Piramus.
320 Tysbé trouva la creveüre,
Prist le pendant de sa cainture,
S'en fist outre le fer paroir,
Que ses amis le pot veoir.
Piramus vint de deporter
325 Pour ses dolours reconforter.
Entre en la chambre, cele soi,
Torne ses iex vers la paroi,
Garde, si aperçoit l'enseigne
Qui la crevace li enseigne.
330 Cele part vait, prent le pendant,
Voit le pertuis aparissant.
'Tysbé', dist il, 'bele faiture,
Flours de toute autre creature,
Par l'enseigne de la chainture
335 Sui je venus offrir droiture
Que ne trouvai la creveüre;

f. 93r col. b

290 May the God of Love grant me,
 Whether I rejoice in it or regret it,
 That I may hold him in my arms again
 Soon.
 Here I shall end my lament in tears.
 I cannot help fainting; now is the time.
 295 And this
 Is what I have to do each day,
 This is the fief I hold from my love.’
 The maiden fainted three times,
 And when she rose to her feet again
 300 She holds out both her hands towards the heavens:
 She implores the gods with great humility
 To grant that she may find a way
 To be able to speak to her beloved.
 The two palaces were next to one another
 305 And constructed in such a manner
 That only one partition, one wall
 Separated the two of them.
 In the inner chamber
 Where fewest people went,
 310 Where the maiden was confined,
 The wall was slightly cracked.
 The crack was not very large
 And had lain hidden for many years,
 Until Love brought it to light,
 315 Love, from which nothing can be concealed.
 What is there that Love does not become aware of?
 The two lovers were the first ones
 To notice this hole:
 First Tisbé, then Piramus.
 320 Tisbé discovered the crack,
 Took the pendant on her belt
 And pushed the metal part of it through
 So that her beloved could see it.
 Piramus returned from taking exercise,
 325 Intended to bring comfort from his grief,
 He enters the chamber, makes himself inconspicuous,
 Turns his eyes towards the wall,
 Looks and sees the token
 That shows him where the crack is.
 330 He goes over, takes the pendant
 And sees the hole it reveals:
 ‘Tisbé’, he says, ‘fair creature,
 Flower of all other women,
 By the token of this belt,
 335 I have come here to make amends
 For not discovering this crack;

Vostre en est bele l'aventure
D'apercevoir tel troueüre.
Se vous avez de moi tel cure
340 Ne vous tendra la fermeüre
Que ne veigniez ici segure:
Sans message, sans couverture,
A basse vois et a murmure
Porrons parler de nostre injure;
345 Emprez savrois en quel arduure
M'a mis Amours sans forfaiture.
Hé, diex, comme est sa vie dure,
Qui longuement teulz mauz endure!
La pucele de l'autre part
350 Est en escout et en esgart;
De la parole entent l'esfroï,
Traït soi plus pres de la paroi,
Met son oeil endroit la crevace,
De son ami connut la face.
355 Parler cuide, mes el ne puet
Pour l'amour qui si la commuet.
Ou premerain esgardement
Fremist, souspire et si esprent,
Tressault, tramble et si tressue,
360 Taint sa color et si li mue.
Porpense soi qu'ele li die,
En soi meïsmes s'entroblië:
En tantes guises la destraint
Amours, qui toutes choses vaint.
365 A la parfin s'est pourpensee,
Si s'est un poi asseüree;
Met la bouche endroit la fendure,
Emprez parole en tel mesure:
'Amis, ensi vous os nomer –
370 Ce ne me puet on pas veer –
Ne me puis pas vers vous celer.
Vostre proesce vueil gaber:
Premiere soi conseil trouver
Com peüssons ci assambler,
375 Quar qui plus aime plus voit cler.
Griement vous oi desconforter,
Mes poi savez que est amer:
Encor vous en poez joer;
A moi lessiez le duel user,
380 Cui riens ne puet confort doner.
Joie ai changiee por plorer,
Pour dolereus complains jeter,
Et leesce pour gamenter,
Soëf dormir por grief penser,
385

f. 93v col. a

To you belongs the good fortune
 Of having noticed this opening.
 If you really care for me
 340 No lock or bolt will stop you
 From coming here with confidence:
 Without messengers, quite openly,
 Quietly and in a whisper,
 We can speak about the wrong that has been done to us;
 345 Then you will know how Love
 Has set me on fire, though I have done him no wrong.
 Ah, God, how harsh life is
 For anyone who suffers such torment for long!⁷
 The maiden on the other side
 350 Is listening and watching;
 She hears the sound of his words,
 Moves closer to the wall,
 Puts her eye to the crack
 And recognises her beloved's face.
 355 She tries to speak, but cannot,
 Because of the love that shakes her to the core.
 The moment she sees him
 She shivers and sighs and burns with love,
 Quakes and trembles and perspires all over,
 360 Her colour changes, comes and goes,
 She thinks about what she should say to him,
 Is lost in thought for a while;
 Love oppresses her in so many ways,
 Love which conquers all.
 365 Eventually, she has gathered her thoughts
 And taken heart somewhat;
 She puts her mouth to the crack,
 Then this is what she says:
 'My love – I dare to call you that:
 370 They cannot forbid me to do so –
 I cannot hide my feelings from you.
 I am going to make fun of your valour:
 I was the one who first found a way
 For us to be together here,
 375 Because the one who loves most deeply sees most clearly.
 I hear you lamenting bitterly,
 But you have little idea what love is:
 You can still make a game of it;
 You leave me to endure sorrow,
 380 I to whom nothing can bring comfort.
 I have exchanged joy for weeping,
 For pouring out sorrowful laments,
 And merriment for grieving,
 Sweet sleep for desolate thoughts,

385 Jeu et delit pour souspirer.
Amis, ne puis or plus ester:
Lermes m'aonbrent l'esgarder,
Souspirs me tolent le parler.
Pensez demain dou retourner,
390 Plus a loisir porrons parler
Et li uns l'autre conforter.'
Ne pot lors plus parler a lui,
Ensi departent ambedui.
Li jours s'en vait, la nuis prist fin.
395 Ansi repairent au matin
Et revienent a lor pertus.
Primes parole Piramus:
'Amie, moult sui angoissous,
Quar a mort sui navrez pour vous
400 *Que j'ain.*
Des or vieng je bien a reclain,
Com li ostors quant il a fain;
Plus sui pris que poissons a l'ain.
Sorpris
405 Sui je pour vous, ce m'est avis:
Ne sai que soit joie ne ris;
S'auques me tient, n'en irai vis.
Muir moi!
Li diex d'amours ne garde foi,
410 Quar sormontez nous a sa loi:
Lacié somes en une roi
Andui.
Ne sai cui prier, vous ou lui.
Bele, a vous fais je mon refui.
415 Se por vous muir, tant mar i fui!
Amie,
Moult feriez grant felonie
Se pour vous perdoie la vie,
Quant par vous puis avoir aye.
420 Dolent!
Moult puis avoir duel et torment,
Qui tant ai amé longuement
Et ne puis faire mon talent.
Chetis!
425 Hé, bele, com sui entrepris,
Com sui pour vostre amour conquis!
Dolour
Ne me default ne nuit ne jour:
Or pens, souspir et emperez plour;
430 Toute ai perdue la coulour;
Dormir,
Boivre et mengier m'estuet gerpir;

f. 93v col. b

385 Joy and pleasure for sighing.
 My love, I cannot stay here any more:
 Tears cloud my eyes,
 Sighs prevent me from speaking.
 Be sure to come back tomorrow;
 390 We shall be able to talk at greater length
 And comfort one another.'
 She could not say any more to him,
 And so the two of them parted.
 The day passes, the night comes to an end.
 395 In the morning both of them return
 And come back to their crevice.
 Piramus is the first to speak:
 'My love, I am in agony,
 For I am mortally wounded because of you,
 400 Whom I love.
 Now I come back to the call,
 Like a falcon when it is hungry;
 I am more securely hooked than a fish on a line,
 I am trapped
 405 Because of you, it seems to me:
 I do not know what joy and laughter are.
 If I am held much longer, I shall not escape alive.
 I am dying!
 The God of Love does not keep faith with us,
 410 For his justice has passed us by:
 We are entangled in one net
 Together.
 I do not know whom to implore, you or him.
 Fair one, I take refuge with you.
 415 If I die because of you, so much the worse for me!
 My love,
 You would be guilty of great treachery
 If I were to lose my life because of you,
 When you can save me.
 420 Unhappy me!
 Well may I suffer grief and torment,
 I who have loved so long
 And cannot do what I desire.
 Poor wretch!
 425 Ah, fair one, how I am afflicted,
 How I am overcome by love of you!
 Sorrow
 Never leaves me, night or day:
 One moment I am lost in thought, I sigh and then I weep;
 430 The colour has all vanished from my cheeks.
 Sleeping,
 Eating and drinking are things I must leave behind.

Ne puis parler que ne souspir.
Bien ai appris mal a souffrir.
435 Deduit
Et quanque je desir me fuit.
Hé, diex, a cui complaing je luit,
Ja ne garrai se ne m'en fui.
Foir?
440 Amours ne me veult pas gerpir:
Pour amours m'estovra morir.
Morrai?
Se dieu plaist et vous, non ferai,
Ançois vous en soupploierai:
445 Ja tant, ce cuit, n'en prierai
En vain,
Ains tendrai tant droite ma main
Que de cest mal me ferois sain
Et de vostre amistié certain.
450 Hé, murs!
Tant par estes aspres et durs,
Mes se je fuisse auques seürs,
La frete
Fust a mes mains si ample fete
455 Que sans veüe de la guete
Vous en eüsse parmi trete.
Parois,
Aiez merci de ces destrois!
Pertuis, tant par estes estrois!
460 Chaillous, se vous aouvressoiz
Seul tant
Qu'ensamble fussiens en parlant,
Et alissons entrebesant!
Amie,
465 Se fusse en vostre compaignie,
De grant douleur fusse garie,
Mais tote chose nos envie.
Hoster,
Pour tant te devons nous amer,
470 Qui parmi toi nous lais parler.
Crevace
Cele toi bien que ne te sace
Nes uns de ceulz qui nous manace.
A demi oeil esgart la face
475 Par toi
De cele qui le cuer de moi
Et le corage a trait o soi.
Mesiere,
Tant par estes cruel et fiere,
480 Qui n'aouvrez par ma proiere

f. 94r col. a

I cannot speak without sighing.
 I have certainly learned how to suffer pain.
 435 Pleasure
 And all that I desire have fled from me.
 Ah, God of Love, against whose sickness I struggle!
 I shall never be cured unless I leave.
 Leave?
 440 Love is not going to abandon me:
 I shall have to die because of Love.
 Die?
 If it please God and you, no,
 Rather, I shall entreat you:
 445 I shall not beg, I believe,
 In vain,
 But I shall hold my hand out so straight
 That you will cure me of this sickness
 And assure me of your love.
 450 Ah, wall,
 You are so harsh and unyielding,
 But if I felt a little safer here
 The crack
 Would be made so wide by my hands
 455 That without the guard noticing
 I would have drawn you through it.
 O wall,
 Have mercy on these sufferers!
 O crack, you are so very narrow!
 460 Stone, if you would only open up
 Enough
 For us to be together as we speak
 And to kiss one another!
 My love,
 465 If I were at your side,
 I would be cured of my great pain,
 But everything is against us.
 O lodging,
 We should still love you
 470 For allowing us to speak through you.
 O crack,
 Hide yourself well, so that none of those
 Who threaten us can find you.
 I can half-see the face
 475 Through you
 Of the one who has drawn
 My heart and soul to her.
 O wall,
 You are so pitiless and cruel,
 480 Who do not open up at my entreaty

Tant que besier puisse la chiere,
La bouche,
La cui douceurs au cuer me touche.
Hé, gente,
485 Itant me fetes sans atente,
Ne plus.
Prions orendroit de ça jus
Que nous aït dame Venus
Que nulz ne truisse cest pertus.’
490 Li jovenciaux plaint et souspire,
Lores fremist, ne pot mot dire,
Et quant li siens contes remaint,
Tysbé commence son complaint:
‘Amis, trop vous desconfortez;
495 Merveilles n’est, que trop m’amez:
Bien sai qu’a mort estes navrez
Pour moi,
Et je por vous, en moie foi.
De ma vie ne sai conroi,
500 Ne sui mie en menor esfroi
Que vous.
Moult estes tristes et ploroux,
Et mes cuers est moult angoissous.
Griement
505 Vous complaigniez de cest torment,
Mes je, espoir, plus durement.
Amis,
Qui si dites qu’estes conquis,
Li miens cuers est d’amors surpris
510 Sans faille;
Plus est espris que feus em paille.
Amors m’ocist et me travaille.
Diex grans,
Quel ire est ce, quel maltalans,
515 Que as a moi de si lonc tans?
Diex pere,
Qui me feïs nestre de mere,
Voies mon duel et ma misere,
Ma paine.
520 Males herres et male estraine
Reçui,
Amis, quant primes te connui.
Ains puis ne nuit ne jour ne fui
Sans plaie.
525 N’est merveille s’ele s’esmaie,
La touse
Qui pour vous est si angoissouse:
Riens ne la puet faire joieuse.

f. 94r col. b

Even enough for me to kiss her face,
 Her mouth,
 Whose sweetness stirs my heart.
 Ah, fair wall,
 485 Do just this much for me without delay,
 No more.
 Let us pray now to the heavens above
 That lady Venus may help us
 So that no one finds this hole.’
 490 The young man laments and sighs,
 Then he trembled and could say no more,
 And when his tale breaks off,
 Tisbé begins her lament:
 ‘My love, you are in great distress;
 495 No wonder, for you love me so deeply:
 I know that you have received a mortal wound
 For me,
 And I for you, by my faith.
 I do not know what to do with my life,
 500 I am no less troubled
 Than you.
 You are very sad and tearful,
 And my heart is full of anguish.
 Bitterly
 505 You lament this torment,
 But, I believe, I lament more bitterly still.
 My love,
 You who say that you are overcome,
 My heart has been ambushed by love
 510 In truth;
 It burns more fiercely than fire in straw.
 Love is killing me and torturing me.
 Great God,
 What anger, what ill-will is this
 515 That you have harboured against me for so long?
 Divine father,
 Who caused me to be brought into this world,
 You see my grief and my suffering,
 My torment.
 520 Ill-treatment and ill fortune
 Were mine,
 My love, when first I came to know you.
 Never since, day or night, have I been free of
 Love’s wound.
 525 No wonder then if she is distressed,
 The girl
 Who suffers such anguish for you:
 Nothing can make her joyful.

A tort
530 Ai je perdu joie et deport;
Riens ne me puet doner confort;
Par grant angoisse atens la mort.
Le jour
Je sui en lerne et en freour
535 Et en angoisse et en dolour
Et en torment et en tristour;
La nuit
N'ai je ne deport ne deduit.
Quant je me gis dedens mon lit,
540 Riens n'oi,
S'en sui en paine et en esfroï;
Si m'est avis que je vous voi,
Et ne poez parler a moi,
Dont sui pires que ne soloi.
545 Tressaill,
Tressu d'angoisse et de travail;
Dont tens mes mains que je vous bail,
Et quant vous doi prendre, si fail.
Amis,
550 Quant me rendors, si m'est avis
Que vous estes devant mon vis,
Tous dehaitiez et tous pensis.
Diex donge
Que biens me viengne de cest songe!
555 Dont mest avis que me semonge
Sovent
Ne sai quel vois, en complaignant,
Qui ce me dist apertemant
Ensi:
560 'Tysbé, cognois tu ton ami?
Esveille toi, s'alons de ci.
Tysbé,
Li dieu nous ont amonesté
Que issons fors de la cité,
565 Souz le morier,
Droit a la fontaine au gravier:
La nous porrons esbanoier.'
Amis,
Dites qu'il vous en est avis.
570 De m'amor vueil que soies fis
Pour voir.
Je m'emblerei dou premier soir,
A mienuit irai savoir,
La fors,
575 S'i trouverai le vostre cors.
Amis, ta vie est mes tresors;

Unjustly
 530 Have I lost joy and pleasure;
 Nothing can bring me comfort;
 In agony I await death.
 By day
 I am in tears and fearful,
 535 Anxious and doleful,
 Suffering and sorrowful;
 By night
 I have neither pleasure nor enjoyment.
 When I lie in my bed, there is
 540 Silence,
 And it fills me with pain and distress;
 It seems as though I can see you,
 But you cannot speak to me,
 Which makes things even worse for me than they were.
 545 I shake,
 I sweat with anguish and torment;
 Then I stretch out my hands to reach you,
 And when I am about to hold you, it comes to nothing.
 My love,
 550 When I go back to sleep, then it seems
 That you are there before my face,
 All stricken and downcast.
 God grant
 That some good may come to me from this dream!
 555 Then it seems that I am hailed
 Time and again
 By some voice, I know not which, lamenting,
 That speaks clearly to me
 Like this:
 560 'Tisbé, do you recognise your love?
 Wake up, let us go away from here.
 Tisbé,
 The gods have commanded us
 To go out from the city,
 565 Beneath the mulberry tree,
 Straight to the spring by the gravel bank:
 There we can enjoy ourselves together.'
 My love,
 Tell me what you think of this.
 570 I want you to be quite sure of my love,
 In truth.
 I shall steal away during the first part of the night,
 At midnight I shall go and see,
 Beyond the walls,
 575 If I can find you there.
 My love, your life is my treasure:

Gardez
Ne soiez lenz ne demorez;
Dou premerain some levez,
580 A la fontaine me querez,
Sous le morier enmi les prez,
La ou Ninus fu enterrez,
Certainement m'i troverez.'
Ensi ferment lor convenant,
f. 94v col. b 585 Puis departent li dui amant
Et saluerent le pertuis
Qu'il ne virent des or mais puis,
Mes primes baise la paroi
Chascuns au departir de soi.
590 Li dui amant sont en grant cure;
Trop lor samble que li jours dure;
Moult se complaignent dou soleil,
Souvent l'apelent 'non feeil',
Quar trop se targe d'esconser,
595 Et si fait la nuit demorer:
Dient qu'a escient le fait
Pour destourbanche de lor plait.
Li jours s'en vait, la nuis repaire,
Et li termes de lor afaire.
600 Montent les guetes sor les murs;
Cil se dorment qui sont segurs,
Mes nulz des deus ne se repose,
Ains est en apens d'autre chose;
Chascuns en soi meismes soigne
605 De bien emprenre sa besoigne.
Or sont li cuer en esperance,
Et non pourquant sont em balance
De ce s'il le facent ou non,
Mes volentez oste raison.
610 Delitent soi ou dous penser
De ce qu'il doivent assambler,
Et devisent en lor corages
Lor mors, lor deulz et lor damages.
Il ont andui joie et dolour,
615 Mes toutes ores vaint Amour;
Sens ne raison nes puet retraire
De ce qu'il ont empris a faire.
Ja ert la gent toute endormie
Quant Tysbé s'est desavancie:
620 Lieve dou lit ou elle gist,
f. 95r col. a Tout belement de la chambre ist.
Ne la tint huis ne fermeüre;
De la chambre ist toute segure,
Sole par nuit et sans paour:
625

Take care
 Not to be late, and do not tarry;
 Rise from your first sleep,
 580 Look for me at the spring,
 Under the mulberry tree in the middle of the fields,
 Where Ninus was buried,
 You will surely find me there.'
 So they make their compact
 585 And then the two lovers part
 And took their leave of the crack
 That they never saw again,
 But first each of them kisses the wall
 As they leave.
 590 The two lovers are very anxious;
 It seems to them that the day is too long;
 They keep reproaching the sun,
 And frequently call it 'traitor',
 For being so slow to set,
 595 And holding back the night for so long:
 They say that it is doing it on purpose
 In order to disrupt their plans.
 The daylight wanes, night returns
 And with it comes the hour for their venture.
 600 The watchmen climb up on the city walls;
 People who are peace with themselves fall asleep,
 But neither of these two can rest,
 They have something else on their minds;
 Each of them is privately preoccupied
 605 With getting their undertaking off to a good start.
 Now their hearts are filled with hope,
 And yet they are still uncertain
 As to whether they should do it or not,
 But desire overcomes reason.
 610 They rejoice in the pleasant thought
 That they are about to be together,
 And they also go over in their minds
 The grief, the suffering and death that could be theirs.
 Both of them experience joy and pain,
 615 But Love triumphs nonetheless;
 Neither sense nor reason can dissuade them
 From doing what they have embarked upon.
 Everyone was already asleep
 When Tisbé made the first move:
 620 She rises from the bed where she is lying,
 And leaves the chamber very quietly.
 Neither door nor lock held her back;
 She leaves the chamber with confidence,
 Alone in the night but without fear:

625 Tel hardement li done amour.
Quant fu issue dou palais,
Et elle devaloit em pais,
Si mist avant le pié senestre;
Puis esgarda par devers destre,
630 Senti tout le palais fremir,
Et vit la lune a empalir.
Quant ot esgardé tout entour,
Onques pointe nen ot paour
Qu'el ne parface son afaire,
635 A quel fin qu'ele en doie traire.
Ja ert desi qu'as murs venue
Quant une gaite l'a veüe,
Et quant a cele hore la voit
Cuide c'une deesse soit,
640 Trait soi arriere, ne l'apele;
Ensi s'en vait la demoisele
Devant les iex de cele guaite.
S'en ala bien par une fraite
Et vint au leu sans demorance
645 Ou fu prise la convenance.
Ja iert assise sus le marbre,
A la fontaine dessous l'arbre,
Ou il devoient assambler,
Puis se commence a porpenser
650 En quel guise elle gaberait
Le jovenciel, qui ne venoit,
Quant uns lions de la montaigne,
Qui ot ocis une compaignie
De bestes, vint parmi les prez.
655 Encore estoit envolepez
Des entrailles et de la laine;
Abevrer vint a la fontaine.
La pucele bessa la teste
Quant vit venir la fiere beste,
660 Fuit li li sans, pert la colour:
N'est merveille s'elle ot paour.
Vait s'ent fuiant par une voie
Et crient que li lyons nel voie,
Mes tant est esbahie et simple
665 Qu'enmi sa voie laist sa guimple.
Vait s'ent isnelement mucier
Sous l'ombre d'un alemandier.
Li lyons vint a grant esfroi,
A la fontaine estaint sa soi,
670 Et quant il est bien assasez,
Si se deduit aval les prez.
Trouve la guimple en une sente,

f. 95r col. b

625 Such was the boldness Love gave her.
 When she had left the palace
 And was going undisturbed down the steps,
 She put her left foot forward;
 Then she looked towards her right,
 630 Felt the whole palace tremble,
 And saw the moon turn dim.
 When she had looked all around,
 She felt no hint of fear
 That she would not carry out her plan,
 635 Whatever fate might await her as a result.
 She had already reached the city walls
 When a watchman saw her,
 And, seeing her at that hour of the night,
 He believes that she is a goddess,
 640 Draws back and does not challenge her;
 And so the maiden goes her way
 Under the very eyes of the watchman.
 She went her way through a breach in the wall
 And came without delay to the place
 645 Where they had agreed to meet.
 She was already sitting on the marble slab
 By the spring under the tree
 Where they were to be together,
 And she begins to think
 650 About how she would tease
 The young man for not arriving on time,
 When a lion from the mountains
 Which had killed a flock
 Of sheep came through the fields.
 655 It was still covered
 In entrails and wool;
 It came down to drink at the spring.
 The maiden cowered
 When she saw the ferocious animal coming,
 660 The blood drains from her face, she turns pale:
 No wonder she was afraid.
 She runs away along a track,
 Fearing that the lion will see her,
 But she is so agitated that, unwittingly,
 665 She drops her wimple as she goes.
 She swiftly goes and conceals herself
 In the shadow of an almond tree.
 The lion approached roaring loudly,
 Quenches its thirst at the spring,
 670 And when it has drunk its fill,
 It gambols off through the fields.
 It finds the wimple on a path,

Si la defoule et ensanglente;
Et quant il est des prez issus
675 Et Pyramus y est venus,
Hé, dieux, com grans mesaventure!
Com dolerose troveüre!
Quar a la clarté de la lune,
Si con apareilloit fortune,
680 Garda sous l'ombre dou morier,
Si vit la guimple blanchoyer,
Et sus la poudriere environ
Cognut la trace dou lyon;
Esgrapilliee voit l'araine,
685 Trouble l'iaue de la fontaine,
Trouve la guimple defolee
Et de nouvel ensanglentee:
Cuide que soit dou sanc s'amie,
Garde environ, ne li voit mie.
690 Hé, las! Com malement demore!
N'ert pas venue en icele ore:
Tant crient icele beste fiere
Qu'encor n'osoit torner arriere.
Quant Pyramus ne voit s'amie,
695 Dont cuide il bien qu'el soit fenie.
Plus devint vers que fueille d'ierre,
Et enredi comme une pierre;
Mue li sans, change corage,
Lores esprent d'ire et de rage,
700 Emprez parole itant comme ire
Et maltalens li lesse dire:
'Nuis de dolour, nuis de torment,
Moriers, arbres de plorement,
Prez, qui dou sanc estes sanglent,
705 Fontaine,
Que ne m'avez rendue saine
Celi cui sanc gist en l'araine?
Sodainement est fete vaine
M'entente,
710 M'esperance, m'amour, m'atente.
Hé, diex, quel duel me represente
Ceste guimple que voi sanglente!
Amie,
Com fu la beste tant hardie
715 Qui vers vous fist ceste envaÿe?
Quel mal, quel duel, quel felonie
Qu'en tel maniere estes perie!
Ma cure,
C'est grant damage que tant dure,
720 Qui ci vous fis venir segure,

f. 95v col. a

Tramples it and covers it with blood;
 And when it has left the fields
 675 And Piramus has arrived,
 O, God, what a calamity!
 What a heart-breaking discovery he makes!
 For in the moonlight,
 As fate would have it,
 680 He looked in the shadow of the mulberry tree
 And saw the white gleam of the wimple,
 And on the dust all around
 He recognised the lion's tracks;
 He sees the sand scattered around,
 685 The water in the spring muddied,
 He finds the wimple trampled to pieces
 And covered in fresh blood:
 He believes it is his beloved's blood,
 Looks around and sees no sign of her.
 690 Alas! Tragically, she stays where she is!
 She did not come forward at this point:
 She is so afraid of the ferocious animal
 That she did not yet dare to come back.
 When Piramus does not see his beloved,
 695 He is convinced that she has perished.
 He turned greener than an ivy-leaf
 And was fixed to the spot like a stone.
 His blood runs cold, his heart turns over;
 Then he burns with anguish and rage,
 700 And afterwards he speaks such words as anguish
 And wrath will allow him to utter:
 'Night of sorrow, night of torment,
 Mulberry, tree of tears,
 Fields, bloody with her blood,
 705 O spring,
 Why have you not kept her safe for me,
 The girl whose blood lies on the sand?
 Suddenly they all come to nothing,
 My plans,
 710 My hopes, my love, my expectations.
 Ah, God, what grief it represents for me,
 This wimple I see covered in blood!
 My love,
 How was the wild animal bold enough
 715 To launch such an attack on you?
 What a calamity, what a tragedy, what a crime
 That you should have died this way!
 My dear,
 It is a bitter blow that I am still alive,
 720 I who gave you the confidence to come

Sole en tel liu par nuit obscure.
Seule!
Haÿ, de la mauvese goule
Qui de vostre char est saoule!
725 Hé, las!
Ci voi dou sanc et voi des dras.
Lyon, tu qui la devoras,
Merveil se plus n'en i lessas;
Lune crueulz, qui l'esgardas,
730 S'a cele hore n'en obscuras.
C'est tort,
Quant ele est morte et ne sui mort:
Ne sai quel duel me soit plus fort.
La mort est mon mieudre confort.
735 Chetis!
Quant elle est morte et je sui vis!
Por dieu, terre, quar m'englotis,
Ou tu, lyons, qui l'oceÿs,
Repaire:
740 Je sui tous pres, sans nul contraire
Ta volenté pués de moi faire.
Revien,
Qui devoras la douce rien;
Son sanc beüz, or boi le mien!
745 Dolens!
Ma douce amie, trop sui lens
Qu'a vostre mort ne fui presens.
Mors, quar repaire, si me prens!
Hé, mors,
750 Pourquoi demores? C'est grans tors
Que je ne sui orendroit mors.
Suer chiere,
Je vous ai morte qui derriere
Ving a mon terme, et vous premiere.
755 Or pri ma destre que bien fiere:
Vengerai vos en tel maniere.
Vengier?
Mes primes vueil aus diex proier
Qu'il demoustrent en cest morier
760 Signe de mort, de destorbier,
De plour:
Facent le fruit de tel coulour
Comme il afiert a la douleur.
Tel duel et tel priere faite,
765 Puis empez a s'espee traite,
Si a la guimple sus levee
En son la more de l'espee.
Bese la guimple avec le sanc,

f. 95v col. b

Alone to such a place at night, in the darkness.
 Alone!
 Ah, to think of the vile maw
 That is sated with your flesh!
 725 Alas!
 I see blood here and I see clothing.
 Lion, you who devoured her,
 I marvel that you did not leave more of her,
 And you, pitiless moon, who watched it happen,
 730 That you did not cover your face at that moment.
 It is unjust
 That she is dead and I am not:
 I do not know which grieves me more.
 Death is my best comfort.
 735 Poor wretch,
 When she is dead and I am still alive!
 For God's sake, earth, swallow me up,
 Or you, lion, who killed her,
 Return:
 740 I am ready and shall put up no resistance,
 You can do what you will with me.
 Come back,
 You who devoured the sweet creature;
 You drank her blood, now drink mine!
 745 Forlorn!
 My sweet love, I am too slow,
 For I was not present at your death.
 Death, return and take me now!
 Ah, Death,
 750 Why are you waiting? It is a crime
 That I am not dead here and now.
 Dear sister,
 I killed you, by arriving last
 At the rendez-vous, while you were first.
 755 Now I beg my right hand to strike well:
 This is how I shall avenge you.
 Avenge?
 But first I shall pray to the gods
 To display in this mulberry tree
 760 A sign of death and tribulation
 And grief:
 May they make its fruit turn a colour
 Which befits sorrow.
 When he had given vent to his grief and made his prayer,
 765 Then he drew his sword,
 And lifted up the wimple
 On the tip of the sword.
 He kisses the wimple and the blood;

770 Tresperce soi parmi le flanc,
Tresque de l'autre part dou cors
Fet aparoir l'espee fors.
La ou il muert baise la guimple.
Si fete amour a mort le simple!
Sor les branches raie li sans,
775 Nercist li fruis qui estoit blans:
Tous temps avoit esté la more
Blanche jusques a icele hore;
Adont si ot noire coulour
En tesmoignage de dolour.
780 Tysbé repairoit a ytant,
Qu'el ne deceüst son amant;
Moult couvoite qu'ele li die
De quel peril elle est garie.
Cuide acomplir sa volenté
785 De ce qu'ele ot tant desirré,
Mes ore aproce terme brief
Que lor amours vendront a chief.
Ja li est vis qu'el soit o lui,
Et s'entrebracent ambedui
790 Et parolent de lor amours,
Mes orendroit avra dolours.
Tout belement s'en vait arrier,
Et quant elle aproce au morier
Donques se tint pour esgaree,
795 Pour la coulour qu'el vit muee,
Quar primes avoit veü blanc
Le fruit, qui ore est taint de sanc.
Endementres que elle doute
Si a tenue droite route,
800 Le jovenciel oit senglotir,
Plaindre, gesmir, trere souspir;
Vit la guimple comme il la touche
D'ores en autres a sa bouche,
Et quant elle aperçoit la plaie
805 N'est merveille s'elle s'esmaie.
Quant voit parmi le cors l'espee,
Fuit li li sans, si s'est pasmee.
Relieve soi, dolante et mate,
Trait ses cheveux, si se degrate,
810 Derront sa char, si plore et crie,
Plus aime mort que ne fet vie.
Lores s'encline sor le cors,
Si a traite l'espee fors,
Encontremont l'en a drecie,
815 Puis parole com feme irie:
'Espee dont je sui saisie,

f. 96r col. a

He runs himself through the flank,
 770 So that the sword emerges
 On the other side of his body.
 As he lies dying he kisses the wimple.
 Such is the love that caused this hapless youth's death!
 His blood spurts on to the branches
 775 And turns the white fruit black:
 Mulberries had always been
 White until that time;
 Then black became their colour
 As a testament to sorrow.
 780 Meanwhile Tisbé returned,
 So as not to dash her lover's hopes;
 She is very eager to tell him
 What danger she has escaped from.
 She believes she is going to achieve her goal
 785 And she will have what she had desired so much,
 But now the time is rapidly approaching
 When their love will run its course!
 It seems to her that she is already with him,
 That they are embracing one another
 790 And talking of their love,
 But soon sorrow will be hers.
 Quietly she retraces her steps,
 And when she approaches the mulberry tree,
 She thought that she had lost her way
 795 Because of the change in colour she could see,
 For to begin with the fruit she had seen was white,
 Which now is black with blood.
 While she is puzzling over this
 She has kept going straight ahead.
 800 She hears the young man sobbing,
 Moaning, groaning, gasping for breath;
 She saw how he was pressing the wimple
 Time and again to his lips,
 And when she notices the wound,
 805 No wonder she is horrified.
 When she sees the sword through his body,
 The blood drains from her face and she fainted.
 She comes round, disconsolate, distraught,
 Tears her hair, claws her face with her nails,
 810 Rips at her flesh, weeps and cries aloud,
 Death is sweeter to her than life.
 Then she bends over the body
 And pulled the sword out of it.
 She raised it up high
 815 And speaks like a woman in despair:
 'O sword that I have in my hand,

Qui ma joie as a deul fenie,
Or esproeuve com es hardie.
Espee,
820 Qui nostre amour as terminee,
En mon pis soies reschaufee,
De nos deus sans ensanglentee.
Sanglente!
Hé, diex, quel fin et quele atente,
825 Com tost perist nostre jouvente!
Biau sire,
Petit vous puet espargnier ire
Quant vostre main vous vault ocire.
Lasse, com puis parole dire,
830 La ou je voi que il souspire?
Jou voi
Que il travaille a mort por moi.
Com foible amour, com povre foi
Avroie,
835 Amis, se je ne vous sivoie,
S'a court terme ne m'ocioie.
Biaux chiers,
Com grant dolours, quelz destorbiers!
Trop fu vostre corages fiers!
840 Lune, fontaine, prez, moriers,
Nuit pale,
Qui enseigne me feïs male
Quant fui issuë de la sale,
Oiez!
845 Pri vous que ma mort tesmoigniez.
Diex, de mon cuer, comme est iriez!
Tysbé, mauvese, que targiez?
Mauvese,
Tant solement morir vous plese,
850 Qu'or ne vous fault ne point ne ese.
Morir?
Nulle chose tant ne desir
Com mes douleurs a defenir.
A tort me targe dou ferir.
855 A tort!
Amours, fetes mon poing si fort
Qu'a un seul cop reçoive mort,
S'en avra s'ame grant confort:
Andui morromes d'une mort.
860 Amis,
Bien sai qu'amours vous ont ocis.
Quant assambler ne poons vis,
Mors nous joindra, ce m'est avis.
Parens,
865

f. 96r col. b

That has brought my joy to an end in grief,
 Show me now how bold you are.
 O sword
 820 That has put an end to our love,
 Be warmed again in my breast
 And bloodied with my blood and his.
 Bloodied!
 Ah, God, what an ending, what a dream,
 825 How soon our youth is destroyed!
 Dear lord,
 Grief has not spared you anything
 When you decided to die by your own hand.
 Wretch, how can I speak a word
 830 When I see him gasping for breath?
 I see
 That he is in his death-throes, because of me.
 What a shallow love, what worthless loyalty
 Mine would be,
 835 My love, if I did not follow you
 And kill myself straightaway.
 Dear one,
 Such a tragedy, such a disaster!
 Your heart was too ruthless!
 840 Moon, spring, fields, mulberry tree,
 Pale night,
 Who sent me a baleful omen
 When I had left the hall,
 Hear me!
 845 I invoke you as witnesses to my death.
 Oh, God, my heart, how distraught it is!
 Tisbé, faint-heart, why do you delay?
 Faint-heart,
 All you need is the desire to die,
 850 For time and opportunity are not lacking!
 To die?
 I desire nothing more
 Than to put an end to my sorrows.
 It is wrong for me to stay my hand.
 855 Wrong!
 Love, make my hand strong enough
 For a single blow to kill me,
 And his soul will be greatly comforted:
 We shall both die the same death.
 860 My love,
 I know that Love has killed you.
 If we cannot be together in life,
 Death will unite us, so it seems to me.
 Parents,

865 Qui nous cuidiez garder leens,
A court terme serois dolens.
Com dolereuz encombrements
Verrois,
Quant ambedeus nous trouverois
870 Ensamble, mors et acolez!
Pri vous que cest don me donez:
Quant en joie fumes seurez,
Et a mort somes dessamblez,
Seviaus
875 Que nous contiengne uns seulz tombliaux;
Andeus nous reçoive uns vesseaux.’
Adont s’encline la pucele,
Bese sa bouche si l’apele:
‘Pyramus, ves ci vostre amie:
f. 96v col. a 880 Quar l’esgardez, si ert garie.’
Li jovenciaux, la ou moroit,
Entroeuve les iex et si voit
Que ce iere Tysbé s’amie
Qui l’apeloit toute esmarie.
885 Parler i veult, mes il ne puet,
Quar la mort qui le tient nel let,
Mes tant a dit: ‘Tysbé, amie,
Pour dieu, qui vous remist en vie?’
Atant se taist, ne puet plus dire,
890 Puis la regarde, si souspire;
Li cuers li part, si pert la vie,
Cele lesse toute esmarie.
Cil est mors et cele est pasmee:
Diex, quele amours est ci finee!
895 La pucele s’est redrecie;
L’espee a a deus mains sachie;
Parmi le pis sous la mamele
Se tresperce la damoisele.
D’ambedeus pars sault li sans fors,
900 Et cele chiet dessus le cors.
Le cors acole et si l’embrace,
Les iex li baise et bouche et face;
Baise la bouche par grant cure:
Tant com sans et vie li dure,
905 Se demoustre veraie amie.
Cil est fenis, cele est fenie.
Iluec morust; en tel senblant
S’assanblerent li dui amant.
Dites amen, chascun par non,
910 Que dieus lor face voir pardon,
Et nos face redemption
Et nos otroit beneïcon.

865 Who planned to keep us confined indoors,
 You will soon be broken-hearted.
 What a terrible tragedy
 You will see,
 When you find the two of us
 870 Together, dead in one another's arms!
 I beg you to grant me this boon:
 As we were parted in our joy
 And are separated by death,
 At least
 875 Let a single grave enclose us;
 Let one tomb receive us both.'
 Then the maiden bends forward,
 Kisses her lover's lips and addresses him:
 'Piramus, see, your beloved is here.
 880 Look at her and she will be saved.'
 As he lay dying, the youth
 Half opens his eyes and sees
 That it was his beloved Tisbé
 Who was addressing him, distraught.
 885 He tries to speak to her, but cannot,
 For death, which has him in its clutches, will not let him.
 But he managed to say: 'Tisbé, my love,
 In God's name, who brought you back to life?'
 At this he falls silent, he can say no more,
 890 Then he looks at her and sighs;
 His heart stops beating and he dies,
 Leaving Tisbé distraught.
 He is dead and she has fainted.
 Oh, God, what a love has ended here!
 895 The maiden raised herself up;
 She grasped the sword in both hands;
 Through the chest, underneath her breast,
 The young girl runs herself through with it.
 The blood spurts out on both sides,
 900 And she falls across her lover's body.
 She puts her arms around the body and embraces it,
 Kisses his eyes and mouth and face;
 She kisses his lips passionately:
 For as long as she is conscious and alive,
 905 She proves herself to be a true lover.
 Now he is dead and she is dead.
 There she died; this is how
 The two lovers came to be together.
 Say 'Amen' aloud, each of you,
 910 And may God grant them true forgiveness,
 And grant us redemption,
 And give us His blessing.

REJECTED READINGS

(sigla in brackets indicate source of emendation: B, C, A = other MSS; de B = de Boer; Br = Branciforti; Cor = Cormier; Ba = Baumgartner)

17 a eulz (B) 19 les ris les jeux (A geu) 20 deulz deus (A) 22 esmouvement (A) 31 fais (B) 32 fais (B) 35-36 not in RB (A; 35 Li penon engiens et perriere, corr. de B) 38 en passer (BA) 40 ses c. (A) 72 leesce (BC; A licensse) 78 Ne nulz sens nest (A; B serf) 114 qui (B) 121 lesse (see note) 134 m. travail (BC) 138 a grant griete (B; A haliegrete) 147 not in RB (C) 152 not in RB (C) 160 not in RB (C ferei) 168 cis tors fais (Ba tors; cf C Qui si longues me fet cest tort) 169 not in RB (C tort fet) 173 not in RB (C agaitier; A has *gaitier* incorporated at end of previous line) 188 Jen (C en plor; B incorporates *En plors* at start of following line) 189 Consentez (A) 231 not in RB (C) 232 Chose dont tu faces tel r. (Cor; cf. C Por qoi tu faces tel outrage; B chose dont faces itel raige) 241 *Amis* written at the end of the previous line 283 senc (B) 295 missing in all MSS (RB incorporate *Ensi* (B *Ainsi*) at start of following line) 296 Ensi fais je (de B; cf C Si mestuet faire) 331 petruis (B) 342 onverture (BCA) 352 Torne ses iex vers (CA Tret sei; B Trest soi plus pres de la crevace) 375 cui p. a. (BCA) 387 not in R (B; cf A Lermes me tolent lesgarder) 400 missing in all MSS (de B) 402 not in R (A ostoirs; cf. B Quant li ostors con il a faim; C Com fet lostor quant il a fein) 410 sa foi (B) 437 je lui (A) 438 Ne la garra (A; B Ne la garrai) 442 Morir (C; A incorporates *morrai* at the end of v. 443) 447 not in R (B) 448 de de c. m. (BCA) 467 not in R (de B; B eunvie C vos anvie A toute c.) 468 Hostel (Br) 471 not in RB (CA) 472 con n. t. s. (B) 473 Nez pas d. c. (B) 474 not in R (B) 495 m. est (B; CA nest merveille) 530 confort (BA) 531 not in R (B; see note to 530) 534 J sui en lerne (see note) 556 not in R (CA; B incorporates *Souvent* at start of following line) 573 A la fontaine irai soir (B) 583 ninius 630 fermir (B) 636 La ert (BCA) 663 la v. (B) 666 ilnelement (BA) 677 Li aproche pesant et dure (BA; see note) 684 esgrapillie (B) 707 Celui qui (C cele cui A seli) 728 plus en i (A) 730 obcurcas (A) 750 demore (B) 756 not in RB (AC) 761 not in RB (C plor; A En leu de plour) 760 et d. (B) 812 sescrie (B; C sacline A se cline) 817 not in R (B) 818 comme h. (B) 832 t. mort (BA) 850 ni ese (BA) 873 Et m. (B) 874 not in RB (C) 886 ne let (B) 909 Ditest

NOTES

30 A has an extra couplet after v. 30: 'Ele fait plaie sanz pertus / vers qui ne puet herbe ne jus' (this passage is not in C).

35-36 The fact that four terms (*fers*, *fleche*, *penon* and *coiche*) are included in the development of the allegory in vv. 37-40 indicates a lacuna in RB: the reference to the feathers and the nock in vv. 39-40 make little sense unless the *penon* and *coiche* feature in the initial description of Love's arrow.

54 De Boer, Branciforti and Cormier emend to *lor grans* (B), but I retain the reading from R. *Tens* is attested as a synonym for *aé*, cf. the line from *Le Chevalier au Cygne* quoted in Tobler-Lommatzsch: 'Il(s) sont tout d'un sanlant, d'un tens et d'un aé'.

55 Given R's confusion of *pensser* and *passer* in v. 38, there may be a case for emending *pensent* to *passent* here, giving the sense 'they spend each day gazing at one another'. Tobler-Lommatzsch quote an example from Froissart of *passer* + direct object followed by *de* + infinitive: '...pas le passai [mon jouvent] com nices, / Mes d'amer par amours tous riches.'

62-63 Unlike de Boer, Branciforti and Cormier, I have retained the text of R, which makes better rhetorical and botanical sense than the readings in B or A, which are clearly *lectiones faciliores* (this passage is not in C). B 'or et argent la primevoire' is doubtful, since a flower is not a logical point of comparison for two precious metals. A 'or argent, rose primevoire', adopted by de Boer, Branciforti and Cormier, makes better sense, but still reads suspiciously like an attempt to make sense of a line containing a word unfamiliar to the scribe. Baumgartner retains 'marouste' which she sees as a variant form of *marroge* (modern French *marrube*, i.e. white horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*), but does not explain why a downy, nettle-like plant with tiny white, lipped flowers should be compared to a primrose. The logic of this passage demands a close comparison of like with like, the difference between the terms being one of degree rather than substance, since the point is to underline the degree to which the two protagonists were superior to the other male and female inhabitants of Babylon. So a gemstone (jasper) is superior to glass, which shares some of its properties, such as hardness, translucency and desirability, but to a lesser degree (it is worth remembering that in the twelfth century glass was a much more valuable commodity than it is now, and also that it was less transparent than its modern equivalent). Likewise, gold is superior to silver, which may be less valuable, but is nonetheless a precious metal. Most dictionaries of Old and Modern French identify the *marouste* with the stinking camomile or stinking mayweed, *Anthemis cotula*, which seems an unlikely pairing for the primrose, with which it has little in common other than its being a flowering plant. However, given that vernacular names for wildflowers are often quite loosely applied to a range of similar-looking plants, it seems quite plausible that the term *marouste* may also have been used for the scented mayweed, *Matricaria recutita*, which is almost identical in appearance to *Anthemis cotula*. The two plants are distinguished chiefly by smell, that of the *Anthemis* being quite unpleasant, while the *Matricaria* is pleasantly aromatic (hence their respective common names in English). In warm sunshine, primroses give off a scent like violets: it would therefore make good sense, in terms of this particular rhetorical sequence, to compare the primrose to another scented plant, whose perfume is pleasant, but not as attractive as that of the first term in the comparison.

68 After v. 68 A has a slightly garbled six-line speech attributed to Nature; C has one additional couplet, the second line of which is almost identical to the final line in A. De Boer concludes from this that there must be a lacuna in RB, which he fills with the first and last couplets from A, omitting the obviously corrupt middle couplet. Branciforti and Cormier follow de Boer here. Given that A is corrupt and only partially corroborated by C, it seems wiser to follow the text of RB, which makes sense as it stands.

86 CA have an extra couplet after v. 86: C 'Molt tost feraient .i. tel plet / Ou il avroit .i. maves tret'; A 'Veoir feissent i tel plait / Ou grant merveille eust estret'.

90 CA have an extra couplet after v. 90: C *Eschar ai de lor druerie/ Par tens commencent la folie*; A *‘Granz eschars est de druerie / Tost commencierent la folie’*.

121 RB and A all have *lesse*, which has been retained by previous editors, who have inserted a full stop after *guerir* and interpreted the four plural nouns in vv. 122-23 as supplementary subjects of the singular verb *maint* in v. 124. Apart from requiring an uncharacteristically awkward shift of subject from *aëz* in v. 119 to *amours* in v. 120, this reading also assumes that *amours* is a case error (nominative singular for oblique), similar to that in v. 45 (although in v. 45 *Amours* is clearly being used as a proper noun). Emending to *lessent* and repunctuating allows us to read *amours* as an oblique plural, which is consistent with R’s use of the plural form in vv. 209, 787 and 861 (and possibly elsewhere: it is unclear whether the form *amours* after a preposition represents an ‘incorrect’ singular or a ‘correct’ plural; similar hesitation between singular and plural is found with *dolour*). C has *‘Lores nes lesse en pes garir / Le lonc porpens, le grief soupir’* and omits vv. 123-24. This may suggest that the scribe of C assumed that *amours* was not the subject of *lessier*, and used singular nouns in v. 122 in order to avoid any ambiguity.

142 Other editors insert the disyllabic line ‘Sovent’ from C after v. 142 (A incorporates *sovent* into the following line). Since none of the other lyric sequences begins with a disyllable in RB, I take the view that the line in C may represent a scribal addition, which was also probably present in the MS from which A was adapted. Faral notes that ‘le passage paraît suspect’ (review, p. 297).

174 CA have an extra line, ‘Por promesse ne por loier’, after v. 174.

186 ‘Percie’ is an alternative graphy for *persie*, i.e. turned pale or wan, not a form of the verb *percier*.

204-06 Previous editors have assumed that this sequence of three lines on the same rhyme indicates a lacuna, and have replaced v. 204 with two lines from C (*‘Fait proieres, vouz et promesse / Et sacrefise a la deesse’*), in order to maintain the pattern of rhyming couplets. I take the view that the lines in C (and a similar couplet in A) may represent a scribal emendation and retain the reading from R. Sequences of monorhymed octosyllables are found elsewhere in the text, and we find four lines on the same rhyme at the end of B, which probably represents the original epilogue of the RB tradition (see note to v. 906). Lines 204-06 clearly mark the end of a narrative unit; the break in the sequence of couplets could be seen as signalling this to the audience. It is worth noting that the prologue to Gautier d’Arras’s *Ille et Galeron* in MS P (BNF fr. 375) also ends with an apparently incomplete couplet.

216 The other MSS have ‘esgaree’ (C ‘esgare’), which has been adopted by previous editors. I retain R ‘esgardee’ and interpret it as meaning ‘kept under surveillance’. The terms *savoir*, *voisdie*, *engignier* and *boisdie* in the following couplet clearly depend on the idea of a constraint to be overcome. *Esgardee* has the virtue of making the nature of that constraint explicit, while *esgaree* requires the reader to fill in the reason why a ‘helpless girl’ should be complaining about not being able to come up with a devious plan.

228 Although the MS clearly reads ‘Non’, Baumgartner emends to ‘Nou faire’ on the grounds that the prohibitive infinitive is normally preceded either by *ne* or by the enclitic form *nel*. The scribe’s consistent use of the form *dou* for *de + le* (16 occurrences) may lend some weight to her argument.

229 Faral (review, p. 299) notes the similarity between this debate between Reason and Love and that found in Chrétien de Troyes’s *Chevalier de la Charrette*. Neither Cormier nor Baumgartner capitalises *raison*.

254 BCA all have ‘chalangier’, but R ‘reprochier’ makes very good sense: Tisbé would happily accept a reproof for her ‘fier corage’ (i.e. for having put thoughts of her family’s reputation before her lover’s claims on her), because the only person who would reproach her for this would be Piramus; given that they are now prevented from speaking to one another, she would cherish the sound of his voice (‘se m’en ooie’), even if he were to chide her. *Chalangier*, with its connotations of a public claim or accusation in court, makes sense if *en* in v. 254 refers not to the *fier corage* itself, but to Tisbé’s offering her virginity as amends for it: she would welcome being publicly accused by others for having given herself to Piramus, as proof of her love for him. Given that Tisbé addresses Piramus directly in v. 252, I prefer to read v. 254 as a natural extension of this imagined private conversation between lovers, before the heroine’s thoughts turn in vv. 255-58 to the way in which others might react if they knew what she had just resolved to do.

258 This line may represent a scribal reworking in R: B has ‘Se il avoit a mo afaire’ and C ‘Se il avoit de moi afere’, while A ‘Se il navoit a moi a faire’ clearly derives from something similar.

286 De Boer emends to ‘Riens ne respasse’, while Branciforti and Cormier combine C ‘Riens ne me lasche’ and B ‘Riens ne moi lasse’ to give ‘Riens ne me lasse’. This produces a curious sequence of one disyllable and two octosyllables on identical rhymewords. *Passer* is attested in the sense of ‘to overlook’; in one of the examples cited in the *AND* it can also be interpreted as ‘to spare’, which is how I read it here. Baumgartner retains ‘passe’ and translates as ‘Il ne cède pas,/ Ce mal [...]’.

323 BC have ‘puist’ (A ‘puisse’), but I retain the indicative and read it as an anticipation of the result of Tisbé’s action.

326 De Boer, Branciforti and Cormier emend to ‘couche soi’ (CA; B has ‘coile soi’), but the reference in v. 309 to Tisbé being confined in a ‘less busy’ chamber in the palace, rather than an empty one, suggests that other people still frequent these contiguous rooms. It would therefore make sense for the lovesick Piramus to hide himself away from prying eyes.

329 BA have ‘Que’, adopted by de Boer, Branciforti and Cormier, but R ‘Qui’ makes better sense: the hanging end of the belt draws Piramus’s attention to the crack in the wall rather than the other way around. C ‘Que la ceinture li enseigne’ suggests that the scribe realised that *que* was illogical here and tried to improve the line without changing the initial word (which he may have already copied before becoming aware of the problem).

331 ‘Aparissant’ is found only in R (B ‘si dit itant’; C ‘si dist atant’; A ‘si dist itant’). However, the accumulation of epithets found in the other MSS in v. 332 (B ‘T. douce bele f.’; C ‘T. bele douce f.’; A ‘He T. tendre c.’) looks suspiciously like padding introduced to compensate for moving *dist il* into the previous line.

338 Previous editors have transcribed the last word in this line as *troveüre*, i.e. ‘(lucky) find’. Given the context, the use of the verb *apercevoir*, which sits rather uneasily with *troveüre*, and the presence of the cognate *creveüre* in v. 337, I prefer to read *troueüre*, i.e. ‘opening’.

352 The repetition in R of *iex-oeil* is awkward and suggests that the scribe has recopied v. 327 instead of v. 352.

354 B has the extra line ‘Tantost benoit la crevace’ after v. 354, but is clearly corrupt at this point: the rhyme words of vv. 352 and 353 have been inverted and v. 351 is repeated after v. 353 to provide a rhyme for *paroi*; the extra line is a scribal addition to supply the rhyme which is then needed for *face* in v. 354.

379 De Boer emends to ‘le doulouser’ (cf. C ‘Lessiez amis le doulouser’; A ‘Amis lessiez de doulouser’), while Branciforti and Cormier combine A and C to give ‘Amis, lessiez le doulouser’. ‘A moi’ makes better sense than ‘Amis’ here: Tisbé is arguing that her suffering must be greater than Piramus’s because her love is stronger than his, since it led her to discover the crack in the wall. I retain *duel user* on the grounds that *user* is attested in the sense of ‘to suffer’ (Tobler-Lommatzsch quote the line ‘mout i use mal et endure’ from *Guillaume d’Angleterre*). B ‘le duel mener’ is clearly a *lectio facilior*; CA ‘doulouser’ may also represent a scribal alteration.

402 The sense of the simile is incomplete without this line; the image of the lady as falconer is found in Jauféré Rudel ‘Quan lo rius de la fontana’, vv. 10-11. The hunting imagery continues with the reference to the lovers being caught in a net in vv. 411-10.

437 A difficult line: B has ‘auquel complain je lui’ and A ‘quel compaignons je luit’ (this line is not in C). De Boer follows A, while Branciforti and Cormier emend to ‘a quel complain je luit’. I retain the reading from R, apart from reinstating the final *t* of *luit*, and interpret this as a direct address to the God of Love, literally ‘Oh God, whose grief I struggle with’ (Baumgartner follows R and translates ‘Ah, Dieu, contre quel mal il me faut lutter!’). The use of *cui* in the sense of Modern French *dont*, or *duquel* after a preposition, is relatively uncommon, but the fact that there is another example in v. 483 in R (and in v. 707 in C) suggests that our author may have favoured this construction, and lends some support to my interpretation. The imperfect rhyme in v. 438 may indicate that the whole passage has become corrupted at some stage (elsewhere in our text, *fui* rhymes only with *lui* / *ambedui* / *andui* / *refui* / *connui*, while *deduit* rhymes with *nuit* and *lit* in vv. 537-39, and *nuit* with *cuit* in vv. 133-34).

467 Lines 471-73 are also obviously corrupt, which suggests either that R’s original was defective or that the scribe became distracted at this point.

468 *Hoster* is a well-attested variant form of *hostel*.

474 A ‘Et de moi ont gaste la face’ clearly derives from something very similar to B ‘A demi oeil esgart la face’, while C ‘Et garde ne voient la face’ looks like an attempt by a scribe to make sense of a garbled original.

480 BA both have ‘Que’, which would make this a question: ‘Why don’t you open up at my entreaty?’. De Boer, Branciforti and Cormier all follow BA here (this line is not in C).

483, 485 Single octosyllabic lines between disyllables are unusual: these are the only two examples that appear in all MSS. However, there are no obvious signs of lacunae here, and the very restricted number of possible rhymes in *–ouche* makes it difficult to imagine what a missing line after v. 483 might have looked like (the only other instance of this rhyme in our text, in vv. 802-03, also uses the pairing *touche/ bouche*).

511 This may be a reminiscence of another well-known story from the *Metamorphoses*: in Book VI, Tereus’s guilty love for his sister-in-law Philomela is described as flaring up as quickly as a fire in dry corn or leaves or stored hay.

518 De Boer and Baumgartner emend ‘Voies’ to ‘Veez’ on the basis of A (although *voies* is attested as a second person plural imperative). However, this interpretation involves an uncharacteristically awkward shift from singular to plural mode of address. Branciforti and Cormier emend to ‘Veīs’, which is equally unsatisfactory, as Tisé is clearly referring to her present situation, not to something that the deity saw in the past. *Voier* is attested as an alternative form of the infinitive (see Tobler-Lommatzsch, s.v. *veer*), so I prefer to retain *voies* and read it as a variant disyllabic form of the second person singular of the present indicative. *Voies* might also (but less plausibly) be seen as an extension to the affirmative of the Old French tendency to use a second-person present subjunctive with imperative force in negative constructions.

520 CA have an extra octosyllable after v. 520: C ‘Vez damour com el me demeine’; A ‘Veez damors com me demaine’; and again after v. 525: C ‘Qui com plus dure plus sesgaie’; A ‘Quar com plus dure et plus sesgaie’. However, as the text of RB is not obviously incomplete here, I have chosen not to include them.

530 The scribe of R seems to have copied *confort* from the line below, instead of *deport*, then rather than correct v. 530 he omitted v. 531, since the passage still made sense without it.

534 BCA all have ‘en lermes’ (BC omit *je*). Baumgartner retains *lerme* as a singular with collective meaning, and I follow her here. She reads the initial letter as the pronoun *i* rather than an error for *je*, but this produces awkward syntax, and the inclusion of *je* before the verbs in vv. 538-39, in the parallel construction introduced by ‘La nuit’, strongly suggests that it should appear in v. 534 as well.

544 B has an extra octosyllable after v. 544: ‘Por ce que grant douleur le loie’, but v. 544 is corrupt in B, and this extra line may represent an attempt to make some sense of a garbled text. It may have been intended to read ‘Por ce qu’a grant douleur ie l’oie’.

565-66 There is no equivalent of these lines in BCA, and the irregular v. 565 indicates that R is corrupt at this point. I have retained these lines, however, since they do make sense, and B 567 ‘La poons assanbler amis’ is clearly a conflation of v. 568 with something similar to R’s reading, probably with an *-er* rhyme. Previous editors have omitted vv. 565-66 and replaced v. 567 with A ‘Tant que pussons estre assamblé’, but this is just as likely to represent a scribal emendation as an original reading.

573-75 The text of v. 573 in R (‘A la fontaine irai seoir’) requires us to read *si* in v. 575 as an affirmative adverb (‘I shall go and sit by the spring beyond the walls, and I shall find you’). This does not make very good sense here: Piramus has not yet agreed to the plan, so it is illogical for Tisbé to declare at this point that she *will* find him. Moreover, the reference to the spring makes for an awkward anticipation of the very precise details about the meeting-place given in vv. 580-82. Line 583 (which is found only in R) implies that Tisbé is challenging her lover to prove that he is as audacious as she is: her saying that *he* will definitely find *her* at the spring is a more natural conclusion to the speech if some doubt has been expressed earlier about *her* finding *him* there. Given that there are signs that the scribe of R was working from an original that was damaged or otherwise corrupt at this point (see previous note), I have preferred the reading from B, and take *si* in v. 575 to be *se + i*, giving ‘if I shall find you there’. C ‘Par une nuit irai savoir la hors / Se troveroie vostre cors’ and A ‘Par mienuit savoir irai / La fors / Se ie troverai vostre cors’ both support this reading.

582 The MS reads either *ninius* or (possibly) *nimus*. B has either *gunus* or (more probably) *gimus*, while C has *venus* (this line is not in A). In Greek mythology Ninus, founder of Nineveh, was the second husband of Semiramis, who succeeded him as monarch and built the fabled city of Babylon. According to Diodorus Siculus, Ninus was responsible for the death of Semiramis’s first husband, who hanged himself in despair when the king demanded that he give up his wife to him. Whether this part of the legend would have been familiar to a twelfth-century writer or his audience is unclear. If it was, our poet’s decision to retain Ovid’s reference to Ninus can be seen as further reinforcement of the transgressive aspects of the tale.

631 I take this description of the moon turning dim to be a reference to a lunar eclipse, often regarded as an ill omen. During totality, the moon remains visible, but loses its brightness, appearing pale or copper-coloured depending on atmospheric conditions.

632-33 De Boer, Branciforti and Cormier follow CA here: ‘Vit le huan vit (A la chancre et) la fresaie / Mes nis un sine (A uns signes) ne lesmaie’. In v. 633 Baumgartner emends to ‘pour ce’ on the basis of B (although this is not listed in the rejected readings). Given the difficulty of distinguishing *c* and *t* in many scribal hands, B ‘por ce’ could be a misreading of R ‘pointe’, or vice versa. As the *AND* lists *pointe* as a variant of *point*, and as *ne...point* is so common as an emphatic negative construction, I retain *pointe* and translate it as ‘no hint of’.

677 The text of R ('Li aproche pesant et dure') is inserted in the right-hand margin, with a hash between vv. 676 and 678 indicating where it should go. This suggests that the scribe noticed an incomplete couplet after he had finished copying the text, and invented a line with a *-ure* rhyme to remedy the situation.

689 This could also be punctuated 'ne l'i voit mie', but I prefer to interpret *li* as the stressed form of the object pronoun: 'he could not see *her*' (though he could see all the other signs).

748 After v. 748 C has six lines and A seven which do not figure in RB; both passages are to some extent corrupt. Previous editors have reinstated this passage, using the text of C plus emendations. The omission of two lines a little further on (756 and 761) may imply that the original used by the scribe of R was defective at this point; equally, the fact that the passage does not appear in B may suggest that it is an interpolation.

767 B 'l'audure' (= *la heudure*, hilt or crosspiece of a sword) may be the better reading here. If Piramus were to lift the wimple up on the point of his sword and then plunge the sword into his body, the cloth would end up pinned to the lower part of his chest; it seems unlikely that we should then be invited to envisage a dying man doubling himself up in order to continue kissing a headdress fixed to his body (v. 772). If he were to hold the point of the sword towards his body, in preparation for the fatal blow, and lift the wimple with the hilt, the garment would remain free, and he would grasp it and the hilt when he came to strike home. He would consequently also be able to raise the wimple to his lips as he lay dying (cf. vv. 802-03). Both R 'la more de l'espee' and A 'la pointe de l'espee' look suspiciously like emendations by scribes who did not stop to visualise the scene in detail (this line is not in C).

799 CA have an extra couplet after this line: 'Garde devant soi (A devant soi garda) en la sente / Voit environ (A deseure) l'erbe sanglente'. The transition from v. 799 to v. 800 is not perhaps as smooth as it might be in RB, but the narrative sequence is not disrupted enough to indicate a definite lacuna.

817 Although R does make sense as it stands, the transition is rather abrupt, and the fact that v. 818 is corrupt lends weight to the case for there being a lacuna here. A 'Qui mas ioie toz dis fenie' is clearly derived from something very similar to the line in B (this passage is abridged in C).

906 This is the last line which is common to R and B. R has a twenty-line epilogue which is stylistically closer to the text of the OM than to the remainder of the story of Piramus and Tisbé (see de Boer, p. 52), and should probably be seen as a bridging passage inserted by the OM poet in place of the final lines of his intercalated text. I have replaced the epilogue from R with the remaining 6 lines from B. De Boer, Branciforti and Cormier omit vv. 905-06 and substitute the final two couplets of C: 'Tant con li dure sens et vie / Se demonstre veraie amie. / Ici fenist des deus amanz. / Con lor leal amor fu granz'. Baumgartner retains vv. 905-06 and includes a further couplet from R: 'En tel maniere sont finé / Li dui amant par loiauté.'

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Diplomatic Transcriptions

MS R (Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale 1044 (0.44), folios 91r – 96v)

Parchment, 14th century, modern binding. Commissioned by Jeanne de Champagne Navarre, wife of Philippe le Bel. Contains the whole of the *Ovide Moralisé*. Two columns per page, with 453 illuminations. Fols 91r-96v contain ten miniatures depicting the servant reporting Píramus and Tisbé to Tisbé's mother (91r); Píramus lamenting (92r); Tisbé finding the crack in the wall (92v); the lovers at the wall (93r); the lovers planning their escape (94r); Tisbé hiding from the lion (94v); Píramus running himself through with his sword (95r); Tisbé kissing the dying Píramus (95v); Tisbé killing herself (96v); the lovers' funeral (96v). *Píramus et Tisbé* is preceded by a miniature of the three daughters of Minyas, and the following lines:

Autre fable savoit plus bele
 Plus agreable et plus novele
 Comment la more qui fu blanche
 Devint puis noire sor la branche
 Ceste li plaist ceste lor conte
 Or vous raconteerai le conte
 Et la fable sans aiouster
 Sans muer et sans riens oster
 Si comme uns autres la dite
 Puis i metrai la verite
 Ceste histoire et lalegorie
 Que ceste fable signifie.

Transcription Notes

Large initials are marked by underlined characters. The position of the miniatures is marked by the siglum [min] at the end of the line immediately preceding each illustration. The scribe uses both *i* and *j*: *j* is transcribed *j* within the line and *I* in initial position. There is moderate use of standard abbreviations: *x* has been retained in the transcription, since its value for the scribe is uncertain; < *multum* is expanded to *moult* on the basis of two occurrences of the full form; *u^o* is expanded to *uous* in line with the full form found in the text. Both *con* and *com* are found as full forms, but *com* is the more frequent and is used as the expanded form of *cō* and *9* standing alone. *9* within a word is transcribed in line with modern French orthographical practice (*comme*, *commence* but *contraire*, *confort*, *connui*, *convenance* etc.).

f. 91r col. b

En babilone la cite

[min] preceding

Furent dui home renome
De grant ualour de grant hautesce
De parente et de richesce

5 Li riche home orent .ii. enfans
Dune biaute et duns samblans
Luns fu ualles lautre meschine
Tant biaux norent rois ne royne
.II. enfans orent li riche home

10 Quouides en son liure nome
Et dist quil furent apele
Lun piramus. lautre tysbe
Ancois quil eussent .iii. ans
Toucha amours les .ii. enfans

15 Et naura plus en lor endroit
Que lor aez ne requeroit

f. 91v col. a

Li pers a eulz ligaulz corages
Lor grans biautez lor grans parages
Les paroles les ris les ieus

20 Et li aaisement deulz deus
Et li entreueoir souuent
Lor donnerent esmouement
Hay amours deuant tes iex
Ne puet durer ioenes ne uiex

25 Il nest iouuente ni aez
Qui de ton dart ne soit naurez
Contre ton dart na nulle essoigne
Double haubers ne double broigne
Ta saiete ne set faillir

30 Uers lui ne puet nulz homs garir
Sans douleur fais traire souspir
Sans sanc expandre fais palir
Li fers de ton dart porte feu
Souspirs la fleche dou mileu

35 Li fers naure dou regarder
Et la fleche coule en passer
Li penon font les apareulz
La coiche ajouste ses conseulz
De tel saiete et de tel lance

40 Naura amours en lor enfance
Le jouencel et la meschine
Tres que la mort lor fu uoisine
Encor ne seuent riens damours
Si les a mis en grans freours

45 Ia lor plaist par matin leuer
Et lun de lautre porpenser
Et jeunent plus que lor droit
Et lor aez ne requeroit

f. 91v col. b

Par matinet chascun sen emble
50 Si uont le iour iouer ensamble
Deduent soi o les enfans
De lor aez et de lor tans
Le jour pensent deulz esgarder
Quil ne sen pueent saoler
55 Tart reuienent a lor ostaulz
Quar li departirs lor est mauz
Plaist lor a faire mainte chose
Dont len moult les manace et chose
Tant com jaspes sormonte uoirre
60 Et or argent. et primeuoire
A la marouste sormonte
Tant sormontoient de bonte
Et de ualour et de biaute
Cil dui. tous ceulz de la cite
65 Par grant conseil et par grant cure
Et par grant sens les fist nature
Tant com lor aez fu contraire
A ce quamours requiert a faire
Et il furent dedens .x. ans
70 Fu assez lor leesce grans
Daler ensamble et de parler
Desbanoier et de ioer
Li douz regars li simples sens
Et li non conuenables temps
75 Et que nulz biens nest sans enuie
Ne nulz sens nest sans felonie
Les fist departir et garder
Quil ne porent ensamble aler
.I. sers percut lor contenance
80 Et dist or sai ie sans doutance
Que moult sentraiment cil enfant
Et se il fussent auques grant
Et il eussent tel lesir
Griez chose fust dou departir
85 A la mere a la damoisele
Porta li sers ceste nouele
Et cele dist des or ten tes
Quar il nassambleront iames
Puis dist a une chamberiere
90 Garde se tu mas de riens chiere
Que tysbe nisse fors de lus
Et quel ne uoie piramus
A dont leua uns maltalans
Entre les peres aus enfans
95 Une tencon et une enuie

f. 92r col. a

Qui puis dura toute lor uie
 Ceste chose fist destorber
 Les .ii. enfans a aprimer
 Et dassambler par mariage
 100 Et denuoier entreulz message
 Li dui enfant sont en destroit
 Li uns not lautre ne ne uoit
 Moult lor samble griez la deuse
 Que lor parens ont entraulz mise
 105 Mes ce que len les garde plus
 Tysbe nose issir fors de lus
 Ne piramus uers lui garder
 Fet plus lor amour auier
 Andui croissent selonc lor tens
 110 Croist lor aez et croist lor sens
 Croist lor ardours et croist lor plaie
 Et croist li feus qui riens napaie
 Croist lor amours et lor aez
 Et ia orent .xu. ans passez
 115 Et puis quil uindrent en iouuent
 Et il choisirent escient
 Et lor aez sahart au cours
 Ou nature choisist amours
 Adont nes lesse plus guerir
 120 Li lonc penser li grief sospir
 Les grans dolors li fort complaint
 Li durs tormens au cuer lor maint
 Dementent soi et nuit et iour
 Toute lor uie est en dolour
 125 Plorent plaignent chascuns par soi
 Ne seuent deulz prendre conroi
 Ne ne pueent trouuer remire
 Ne par mecine ne par mire
 Li feux lor siet dedens les os
 130 Qui ne lor lesse auoir repos
 Ains les trauaille ior et nuit
 Et de mortel trauail les cuit
 Cil feux et cele flame seule
 Retrait les ners et art la meule
 135 Tault la uertu change biaute
 Et chace tout a grant griete [min]
 Piramus est plains de tristour
 Plains de sospir et plains de plour
 Plains de penser et plains de cure
 140 Demente soi en tel mesure
 Helas fet il chetif dolent
 Soufferrai longues cest torment
 Tous tens ai duel ioie noient

f. 92r col. b

Et com plus me dueil plus mesprent
145 Ie mens certes ains est ardour
Qui ensi uient de iour en iour
Si taint ma face et ma coulour
Com fait la fueille la froidour
He piramus quel la feras
150 En quel guise te contendras
Hay pere qui mengendras
Pourquoi
Nas tu ore pitie de moi
Se tu ne prens autre conroi
155 Ou par enging ou par desroi
Tysbe bele que te uerrai
Ou se ce non pour toi morrai
Saches se par amours ne tai
Que par force te raurai
160 La mort
Iert mon refuge et mon confort
Saulques me tient cis malz si fort
Ou se longues mest cis tors fais
He: dieux pourquoi nest fais cis plais
165 Que nos parens fussent em pais
Neussons mie tant dagais
Ne ie ne puis tant exploitier
Que ji trouuaise messagier
Que ie li peusse enuoier
170 Cui chault
Ne monte riens se dieux me sault
Hay peres qui mains en hault
Estain le feu qui si massault
Le feu
175 Qui ma tolu et ris et jeu
Ne puis guerir en nesun leu
Amie
Pour uous est ma coulour perie
Mon cors naure ma chars percie
180 Bele pour uous despens ma uie
Ien plours
Consentez moi li dieux damours
Quencor la tiengne nuit ou jours
Ou a leesce ou a dolours
185 Pasmer
Mestuet. errant ne puis parler
Or sui hetiez or uueil plorer
Ore ai grant chault or uueil trambler
f. 92v col. a
190 Ains quil peust son duel fenir
Li prist la face a empalir
En lermes et en plorement

Chey pasmez ou pauement
 Empres grant piece est releuez
 Tous tristes tous descolorez
 195 Uait sent au temple ueneris
 Couche soi sus le marbre bis
 Une priere a commencie
 Quele li doinst auoir baillie
 De parler a tysbe samie [min]
 200 Tysbe rest la dedens enclose
 Fors dou palais issir nen ose
 Souuent remembre ses amours
 Souuent mue le iour colours
 Souuent se plaint et souent plore
 205 Lasse fet elle com male ore
 Fui nee
 He diex com male destinee
 Com dure uie mest donee
 Ains mes ne fu nulle esgardee
 210 En uie
 Qui par sauoir ou par uoisdie
 Ne seust engigner boisdie
 Fors moi
 Mes quant ie plus pens et mains uoi
 215 En quel guise prendrai conroi
 Amis douz de parler a toi
 Parler
 Tysbe fole ueulz tu desuer
 Et ta chastee uioler
 220 Et ton lignage uergonder
 Non faire
 Garde raison qui test contraire
 Ne te chaille entour toi atraire
 Chose dont tu faces tel rage
 225 Onques feme de ton lignage
 Ne fu reprise de putage
 Reprise
 Non serai ie par nulle guise
 Miex uueil estre .c. fois ocise
 230 Tysbe
 Ou as tu pris icest pense
 Tost as pyramus oublie. amis
 Onques a certes ne le dis
 Or poez dire ce mest uis
 235 A droit
 Quen amours de feme na foit
 Biaux douz amis prenez a droit
 Le gage
 Tenez sire pour cest outrage

f. 92v col. b

240 Uous otroi ci mon pucelage
Trop iere ore de fier corage
De fier
Uers uous doi ge bien supploier
Moult auroie le blasme chier
245 Se men ooie reprochier
Contraire
Si com me samble a mon uiaire
Nulz hom ne men deuroit retraire
Ne reprendre de cest afaire
250 Desuee
Tes toi fole desmesuree
Quel corage uous a muee
Moult estes ore forsenee
Lerai
255 Tout cest pense que ie ore ai
Par le conseil mon pere aurai
Autresi gent ami bien sai
Si gent
Merueil se piramus mentent
260 Oil. ie tramble bien le sent
Si mar le dis or men repent
He: biaux
Rose tendre et lis nouuiaus
Flors de tous autres damoisiaus
265 Merci
Naies cure de quanque di
De paour ai le cuer marri
Iamais naurai nul autre ami
Que uous
270 Mes uos parens sont enuious
Et li mien sont de moi ialous
Cui chault
Ne monte riens se diex me sault
Or senc mon cuer ore ai trop chault
275 A poi ferai pour uous .i. sault
He lasse
Que ai ie dit riens ne me passe
Li maulz qui si souuent me lasse
Dolente
280 Li diex damours le me consente
Ou bon me soit ou men repente
Quentre mes bras encor le sente
Par termes
Ci fenirai ma plainte en lermes
285 Pasmer mestuet ore est li termes [min]
Ensi fais ie par chascun di
Tel fief tieng ie de mon ami

La pucele est trois fois pasmee
 Et quant elle sest releuee
 290 Ansdeus ses mains uers le ciel tent
 Aus diex prie moult humblement
 Quil li doignent conseil trouuer
 Qua son ami puisse parler
 Prochain furent li dui palais
 295 Et par tele maniere fais
 Cune parois et .j. murs seulz
 Estoit deuisse dambedeus
 Endroit la chambre la dedens
 Ou mains conuersoient de gens
 300 Ou la pucele iert enfermee
 Fu la parois .i. peu creuee
 La creuace nert gaires grans
 Si fu celee par mains ans
 Desi quamours la fist trouuer
 305 Uers cui riens ne se puet celer
 Quel chose est ce quamours ne sent
 Li dui amant premierement
 Apercurent celui pertus
 Primes tysbe puis piramus
 310 Tysbe trouua la creueure
 Prist le pendant de sa cainture
 Sen fist outre le fer paroir
 Que ses amis le pot ueoir
 Piramus uint de deporter
 315 Pour ses dolours reconforter
 Entre en la chambre cele soi
 Torne ses iex uers la paroi
 Garde si apercoit lenseigne
 Qui la creuace li enseigne
 320 Cele part uait prent le pendant
 Uoit le petruis aparissant
 Tysbe dist il bele faiture
 Flours de toute autre creature
 Par lenseigne de la chainture
 325 Sui ie uenus offrir droiture
 Que ne trouuai la creueure
 Uostre en est bele laenture
 Daperceuoir tel troueure
 Se uous auez de moi tel cure
 330 Ne uous tendra la fermeure
 Que ne ueigniez ici segure
 Sans message sans onuerture
 A basse uois et a murmure
 Porrons parler de nostre iniure
 335 Emprez saurois en quel ardure

f. 93r col. b

Ma mis amours sans forfaiture
He diex comme est sa uie dure
Qui longuement teulz maulz endure
La pucele de lautre part
340 Est en escout et en esgart
De la parole entent lesfroi
Torne ses iex uers la paroi
Met son oeil endroit la creuace
De son ami connut la face
345 Parler cuide mes el ne puet
Pour lamour qui si la commuet
Ou premerain esgardement
Fremist souspire et si esprent
Tressault tramble et si tressue
350 Taint sa color et si li mue
Porpense soi quele li die
En soi meismes sentroblie
En tantes guises la destraint
Amours. qui toutes choses uaint
355 A la parfin sest pourpensee
Si sest un poi assuree
Met sa bouche endroit la fendure
Emprez parole en tel mesure
Amis ensi uous os nomer
360 Ce ne me puet on pas ueer
Ne me puis pas uers uous celer
Uostre proesce uueil gaber
Premiere soi conseil trouuer
Com peussons ci assambler
365 Quar cui plus aime plus uoit cler
Griement uous oi desconforter
Mes poi sauez que est amer
Encor uous en poez ioer
A moi lessiez le duel user
370 Cui riens ne puet confort doner
Ioie ai changiee por plorer
Pour dolereus complains ieter
Et leesce pour gementer
Soef dormir por grief penser
375 Ieu et delit pour souspirer
Amis ne puis or plus ester
Souspirs me tolent le parler
Pensez demain dou retourner
Plus a loisir porrons parler
380 Et li uns lautre conforter
Ne pot lors plus parler a lui
Ensi departent ambedui
Li jours sen uait la nuis prist fin

f. 93v col. a

385 Ansi repairent au matin
 Et reuiennent a lor pertus
 Primes parole piramus
 Amie moult sui angoissous
 Quar a mort sui naurez pour uous
 Des or uieng ie bien a reclain
 390 Plus sui pris que poissons a lain
 Sorpris
 Sui je pour uous ce mest auis
 Ne sai que soit ioie ne ris
 Sauques me tient nen irai uis
 395 Muir moi
 Li diex damours ne garde foi
 Quar sormontez nous a sa foi
 Lacie somes en une roi
 Andui
 400 Ne sai cui prier uous ou lui
 Bele a uous fais ie mon refui
 Se por uous muir tant mar i fui
 Amie
 Moult feriez grant felonie
 405 Se pour uous perdoie la uie
 Quant par uous puis auoir aye
 Dolent
 Moult puis auoir duel et torment
 Qui tant ai ame longuement
 410 Et ne puis faire mon talent
 Chetis
 He bele com sui entrepris
 Com sui pour uostre amour conquis
 Dolour
 415 Ne me default ne nuit ne iour
 Or pens souspir et emprez plour
 Toute ai perdue la coulour
 Dormir
 Boiure et mengier mestuet gerpir
 420 Ne puis parler que ne souspir
 Bien ai appris mal a souffrir
 Dedit
 Et quanque ie desir me fuit
 He diex a cui complaing ie lui
 425 Ne la garra se ne men fui
 Foir
 Amours ne me ueult pas gerpir
 Pour amours mestoura morir
 Morir
 430 Se dieu plaist et uous non ferai
 Ancois uous en soupploierai

f. 93v col. b

Ia tant ce cuit nen prierai
En uain
Ains tendrai tant droit ma main
435 de de. cest mal me ferois sain
Et de uostre amistie certain
He murs
Tant par estes aspres et durs
Mes se ie fuisse auques seurs
440 La frete
Fust a mes mains si ample fete
Que sans ueue de la guete
f. 94r col. a Uous en eusse parmi trete
Parois
445 Aiez merci de ces destrois
Pertuis tant par estes estrois
Chaillous se uous aouuersois
Seul tant
Quensamble fussiens en parlant
450 Et alissons entrebesant
Amie
Se fusse en uostre compaignie
De grant doleur fusse garie
Hostel
455 Pour tant te deuons nous amer
Qui parmi toi nous lais parler
Cele toi bien con ne te sace
Nez pas de ceulz qui nous manace
Par toi
460 De cele qui le cuer de moi
Et le corage a trait o soi
Mesiere
Tant par estes cruel et fiere
Qui naouurez par ma proiere
465 Tant que besier puisse la chiere
La bouche
La cui douceurs au cuer me touche
He gente
Itant me fetes sans atente
470 Ne plus
Prions orendroit de ca ius
Que nous ait dame uenus
Que nulz ne truisse cest pertus
Li jouenciaux plaint et souspire
475 Lores fremist ne pot mot dire
Et quant li siens contes remaint
Tysbe commence son complaint
Amis trop uous desconfortez [min]

f. 94r col. b

480 Merueilles est que trop mamez
 Bien sai qua mort estes naurez
 Pour moi
 Et ie por uous en moie foi
 De ma uie ne sai conroi
 Ne sui mie en menor esfroi

485 Que uous
 Moult estes tristes et plorou
 Et mes cuers est moult angoissou
 Griement
 Uous complaigniez de cest torment

490 Mes ie espoir plus durement
 Amis
 Qui si dites questes conquis
 Li miens cuers est damors surpris
 Sans faille

495 Plus est espris que feus em paille
 Amors mocist et me trauaille
 Diex grans
 Quel ire est ce quel maltalans
 Que as a moi de si lonc tans

500 Diex pere
 Qui me feis nestre de mere
 Uoies mon duel et ma misere
 Ma paine
 Males herres et male estraine

505 Recui
 Amis quant primes te connui
 Ains puis ne nuit ne iour ne fui
 Sans plaie
 Nest merueille sele sesmaie

510 La touse
 Qui pour uous est si angoissouse
 Riens ne la puet faire ioieuse
 A tort
 Ai ie perdu ioie et confort

515 Par grant angoisse atens la mort
 Le iour
 I sui en lerne et en freour
 Et en angoisse et en dolour
 Et en torment et en tristour

520 La nuit
 Nai ie ne deport ne deduit
 Quant ie me gis dedens mon lit
 Riens noi
 Sen sui en paine et en esfroi

f. 94v col. a

525 Si mest auis que ie uous uoi
 Et ne poez parler a moi

Dont sui pires que ne soloi
Tressaill
Tressu dangoisie et de trauail
530 Dont tens mes mains que ie uous bail
Et quant uous doi prendre si fail
Amis
Quant me rendors si mest auis
Que uous estes deuant mon uis
535 Tous dehaitiez et tous pensis
Diex donge
Que biens me uiengne de cest songe
Dont mest auis que me semonge
Ne sai quel uois en complaignant
540 Qui ce me dist apertemant
Ensi
Tysbe cognois tu ton ami
Esueille toi salons de ci
Tysbe
545 Li dieu nous ont amoneste
Que issons fors de la cite
Souz le morier
Droit a la fontaine au grauier
La nous porrons esbanoier
550 Amis
Dites quil uous en est auis
De mamor uueil que soies fis
Pour uoir
Ie memblerai dou premier soir
555 A la fontaine irai seoir
La fors
Si trouuerai le uostre cors
Amis ta uie est mes tresors
Gardez
560 Ne soiez lenz ne demorez
Dou premerain some leuez
A la fontaine me querez
Sous le morier enmi les prez
La ou ninius fu enterrez
565 Certainement mi trouerez [min]
Ensi ferment lor conuenant
Puis departent li dui amant
Et saluerent le pertuis
Quil ne uirent des or mais puis
570 Mes primes baise la paroi
Chascuns au departir de soi
Li dui amant sont en grant cure
Trop lor samble que li iours dure
Moult se complaignent dou soleil

f. 94v col. b

575 Souuent lapelent non feeil
 Quar trop se targe desconser
 Et si fait la nuit demorer
 Dient qua escient le fait
 Pour destourbance de lor plait
 580 Li jours sen uait la nuis repaire
 Et li termes de lor afaire
 Montent les guetes sor les murs
 Cil se dorment qui sont segurs
 Mes nulz des .ii. ne se repose
 585 Ains est en apens dautre chose
 Chascuns en soi meismes soigne
 De bien emprendre sa besoigne
 Or sont li cuer en esperance
 Et non pourquant sont em balance
 590 De ce sil le facent ou non
 Mes uolentez oste raison
 Delitent soi ou dous penser
 De ce quil doiuent assambler
 Et deuisent en lor corages
 595 Lor mors lor deulz et lor damages
 Il ont andui ioie et dolour
 Mes toutes ores uaint amour
 Sens ne raison nes puet retraire
 De ce quil ont empris a faire
 600 Ia ert la gent toute endormie
 Quant tysbe sest desauancie
 Lieue dou lit ou elle gist
 f. 95r col. a Tout belement de la chambre ist
 Ne la tint huis ne fermeure
 605 De la chambre ist toute segure
 Sole par nuit et sans paour
 Tel hardement li done amour
 Quant fu issue dou palais
 Et elle deualoit em pais
 610 Si mist auant le pie senestre
 Puis esgarda par deuers destre
 Senti tout le palais fermir
 Et uit la lune a empalir
 Quant ot esgarde tout entour
 615 Onques pointe nen ot paour
 Quel ne parface son afaire
 A quel fin quele en doie traire
 Ia ert desi quas murs uenue
 Quant une gaite la ueue
 620 Et quant a cele hore la uoit
 Cuide cune deesse soit
 Trait soi arriere ne lapele

Ensi sen uait la demoisele
Deuant les iex de cele guaite
625 Sen ala bien par une fraite
Et uint au leu sans demorance
Ou fu prise la conuenance
La iert assise sus le marbre
A la fontaine dessous larbre
630 Ou il deuoient assambler
Puis se commence a porpenser
En quel guise elle gaberait
Le iouenciel qui ne uenoit
Quant uns lions de la montaigne
635 Qui ot ocis une compaignie
De bestes uint parmi les prez
Encore estoit enuolepez
Des entrailles et de la laine
Abeurer uint a la fontaine
640 La pucele bessa la teste
Quant uit uenir la fiere beste
Fuit li li sans pert la colour
Nest merueille selle ot paour
Uait sent fuiant par une uoie
645 Et crient que li lyons la uoie
Mes tant est esbahie et simple
Quenmi sa uoie laist sa guimple
Uait sent ilnelement mucier
Sous lombre dun alemandier
650 Li lyons uint a grant esfroie
A la fontaine estaint sa soi
Et quant il est bien assasez
Si se deduit aual les prez
Trouue la guimple en une sente
655 Si la defoule et ensanglente
Et quant il est des prez issus
Et pyramus y est uenus
He dieux com grans mesauenture
Li aproche pesant et dure
660 Quar a la clarte de la lune
Si con apareilloit fortune
Garda sous lombre dou morier
Si uit la guimple blanchioier
Et sus la poudriere enuiron
665 Cognut la trace dou lyon
Esgrapillie uoit laraine
Trouble liaue de la fontaine
Trouue la guimple defolee
Et de nouuel ensanglentee
670 Cuide que soit dou sanc samie

f. 95r col. b

Garde enuiron ne li uoit mie
 Helas com malement demore
 Nert pas uenue en icele ore
 Tant crient icele beste fiere
 675 Quencor nosoit torner arriere [min]
 Quant pyramus ne uoit samie
 Dont cuide il bien quel soit fenie
 Plus deuint uers que fueille dierre
 Et enredi comme une pierre
 680 Mue li sans change corage
 Lores esprent dire et de rage
 Emprez parole itant comme ire
 Et maltalens li lesse dire
 Nuis de dolour nuis de torment
 685 Moriers arbres de plorement
 Prez qui dou sanc estes sanglent
 Fontaine
 Que ne mauuez rendue saine
 Celui qui sanc gist en laraine
 690 Sodainement est fete uaine
 Mentente
 Mesperance mamour matente
 He diex quel duel me represente
 Ceste guimple que uoi sanglente
 695 Amie
 Com fu la beste tant hardie
 Qui uers uous fist ceste enuaye
 Quel mal quel duel quel felonie
 Quen tel maniere estes perie
 700 Ma cure
 Cest grant damage que tant dure
 Qui ci uous fis uenir segure
 Sole en tel liu par nuit obscure
 Seule
 705 Hay de la mauuese goule
 Qui de uostre char est saoule
 Helas
 Ci uoi dou sanc et uoi des dras
 Lyon tu qui la deuoras
 710 Merueil se plus en i lessas
 Lune crueulz qui lesgardas
 Sa cele hore nen obcurcas
 Cest tort
 Quant ele est morte et ne sui mort
 715 Ne sai quel duel me soit plus fort
 La mort est mon mieudre confort
 Chetis
 Quant elle est morte et ie sui uis

f. 95v col. a

f. 95v col. b

720 Por dieu terre quar menglotis
Ou tu lyons qui loceys
Repaire
Ie sui tous pres sans nul contraire
Ta uolente pues de moi faire
Reuien
725 Qui deuoras la douce rien
Son sanc beuz or boi le mien
Dolens
Ma douce amie trop sui lens
Qua uostre mort ne fui presens
730 Mors quar repaire si me prens
He mors
Pourquoi demore cest grans tors
Que ie ne sui orendroit mors
Suer chiere
735 Ie uous ai morte qui derriere
Uing a mon terme et uous premiere
Or pri ma destre que bien fiere
Uengier
Mes primes uueil aus diex proier
740 Quil demoustrant en cest morier
Signe de mort et destorbier
Facent le fruit de tel coulour
Comme il afiert a la dolour
Tel duel et tel priere faite
745 Puis emprez a sespee traite
Si a la guimple sus leuee
En son la more de lespee
Bese la guimple auec le sanc
Tresperce soi parmi le flanc
750 Tresque de lautre part dou cors
Fet aparoir lespee fors
La ou il muert baise la guimple
Si fete amour a mort le simple
Sor les branches raie li sans
755 Nercist li fruis qui estoit blans
Tous temps auoit este la more
Blanche. iusques a icele hore
Adont si ot noire coulour
En tesmoignage de dolour [min]
760 Tysbe repairoit a ytant
Quel ne deceust son amant
Moult couuoite quele li die
De quel peril elle est garie
Cuide acomplir sa uolente
765 De ce quele ot tant desirre
Mes ore aproce terme brief

f. 96r col. a

Que lor amours uendront a chief
 Ia li est uis quel soit o lui
 Et sentrebracent ambedui
 770 Et parolent de lor amours
 Mes orendroit aura dolours
 Tout belement sen uait arrier
 Et quant elle aproce au morier
 Donques se tint pour esgaree
 775 Pour la coulour quel uit muee
 Quar primes auoit ueu blanc
 Le fruit qui ore est taint de sanc
 Endementres que elle doute
 Si a tenue droite route
 780 Le jouenciel oit senglotir
 Plaindre gesmir trere souspir
 Uit la guimple comme il la touche
 Dores en autres a sa bouche
 Et quant elle apercoit la plaie
 785 Nest merueille selle sesmaie
 Quant uoit parmi le cors lespee
 Fuit li li sans si sest pasmee
 Relieue soi dolante et mate
 Trait ses cheueux si se degrate
 790 Derront sa char si plore et crie
 Plus aime mort que ne fet uie
 Lores sescrie sor le cors
 Si a traite lespee fors
 Encontremont len a drecie
 795 Puis parole com feme irie
 Espee dont ie sui saisie
 Or esproeuee comme hardie
 Espee
 Qui nostre amour as terminee
 800 En mon pis soies reschaufee
 De nos .ii. sans ensanglente
 Sanglente
 He diex quel fin et quele atente
 Com tost perist nostre jouuente
 805 Biau sire
 Petit uous puet espargnier ire
 Quant uostre main uous uault ocire
 Lasse com puis parole dire
 La ou ie uoi que il souspire
 810 Iou uoi
 Que il trauaille mort por moi
 Com foible amour com poure foi
 Auroie
 Amis se ie ne uous siuoie

f. 96r col. b

815 Sa court terme ne mocioie
Biaux chiers
Com grant dolours quelz destorbiers
Trop fu uostre corages fiers
Lune. fontaine prez moriers
820 Nuit pale
Qui enseigne me feis male
Quant fui issue de la sale
Oiez
Pri uous que ma mort tesmoigniez
825 Diex de mon cuer comme est iriez
Tysbe mauuese que targiez
Mauuese
Tant solement morir uous plese
Quor ne uous fault ne point ni ese
830 Morir
Nulle chose tant ne desir
Com mes douleurs a defenir
A tort me targe dou ferir
A tort
835 Amours fetes mon poing si fort
Qua un seul cop recoiue mort
Sen aura same grant confort
Andui morromes dune mort
Amis
840 Bien sai quamours uous ont ocis
Quant assamblar ne poons uis
Mors nous ioindra ce mest auis
Parens
Qui nous cuidiez garder leens
845 A court terme serois dolens
Com dolereuz encombrements
Uerrois
Quant ambedeus nous trouuerois
Ensamble mors et acolez
850 Pri uous que cest don me donez
Quant en ioie fumes seurez
Et mort somes dessamblez
Que nous contiengne .i. seulz tombliaux
Andeus nous recoiue .i. uesteaux
855 Adont sencline la pucele
Bese sa bouche si lapele
Pyramus ues ci uostre amie
Quar lesgardez si ert garie
Li iouenciaux la ou moroit
860 Entroeuure les iex et si uoit
Que ce iere tysbe samie
Qui lapeloit toute esmarie

f. 96v col. a

Parler i ueult mes il ne puet
 Quar la mort qui le tient ne let
 865 Mes tant a dit tysbe amie
 Pour dieu qui uous remist en uie
 Atant se taist ne puet plus dire
 Puis la regarde si souspire
 Li cuers li part si pert la uie
 870 Cele lesse toute esmarie
 Cil est mors et cele est pasmee
 Diex quele amours est ci finee
 La pucele sest redrecie
 Lespee a a .ii. mains sachie
 875 Parmi le pis sous la mamele
 Se tresperce la damoisele
 Dambedeus pars sault li sans fors
 Et cele chiet dessus le cors
 Le cors acole et si lebrace
 880 Les iex li baise et bouche et face
 Baise la bouche par grant cure
 Tant com sans et uie li dure
 Se demoustre ueraie amie
 Cil est fenis cele est fenie
 885 En tel maniere sont fine
 Li dui amant par loiaute
 Ensi se moustrent urai amant
 Quar il sont de fin cuer amant.
 Quar li uns deulz ne uaudroit estre
 890 Ou paradis au roi celestre
 Et li autres si fust ici
 Se il nestoit aueuques lui [min]
Ensi com la fable recorde
 Qui a uoie istoire sacorde
 895 Sentramerent les .ii. amans
 Si fu teulz lor departemans
 Que lun se mist pour lautre a mort
 Et quant il furent andui mort
 Li parens qui mors les trouerent
 900 En .i. seul tomblel les poserent
 Et la more qui lors ert blanche
 Deuint noire dessus la branche
 Si recut sanguine colour
 En signe de cele dolour [min]

MS B (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 19152, folios 98r – 101r)

Formerly Saint Germain fr. 1239. Vellum, late 13th or early 14th century, modern binding. Three columns per page, forty-four lines per column. Contains forty texts of varying lengths, including fabliaux, moral texts, *Piramus et Tisbé*, *Narcisus*, *Florence et Blancheflor* and the romances *Partonopeus de Blois*, *Blancandin* and *Floire et Blancheflor*. The modern table of contents originally omitted *Piramus*: ‘De Pyrame et Thisbé. fol. 98’ has been inserted, in a different hand, between ‘Ovide de arte, mis en rimes. fol. 93’ and ‘Le doctrinal. fol.101’. The text is preceded by the rubric ‘Ci commence de piramo et de tysbe’. The MS has been trimmed, with the result that some letters at the right-hand edge of certain rectos are missing. These lines are marked with an asterisk in the transcription.

For further details, see Edmond Faral, *Le Manuscrit 19152 du fonds français de la Bibliothèque Nationale, reproduction phototypique publiée avec une introduction* (Paris: Fondation Singer-Polignac, 1934).

Transcription Notes

The positions of large initials are marked by underlined characters. The scribe makes frequent use of standard abbreviations. The standard abbreviation for *par* has been transcribed *per* in *pere* and *pertuis*. Nasal before *bl* is almost always written in full, usually as *anbl*– but occasionally as *enbl*–. The value of *x* is consistently *us* and this is represented in the transcription. The full form of the second person pronoun is normally *uos* so *u^o* has been expanded accordingly; <*pro* and <*multum* are usually abbreviated, and have been expanded to *por* and *molt* in line with occasional full forms (vocalisation of *l* is inconsistently represented: *autre*, *maus*, *ostaus*, but *maltalenz*, *salt*, *halt*, *asalt*, *dolz* etc.). In the absence of full forms, *9* has been expanded to either *con* or *com*, in line with modern French orthographical practice (*com*, *compaignie*, *complain*, *commence* but *connoist*, *confort*, *conquis*, *contes*, *conroi*, etc.).

f. 98r col. a

En babiloine la cite
 Furent dui home renome
 Si erent proisie de grant hautece
 De parente et de richece
 5 Li riche home orent .ii. enfanz
 De grant beaute et de plaisanz
 Lun fu uallet lautre meschine
 Plus beaus nen ot roi ne roine
 II. enfanz orent li riche home
 10 Que ouide en son liure nome
 Et dit qu'il furent apele
 L'un piramus. l'autre tysbe
 Encois quil eussent .iii. anz
 Toucha amors les .ii. enfanz
 15 Et naura plus en cel endroit
 Li pers aez li granz coraiges
 Les granz beautez li beaus parages
 Les paroles les ris les geus
 Et li aesement daus .ii.
 20 Et li entreueoirs souuent
 Lor donerent expandement
 Hai: amors deuant tes elz
 Ne puet garir ioenes ne uielz
 Il nest iouente ne aez
 25 Qui de ton dart ne soit naurez
 Contre ton dart na nul essoine
 Double hauberc ne doule broigne
 Ta saiete ne set faillir
 Uers lui ne puet nus hom garir
 30 Sanz doulor fait faire soupir
 Sanz sanc expandre fait palir
 Li fers de ton dart porte feu
 Soupirs la fleche du mileu
 Li fers naure a lesgarder
 35 La fleche coule el pensser
 Li penon font les apparois
 La couche aïoste le conseil
 De tel saete et de tel lance
 Naura amors en lor enfance
 f. 98r col. b 40 Le iouencel et la meschine
 Iusqua la mort lor fu uoisine
 Encor ne seuent riens damor
 Et ses a mis en grant freor
 Ia lor plaist par matin leuer
 45 Et lun de lautre a porpensser
 Et geunent plus que lor droit
 Et que lor aez ne deuoit
 Par matinet chascun sen enble

Et uont le ior ioer ensamble
50 Deduisant soi o les enfanz
De lor aez et de lor granz
Le ior passe dels esgarder
Quil ne se pueent saoler
Tart repairent a lor ostaus
55 Que del desseurer lor est maus
Plaist lor a faire mainte chose
Dont on les menace et chose
Tant com gemme sormonte uoirre
Or et argent la primeuoire
60 Tant sormonterent de beaute
Toz ceus cil dui de la cite
Par grant conseil et par grant cure
Et par grant sens les fist nature
Tant com lor aez fu contraire
65 Et ce quamors requiert affaire
Et il furent deuant .x. anz
Fu assez lor licence granz
Daler ensamble et de paller
Desbanoier et de ioer
70 Li dolz regarz li simples sens
Et li non couenable tens
Ce que nus biens nest sanz enuie
Et nes .i. serf sanz felonnie
Les fist departir et garder
75 Quil ne porent ensamble aler
Un serf parcut lor couenance
Et dit or sai bien sanz doutance
Que molt sentraiment cil enfant
Et se il fussent auques grant
80 Et il eussent tel loisir
Grief chose fust du departir
A la mere a la damoisele
Porta li sers ceste nouuele
Et cele dit des or tan tes
85 Que il nasenbleront ior mes
Puis uint a une chamberiere
Garde se tu mas noient chiere
Et tysbe nisse fors de lus
Ne quele uoie piramus
90 A tant leua .i. maltalenz
Entre les peres as enfanz
Une tencon et une enuie
Qui puis dura tote lor uie
Ceste chose fist destorber
95 Les .ii. enfanz a assenbler
Deus aprimer par mariaige

f. 98r col. c

Et denuoier entraus mesaige
Li dui enfant sont en destroit
 Lun si not lautre ne ne uo*
 100 Molt lor sanble grief la deuse
 Que lor parenz ont entraus mise
 Mais ce que on nes garde plus
 Tysbe nosoit issir de lus
 Ne piramus uers li garder
 105 Font lor amors plus auuier
 Endui croissent selonc lor tens
 Croist lor aez et croist lor sens
 Croist lor ardor et croist lor p*
 Et croist li feus que riens napaie
 110 Croist lor amor et lor aez
 Et ia orent .xu. anz passez
 Puis que il uinrent a iouent
 Et il choisirent escient
 Et li aez aert lor cors
 115 Ou nature choisist amors
 Adonc nel laisse plus garir
 Li lonc pensser li grant soupir
 Les granz dolors li font complaint
 Li durs tormenz el cuer lor mai*
 120 Dementent soi et nuit et ior
 Tote lor uie est en doulor
 Pleurent plaignent chascun par s*
 Ne seuent daus prenre conroi
 Ne ne pueent trouuer remir*
 125 Ne par marine ne par mire
 Li feus lor siet dedenz les os
 Qui nes laisse auoir repos
 Si les trauaille ior et nuit
 Et de mortel ardor les cuit
 130 Cil feus et cele flambe sole
 Retrait les ners et art la mole
 Tolt la uertu change beaute
 Chace tot alegierete
Piramus est plains de tristor
 135 Plain de soupir et plain de plor
 Plain de pense et plain de cure
 Demante soi en tel mesure
 He: las fait il chaitif dolent
 Sofferrai longues cest torment
 140 Toz tens ai duel ioie noient
 Et com plus duel et plus mesprent
 Ge ai menti. ainz est ardor
 Qui ainsi uient de ior en ior
 Matist ma face ma coulor

f. 98v col. a

145 Com fait gelee terre flor
He: piramus quel la feras
En quel guise te contendras
Hai: pere qui mengendras
Nas tu ore merci de moi
150 Se tu ne prenz autre conroi
Ou par enging ou par desroi
Tysbe bele que te uerrai
Ou ce se por toi morrai
Saiches se par amors ne tai
155 Que par force te raurai
La mort si est mes reconforz
Sauques me tient cist maus si forz
Se longues mest faiz
cist torz faiz
160 He: diex pourquoi nest faiz cist plez
Que nos peres fussent en pais
Neussion mie tant agaiz
Ne ge ne puis tant exploitier
Que ge trouasse .i. messaigier
165 Qua lui pooisse enuoier
Ne monte riens se dieus me salt
Hai: pere qui mains en halt
Estain le feu qui si masalt
Qui ma tolu et ris et geu
170 Ne puis garir en nes .i. leu
Por uos est ma colour amie
Mon cors ma char tote perie
Bele por uos despent ma uie
En plors. beaus sire dieu damors
175 Quancor la tiegne ou nuit ou ior
Ou a leece ou a doulor
Mestuet errant ne puis parler
Or sui haitiez or puis plorer
Or ai grant chalt or uueil trambler
180 Ainz que peust son duel finer
Li prist la face a enpalir
En lermes et en plorement
Chai pasmez el pauement
Après grant piece est releuez
185 Il est tristes descolorez
Ua sen au temple ueneris
Couche soi sor le marbre bis
Une priere a commencie
Quele li doit auoir baillie
190 De parler a tysbe samie
Tysbe ert la dedenz enclose
Fors du palais issir nen ose

f. 98v col. b

Souent remembre ses amors
 Souent mue le ior colors
 195 Souent se plaint et souent pleure
 Lasse fait ele en male eure
 Si maist dieus fui ore nee
 He: las com male destinee
 Com dure uie mest donee
 200 Ainz mais nen fu nule esgaree
 Qui par sauoit o par folie
 Que peust engignier boisdie
 Mais quant plus puis et ge meilz uoi
 En ques guise prenre conroi
 205 Amis dolz de parler a toi
 Tysbe fole ueus tu desuer
 Et ta chastee uioler
 Et ton lignaige uergonder
 Garde raison qui test contraire
 210 Ne te chaille entor toi atraire
 Chose dont faces itel raige
 Quar ainz feme de ton lignaige
 Ne fu reprise de putaige
 Non serai ge par nule guise
 215 Mielz uueil estre .c. foiz ocise
 Ou as tu prise icest pensse
 Tost a piramus oublie
 Onques a certes ge nel dis
 Or poez dire ce mest uis
 220 Quamors de feme nen a foi
 Beaus douz amis prenez en droit
 Et si retenez .i. bon gaige
 Por lamende de cest outraige
 Ici uos doig mon pucelaige
 225 Trop ere ore de fier coraige
 Uers uos me doi bien souploier
 Molt auroie le blasme chier
 Se men ooie chalangier
Si com moi sanble a mon uiaire
 230 Ne men deuoit nus hom retraire
 Se il auoit a mo afaire
 Tes toi fole desmesuree
 Quel coraige uos a mueue
 Molt estes ore forsenee
 235 Tot ce penser que ge or ai
 Par le conseil mon pere aurai
 Autresi gent mari bien sai
 Merueil se piramus mentent
 Oil: ge trable bien le sent
 240 Si mar le dis or men repent

f. 98v col. c

Rose tenree. et lis nouveaux
Flors de toz autres damoisaus
Naies cure de quanque di
De poor ai le cuer marri
245 Mais uoz parenz sont enuious
Et le mien sont de moi ialous
Ne monte rien de deus me salt
Or sent mon cuer or a trop chalt
A poi ferai por uos .i. salt
250 Que ai ge dit riens ne moi lasse
Li maus qui si souent me lasse
Li dieus damors le me consente
Ou bel me soit ou men repente
Quantre mes bras en la sante
255 Ci fenirai ma plainte en lermes
Pasmer mestuet or est li termes
Ainsi face par chascun di
Tel fie tiegne de mon ami
f. 99r col. a La pucele est .iii. foiz pasmee
260 Et quant ele sest releuee
An.ii. ses mains uers le ciel tent
A dieu prie molt humblement
Quil li doigne conseil trouuer
Qua son ami puisse parler
265 Prochain furent li dui palais
Et en tele maniere faiz
Cune paroiz et .i. mur seus
Estoit deuse dambe .ii.
Endroit la chambre la dedenz
270 Ou conuersoient mains de genz
Ou la pucele ert enfermee
Fu la poroiz .i. peu creuee
Et fu celee par molt danz
La creuace niert gaire granz
275 Desi quamors la fist trouuer
Uers qui riens ne se puet celer
Quel chose est ce quamors ne sent
Li dui amant premierement
Aparcurent celui pertuis
280 Premiers tysbe puis piramis
Tysbe trouua la creueure
Prist le pendant de sa ceinture
Sen fist outre le fer ueoir
Que ses amis puist parceuoir
285 Piramus uient de deporter
De ses doulors reconforter
Uait a la chambre coile soi
torne ses elz uers la paroi

f. 99r col. b
 290 Garde si aparcoit lensaigne
 Que la creuace li ensaigne
 Cele part uait prist le pendant
 Uoit le pertuis si dit itant
 Tysbe douce bele faiture
 Flors de tot autre creature
 295 Par lensaigne de la ceinture
 Sui ci uenuz offrir droiture
 Que ne trouuai la creueure
 Uostre en est bele lauenture
 Daparcoiure tel trouueure
 300 Se uos auez de moi grant cure
 Ne uos tenra ia fermeure
 Que ne ueignoiz ici segure
 Sanz mesaige sanz couerture
 A basse uoiz et a murmure
 305 Porrons parler de nostre eniure
 Enpres saurez en quel arduure
 Ma mis amors sanz forfaiture
 He: dieus com est sa uie dure
 Qui longuement tel mal endure
 310 La pucele de lautre part
 Est en escout et en esgart
 De la parole entent lesfroi
 Trest soi plus pres de la creuace
 De la parole entent lesfroi
 315 Met son oeil pres de la paroi
 De son ami connoist la face
 Tantost benoit la creuace
 Parler uelt. mais ele ne puet
 Por amor qui si la commuet
 320 El premerain esgardement
 Fremist et soupire et esprent
 Tressalt trestranble et tressue
 Taint la coulor et si li mue.
Porpense soi quele li die
 325 En soi meisme sentroublie
 En tante guise la destraint
 Amors qui tote chose uaint
 A la parfin est porpenssee
 Et est .i. poi asseuree
 330 Met sa bouche endroit la freture
 Puis si parole en tel mesure
 Amis ainsi uos os nomer
 Ce ne me puet on pas uaer
 Ne me puis mais uers uos celer
 335 Uostre proece uueil garder
 Premiere soi conseil trouuer

Com pooison ci assanbler
Quar qui plus aime plus uoit cler
Griefment uos oi desconforter
340 Mais poi sauez que est amer
Encor uos en poez ioer
A moi laissez le duel mener
Qui riens ne puet confort doner
Ioie ai changie por por plorer
345 Por dolerous complainz giter
Et leesce por guermenter
Ioie et delit por soupirer
Soef dormir por grief pensser
Amis ne puis plus ci ester
350 Lermes maonbrent lesgarder
Soupirs me tolent le parler
Pensez demain du retourner
Plus a loisir porrons parler
Et li uns lautre conforter
355 Ne pot ainz plus parler a lui
Ainsi dessoient anbedui
Li iors sen ua la nuit prent fin
Andui repairent au matin
Et reuient a lor pertus
360 Prime parole piramus
Amie molt sui angoissous
Quar a mort sui naurez por uos
Des or uieg ge bien a reclaim
Quant li ostoirs com il a faim
365 Sui ge por uos ce mest auis
Ne sai que soit ioie ne ris
Sauques me tient nen irai uis
Le dieus damors ne garde foi
Si sormonte nos a sa loi
370 Lacie somes en une roiz
Ne sai qui prie o uos ou lui
Bele a uos face mon refui
Se par uos muir tant mar i fui
Molt par feriez felonnie
375 Se par uos perdoie la uie
Quant par uos puis auoir aie
Molt puis auoir duel et torment
Qui tant ai ame longuement
Et ne puis faire mon talent
380 He: bele com sui entrepris
Com sui por uostre amor conquis
Ne me default ne nuit ne ior
Or pens soupir et en enpres plor
Tot ai perdue la colour

f. 99r col. c

f. 99v col. a

385 Boiure et mengier mestuet ger*
 Ne puis parler que ne soupir
 Bien ai appris mal a souffrir
 Et quanque ge desir sesoin
 He: dieus auquel complain ge lui

390 Ne la garrai se ne men fui
 Amor ne me uelt pas gerpir
 Por amors mestoura morir
 Se dieus plaist et uos non ferai
 Encors uos en souplierai

395 Ia tant ge cuit ne proierai
 Ainz temoin tant droite ma main
 Que de cest mal me ferai sain
 Et de uostre amistie certaine
 He: murs. or estes uos trop durs

400 Mais se ge fusse auques segurs
 La frete eusse a mes mains faite
 Que sanz ueue de nos gaites
 Uos en eusse parmi traite
 Or uos di ge dame paroiz

405 Aiez merci de ces destroy
 Pertuis trop par estes estroiz
 Chaillou se uos aourissoiz
 Que nos geuissions en parlant
 Et alissions entrebaisant

410 Se fusse en uostre compaignie
 De grant dolor eusse aie
 Mais tote chose nos eunuie
 Par tant te deuon nos amer
 Que parmi toi nos laiz parler

415 Cele toi bien que ne le sachent
 Nes .i. de ceus qui nos menacent
 A demi oeil esgart la face
 De cele qui le cuer de moi
 Et le coraige a tret a soi

420 Maisiere trop par estes fiere
 Que naourez par ma proiere
 Tant que baisier puisse la chiere
 La bouche qui a mon cuer toche
 Itant me faites sanz atente

425 Proions orendroit de ca ius
 Que nos aist dame uenus
 Que nus ne truisse ce pertus
 Li damoiseaus plaint et soupire
 Lores fremist ne puet mot dire

430 Et quant li siens contes remaint
 Tisbe commence son complaint
 Amis molt uos desconfortez

f. 99v col. b 435 Merueilles nest se uos mamez
Bien sai por moi estes naurez
Et ge por uos en moie foi
De ma uie ne sai conroi
Ne sui en mendre esfroi de uos
Molt estes tristes et plorous
Mes cuers se dielt molt durement
440 Uos complaigniez de cest torment
Mais ge espoir si durement
Que si dites questes conquise
Li miens cuers est damors esprise
Plus est espris que feus en paille
445 Amors mocist et me trauaille
Dieus granz quest ce quel maltalenz
Que as a moi de si lonc tens
Qui me feis quant ge riens nere
Uoies mon duel et manere
450 Males herres amis recui
Male estraine quant uos connui
Ainz puis ne soir ne ior ne fui
Sanz grant paine et sanz ennui
Nest merueille sele sesmaie
455 Por uos a angoissouse plaie
A tort ai perdu mon deport
Riens ne me puet doner confort
Par grant angoisse uif. le ior:
Sui en lermes et en freor
460 Et en paine et en doulor
Et en torment et en tristor:
La nuit. quant me gis
En mon lit
Riens noi. si sui en grant esfroi
465 Puis mest auis que ge uos uoi
Et ne poez touchier a moi
Donc sui pires que ne solore
Por ce que grant doulor le loie
Tressu de paine et de trauail
470 Donc ten mes mains que ge uos bail
Et quant uos droi prenre si fail
Amis. orendroit mest auis
Que uos uoie deuant mon uis
Toz deshaitiez et toz penssis
475 De cest songe damedieu doigne
Et grant honeur et bien en uiegne
Souuent oi uoiz ou plaignemenz
Qui ce me dit apertement
f. 99v col. c 480 Tysbe couoites tu ami
Esueille toi alons de ci

Li dieu nos ont amoneste
 Quissomes hors de la cite
 La poons assanbler amis
 Dites que uos en est auis
 485 De mamor uueil que soiez fiz
 Ge menblerai du premier soir
 A mienuit irai sauoir
 La fors. quan iert uostre cors
 Amis ta uie est mis tresors
 490 Gardez que trop ne demorez
 Au premer some uos leuez
 A la fontaine me querez
 Sor le morier enmi les prez
 La ou gimus fu enterrez
 495 Ainsi ferment li couenant
 Puis departent li dui amant
 Et saluerent le pertuis
 Quil ne uerront des or mais puis
 Primes baisierent la paroiz
 500 Chascun au departir de soi
Li dui amant sont en grant cure
 Trop lor sanble que li ior dure
 Molt se complaignent du soleil
 Souent lapelent non fael
 505 Quar trop se targe desconser
 Et a fait la nuit demorer
 Dient qua esciant le fait
 Por demorance de lor plait
 Li iors sen ua la nuit repaire
 510 Et li termes de lor affaire
 Montent les gaites sor les murs
 Cil se dorment qui sot segur
 Mais nul daus .ii. ne se repose
 Ainz se porpenssent dautre chose
 515 Chascun en soi meisme soigne
 Dapareillier bien la besoigne
 Or sont li cuer en esperance
 Et neporquant sont il baance
 De se si le facent ou non
 520 Mais uolentiers oste raison
 Delitent soi au porpenser
 De ce quil doiuent assanbler
 Et deuisent en lor coraige
 Lor mort lor duel et lor domaige
 525 Il ont andui ioie et doulor
 Mais totes eures uaint amors
 Ses ne raison nes puet retraire
 De ce quil ont enpris a faire

f. 100r col. a

Ia ert la gent tote endormie
530 Quant tysbe sest desauencie
Lieue du lit ou ele gist
Tot belement de la chambre ist
Ne la tinst huis ne fermeure
De la chambre ist tote seure
535 Seule par nuit et sanz poor
Tel hardement li done amor
Quant fu issue du palais
Et ele deualoit en pais
Si mist auant le pie senestre
540 Puis esgarda par deuers destre
Senti tot le palais fremir
Et uit la lune enpalir
Quant esgarde ot tot entor
Onques por ce nen ot poor
545 Quel ne parface son afaire
A quele fin quan doie traire
Ia ert iusques as murs ueneue
Quant une gaite la ueue
Et quant a cele ore la uoit
550 Cuide cune deesse soit
Traist soi arriere ne lapele
Ainsi sen ua la damoisele
Deuant les elz dicele gaite
Sen ala el par une fraite
555 Et uint a lus sanz demorance
Ou ert pris la couenance
Ia ert assise sor le marbre
A la fontaine desoz larbre
Ou il deuoient assanbler
560 Puis se commence a porpensser
Eng quel guise ele gaberait
Le iouencel qui ne uenoit
Quant .i. lion de la montaigne
Qui ot ocise une compaigne
565 De bestes mort parmi les prez
Encor estoit enuelopez
Des entrailles et de laleine
A beurer uont a la fontaine
La pucele baisse la teste
570 Quant uoit uenir la fiere beste
Fuit li li sans pert la coulor
Nest merueilles sel a poor
Ua sen fuiant par une uoie
Et crient que li lions nel uoie
575 Mais tant est esbahie et simple
Quanmi la uoie lait sa guimple

f. 100r col. b

Ua sen isnelement mucier
 Soz lombre dun alemandier
 Li lions uint a grant esfroi
 580 A la fontaine estaint sa foi
 Et quant il est bien assazez
 Si se deduit aual les prez
 Trueue la guimple en une sente
 Si la defoule et ensanglente
 585 Et quant il est des prez issuz
 Et piramus i est uenuz
 He: dieus a grant mesaventure
 Com dolerouse trouueure
 Quar a la clarte de la lune
 590 Si com apareilloit fortune
 Garde soz lombre dun morier
 Et uit la guimple blanchoyer
 Et sor la poudriere enuiron
 Connust la trace du lion
 595 Esgrapilliee uoit lareine
 Troble le gue de la fontaine
 Trueue la gurple defolee
 Et de nouuel ensanglentee
 Cuide que ce soit du sanc samie
 600 Garde enuiron nen i uoit mie
 He: las com malement demeure
 Nest pas uenee en icel eure
 Tant crient icele beste fiere
 Quancor nosoit uenir arriere
 605 Quant piramus ne uoit samie
 Donc cuide bien quel soit fenie
 Plus deuint uert que fueille dierre
 Et enredist plus cune pierre
 Mue le sens change coraige
 610 Lores esprent dire et de raige
 Apres parole itant com ire
 Et maltalent li laisse dire
 Nuiz de doulor nuiz de torment
 Moriers arbres de plorement
 615 Prez qui du sanc estes sanglent
 Fontaine. quar me rendez saine
 Celui en qui sanc gist la reine
 Soltement est uaine mentente
 Mesperance mamor matente
 620 He: dieus quel duel me represente
 Ceste guimple que uoi senglante
 Comment fu beste tant hardie
 Que uers uos fust cel enuaie
 Quel mal quel duel quel felonie

f. 100r col. c

625 Quan tel maniere estes perie
Com granz domaiges que ci dure
Que ci uos fis uenir segure
Seule en tel leu
Par nuit obscure. sole:
630 Hai: de la mauuaise goule
Qui de uostre char est saole
Ci uoi du sanc ci uoi des dras
Lions tu qui la deuoras
Merueille se plus i lessas
635 Lune crueus qui lesgardas
Quant en cel ore noscuras
Cest torz. que ge ne sui or mo*
Ne sai quel duel me soit plus fo*
La mort est mes mendres conf*
640 Quant el est morte et ge sui ui*
Por dieu terre quar mengloutis
O tu lion quil oceis. rep*
Ge sui toz prez sanz nul contraire
Ta uolente puez de moi fair*
645 Tu deuoras la douce rien
Son sanc beus or boi le mien
Ma douce amie trop fui lenz
Qua uostre mort ne fui presenz
Morz que demores quar me pren
650 Mort que demores cest grant c*
Que ge ne sui orendroit mor*
Suer. morte uos ai qui derriere
Uing a mon terme. et uos premiere
Or pri ma destre que bien fiere
f. 100v col. a 655 Mais primes uueil les dieux prier
Quil demonstrent en cel morier
Signe de mort de destorbier
Face le fruit de tel coulor
Que il apartiegne a doulor
660 Tel duel et tel priere a faite
Puis enpres a lespee traite
Si a la guimple sus leuee
En son laudure de lespee
Baise la guimple et puis le sanc
665 Tresperce le parmi le flanc
Tresque de lautre part du cors
Fait aparoir lespee fors
La ou il muert baise la guimple
Si fait amors a la mort simple
670 Sor les branches raie li sans
Nercist li fuz qui estoit blans
Tot tans auoit este la meure

Blanche iusques a icele eure
 Adonc si ot noire coulor
 675 En tesmoignaige de dolor
 Tysbe reparoit a itant
 Qui ne desconnoist son amant
 Molt couoite quele li die
 De quel peril el est garie
 680 Cuide aemplir sa uolente
 De ce que tant a desirre
 Mais or aprosche terme brief
 Que lor amors tenront a chief
 Ia li est uis que soit o lui
 685 Et que senbracent ambedui
 Et parolent de lor amors
 Mais orendroit aura doulor
 Tot belement sen uait arrier
 Et quant el aprosche au morier
 690 Donques se tient por esgaree
 Por la doulor que uoit muee
 Quar primes auoit ueu blanc
 Le fruit qui or ert noir de sanc
 Endementieres quele doute
 695 Si a tenue droite route
 Le iouuencel ot sangloutir
 Plaindre gemir traire soupir
 Uoit sa guimple com il la touche
 Deures en autres a sa bouche
 700 Et quant el aparcoit la plaie
 Nest merueille sele sesmaie
 Quant uoit parmi le cors lespee
 Fuist li li sans si est pasmee
 Relieue soi dolente et mate
 705 Trait ses cheueus et se degrate
 Derront sa char et pleure et crie
 Plus aime mort quel ne fait uie
 Lores sencline sor le cors
 Si a traite lespee fors
 710 Encontremont la endrecie
 Puis parole com feme irie
 Espree de qui sui saisie
 Qui ma ioie as a duel fenie
 Or espueue com es hardie
 715 Qui nostre amor as terminee
 En mon piz soies reschaufee
 De noz .ii. sans ensanglantee
 He: dieus quel fin et quel atente
 Com tost perit uostre iouuente
 720 Petit uos pot a espargnier ire

f. 100v col. b

Quant uostre main uos uolt ocirre
Lasse com puis parole dire
La ou ge uoi que il soupire
Que il trauaille a mort por moi
725 Com faite amor com poure foi
Amis se ge ne uos suioie
Sa cort terme ne mocioie
Com grant doulor quel destorbiers
Com fu uostre corages fiers
730 Lune fontaine pres moriers
Qui ensaignes me firent pale
Quant fu issue de la sale
Pri uos que ma mort tesmoigniez
Dieus de mon cuer com est iriez
735 Tysbe mauuaise quatargiez
Or ne uos fait ne leu ne aise
Tant solement morir uos plaise
Morir: nule chose tant ne desir
Que mes dolors adefinir
740 A tort matarge del ferir
Amors faites mon poig si fort
Qua .i. seul cop recoiue mort
Sen aura same aucun confort
Sendui moromes dune mort
745 Bien sai amors nos ont ocis
Quant assanbler ne poun uis
Mort nos depart ce mest auis
Qui nos cuidiez garder laienz
En cort terme seroiz dolent
750 Com doulerous embracement
Quant ambe.ii. nos troueroiz
Ensanble morz et acolez
Pri uos que cest don nos donez
Quant en ioie fumes seureiz
755 Et a mort somes assanble
Que nos retigne .i. tombeaus
Andui nos recoiue .i. uaisseaus
Adonc sencline la pucele
Baise sa bouche si lapele
760 Piramus uez ci uostre amie
Regardez la si ert garie
Li iouenceaus la ou moroit
Entrueure les elz et si uoit
Que ce iere tysbe samie
765 Qui lapeloit tote esmarie
Parler i uelt mais el ne puet
Quar la mort qui le tient nel lait
Mais tant a dit tysbe amie

f. 100v col. c

Por dieu qui uos remist en uie
 770 Puis la regarde si soupire
 Li cuers li part si pert la uie
 Cil est morz et cele est pasmee
 Dieus quel amor est ci finee
 La pucele sest redrecie
 775 A .ii. mains a lespee prise
 Parmi le piz soz la mamele
 Se tresperce la damoisele
 Dambe parz raie li sans fors
 Et cele chiet desus le cors
 780 Le cors acole et si lenbrace
 Les elz li baise et la face
 Baise la bouche par grant cure
 Tant com sens et uie li dure
 Se demonstre ueraie amie
 785 Il est feniz cele est fenie
 f. 101r col. a Iluec morust. en tel senblant
 Sassanblerent li dui amant
 Ditest amen chascun par non
 Que dieus lor face uoir pardon
 790 Et nos face redemption
 Et nos otroit beneicon
 Amen

Notes

- 44** *plaist t* written above the line
159 *tosrz s* expunctuated
257 *Ainsi* expunctuated between 257 and 258
288 capital *S* expunctuated
334 *c* expunctuated after *vers*
441 *espoirr* first *r* expunctuated
570 *voit t* written above the line
609 *Mues s* expunctuated
645 *devorias i* expunctuated
773 *Dieus quel amor est redreciee* expunctuated before 773

MS C (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Hamilton 257, folios 15v – 18v)

Parchment, second half of the 13th century, modern binding. Formerly part of the collection of Alexander Douglas, tenth duke of Hamilton, acquired along with 411 other MSS by the Prussian government in 1882. Two columns per page, fifty lines per column, no rubrics or miniatures. In its present state contains forty short texts, including *fabliaux*, *Piramus et Tisbé*, *Narcisus*, *La Chastelaine de Vergi* and *Florence et Blancheflor*. Folios 56 to 82 are missing: the *Proverbes au vilain* are incomplete, while the first half of *Narcisus* has been lost. A note at the top of folio 57r reads ‘The MS appears to want 27 quires in this place’. Spaces have been left on folios 15-18 for large initials that were never completed; the first two have guide letters to the left of the blank space. Each disyllable is written on the same line as either the preceding or following octosyllable, sometimes with a punctuation mark separating the two, sometimes without. This layout is preserved here.

Transcription Notes

The spaces left for large initials are marked by characters in square brackets. The scribe makes moderate use of standard abbreviations: *x* consistently represents *us* and is transcribed accordingly; < *multum* is always abbreviated and is expanded to *mout* (vocalisation of *l* is consistently represented as *u*: *autre*, *ostaus*, *maus*, *eus*, *asaut*, *escout* etc.); *u*^o is expanded to *uos* in line with the full form found in the MS. The abbreviation for < *pro* is expanded to *por* on the basis of full forms found in the text; *ē* before *bl* and *br* is transcribed *em* on the basis of the full forms *semble*, *assembler*, *ensemble* (although *enblere*, *enbracemenz* and *remenbree* are also found as full forms). The standard abbreviation for *par* also represents *per* in *pere*, *reperrent* and *pertuis*. In the absence of any full forms, freestanding *o* has been expanded to *com*; within a word it is expanded in line with modern French orthographical practice (*com*, *comment*, *compaignie*, *compleinz*, *commence* but *contraire*, *contenance*, *conta*, *connurent*, *conseil* etc.).

f. 15v col. b

[E]n babiloine la cite
 Furent .ii. homes renomme
 Deus citaiens de grant parage
 Riches dauoir et de lignage
 5 Li riche home orent .ii. enfanz
 De grant beaute et pres en anz
 II. enfanz orent li riche home
 Quouide en son liure nomme
 Et dit quil furent apele

f. 16r col. a

10 Lun piramus lautre thisbe
 Lun fu uallet lautre meschine
 Plus beaus not on rois ne roine
 Encois quil eurent .iii. anz
 Naura amours les .ii. enfanz
 15 Et plus naura en lour endroit
 Que leur aage ne requeroit
 Encor ne seuent quest amour
 Et ia en sunt en grant freour
 Ia lor plect a matin leuer
 20 Et lun o lautre aler ioer
 Et uont le ior o les enfanz
 De lor aage et de lour granz
 Tart reperrent a lor ostaus
 Car le departir lor est maus
 25 Plect lor a fere mentre chose
 Dont les menace len et chose
 Il erent bel et sanz mesure
 Merueilleuse est la leur nature
 Tant com lor ae fu contraire
 30 A ce quamor requiert a fere
 Et il furent dendroit .x. anz
 Fu leur licence assez granz
 Daler ensemble et de ioer
 Dentreus nocer et de parler
 35 La grant amour le simple sens
 Et le bien couenable tens
 Les fist departir et garder
 Quensemble ne porent parler
 Et que nul bien nest sanz enuie
 40 Ne nis .i. serf sans felonie
 .I. serf nota leur contenance
 Et dist or sai bien sanz doutance
 Que mout sentraiment cil enfant
 Et se il fusent auques grant
 45 Mout tost feraient .i. tel plet
 Ou il auroit .i. maues tret
 A la mere a la damoise
 Conta li serf ceste nouele

f. 16r col. b

Et el li dist ore ten tes
50 Il nassembleront ouan mes
Eschar ai de lor druerie
Par tens commencent la folie
Puis apela sa chamberiere
Garde se tu mas de riens chiere
55 Que tisbe nisse hors de lus
Que ne la uoie piramus
Adont sourt .i. grant mautalens
Entre les peres as enfans
Une tenchon et tele enuie
60 Qui puis dura tote lor uie
Qui les choses funt destourber
As .ii. enfanz dentraprismer
Deus aiouster par mariage
Ne denuoier entreus mesage
65 Les .ii. enfanz sunt a destroit
Li .i. not lautre ne ne uoit
Et ce que len les garde plus
Que tisbe nose passer lus
Ne piramus uers le garder
70 Ce fet lamour plus auier
Andui creisent selonc lor tens
Creist leur ae et creist leur sens
Creist lor amour creist leur aez
Et ia orent .xii. ans passez
75 Et des quil uindrent en iouent
Et il connurent escient
Et lor ae fu ia en cours
Ou nature conceit amours
Lors ne les lesse en pes garir
80 Le lonc porpens le grief soupir
Pleint et gemist chascun en soi
Ne seuent deus deus nul conroi
Le feu est la dedenz enclos
Qui ne lor let auoir repos
85 Qui les trauaille ior et nuit
Et de mortel ardour les cuist
[P]iramus est plein de dolour
Plein de soupir et plein de plour
Plein de pensee et plein de cure
90 Demente soi en tel mesure
Souent: a cheitis tristes et dolent
Souferres longues cest torment
Quant ie plus plour et plus mesprent amour:
A tort la nom mes est ardour
95 Qui ensemment de ior en iour
Fletris ma face et ma colour

Com fet gelee tendre flour halas:
 He piramus quel la feras
 En quel guise te contendras
 100 Ahi pere qui mengendras: qarles por quoi
 Sire nas tu merci de moi
 Se tu nen prenz prechein conroi
 Ou par engin ou par desroi ferei:
 Thisbele que uos aurai
 105 Saches se par amour ne tai
 Que par force te raurai
 Ou se ce non por tai aurai la mort:
 Cest mon delit et mon confort
 Se auques est cest mal si fort
 110 Qui si longues me fet cest tort tort fet:
 Ha sire diex que ne uos plect
 Que nos parenz fusent en pes
 Neusson mie tant agues agaitier:
 Ia ne puis ie tant exploitier
 115 Por promesse ne por loier
 Que ie truisse nul mesagier
 Qua mamie puisse enuoier qui chaut:
 Quant ie plus pleing et meins me uaut
 Ahi peres qui meins en haut
 120 Estreig le feu qui si masaut le feu:
 Qui ma toleit et ris et geu
 Ne puis garir en nis un leu amie:
 Por uos est ma colour perie
 Tisbe por uos despent ma uie en plor:
 125 Consentez moi le deu damor
 Quencor uos tiegne ou nuit ou iour
 Ou o leesce ou o dolour
 Pasmestuet ne puis durer
 Or ai grant chaut or ueil trembler
 130 Or sui haitiez or ueil plorer
 Einz quil peust son duel fenir
 Li prist le uolt a enpalir
 O lermes o gemissement
 Chai pasme el pauement
 135 [A]pres lonc tens sen est leue
 Pale trouble et descolore
 Ua sen el temple ueneris
 Couche soi sus le marbre bis
 Fet proieres uouz et promese
 140 Et sacrefise a la dieuesse
 Quencor li doint auoir baillie
 De parler a thisbe samie
 Tisbe est la dedenz enclose
 Et fors du pales isir nose

f. 16v col. a

145 Souent remembre ses amours
Souent le ior colours
Souent soupire souent plore
Lasse fet elle en com male ore fui nee:
Onques ne fu nule esgare en uie:
150 Qui par porpens ou par folie
Ne peust enginer boisdie fors moi:
Quant ie plus pens et ie meins uoi
En quel guise prendre conroi
Amis douz de parler a toi parler:
155 Tisbe bele ueus tu desuer
Ueus ta chastee uioler
Et ton lignage uergonder nel fere:
Garde reson ne soit contrere
Ne te chaut ton corage fere corage:
160 Por quoi tu faces tel outrage
Car onc fame de ton lignage
Ne fu reprise de putage reprise:
Non serai ge en nule guise
Ie uodroie mieus estre ocise tisbe:
165 Ou as tu pris icest pense
Tost a piramus oublie
Lasse por qoi lai ge nomme amis:
La moie foi uos en pleuis
Onc certes a droit ne le dis
170 Or poez dire ce mest uis
Quamor de fame nest pas fuis le gage:
Tenez amis por cest outrage
Ci uos uo ge mon pucelage
Trop iere oreinz de fier corage de fier:
175 Uers uos me doi ge souploier
Mout auroie le blasme chier
Se ie loaie chalengier contraire:
Si com me semble et mest uiaire
Ne men deuroit len pas retrere
180 Se il auoit de moi afere desuee:
Tisbe fole desuergondee
Quel corage ta or muee lerai:
Trestot icest pense que iai
Par le porchast mon pere aurai
185 Autresi bel mari et gent
Merueil est se piramus nentent
Oil ien tremble bien le sent
Tant mar le dis or men repent ha beaus:
Rose tendre et lis noueus
190 Flour de touz autres iouenceaus merci:
Por uos ai ge le uis pali
La char tremblant le cors freidi

f. 16v col. b

Iames naurai nul autre ami que uos:
 Mes uos parens sunt enuios
 195 Et li mien sunt de moi ialos a lasse:
 Quant que ie pleig rien ne me lasche
 Du feu qui si souent maache qui chaut
 Por poi ne faz por uos .i. saut
 Ne monte rien se dieus me saut dolente:
 200 Le deu damours le me consente
 Quentre mes braz encor le sente
 Ou bel men soit ou men repente
 Ci fine mon compleinz o lermes
 Pasmestuet or en est termes
 205 Si mestuet fere chascun di
 Trois fois por mon tres chier ami
 La pucele est .iii. foiz pasmee
 Et quant ele sest releuee
 Andeus ses meins uers le ciel tent
 210 Proie les diex tant doucement
 Que li doignent conseil trouer
 Qua son ami puisse parler
 Si prochein sunt les .ii. pales
 Et a tele mesure fes
 215 Que une mesiere not entreus
 Qui fu deuisse dandeus
 Et en la chambre la dedans
 La ou conuersent meins les gens
 Ou la pucele est enfermee
 220 Fu la paroi .i. poi creuee
 Et fu celee par mout danz
 Tant que amour la fist trouer
 Uers qui rien ne se puet celer
 Que est ice quamours ne sent
 225 Li dui amant premierement
 Apercurent icel pertus
 Primes tisbe puis pirasmus
 Tisbe troua la creueure
 Prist les pendanz de sa ceinture
 230 Fist tot outre le chief pareir
 Que ses amis le puist uoer
 Piramus uient de deporter
 De son grant duel reconforter
 Uet en la chambre couche soi
 235 Tourna son uis uers la paroi
 Garde si apercoit lenseigne
 Que la ceinture li enseigne
 Cele part uint prist le pendant
 Uit le pertus si dist itant
 240 Tisbe bele douce feture

f. 17r col. a

Oeure demeine de nature
Par les pendanz de sa ceinture
Sui ci uenuz ofrir droiture
Que ne trouai la creueure
245 Uostre en est bele lauenture
Se uos auez de moi grant cure
Ne uos tendra pas fermeure
Que ne ueigniez tote seure
Sanz message sanz couerture
250 A base uoiz o amour pure
Porron parler de nostre cure
Après sauroiz en quel mesure
Ma mis amour sanz forfeure
A: dieus tant est sa uie dure
255 Qui longuement tel mal endure
La pucele est de lautre part
Et en escout et en esgart
De la pucele entent lesfroï
Tret sei plus pres de la paroi
260 Met son oeil dedenz la creuace
De son ami choisi la face
Et uolt parler mes el ne puet
Amour soudement les commuet
El premerain esgardement
265 Fremist et soupire et esprent
Tressaut et trestremble et tressue
.C. colors en une eure mue
En itel guise la destreint
Amor qui tote chose ueint
270 A la parfin ses porpensee
Et sest .i. poi raseuree
Met son oeil endroit la freinture
Puis parolle en itel mesure
Cil qui por uos me funt garder
275 Ne nos porront pas deseurer
Ie ne me puis uers uos celer
Mes ie uos ueil .i. poi gaber
Car primes soi conseil trouer
Com nos poon ci asembler
280 Car qui plus aime plus uoit cler
Griement uos uoi desconforter
Lessiez amis le dolouser
Car longues ne poez ester
Plus a loisir porron parler
285 Pensez amis de recourer
El ne pout plus parler o lui
Einz se departent ambedui
Le ior sen uet la nuit prent fin

f. 17r col. b

Andui reperrent au matin
 290 Et reuient a lour pertus
 Primes parrole piramus
 Amie mout sui angoisous
 Car amor ma naure por uos
 Des or uien ge bien a reclaim
 295 Com fet lostor quant il a fein
 Amor ma sachie a son aim sui pris:
 Oil car bien pert a mon uis
 Saucun me tient nen irai uis amie:
 Mout feroit or grant uilenie
 300 Se ie por uos perdoie uie
 Quant men poez bien fere aie chaitis:
 Dame oez com sui entrepris
 Com sui por uostre amour aquis dolour:
 Ne me tresuet ne nuit ne ior dormir:
 305 Boiure et mengier mestuet guerpier deduit:
 Et quant que ie desir me fuit foir:
 Amor ne ueu ge pas guerpier
 Por amor mestoura morir morrai:
 Se deus plest et uos non ferai
 310 Enceis uos en souplierai
 Ie quic ia tant ni prierai en uein:
 Enceis parsieurai tant ma mein
 Que de cest mal me fera sein
 Et de uostre amistie certain amie:
 315 Se poons ioindre compaignie
 De grant dolour aurai aie
 Mes tote chose uos anuie creuace:
 Ceile te bien rien ne te face
 Nis .i. de ceus qui nos menace
 320 Et garde ne uoient la face par toi:
 De cele qui le cors de moi
 Et le corage tient o soi
 [P]iramus si gient et soupire
 A tant let tot ne puet plus dire
 325 Et quant sa parole remeint
 Tisbe commence son pleint
 Amis mout uos desconfortez
 Nest merueille que trop amez
 Bien sai por moi iestes naurez por moi:
 330 Et ie por uos en moie foi
 Ne sui pas en menor esfroie que uos
 Mout estes tristes et ploros
 Et mon cors est mout angoissos amis
 Quant dites questes si aquis
 335 Plus est mon cors damors soupris sanz faille
 Plus est espris que feu en paille

f. 17v col. a

Amor mocit et me trauaille dieus sire:
Ou auez porchacie uostre ire
Uez ma dolor uez mon martire ma peine:
340 Uez damor com el me demeine
Grant mal me sourt et male estreine recui:
Amis quant primes uos connui
Onc puis ne uit ne ior ne fui sans plaie:
Qui com plus dure plus sesgaie la touse:
345 Que riens ne puet fere ioieuse le ior:
Sui en lermes et en dolour
En martire et en freour la nuit
Quant ie me gis dedenz mon lit
Dont cuic que somme mest delit non sunt par foi:
350 Einz sui en peine et en efroi
Dont mest auis que ie uos uoi
Et que poez parler a moi amis:
Quant me rendorm donc mest auis
Que uos estes deuant mon uis
355 Touz dehaitiez et tot pensis dieus donge:
Que bien nos uieigne de cest songe
Dont mest auis que me semonge souent:
Une uoiz o gemissement ainsi:
Conois tu ton ami
360 Esueille toi alon de ci amis:
Dites que uos en est auis
De moi ueil que soiez toz fins por uoir:
Ie men enblere de prin soir
Par une nuit irai sauoir la hors
365 Se troueroie uostre cors gardez:
Ne soiez lenz ne loubliez
A la fonteine me querez
Souz le morier en mi les prez
La ou uenus fu enterrez
370 [A]insi forment lor couenant
Puis se departent li amant
Mes primes besent la parei
Au partir chascun endroit soi
Et saluerent le pertus
375 Ou il ne reperrèrent plus
Li dui amant sunt en grant cure
Mout lor semble que le ior dure
Mout se compleignent du soleil
Souent lapelent non feeil
380 Qui tant tarde a rescouser
Et la nuit fet tant demorer
Dient qua escient le fet
Por demoree de lor plet
Le ior sen uet la nuit repere

f. 17v col. b

385 Et le terme de lor afere
 Cil dormirent qui sunt seur
 Montent les guetes sor le mur
 Mes dices .ii. nul ne repose
 Enceis porpensis autre chose
 390 Delitent soi a porpenser
 De ce quil doient asembler
 Et desirent lor duel lor mort
 Et lor damage grant et fort
 Sens ne reson nes puet retrere
 395 De ce quil ont enpris a fere
 Ia erent la gent endormie
 Quant tisbe sestoit esperie
 Tot soauet tisbe sen ist
 De la chambre ou ele gist
 400 Seule par nuit et sanz paour
 Tel hardement li done amour
 Quant fu issue de la sale
 Et ele deualoit leschale
 Si mist auant le pie senestre
 405 Toner oi desouz le destre
 Senti tot le pales fremir
 Et uit la lune enpalir
 Uit le huan uit la fresaie
 Mes nis .i. sine ne lesmaie
 410 A quel que fin quen doie trere
 Quele ne face son afere
 Ia estoit iusquau mur uenue
 Quant une gaite la ueue
 Mes quant a cele eure la uoit
 415 Quidé que forsenee soit
 Deuant les eulz a lescharguete
 Sen deuale par une frete
 Et uint au leu sans demorance
 Ou il pristrent leur conuenance
 420 Ia fu asise sus le marbre
 A la fonteine desouz larbre
 Quant .i. lion de la monteigne
 Qui ot ocis une compaignie
 De berbiz: uint parmi le pre
 425 Quencore en iert ensanglente
 Des entrailles et de la leine
 Querant leue de la fonteine
 La pucele besse la teste
 Quant uoit uenir la cruel beste
 430 Fuit li le sanc et la colour
 Nest merueille sel ot poor
 Uet soi inellement mucier

f. 18r col. a

Souz lombre dun alemandier
Mes tant fu esbahie et simple
435 Que sus herbe lessa sa guimple
Le lion uint o grant esfroi
A la fonteine esteint sa sei
Et quant il ot beu assez
Uet sei deduire par les prez
440 La guimple trueue en une sente
Defoule la et ensanglente
Et quant il est des prez eissu
Et piramus i est uenu
Garde souz lombre du morier
445 Si uit la guimple blanchoyer
Garde en la poudre denuiron
Si uit la trace du lion
Esparpillee uit lareime
Trouble leue de la fonteine
450 Trueue la guimple defolee
Et de nouel ensanglente
Cuide que soit du sanc samie
Garde enuiron si nen uoit mie
Quant piramus uoit de samie
455 Tant espirmenz quel est perie
Plus deuint uert que fueille dierre
Et plus roide que nule pierre
Mue le sanc change corage
Lors esprent et dire rage
460 Et mautalent li lese dire
Lieu de dolor nuit de torment
Morier arbre de plorement
Fonteine qui ne mauez rendue seine
Cele cui sanc gist en lareine
465 Com soudement est fete ueine
Mesperance mamour matente
Ha: dieus quel duel me represente
Ceste guimple que uoi sanglente
Amie: comment fu la beste hardie
470 Quasit uers uos tele enuaie
Quel duel quel mal quel felonie
Que en tel guise estes perie
Mesure: ce est damage que cil dure
Qui de uenir uos fist seure
475 Seule en tieu lieu par nuit obscure
Soule: ha escommenie goule
Qui de sa char iestes saouille ha las
Ci uoi du sanc ci uoi des dras
Lion qui tisbe deuoras
480 Merueil se point en i lesas: chaitis:

f. 18r col. b

Tisbe est morte et ie sui uis
 Terre ueure et mengloutis
 Reuien qui deuoras la chiere rien
 Son sanc beus reboif le mien. dolent:
 485 Qua uostre mort ne fu present
 Mort que demores car me pren espee:
 Se ie teuse remembre
 Grant piecha ia fust finee
 Mauez mort de fuir est couardie
 490 Ha: bele douce chiere amie
 Por moi pechierre iestes perie
 Ie uos ai morte quant deriere
 Uing au terme et uos premiere
 Or pri ma destre que bien fiere
 495 Uengerai uos en tel maniere. uengier:
 Mes primes ueil les dieus proier
 Qui demoutrent en cest morier
 Sine de mort et dencombrier de plor:
 Face le fruit de tel color
 500 Que ce seit sine de dolor
 O duel: a tel proiere fete
 Par grant ire a lespee trete
 Bese la guinple et puis le sanc
 Tresperce soi parmi le flanc
 505 Si que de lautre part du cors
 En refist estre le chief hors
 Et quant il mort bese la guinple
 Si fet amor en la mort simple
 Tor iors auoit este la more blanche
 510 Desi qua icele ore
 Adont recut noire colour
 En testemoine de dolour
 Tisbe repere entretant
 Quel ne deceiue son amant
 515 Mout coueite quele li die
 De quel peril ele est garie
 Cuide acomplir sa uolente
 De ce que tant a desire
 Or aprisme le terme brief
 520 Que lor amor trera a chief
 Auis li est que soit o lui
 Et quil sentrebesent andui
 Et parrollent de lor amour
 Crient que sa ioie soit dolour
 525 Quant el aprisma du morier
 Si uit la more nercoier
 Donques cuida estre esgaree
 Por la colour quel uit muee

f. 18v col. a

Primes fu tor iors le frit blanc
530 Or est tot merci por le sanc
Garde deuant soi en li sente
Uoit enuiron lerbe sanglente
Le iouencel ot sangloutir
Pleindre giendre rendre soupir
535 Uoit la guinple comme ila touche
Doirres en autres a sa bouche
Quant uit parmi le cors lespee
Fuit li le sanc si sest pasmee
Relieue soi cruel et fiere
540 Deront ses dras debat sa chiere
Adonc sacline sus le cors
Si a trete lespee hors
Et encontremont la drecee
Puis parle comme fame iree espee:
545 Qui nostre uie as deseuree
En mon piz seras reschaufee
Et de .ii. sans ensanglente sanglente:
Ha: dieus quel fin et quele atente
Et dolorouse et com dolente beau sire:
550 Ne uos sout espargnier uostre ire
Quant uos uos uosites ocire
Lasse com pui ge parler dire
Dont la oi cil qui soupire beaus chiers:
Mout fu uostre corage fiers nuit male:
555 Qui me feis le signe pale
Quant fui issue de la sale
Tisbe mauese
Or ne uos faut ne lieu ne ese
Tant soulement morir uos plese morir:
560 Nule chose tant ne desir a tort:
Amours fetes ma mein si fort
Qua .i. seul coup recoiue mort amis:
Duel et amour uos ont ocis
Quant asembler ne poon uis parenz:
565 Qui nos quidez garder laienz
Com doulerous embracemenz uerrez:
Quant ensemble nos trouerez
Cest don uos pri que nos doigniez seueaus:
Que soion mis en .i. tombleaus
570 Lores sacline la pucele
Bese la plaie si lapele piramus:
Tisbe uostre amie
Socit o uos de compaignie
Ourez les euz que mort enuie
575 Ueez com duel me fet hardie
De quant quel a ainsi parle

f. 18v col. b

Nentent il fors le non tise
 Tise: cest nom le resuertue
 Oeure les euz de sa ueue
 580 Puis les reclot et pert la uie
 A la ueue de samie
 La pucele sest acesmee
 A ses .ii. meins a pris lespee
 Par mi le piz souz la mamele
 585 Sen referi la damoisele
 De lautre part ist le sanc hors
 Et ele chiet desus le cors
 Le cors acole et enbrace
 Bese les euz bese la face
 590 Bese la bouche par grant cure
 Tant com sens et uie li dure
 Tant com li dure sens et uie
 Se demoutre ueraie amie
 Ici fenist des .ii. amanz
 595 Com lor leal amor fu granz
 Explicit

Notes

100 *garles* conjectural: abbreviation mark over *q* unclear

MS A (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. 837, folios 95v-99v)

Vellum, late 13th century, modern binding. Two columns per page, fifty lines per column. In its present state, contains 247 short texts, including fabliaux, moral and religious texts, *lais*, songs, plays, the *Chastelaine de Vergi*, *Piramus et Tisbé*, and *Narcisus*. A gathering is missing after fol. 137 and after fol. 149; a single folio is missing after fols 99, 165, 173 and 181. The text of *Piramus* is incomplete: a note in a later hand at the bottom of fol. 99 reads: ‘Manque icy un feuillet; ainsi il ne faut point y chercher la fin du fabel de Pyrame et de Tysbe, ni le commencement du fabel intitulé “Le lunaire que Salemons fist”’. A large decorated initial *E* occupies the left-hand half of the first eight lines of *Piramus*; smaller red initials are found in the body of the text. The text is preceded by the rubric ‘De piramus et de tisbe’.

Transcription Notes

Large initials are indicated by underlined characters. The scribe makes moderate use of standard abbreviations: *x* consistently represents *us* and is transcribed accordingly; < *multum* is always abbreviated and is expanded to *mout* (vocalisation of *l* is consistently represented as *u*: *maus*, *autre*, *ostaus*, *aus*, *escout* etc.); *ā* and *ē* before *bl* and *br* have been transcribed *am* and *em* on the basis of the full forms *emblez* and *remembree*. The standard abbreviation for *par* also represents *per* in *pertuis* and *apertement*. The full form of the second person pronoun is *uous*, so *u^o* has been expanded accordingly. In the absence of any full forms, *9* has been expanded to either *con* or *com*, in line with modern French orthographical practice (*com*, *complaint*, *commence* but *contre*, *contenance*, *consente*, *connui*, *conseil* etc.).

f. 95v col. b

En babiloine
 la cite
 furent dui
 homme renomme
 5 dui citeain de
 grant hautece
 de parente
 et de richece
 Li riche homme orent .ii. enfanz
 10 Dingal biaute et duns samblanz
 Luns fu ualles lautre meschine
 Si biaux norent rois ne roine
 Comme auoient cil dui riche homme
 Quouides en son liure nomme
 15 Et dist quil furent apele
 Luns pyrramus lautre tysbe
 Aincois quil eussent .uii. anz
 Toucha amors les .ii. enfanz
 Et naura plus a cel endroit
 20 Que lor aez ne requeroit
 Ia pert a eus li bons corages
 La grant biautez li hauz parages
 Les paroles li ris li geu
 Et li aisement del leu
 25 Et li entreueoir souent
 Lor donerent espirement
 Aus amanz deuint tels solas
 Nes pot garir ne hauz ne bas
 Nule maniere nus aez
 30 Nen eschape nen soit naurez
 Amors ie te faz bien sauoir
 Contre ton dart na nus pooir
 Ne contre li na nus essoingne
 Doubles haubers ne double broingne
 35 Ta saiete ne puet faillir
 Ualles ne puet nis uns gaudir
 Ele fet plaie sanz pertus
 Uers qui ne puet herbe ne ius
 Sanz dolor fet trere souspir
 40 Et sanz sanc expandre palir
 Li fers de la saiete est feu
 Souspir la fleche de mi leu
 Li penon engiens et perriere
 Douce amors la coche darriere
 f. 96r col. a 45 Li fers naure en lesgarder
 La fleche cele de pensser
 Li panon font les apparaus
 La coche aiouste les consaus

A tel saiete a tele lance
50 Naura amors en lor enfance
Le iouencel et la meschine
Tant que la mort lor fu uoisine
Encor ne seuent riens damer
Or les a mis en grant pensser
55 Ia lor plest a matin leuer
Et lun de lautre remembrer
Et aiment plus quil ne deuoient
Et que lor aez ne queroient
Par matinet chascuns sen emble
60 Et uenoient le ior ensamble
Et deduient o les enfanz
De lor aez et de lor anz
Lassent lor ieus de regarder
Quil ne se pueent saouler
65 Quant reperent a lor ostaus
Li desseurers lor est mout maus
Plest leur a fere mainte chose
De quoi on les manace et chose
Tant com iesme sormonte uoire
70 Or argent. rose primeuoire
Tant sormonterent de biaute
Cil dui toz ceus de la cite
Par grant estude par grant cure
Par grant solaz les fist nature
75 Et dist parra ci ma uertuz
Et mes engiens i soit ueuz
Diuersement si com moi samble
Son ne tue ces .ii. ensamble
Il sont andui dune mesure
80 Merueilleus est or lor nature
Tant com leur aez fu contrere
Et quanque amors requiert a fere
Et il furent enfant des anz
Fu assez lor licensse granz
85 De lassambler et del iouer
Dentreueoir et del parler
Lentreparler li simples sens
Et li non couuenables tens
Ce que nus biens sanz felonie
90 Et nes uns sers nest sanz enuie
Les fist departir et garder
Que ne porent ainz plus parler
Uns sers nota lor contenance
Et dist or sai bien sanz doutance
95 Que mout sentraiment cil enfant
Et se il fussent auques grant

f. 96r col. b

Grief chose fust du departir
 Et se il fussent a loisir
 Ueoir feissent i tel plait
 100 Ou grant merueille eust estret
A la mere la damoisele
 Porta li sers ceste nouele
 Ele li respont or te tais
 Quil nassamblent des or mais
 105 Granz eschars est de druerie
 Tost commencierent la folie
 Puis dist a une chamberiere
 Quar ua fermer cel huis derriere
 Que tysbe nisse fors de luis
 110 Que ne la uoie pyrramus
 Entretant ot mautalens granz
 Entre les peres aus enfanz
 Une tencon et une enuie
 Qui puis dura toute lor uie
 115 Ceste chose fu destorbier
 Des .ii. enfanz entraprochier
 Li dui enfant sont en destroit
 Li uns not lautre ne ne uoit
 Mout lor samble grief la deuse
 120 Que lor pere ont entraus .ii. mise
 Mes ce que len les garde plus
 Que tysbe nisse fors de luis
 Et pyrramus uers luis garder
 Fet lor amor plus auier
 125 Andui croissent selonc lor tens
 Croist lor engins et croist lor sens
 Croist la dolor et croist la plaie
 Et croist li sens. qui sens ne paie
 Croist lor amors croist lor aez
 130 Dusquil orent .xu. anz passez
 Des que il uindrent en iouent
 Et il choisirent escient
 Et leur aez fu ia el cors
 Et nature resiut amors
 135 Lores ne les lesse garir
 Li lons pensser et li souspir
 Les granz cures li dur complaint
 Li fors tormenz ques cuers lor maint
 Dementent soi et nuit et ior
 140 Toute leur uie est en dolor
 Pleurent giesment chascuns en soi
 Ne seuent daus nis .i. conroi
 Ne pueent auoir nul remierre
 Par fenestre ne par uerriere

He: amors
 Consente moi li dieus damors
 f. 96v col. b 195 Quencor la tiegne ou uoist iouer
 La ioie la dolor. pasmer
 Mestuet. et nen puis plus parler
 Or sui haitiez or uueil trambler
Ainz que puist son duel defenir
 200 Li prist li uis a empalir
 En lermes en gemissement
 Chei pasmez el pauement
 Empres lonc tens est releuez
 Pales troubles descolorez
 205 Ua sen au temple ueneris
 Couche soi sus .i. marbre bis
 Si fet proiere apres la messe
 Et sacrefice a la deesse
 Quele li doinst auoir aie
 210 De parler a tysbe samie
Tysbe est la dedenz enclose
 Fors du palais issir nen ose
 Souent remembre ses amors
 Souent mue le ior colors
 215 Souent se plaint et souent pleure
 Lasse dist ele de male eure
 Fui nee
 Ha: dieus com male destinee
 Com male uie mas donee
 220 Ainz mes ne fu nule esgaree
 Que ie par sens ou par folie
 Par grant doucor non felonie
 Ne pot mes engignier boisdie
 Fors moi
 225 Mes com plus plaing et plus mesmai
 En quel guise prendrai conroi
 Amis ie dueil da toi parler
 Tysbe fole ueus tu deruer
 Ueus tu chastee uioler
 230 Et ton lignage uergonder
 Ne faire
Garde reson que cest contraire
 Ne te chaut dentor toi atraire
 Chose par qoi tu faces rage
 235 Quar ainc fame de ton lignage
 Ne fu reprise de putage
 Reprise
 Ne fera ia en nule guise
 Mieux uausist con teust ocise
 240 Tysbe

Et quant ele fu releuee
 290 Enuers le ciel ses .ii. mains tent
 A dieu prie lacordement
 Que il li doinst conroi trouer
 Qua son ami puisse parler
 Parqoi furent li dui palais
 f. 97r col. b 295 En itele maniere fais
 Cune parois et uns murs seus
 Ere deuse dambes .ii.
 Endroit la chambre la dedanz
 Si escreua li murs fendanz
 300 Ou la pucele ert enserree
 Fu la maisiere .i. poi creuee
 La creuace nert gueres granz
 Et fu celee par .iiii. anz
 Dusques amors la fist trouer
 305 Uers qui riens ne se puet celer
 Quels chose est ce quamors ne sent
 Li dui enfant premierement
 Apercurent icest pertus
 Primes tysbe puis pyrramus
 310 Tysbe troua la creueure
 Prist le pendant de sa cainture
 Outre fesoit le chief paroir
 Que ses amis puisse ueoir
 Pyrramus uint de deporter
 315 De sa dolor reconforter
 Uint a la chambre couche soi
 Torna le chief uers la paroi
 Garde si apercoit lensaingne
 Que la creuace li ensaingne
 320 Ua cele part prent le pendant
 Et quant le tint si dist itant
He: tysbe tendre creature
 Ocirre de moi de ma feture
 Seur toutes sanz controueure
 325 Franche cortoise et clere et pure
 Par lensaingne de la cainture
 Sui ie uenez offrir droiture
 Que ne trouai la creueure
 Se uous auez de moi grant cure
 330 Ne uous tendra pas fermeure
 Que ne uenez ici segure
 Sanz message sanz couuerture
 Porrons parler de nostre iniure
 Mont mes amors sanz forfeure
 335 Apres saurez a quele arduure
 Ha: dieus mout ai la uie dure

Qui longuement le mal endure
La pucele de lautre part
Est en escout en en regart
340 De la parole et de lesfroi
Trait soi plus pres de la paroi
Met son oeil endroit la creuace
De son ami choisi la face
Parler uout mes ele ne pot
f. 97v col. a 345 Et mout sadement le coniot
Après le sien esgardement
Fremist et souspire asprement
Toute se tressaut et tressue
En poi de tens sa color mue
350 Porpense soi quele li die
De soi meisme sentroublie
En tantes guises la destraint
Amors douces qui trestout uaint
A la parfin sest porpensee
355 Et rest .i. poi rassuree
Met sa bouche endroit la fraiture
Si parole en itel mesure
Amis ici nos pas nommer
Ce ne me poez pas ueer
360 Cil qui por uous me fet garder
Ne me puis mes uers lui celer
Uostre perece uueil gaber
Premiere sueil conseil trouer
Que uous poez ci assambler
365 Qui plus aime plus ueut amer
Griefment uous oi desconforter
Mes sor sauez que enueer
Amis lessiez le dolouser
Encor uous en poez loer
370 Male chose est del dementer
Quant rien ne puet confort doner
Ioie ai quant ie i puis parler
Et por dolor mon bel chanter
Ioie et deduit por souspirer
375 Souef dormir por plus plorer
Amis ne puis mes plus ester
Lermes me tolent lesgarder
Souspir me tolent le parler
Pensez de moi de retourner
380 Plus a loisir porrons conter
He: dieus quant nous leras iouster
Or ne puet mes parler a lui
Ainsinc dessoiurent ambedui
Leure sen uait reuient la nuis

385 Andui reperent au pertuis
 Premerains pyrramus parole
 Amie oez de ceste chose
 Quar naurez sui a mort por uous
 Des or deuieng ie uostres tous
 390 Com li ostoirs quant il a fain
 Amors ma soupris a son ain
 Pris sui ie bien par anemis
 Ne sai que est ioie ne ris
 Sauques me tient nen irai uis
 f. 97v col. b 395 Uers uous tout sanz guiler foui
 Quar en iouent nous assaillis
 Lacie sommes en une ris
 Andui ne sai que prions hui
 Dame uous estes mon refui
 400 Se par uous muir tant mar i fui
 Amie
 Mout esteroit granz uilonie
 Se par uous perdoie la uie
 Quant par uous puis auoir aie
 405 Dolant
 Mout auerai grant marimant
 Quant ie ai ame longuement
 Et ne puis fere mon talent
 Chetis
 410 Comme ie sui ore entrepris
 Com sui por uostre amor aquis
 Dolor
 Ne me tresuait ne nuit ne ior
 Or pens or souspir et or plor
 415 Toute ai perdue la color
 Dormir
Boiure et mengier mestuet gerpir
 Ne puis parler quar ie souspir
 Bien ai appris mal a souffrir
 420 De deduit et quanques desir
 Souduit
 He: dieus quel compaignon ie luit
 Ia ne garrai se ne men fui
 Fouir
 425 Amors ne me ueut pas gerpir
 Amors me ueut a soi tenir
 Por amors mestoura morir
 Morir
 Se dieu plest mie ne morrai
 430 Amors aincois uous ploerrai
 Onques ia tant ne prierai
 Main

Aincois porsurrarai bien ma main
Que de cest mal me fera sain
435 Et de uostre amistie certain
He: murs
Tant par estes espes et durs
Que ie nen puis estre seurs
La fraite fusi ample fete
440 Que sanz ueue descharguete
Uous en eusse parmi trete
Parois
Aurez merci de cest destrois
Pertuis tant par estes estrois
f. 98r col. a 445 Certes se uous uous ouurissois
Seul tant
Que nous delitissons parlant
Et se nous en entrebesant
Puissons iouster par compaignie
450 De grant dolor eusse aie
Mes toute chose nous enuie
Iouster
Par tant uous deuons mieus amer
Que parmi uous porrons parler
455 Creuace
Cele tramble qua poi ne sace
Nis uns de ces qui nous manace
Et de moi ont gaste la face
Par quoi
460 De celui qui le cors de moi
Et le corage a tret o soi
Masiere
Tant par estes cruels et fiere
Que nentrouurez par ma proiere
465 Tant que besier puisse sa bouche
La quel dolor au cuer me touche
O griete
A ueue uers moi la sante
I tant me fetes que la tante
470 Le plus
Que nentrecloe le pertuis
De cest torment nous complaint nus
Quensamble parler ne poons
Et cruelment nous entramons
475 Sanz ire
Belement se plaint et souspire
Ici fenist ne puet plus dire
Et quant ses complains li refraint
Tysbe commence le complaint
480 Amis mout uous desconfortez

Nest merueille quar mout mamez
 Bien sai que mout estes naurez
 Por moi
 Et ie por uous en moie foi
 485 De ma uie ne sai conroi
 Toute ior sui en tel esfroi
 Por uous
 Uous estes tristes et ploraus
 Et mes cors est si angoissous
 490 Purement
 Nous compaignons de cest torment
 Amis
 Qui si dites que tant aquis
 Com li miens cors damors porpris
 f. 98r col. b 495 Dieus quels ire quels mautalens
 Qui es a moi de tant lonc tens
 Dieus pere
 Qui me feis quant ie ne nere
 Ueez mon duel et ma misere
 500 Ma paine
 Ueez damors com me demaine
 Males ores et male paine
 Recui
 Por uous quant primes uous connui
 505 En pais ne ior ne nuit ne sui
 Sanz plaie
 Quar com plus dure et plus sesgaie
 Ne nest merueille sil sesmaie
 Chetiue
 510 Que toutes eures sui penssiue
 Ne riens ne puet fere ioiue
 Tout ai perdu ioie et deport
 Que ne puet moi doner confort
 Le ior
 515 Sui ie en lermes et en plor
 En grant martyre et en dolor
 La nuit
 Quant ie me gis enz en mon lit
 Cuidiez que souef me delit
 520 Dont sui en paine et en esfroi
 Et dont me sui que ie uous uoi
 Que ne poez touchier a moi
 Lors si mesfroi et si tressail
 Trestramble de ioie et trauail
 525 Lors get les mains que ie uous bail
 Et quant uous cuit prendre si fail
 Amis
 Quant me rendorm dont mest auis

530 Que uous estes deuant mon uis
Toz debatuz et toz penssis
Estez
Dieus doinst que uous bien uous prouez
De ce que uous tant uous penez
Souuent
535 Ne sai de quels gemissemenz
Qui nous retourne a granz tormenz
Aimi.
Tysbe connois tu ton ami
Et uois le tu alons de ci
540 Tysbe.
Li dieu nous ont amoneste
Que issons fors de la cite
Tant que pussons estre assamble
Amie.
f. 98v col. a 545 Cil uous apele dont nest uie
Qui uous doinst longue compaignie
Souuent
Et soit a son commandement
Et nous doinst bon assablement
550 Amoit
Li dieus qui nous en semonoit
Et apertement le disoit
Amis
Dites que uous en est auis
555 De moi uueil bien que soies fis
De urai
Por uoir que ie men emblerai
De la prison
Ia ni auera mesprison
560 Bien sai
Par mienuit sauoir irai
La fors.
Se ie trouerai uostre cors
Gardez.
565 Ne soiez pas entroubliez
De la prison uous en emblez
A la fontaine me querez
Souz le morier en mi les prez
Atant
570 Issi dessoient li amant
Que il ne uont plus arestant
Andoi
Mes ainz besierent la paroi
Au partir chascuns endroit soi
575 Et saluerent le pertuis
Ou il ne rassamblèrent puis

Li dui amant sont en grant cure
 Trop lor est uis que cil iors dure
 Mout se complaignent du soleil
 580 Souent lapelent non feeil
 Qui targe tant a esconsser
 Et fet lauoit tant demorer
 Dient qua escient le fet
 Por demorance de lor plet
 585 Li ior sen ua la nuis repere
 Et li termes de lor afere
 Montent les gaites sor les murs
 Cil se dorment qui sont segurs
 Mes nus des .ii. ne se repose
 590 Chascuns a son endroit senchose
 Et orent ia une esperance
 Et auoec il sont en doutance
 Sauoir sil le facent ou non
 Mes or escoutez la reson
 f. 98v col. b 595 Dolente soi au porpensser
 De ce quil doiuent assamblar
 Et deuint en lor corage
 Lor duel lor mort et lor damage
 Ont ensamble ioie et dolor
 600 Mes toutes uoies en amor
 Sens ne reson ne pueent trere
 De ce quil ont empris a fere
 La gent estoit toute endormie
 Quant tysbe sest adeuancie
 605 Lieue du lit ou ele gist
 Trestout souef de la chambre ist
 Ne la tint huis ne fermeure
 De la chambre ist toute seure
 Seule par nuit et sanz paor
 610 Tel hardement li done amor
 Quant fu issue de la sale
 Contre .i. grant tertre sadeuale
 Si mist auant le pie senestre
 Deust torner de desus destre
 615 Soi tout le palais fremir
 Et uit la lune paleir
 Uit la chancre et la fressaie
 Mes nis uns signes ne lesmaie
 A quele fin cele doit trere
 620 Que ne parface son afere
 Ia estoit dusquau mur uenue
 Quant une gaitte la ueue
 Por ce questroite la ueoit
 Cuide cune deesse soit

625 Tret soi arriere ne lapele
Lessa aler la damoisele
Deuant les ieus de leschargaite
Deualoit soi par une fraite
Et uait au lieu sanz demorance
630 Ou est prise la couenance
Ia est assise sor .i. marbre
A la fontaine desouz larbre
Ou il deuoient assambler
Et commencoit a porpensser
635 En quele guise gaberait
Le iouencel qui ne uenoit
Quant uns lyons dune montaingne
Qui ot ocis une compaingne
De bestes quar il ot besoingne
640 Por ce que il auoit grant soingne
Queroit leue de la fontaine
Qui tant estoit et clere et saine
La pucele besse la teste
Et uit uenir la fiere beste
f. 99r col. a 645 Fuit li li sens et la color
Nest merueille sele ot paor
Ua sen fuiant par mi la uoie
Et crient que li lyons nel uoie
Tant fu esbahie la simple
650 Que souz larbre gerpi sa guimple
Ua sen isnelement mucier
Sous lombre dun alemandier
Et li lyons a grant esfrois
A la fontaine estint sa soif
655 Et quant il est bien saoule
Ua sen deduisant par le pre
Troua la guimple par la sente
Defoule la et ensanglente
Et quant il est des pres issuz
660 Et pyrramus i est uenuz
He: dieus com grant mesaventure
Com dolereuse troueure
Garde en la pree denuiron
Connut la trace del lyon
665 Garda souz lombre del morier
Et uit la guimple blanchioier
Esparpelee uit la laine
Trouble leue de la fontaine
Trueue la guimple ensanglente
670 Qui de nouuel ert defoulee
Cuide que soit du sanc samie
Garda entor et nen uit mie

Ha: dieus com malement demeure
 Que nest uenue en icele eure
 675 Tant doute cele beste fiere
 Nose uenir. ainz est arriere
 De la beste ert espoentee
 Mes .i. poi rest rasseuree
 Quant pyrramus uit de samie
 680 Que ele estoit ainsi fenie
 Plus deuint uert que fueille dierre
 Et refroidist comme une pierre
 Que li sans change le corage
 Lors estoit plains dire et de rage
 685 Et mautalens le lasse et ire
 Quant il samie ne remire
 Haitie et saine
 Se li cors geust en laraine
 Com salemon en feutre uaine
 690 Neis le pre ni aparente
 Ceste guimple qui est sanglente
 Ma mort temptez
 Ha: dieus quels deuls mest presentez
 He: mort por dieu quar me prenez
 f. 99r col. b 695 Dame com fu beste hardie
 Qui uous fist iceste enuaie
 Quels maus quel duel quel felonie
 Quen tel maniere estes fenie
 Mesure
 700 Cest granz damages que ie dure
 Qui de uenir uous fis seure
 Et seule aler par nuit obscure
 Las comme escommenie goule
 Qui est de uostre char saoule
 705 Ci uoi del sanc ci uoi des dras
 Lyons tu qui la deuoras
 Merueil que plus nen i lessas
 Lune obscure qui lesgardas
 Sai que terme nen obscuras
 710 Quant ele est morte et ne sui mors
 Morirs est mes mieudres confors
 Quant ele est morte et ie sui uis
 Terre por dieu quar mengloutis
 Ou tu lyons qui loceis
 715 Repaire
 Que ne me prens sanz nul contraire
 Las.
 Or sui ie trop chetis et mas
 Qui deuoras la douce rien
 720 Son sanc beus si boif le mien

Amie tysbe moi dolent
Qua uostre mort ne fui present
Espee.
Sen uous eusse remembre
725 Ma uie ia pres fust finee
Mort desirree encoardie
Ne uaut rien mes ele ert hardie
Ha: bele douce chiere amie
Par ma perece estes fenie
730 Chiere.
Ce uous a mort que uing derriere
A uo terme fustes premiere
Or pri ma destre que bien fiere
Uengera uous en tel maniere
735 Uengier.
Or primes uueil les dieus prier
Que il motroit cest martyrier
Si que de mort de destorbier
En leu de plor.
740 Facent souffrir a tel freor
Qui apartiengne a ma dolor
Tel duel et tel priere ai faite
Par grant ire ai lespee traite
Puis a la guimple sus leuee
745 En son la pointe de lespee
Besa la guimple puis le sanc
Tresperce soi parmi le flanc
Dusques de lautre part du cors
Fet parissir lespee fors
750 Il escolorge sus le marbre
Qui estoit a la fin de larbre
Entrues quil muert bese la guimple
Si fet amors a la mort simple
Sus les branches raide li sans
755 Noircist li fruis qui ere blans
Toz tens auoit este la meure
Blanche dusques a icele eure
Adonc recut noire color
A testemoine de dolor
760 Et tysbe repere entretant
Que ne decoiue son amant
Mout couoita quele li die
De quel peril ele ert garie
Cuide acomplir sa uolente
765 De ce quele ot tant desirre
Ia li est uis quele est o lui
Que sentrebesent ambedui
Que parolent de leur amor

Quant aperçoit la grant dolor
 Et ele aproche du morier
 Et uit les mores noircoier
 Lors cuidoit bien estre esgaree
 Por la color que uit muee
 Que primes auoit ueu blanc
 775 Le fruit qui estoit noir de sanc
 Et dementres quele le doute
 Si a trouee droit sa route
 Deuant soi garda en la sente
 Uoit deseure lerbe sanglente
 780 Le iouencel ot segloutir
 Plaindre giendre trere souspir
 Uit sa guimple comme il la touche
 Deures en autres a sa bouche
Et quant ele aperçoit la plaie
 785 Nest merueille sele sesmaie
 Fuit li li sans si chiet pasmee
 Quant uit parmi le cors lespee
 Relieue soi cruels et fiere
 Tret ses cheueus debat sa chiere
 790 Desront ses dras et pleure et crie
 Lors aime mort despit sa uie
 E lors se cline sus le cors
 Sen a trete lespee fors
 En contremont lauoit drecie
 f. 99v col. b 795 Si parole com fame irie
 Espee dont ie sui saisie
 Qui mas ioie toz dis fenie
 Or prueues com die a molestre
 Com pucele se doit irestre
 800 Espee.
 Qui nostre mort a destinee
 Soies en mon cuer reschaufee
 Sanglente
 He: dieus quel fin de tel iouente
 805 Biaus sire
 Lasse com puis apalir dire
 Lasse ie uoi que il souspire
 La uoi.
 Que il trauaille a mort por moi
 810 Com fete amor com tendre foi
 Auroie.
Amis se ie ne uous suioie
 Sa cort terme ne mocioie
 Baisiers
 815 Com grant dolor quels destorbiers
 Com fu uostre corages fiers

Lune fontaine prez moriers
Quels essoines quels destorbiers
Orains quant aualai lescale
820 Quant fui issue de la sale
Ou ie fui tant sechie et pale
Targiez
Toz biens qui ne mest aprochiez
Prez moriers fontaines et biez
825 Pris uous que ma mort tesmoingniez
Sanz aise
Tysbe et faintise et mauuaise
Ia ne uos faut ne leu ne aise
Tant seulement morir uous plaise
830 Morir.
Nule chose tant ne desir
Mes que de mon complaint fenir
A tort demeure de ferir
A tort.
835 Amors me fet ma main si fort
Qua en soi ire uie et mort
Ni aura same grant confort
Se andui cheons sor .i. sort
Amis.
840 Et duel et mort uous a ocis
Quentrassembler ne poons uis
Bien uous doi siurre ce mest uis
Parens.
Qui me cuidiez garder leenz

Notes

758 *recoit oi* expunctuated, *u* written above