

The Manuscript Context of Medieval French Cross-Dressing Literature

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I received a research bursary from the Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, which allowed me to take a two-week research trip to Paris, Brussels, and The Hague in June 2017. My thesis examines representations of cross-dressing in medieval literary culture and this research trip enabled me to gather more information for my chapter on the production and ownership of the manuscripts of cross-dressing texts. There were two main areas of focus for this trip: first, to explore the visual depiction of cross-dressing and second, to learn more about the manuscripts' production.

I consulted manuscripts at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague, and I am grateful for all the assistance provided by the library staff. I was able to examine twenty-one manuscripts of four texts: *La Légende dorée*, *Le Roman de Cassidorus*, *Le Roman du Comte d'Artois*, and *La Vie de Sainte Euphrosyne*. Many of these manuscripts are not digitised, are only partially available online, or are in black and white.

This research trip gave me an opportunity to consult these manuscripts and to complete comparative analyses of visual representations of cross-dressers. I was able to see how cross-dressing was portrayed visually both in different genres and in different versions of the same text, learning that the genre does not directly affect whether cross-dressing is depicted or obscured. Many of these manuscripts included marginal notes from those involved in the manuscript's production and from later readers. Several of the manuscripts included notes for the artist. These notes, most of which cannot be seen on photographs, were instructions describing the scene to be represented in the miniature. Such information allows

us to gain a better understanding of how these codices were produced and the working practices of specific booksellers.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Society for this research bursary. The information gathered during this trip will contribute significantly to my chapter on the manuscripts of cross-dressing literature and my increased corpus of manuscripts will allow me to discuss more conclusively how cross-dressing is depicted in manuscript illuminations.