

Animal tales as fabliaux

Article

Published Version

Taylor, J. L. (1977) Animal tales as fabliaux. Reading Medieval Studies, III. pp. 63-79. ISSN 0950-3129 Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/84351/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

Publisher: University of Reading

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

ANIMAL TALES AS FABLIAUX

Can animal tales be fabliaux? The tacit critical consensus seems to be that they cannot. Although the definitions of the genre proposed by Bédier,¹ Nykrog,² Jadogne³ and Thompson⁴ do not specifically exclude animal tales from consideration as fabliaux, their genre-catalogues do not include any.⁵ Only Fox⁶ is moved to suggest that some animal tales were included among the fabliaux, and he, regrettably, does not go on to elucidate.

The lack of animal-tales in the catalogues of the first four scholars can probably be explained by too great a reliance on the Montaiglon-Raynaud corpus of fabliaux,⁷ from which Anatole de Montaiglon had explicitly banned animal tales.⁸ Yet it is curious in the case of Jadogne, who, observing⁹ that we have no right to contradict a medieval author's definition of his own work then failed to mention in his analysis five animal tales which are called 'fabliaux' by their authors, as well as a number of other tales similarly attested.¹⁰

It is these five animal tales which will interest us here. Although it is a commonly-held view among medievalists that the use of genre-definitions by authors and scribes is vague and untrustworthy¹¹ - and scholars have not hesitated to contradict a medieval author when they found it expedient - there is strong evidence that these animal tales really were fabliaux, and not just 'fables d'animaux', as Nykrog has it.¹²

The anonymous author of *De l'Asne et du Chien* calls his tale a 'fablel'.¹³ In the oft-quoted introductory passage to *Des. II. chevaux*, Jean Bodel describes his composition *Dou Icu et de l'oue* as a fabliau.¹⁴ Yet both his recent editors, Foulon and Nardin, have chosen to contradict him and call the tale a 'fable'.¹⁵ In the *Isopet I - Avionnet*, certain manuscripts call both *De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler* and *De Renart et de l'Aigle* 'fabliaux',¹⁶ and finally an interpolated version of Marie de France's fable *De lupo et ariete* is called a 'fablel'.¹⁷

What will concern us here are the reasons why the anonymous authors of *De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler*, *De Renart et de l'Aigle*, the interpolated Marie de France fable and *De l'Asne et du Chien* called their tales 'fabliaux', and the reasons why Bodel described *Dou Icu et de l'oue* as a fabliau. The easy assumption that medieval authors did not use the genre definitions with any degree of accuracy should be discarded as potentially misleading. The question we must ask ourselves is: what, if anything, distinguishes these animal fabliaux from animal fables?

De l'Asne et du Chien conveniently provides us with the means of a direct comparison between 'fable' and 'fabliau' versions of the same story. The fabliau of MS. B.N. 837 is a reworking of the tale of the same name found in the *Isopets*, and derived from the medieval Latin *Romulus*, itself a derivative of the fables of Phaedrus.¹⁸ The 'stories' of the two tales may be summarized as follows:

Fable A lap-dog enjoys the favour of master and servants because of his fawning behaviour. An ass, jealous of the treatment which the dog receives, decides to imitate the dog's behaviour in the hope of greater rewards. When the ass puts his fore-feet on his master's shoulders and begins to bray in imitation of the lap-dog's yapping, the master thinks he has gone mad, and orders the servants to beat him soundly.

Moral: Only a fool attempts that which is not in his nature.

Fabliau A dog and an ass discuss which of them has to work harder for a living. The dog swears it is he, and asks the ass if he would like to bet on it. The ass lays a wager of one 'livre parisis', and tells of his hardships first. He is so overloaded that his back is nearly broken, and he receives very little food for his labour. When the boy drives him through the streets, he whips him extra hard if he sees his mistress, in order to impress her. The dog answers that he has to sleep out in the fields and guard the house in all weathers. If thieves attempt to break in, it is always he who suffers from their blows. His only reward is a dry crust of bread which is barely edible. When the kitchen-maid prepares a meal, she eats so much of it beforehand that she cannot eat any more at the table. She is so full that she breaks wind, and all present blame the dog for the unpleasant smell; as a result, he is soundly beaten. The ass admits that the dog has greater hardship and has won the bet.

The 'framework' of fable and fabliau is almost identical. In both cases, we find a dog and an ass attempting to equal or outdo one another with respect to their function in the household. It is the ass who sets off the action - in the fable, by trying to imitate the dog, and in the fabliau by accepting the challenge to lay a bet. The crux of both tales is an encounter with the human members of the household - in the fable, the ass imitates the lap-dog's behaviour in front of his master; in the fabliau, the high point of the comedy occurs when the dog is beaten for the maid's indiscretion during a meal. In both tales, the animal involved in the encounter is beaten. At the close of each version of the tale, there is an intervention by servants - in the fable, the servants beat the ass; in the fabliau, it is a maidservant who brings about

the dog's beating. In both cases, it is the ass who loses - in the fable, he fails in his attempt to rival the dog; in the fabliau, he loses the bet (although it is the dog who suffers the beating).

The author of the fabliau would seem to have had the fable story in mind when he composed his tale. The nature of the differences between the two versions of the same story is revealing. The fabliau's author has exploited the comic possibilities of the original tale. He develops the rivalry between the animals for comic effect instead of moral effect, and consequently omits the moral of the fable. Instead of merely thinking in general terms about the hard work he does,¹⁹ the ass describes his hardships in comic detail. The author of the fabliau changes the lap-dog into a guard-dog, and exploits the comedy in the situation of the animal who suffers both when doing his duty and for a crime he did not commit. The scene of the encounter with the human members of the household is the occasion for high farce in the fabliau, instead of a mere necessity on which the action pivots. This fabliau amounts to a comic version of the fable as found in the Isopets.

It is not possible to state whether the model for our fabliau was an oral version of the fable, derived from an early Romulus, or one of our preserved written versions of it. The XIIIth-century date of the manuscript containing the fabliau precludes all the Isopet versions except for three,²⁰ none of which could directly have suggested the mealtime scene in the fabliau, whereas two later versions²¹ specify that the master was at table when the ass performed his tricks. Of these two, only one contains the detail of the ass thinking about his hard work²² which might have inspired the fabliau's development of the scene - but its late date in any case precludes it as a precursor of the fabliau. Neither of the Latin versions which inspired the Isopets contains the detail of the table, and of these, only De Catulo et Asello²³ in Walter the Englishman's recension of the Romulus has the ass reflecting on his hard work. Perhaps our author used several versions of the tale in his adaptation, or simply a large helping of his own imagination.

It is possible to draw similar parallels between our second animal fabliau and the fables of the Isopets. The 'story' of Dou lou et de l'oue²⁴ is as follows:

A hungry wolf leaves the forest to seek food, and comes upon a herd of geese. He catches one who has strayed away from the others and carries her off, but the goose bemoans her fate to him, complaining that her friends will all be eaten roasted in the magnificent setting of a feast and amid the sound of music, while she will be eaten ignominiously. The wolf is touched

and begins to sing in a raucous voice. The goose, freed from the wolf's jaws, flies off to the safety of a nearby tree. The wolf, furious at his mistake, swears never to sing before eating again, and returns to the flock to seize a goose which he eats forthwith.

Moral: Only peasants believe that nothing should be undertaken on an empty stomach.

Clearly in this fabliau we are dealing with a tale related to a number of others, as Foulon observes.²⁵ Its closest relative among the fables is Marie de France's *De vulpe et gallo*,²⁶ where a cock, captured by a fox's ruse, persuades his captor to answer the shouts of his pursuers. As the fox opens his mouth to do so, the cock escapes into a nearby apple-tree. This tale is repeated as an episode in the *Roman de Renart*, where the fox becomes Renard, and the cock becomes Chantecler.²⁷ Also related is a second Renart episode,²⁸ which tells a variation of the tale of the *Fox and the Crow*, a fable of Phaedrus found in the *Isopets*.²⁹ The story is as follows:

A crow is sitting on a branch, holding a piece of cheese (*Isopets*: in its beak; Renart: with its foot). A fox decides to win the cheese, and flatters the bird, telling him he has a wonderful voice. The crow opens his beak to sing (*Isopets*: and drops the cheese; Renart: and raises the foot which is holding the cheese, so letting it drop).

Moral: (*Isopets* only): Pride comes before a fall.

Other related fables are mentioned by Foulon,³⁰ who however discounts the possibility of their influence upon *Dou lou et de l'oue*. As he points out, 'le thème de l'oiseau pris par la bête fauve, qui trouve un moyen d'échapper à l'emprise en usant d'un stratagème' (p.56), was a common one in the Middle Ages. The inspiration for *Dou lou et de l'oue*, however, can be traced more precisely.

It seems clear that this fabliau's direct antecedent is either Marie de France's fable or the similar episode in the *Roman de Renart*. Its author probably knew both: 'Nous savons que Bodel connaît Renart, et qu'il aime les fables', notes Foulon (p.58). But the retention by *Dou lou et de l'oue* of a moral, albeit a mock-moral,³¹ which the Renart version does not have, tips the balance in favour of Marie.³² The detail of the wolf singing instead of simply answering his pursuers was probably inspired by the fox's trick in the Renart or *Isopet* version of the *Fox and the Crow*. Even the idea of a normally predatory wolf being capable of pity may have come from the *Isopet* fable of the *Ass and the Wolf*.³³

The only problem seems to be why Bodel changed his characters from fox and cock to wolf and goose.³⁴ Perhaps, by changing minor details which did not affect the heart of the fable, he simply wanted to differentiate his fabliau a little more from its sources - which, of course, his audiences might have known.

Just like *De l'Asne et du Chien*, our fabliau was inspired by earlier animal tales, probably fables. For that tale, it was a comparison of the author's exploitation of the crux in each version of the story which explained the essential differences between fable and fabliau. Similarly, it is an analysis of the difference between the tricks of the fabliau's goose and the fable's cock which provides the most illuminating information on the distinction between the two versions discussed here.

It is on the trick that both tales depend - the fable draws its moral from the duping of the fox, and the fabliau draws its humour from the duping of the wolf. In both cases, the potential for comedy was present, but only in the fabliau was it exploited.

What is it, then, which distinguishes the fabliau's version of the basic story from that in the fable? Precisely, this element of comedy. The fable underplays the humour in the trick in order to draw a moral conclusion; the fabliau stresses it and frees it from the seriousness of the moral, adding instead a mock-moral. Essentially, it is the same trick, but exploited for different ends. Again, we see that the distinction between fable and fabliau versions of a tale lies in the latter's comic content.

This analysis, incidentally, draws interesting parallels between the fabliau and the Renart versions of the tale - both exploit the comedy inherent in it, but only the fabliau adds a mock-moral. But this is beyond the scope of the present study.³⁵

Our conclusion with respect to *De l'Asne et du Chien* and *Dou lou et de l'oue*, then, is that both are different from fable-versions of the same tale, and that the element by which they differ is that of comedy.³⁶ Since comedy is characteristic of a majority of other attested fabliaux,³⁷ it seems probable that the authors of these animal tales deliberately called their compositions 'fabliaux' on analogy with these other tales. We would therefore be justified in accepting their classification of the tales as fabliaux. Certainly, these two tales remain in a minority, but we have scant justification for contradicting the scribes who called them 'fabliaux' in the manuscripts.

Exactly the same process - of a 'remanieur' exploiting a fable's latent comedy - is seen in the case of those non-animal tales found both in

the Isopets and as fabliaux. Let us deal first with those fabliaux related to Marie's Isopet.

Marie's De vidua ³⁸ - found also in other Isopets ³⁹ - is essentially the same tale as the fabliau De celle qui se fist foutre sur la fosse de son mari. ⁴⁰ De rustico et nano ⁴¹ is related to those tales dealing with mis-used wishes, Le Couvoiteus et l'Envieus, ⁴² Les Souhaits ⁴³ and Les Quatre Souhaits Saint Martin. ⁴⁴ De homine et uxore litigiosa ⁴⁵ is the same story as Dame Jovenne ⁴⁶ and the third section of Do pré tondu. ⁴⁷ A more general relationship is seen between De muliere et proco eius ⁴⁸ and Iterum de muliere et proco eius ⁴⁹ and the common fabliau-theme of the wife who dupes her husband. Similarly, De uxore mala et marite eius ⁵⁰ is a distant relative of De la dame escolliée. ⁵¹

In all cases, the fabliau developments stress the latent comedy in the original tales. Thompson notes, ⁵² in her comparison of certain of Marie's tales with the fabliaux, that fundamental differences of attitude and technique, such as Marie's refusal to exploit comic possibilities or animate her tales with dialogue, bar the tales from consideration as fabliaux. Iterum de muliere et proco eius she considers an exception and a true fabliau, but this seems unlikely; not only does the tale not stress its latent humour, but the inclusion of a comic tale in a serious collection of moral tales such as Marie's Isopet would have been wholly out of place. Nykrog considers De vidua, De muliere et proco eius, Iterum de muliere et proco eius, De rustico et nano, De homine et uxore litigiosa and De uxore mala et marito eius ⁵³ to be early fabliaux by virtue of their thematic similarities to other fabliaux; but he fails to appreciate the differences of approach and intention which we have noticed here. 'La seule différence entre ces fables de Marie de France et les fabliaux correspondants', for Nykrog, 'est que la fable est beaucoup moins longue qu'un fabliau, et que par conséquent le récit en est plus sommaire et dépourvu de détails' (op.cit., p.251).

We have already suggested that Jean Bodel probably found the idea for Dou lou et de l'oue in an Isopet; Le Couvoiteus et l'Envieus provides a second example of a tale which he most likely found in one of these medieval fable-collections. ⁵⁴ It is a parallel version of Avianus' fable De duobus Mimis et Jove, ⁵⁵ which appears in the Avionnet attached to Isopet I de Paris as De deus menestriers, l'un couvoiteus et l'autre envieus. ⁵⁶

Where the Avionnet tells the brief outline of the story in forty lines, Bodel's fabliau fills eighty-six lines. The expansion is brought about primarily by Bodel's addition of dialogue: this has the effect of rendering the scene more vivid, and of developing the bitter rivalry between the two men into a comic opposition of characters. Bodel omits the serious moral of the

fable (which would rob it of any humour it may have) and replaces it by the gleefully wicked observation, 'Il furent de male despoise' (l.86). The only other alterations he makes to the tale render it more acceptable to a late twelfth-century audience: he changes the supernatural bestower of wishes from Jupiter's son Phebus to St. Martin, and he changes the two companions from minstrels to men 'qui menoient mauvaise vie' - obviously he did not want his audience to think that a minstrel, like himself, could be either covetous or envious!

Finally, De celle qui se fist foutre sur la fosse de son mari has, as we observed, a parallel in the Isopets.³⁹ Regrettably, the only French version besides Marie's is incomplete, but Walter the Englishman's Latin version permits us to see that the anonymous fabliau exploits the latent comedy of the tale.

It is clear, then, that the difference between fabliau and fable versions of a single tale is dependent upon the former's exploitation of comic potential, be the tale's protagonists human beings or animals, and we will bear this in mind when dealing with our remaining three attestations of animal tales as fabliaux. All three are, in fact, dubious attestations, since they depend on suspect manuscript readings or on readings which are contradicted by other manuscripts. The earliest of them is the attestation of Marie de France's De lupo et ariete as a 'flabel' in an early XIVth century manuscript of her Isopet.⁵⁷

This attestation is contained in a passage which we may assume, as does Nykrog (p.9), to be interpolated, since it is not found in any other manuscript version of De lupo et ariete. The tale concerns a wolf's promise not to eat meat, and his equivocal justification of the breaking of this promise. It is quite in the mould of the typical fable, and contains none of the humour found in the already-discussed fable-related fabliaux. Likewise, the tale occurs in the midst of a collection of fables. These pieces of evidence, together with the fact that the reading 'flabel' of MS. B.N. 19152 is both unique and in an interpolated passage, militates against our acceptance of the MS. attestation as trustworthy. Perhaps the scribe, if it was indeed he who was ultimately responsible for the interpolation, was influenced consciously or unconsciously by the other tales in his manuscript collection, for MS. 19152 is one of our richest collections of fabliaux.

The other two attestations are found in certain manuscripts of the Isopet I - Avionnet, the first being of De l'Asne qui salva le Sangler, and the second of De Renart et de l'Aigle. The story of De l'Asne qui salva le Sangler is as follows:

An ass meets a boar and greets him familiarly. The boar is tempted to attack him for this insulting familiarity, but his noble nature prevents him from injuring the humble ass.

Moral: The wise man should not grow angry if the fool is disrespectful, but should take his foolishness into account. One should never cross those who are not one's equals.

As this brief analysis shows, the tale is a straightforward animal fable, without any of the humour which distinguishes the animal fabliaux from their fable equivalents. Similarly, the fact that the tale occurs in an *Isopet* collection of fables hinders our acceptance of the classification 'fabliaux'.

De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler is preserved in all six manuscripts of the *Isopet* I - Avionnet; four of these six versions of the tale call it a 'fablel' in line 13, and it is for this reason that the tale concerns us here. The remaining two MSS. read 'flabe' and 'fable' respectively. The tale is not found in the *Isopet* de Chartres or in *Isopet* II de Paris, and in the *Isopet* de Lyon version, it is not designated by any specific generic title. The version in *Isopet* III de Paris, a collection copied, according to Bastin, 58 from the *Isopet* I - Avionnet, bears the attestation 'fable' in its two-line verse moral.

Although an analysis of this evidence (see Table, footnote 59) provides us with a greater number of manuscript attestations of *De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler* as a fabliau than as a fable, and suggests that later copies showed a greater tendency to correct to 'fable', 60 it is important to note that such statistical evidence cannot be conclusive in itself because of the possibility of lost manuscripts. It is worth retaining the information, however, that some scribes did 'correct' the manuscript readings. Clearly they were not happy with the attestation 'fablel'.

In fact, as our 'corrective' scribes doubtless noticed, all four versions of the tale attesting it as a 'fablel' also call it a 'fable' a few lines later in line 22. 61 This dual attestation further weakens the force of the 'fablel' attestations; if the tale conforms to the characteristics of other fables, and is called a 'fable' in every manuscript except one (the *Isopet* de Lyon provides no generic attestation at all), then surely those manuscripts which also call it a 'fabliau' must be in error. The fact that they are all related copies of the same *Isopet*, the *Isopet* I - Avionnet, helps to explain the number of erroneous attestations. It would seem probable that a single error in an earlier archetype (not preserved) brought about the erroneous attestations of *De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler* in the *Isopet* I - Avionnet manuscripts as a 'fablel'. A scribe needed only to make a single ortho-

graphical error - 'flabe' (< 'fable') with a single error becoming the 'flabel' of MSS. B, L, b and c - to set off a whole chain of erroneous attestations which may mislead the modern scholar.

De Renart et de l'Aigle provides us with a similar case. In this tale,

an eagle steals a cub from a fox and carries it off to its nest. The fox lights a fire beneath the nest, and the smoke from the fire causes the eagle to fear for its own young. It sets the fox-cub free.

Moral: The strong can hurt the weak, and the weak can hurt the strong.

We are dealing once again with a typical fable, with none of the special characteristics of the animal fabliaux. Once again, the tale is found in an Isopet fable-collection, which makes its classification in the fabliau-genre doubtful.

MSS. B, P and L of the Isopet I - Avionnet, however, concur with the attestation 'flaviau' in line 25; MSS. b and c support this attestation with 'fabel' and 'flabel' respectively, and only MS. a of the six Isopet I - Avionnet MSS. reads 'fable'. The tale is not found in Isopet III de Paris or in the Isopet de Lyon. In the Isopet de Chartres, it is called an 'essample' in the text (l. 19), while the rubric above the moral supports the attestation 'fable' with the words, 'La sentence de la fable'; in Isopet III de Paris, the attestation of the Isopet I - Avionnet is amended to 'fable'.

Once again, the attestation 'fabliau' is more frequent than that of 'fable' in our MSS. (see Table, note 59), and once again, the later MSS. show a greater tendency to correct to 'fable'.⁶² As already pointed out, statistical evidence of this kind is untrustworthy, but it does serve to underline a scribal dissatisfaction with the attestation 'fabliau' which seems to grow greater as we get further away from the (hypothetical) archetype MS. This dissatisfaction, together with the evidence of the tale's characteristics and its setting within the Isopet fable-collection, is sufficient for us to reject the attestation 'fabliau' as erroneous: De Renart et de l'Aigle is a fable.

* * * * *

The difference between fable and fabliau versions of a common story lies in the latter's free development of the story for comic effect. Besides the number of tales concerning human protagonists commonly considered as

fabliaux which exhibit this relationship to their fable-equivalents, there are two animal tales which freely exploit the humour latent in fable versions of the same story. These animal tales, De l'Asne et du Chien and Dou lou et de l'oue, are actually called 'fabliaux' by their authors, and in view of these two important pieces of evidence, we cannot follow the lead of those scholars who exclude the tales from their catalogues of the fabliau genre. De l'Asne et du Chien and Dou lou et de l'oue are both fabliaux - albeit of a minority type. They should not, however, be confused with a small group of animal fables found in the Isopets, the attestation of which as 'fabliaux' is most probably mistaken.

The foregoing analysis, moreover, accords with Jodogne's conclusions concerning the relationship of lai and fabliau (op.cit., pp.1043-1045) in that the fabliau again appears as the comic form of a serious genre, and adds weight to the theory that the fabliau as a genre derives from the fable.⁶³ When seeking inspiration for a fabliau, an author would not hesitate to use the same basic story as did a fable, and he would not necessarily choose a tale involving human characters in preference to one involving animals.

JAMES L. TAYLOR
UNIVERSITY OF READING

FOOTNOTES

1. Bédier, J., Les Fabliaux, Paris, 1893: 'Les fabliaux sont des contes à rire en vers' (p.30).
2. Nykrog, P., Les Fabliaux, Copenhagen, 1957: 'La définition ici employée sera la même, ou presque, que celle de Bédier' (p.14). Cf. also pp.14-16.
3. Jodogne, O., Considérations sur le fabliau, in Mélanges offerts à René Crozet, Vol.II, pp.1043-1055, Poitiers, 1966. The fabliau is, 'Un conte en vers où, sur un ton trivial, sont narrées une ou plusieurs anecdotes plaisantes ou exemplaires, l'un et l'autre ou l'un ou l'autre' (p.1055).
4. Thompson, N.J., The Old French Fabliau: A Classification and Definition, dissertation submitted to the University of Southern California, 1972. The fabliau is, 'A short verse narrative of diverse origins, undetermined structure, and varied style and content which takes an exaggerated and often parodic, an unsympathetic, yet always humorous, glance at human foibles and the trivialities of the human condition without seeking to either amend or satirise them' (p.326).
5. Cf. Bédier, op.cit., pp.393-398; Nykrog, op.cit., pp.311-324. Jodogne's catalogue is implied by those tales which he includes in his analysis; it is based on Nykrog's. Thompson uses the Montaiglon-Raynaud corpus of tales as her catalogue.
6. Fox, J., The Fabliaux, ch.8, section II of A Literary History of France. The Middle Ages, London and New York, 1974. Of the fabliaux, Fox writes, 'Most are concerned, not with animals, but with people' (p.227).
7. de Montaiglon, A. et Raynaud, G., Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIIIe et XIVe siècles, 6 vols., Paris, 1872-1890.
8. Montaiglon et Raynaud, op.cit., Avant-Propos, Vol.I, p.vii. Montaiglon limits the fabliau to a tale 'qui se passe dans les données de la vie humaine moyenne' (my italics).
9. Jodogne, op.cit., p.1048. Referring to Nykrog's unwarranted rejection of the Trubert as a fabliau, Jodogne comments: 'Que ce fabliau ne ressemble pas à un autre, peut-être, mais déclarer qu'il n'est pas un fabliau, c'est de l'outrecuidance, c'est affirmer qu'on en sait davantage sur le genre que Douin de Lavesne'. Douin de Lavesne, author of Trubert, actually called his tale a 'fabliau'. Cf. also Rychner, J., in La littérature narrative d'imagination. Des

.....

9. cont'd.

- genres littéraires aux techniques d'expression, Paris, 1961, p.45, who complains of a similar presumptuous declaration by Nykrog: 'M. Nykrog se donne donc l'air de savoir mieux ce qu'est un fabliau que l'auteur de La pleine bourse de sens'.
10. Cf. Nykrog, op.cit., pp.9-11. On p.9, Nykrog notes only four of the five animal tales which are called 'fabliaux' by their authors. Cf. also Johnston, R.C. and Owen, D.D.R. Fabliaux, Oxford, 1965, v and n.4.
11. Cf. Reid, T.B.W., Twelve Fabliaux from MS. F.fr.19152 of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Manchester, 1958, pp.ix-x; Nykrog, op.cit., pp.9-11; Fox, op.cit., p.227; Thompson, op.cit., p.207; Johnston and Owen, op.cit., xvi; etc. Cf. also my subsequent remarks concerning Foulon and Nardin in n.15.
12. Nykrog, op.cit., p.9.
13. Barbazan, Fabliaux et Contes des Poètes français des XI, XII, XIII, XIV and XVe siècles, tirés des meilleurs auteurs. Nouvelle édition, augmentée et revue par M. Méon, Vol.III, Paris, 1808, pp.55-60. [= Barbazan-Méon.]
14. Cil qui trova del Morteruel
Et d'el mort vilain de Bailluel
.....
Et du Leu que l'oue degut
.....
D'un autre fabel s'entremet.
(Jean Bodel, Des .II. chevaus; Montaiglon et Raynaud, op.cit., Vol.I, p.153, ll.1-2/10/14.)
On the significance of this passage, see Nykrog, op.cit., pp.9, 268-269.
15. Foulon, C., L'Oeuvre de Jehan Bodel, Paris, 1958: 'le "loup et l'oie" est une fable' (p.40).
Nardin, P., Les Fabliaux de Jean Bodel, Dakar, 1959: 'Il s'agit en réalité de huit fabliaux et d'une fable ...' (p.9).
16. Bastin, J., Recueil général des Isopets, 2 vols., Paris, 1929-30. De l'Asne qui salva le Sangler: Vol.II, pp.104, 218, 391. De Renart et de l'Aigle: Vol.I, p.140; Vol.II, pp.222, 393.
17. Warnke, K., Die Fabeln der Marie de France, Halle, 1898; no.50, pp.171, 336. Cf. also Nykrog, op.cit., p.9.
18. Bastin, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.6, 40, 121; Vol.II, pp.19, 112, 229, 396. Warnke, op.cit., p.53.

19. The ass only thinks about his own hard work in four of the eight versions of the fable: cf. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.40 (ll.13-14); Vol.II, pp.19 (ll.7-8), 112 (ll.13-14), 396.
20. *De asino adulate*, by Marie de France. Warnke, *op.cit.*, p.53. Written in the late XIIIth century.
Dou servise dou Chien et de l'Asne a leur seigneur, from the *Isopet de Chartres*. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.121. Late XIIIth century MS.
Dou Chien et de l'Asne, from the *Isopet de Lyon*. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.112. XIIIth century MS.
 Naturally, the more precise dating of the fabliau MS., together with those of the Lyon and Chartres *Isopets*, may affect the issue.
21. *De l'Asne et du Chien*, from the *Isopet I - Avionnet*. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.229. Preserved in MSS. of the XIVth and XVth centuries.
De l'Asne et du Chien qui veullent complaire a leur Maistre, from *Isopet III de Paris*. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.396. XVth century MS.
 Of course, these two versions of the tale may be derived from earlier MSS. which have not come down to us, and which might have been direct ancestors of our fabliau.
22. *De l'Asne et du Chien qui veullent complaire a leur Maistre*. Cf. n.19.
23. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, p.19.
24. Barbazan-Méon, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, pp.53-55.
25. Foulon, *op.cit.*, p.56.
26. Warnke, *op.cit.*, p.198. Curiously, Foulon (*op.cit.*) makes no mention of this very obvious relative of *Dou lou et de l'oue*.
27. Cf. *Le Roman de Renart*, ed. Mario Roques, 6 vols., Paris, 1948-1963 (in progress). Vol.II, Branche IIIa, ll.4343-4438.
28. Cf. Roques, *op.cit.*, Vol.III, Branche VII, ll.5605-5645.
29. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.19, 83, 146; Vol.II, pp.18, 110, 225, 394. Marie de France does not have a version among the fables of her *Isopet*.
30. Foulon, *op.cit.*, pp.57-59.
31. Foulon, *op.cit.*, pp.140-141, is at some pains to extract a meaning from the moral. In fact, the moral is inverted: by suggesting that only peasants eat before doing anything, it mocks the wolf's solution - eat before singing - which is actually satisfactory. Obviously, Bodel intended it as a mock-moral.

32. It is worth noting, however, that Bodel invariably ends his fabliaux neatly with one kind of authorial comment or another: of his nine fabliaux, seven have mock-morals, *Li sohaiz desvez* closes with details of the tale's provenance, and *Des .II. chevaus* requests the audience's judgement on the problem. Not one of Bodel's fabliaux ends at the same point as its own story. This habit of Bodel's might have prompted him to add the mock-moral (which, of course, adds to the comedy) to a tale which he had found in the *Roman de Renart*.
33. Cf. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, pp.16, 70, 138.
34. On the substitution of a wolf in the tale of the Fox and the Cock, see Dargan, E.P., *Cock and Fox. A Critical Study of the History and Sources of the Mediaeval Fable*, in *Modern Philology* 4 (1906-1907), pp.38-65, *passim*. He also deals very briefly with the position of *Dou lou et de l'oue* in the history of the Fox and the Cock (p.60, no.6). See also Pratt, R.A., *Three Old French Sources of the Nonnes Preestes Tale*, in *Speculum* 47 (1972), p.422.
35. For further information on the Renart - fabliaux relationship, see Raynaud, G., *Une nouvelle version du fabliau de la nonnette*, in *Romania*, XXXIV (1905), pp.279-283; Jauss, H.R., *Untersuchungen zur mittelalterlichen Tierdichtung*, Tübingen, 1959, p.116.
36. Cf. Reid, *op.cit.*, p.x: 'It would appear that isolated poems composed in general imitation of the fable (though sometimes developing one of its basic elements to the exclusion of the other) were modestly called by the diminutive form of the name to distinguish them from the authentic fables of the traditional collections'. Reid, however, implies that these imitations of the 'fables' preceded those tales generally considered to be fabliaux; while *Dou lou et de l'oue* is certainly among the earliest fabliaux we possess, there is no reason to assume that *De l'Asne et du Chien* is likewise an early tale.
37. Of 90 texts attested as fabliaux (2 attested texts of a fragmentary nature, too short to permit analysis, are excepted here), either internally or by a reference in another text, 76 are comic. This gives a figure of 85% for comic attested fabliaux. Were we to ignore Jodogne's caution (see note 9) and take into account the fact that all of the 14 non-comic texts fit quite unobtrusively into other genres, such as the 'dit', the allegorical dream, etc., and may therefore be mis-attested as fabliaux, the figure is wholly conclusive: 100%.
38. Warnke, *op.cit.*, p.85.
39. Cf. Bastin, *op.cit.*, Vol.II, pp.60 (Walter the Englishman's *Romulus*) and 167 (incomplete version from the *Isopet de Lyon*).

40. No.18 in Nykrog's catalogue. Not attested as fabliau.
41. Warnke, op.cit., p.191.
42. No.41 in Nykrog's catalogue. Attested as a fabliau.
43. No.135 in Nykrog's catalogue. Not attested as a fabliau.
44. No.136 in Nykrog's catalogue. Attested as a fabliau.
45. Warnke, op.cit., p.304.
46. No.45 in Nykrog's catalogue. Not attested as a fabliau.
47. No.103 in Nykrog's catalogue. Attested as a fabliau.
48. Warnke, op.cit., p.145.
49. ibid., p.148.
50. ibid., p.307.
51. No.44 in Nykrog's catalogue. Attested as a fabliau.
52. Thompson, op.cit., in ch.1, section 1, segment on the Fable.
53. Cf. nos. 39, 68, 79, 94, 157, 158 in Nykrog's catalogue.
54. Foulon, op.cit., p.60, is rather vague about Bodel's sources. He does observe, however: 'Il semble donc bien que Bodel l'ait puisée à un fonds commun, qui n'est pas sans analogie avec ces fables latines où il avait pris son sujet du Loup et de l'Oie'. Foulon clearly perceived the connection, even if he failed to explain it satisfactorily. Nardin fails to see any significant difference between the Avionnet fable and Bodel's tale; he describes the latter (op.cit., p.9) as a 'récit purement moral'.
55. Bastin, op.cit., Vol.II, p.77.
56. ibid., Vol.II, p.370.
57. MS. 19152 of the Bibliothèque Nationale. See Faral, E. Le manuscrit 19152 du fonds français de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1934. Cf. also Nykrog, op.cit., pp.9-10.
58. Bastin, op.cit., Vol.II, p.xxxx.

59. Table of Attestations:

	<u>Isopet I - Avionnet</u>						<u>Isopet de</u> <u>Chartres</u> <u>Lyon</u>	
	B	P	L	a	b	c		
	XIVth c.	XIVth c.	XIVth c.	XVth c.	XVth c.	XVth c.	XIVth c.	
<u>Asne</u>	flabel	flabe	flabel	fable	flabel	flabel	-	No
	fable	fable	fable	fable	fable	fable		Attestation
<u>Renart</u>	flaviau	flaviau	flaviau	fable	fabel	flabel	essample fable	-

	<u>Isopet</u>	
	II	III
		XVth. c.
<u>Asne</u>	-	fable
<u>Renart</u>	-	fable

The MS. sigla used are those of Bastin.

The scribe of MS. a, corrects the attestation of both De l'Asne qui salua le Sangler and De Renart et de l'Aigle from 'fabliau' to 'fable', thus indicating a more careful or revisionary attitude to his work than the scribes of the other Isopet I - Avionnet MSS. Likewise, the author of Isopet III de Paris corrects both attestations to 'fable'. Unless we assume he based his version on MS. a, or on a lost MS. with similar readings, we must take these corrections into account when evaluating Bastin's caution that 'nous avons sous les yeux le devoir d'un écolier' (op.cit., Vol. II, p. xxx).

60. Of the three XIVth century MSS. with specific attestations (B, P and L), one (P) corrects to 'fable'. Of the four XVth century MSS. with specific attestations (a, b, c and Isopet III), two (a and Isopet III) correct to 'fable'. This gives a 'correction ratio' of one in three for the XIVth century MSS., and one in two for the XVth century MSS., although we cannot call this evidence convincing in view of the small number of MSS. involved. In this connection, it is worth noting Bastin's conclusions concerning the MSS. of Isopet I - Avionnet: 'le groupe abc, bien que de date postérieure, représente un état plus voisin de l'original que le groupe BPL' (op.cit., Vol. II, p. xxxii). The notion of scribal 'correction' may here be out of place.

READING MEDIEVAL STUDIES

61. 'Fable' here is taken to have its generic sense of 'a fable' rather than its non-specific meaning of 'a story'.
62. Of the four XIVth century MSS. with specific attestations (B, P, L and Isopet de Chartres), only the Isopet de Chartres corrects to 'fable'; in the four XVth century MSS. (a, b, c and Isopet III) with specific attestations, two - a and Isopet III - correct to 'fable'. This gives a 'correction ratio' of one in four for the XIVth century MSS., as opposed to one in two for the XVth century MSS. The small number of manuscripts involved make this evidence inconclusive in itself. For another view of this matter, see Bastin's comments quoted in n.60 above.
63. Cf. inter alia, Nykrog, op.cit., pp.248-252, and Johnston and Owen, op.cit., pp.xiii-xix.