



Concerning the Wicked Woman | De Muliere Mala

Text Information

Author | Petrus Pictor

Language | Latin

Period | 11th Century, 12th Century

Genre | Didactic poetry

Source | BnF MS lat. 16699 176v-77v

URL | <https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/text/pictor-wicked-woman/>

Introduction and translation by Astrid Khoo.

Introduction to the Text

Petrus Pictor, a canon (resident clergyman) at Saint-Omer in northern France, composed *De Muliere Mala* ('The Wicked Woman') in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. In his poem, Pictor first cites a litany of historical and biblical examples on the evil of womankind before detailing the fatal vengeance of a rebuffed mother-seducer who falsely accuses her own son of rape. *De Muliere Mala* thus participates in a long tradition of misogynistic Christian writing as embodied by Tertullian, a pioneering theologian from the second and third centuries AD, who interpreted Eve's fall from grace as a warning that women are 'the Devil's gateway' (*De Habitu Mulierum* 1.1). Nevertheless, it is far more than a mere moralising text, for its explicit treatment of incestuous lust looks to Classical models: Pictor accords a literary status to his verses by referencing ancient erotic writers such as Ovid (43BC-17/18AD) and Apuleius (c. 124-170 AD). The rhetoric of the poem is reinforced by its aggressive anaphoras (repeated phrases at the beginnings of certain lines) and pounding polysyndetons (lists of words linked only by conjunctions, typically 'and...and'), which simultaneously drive home the notion that all women are malicious and evoke the eponymous Wicked Woman's uncontrollable frenzy. Owing to these complex layers, this rarely-studied poem has the potential to please a diverse crowd. It is especially interesting to consider its portrayal of sexual aggression in the light of current debates on this topic, and to question its support of gender essentialism, that is, the notion that all women share the same malevolent characteristics. The poem is, moreover, an enjoyable read as it constitutes a thrilling psychological portrait on the extremities to which lust and pride can lead.

Introduction to the Source

The *De Muliere Mala* was first compiled in the *Liber Floridus*, an 1120 encyclopedia containing what Lambert, a later canon of Saint Omer, considered to be the most important knowledge in his possession. The 'autograph copy', written in Lambert's own hand, is currently stored in the Ghent University Library as MS 92. The manuscript includes other vernacular poems, for example a satire on money narrated by the personified *Denarius* ('Dollar'). The fact that Pictor's work was deliberately excerpted for inclusion in this collection, alongside more well-known texts such as Isidore's *Etymologiae*, indicates that contemporaries appreciated its literary and moral value. While there are no exact duplicates, dozens of partial copies survive, including the twelfth-century French manuscript upon which this edition is based. Their proliferation suggests that Petrus Pictor, and by extension the *De Muliere Mala*, were frequently read in medieval European monasteries.

About this Edition

The source used for transcription and translation is BnF MS lat. 16699 176v-77v, a twelfth-century miscellany containing both Christian poetry and saints' lives. The orthography, capitalisation and segmentation of the manuscript have been preserved in this edition, but abbreviations have been expanded. The transcription has been compared to that of Van Acker (see Further Reading), although his edition is primarily based on BnF MS lat. 13768. While the prose translation does not preserve the Latin rhymes, care has been taken to reproduce Petrus Pictor's rhythmic style and aggressive diction.



Further Reading

Carver, Robert H. F. "Apuleius in the High Middle Ages." *The Protean Ass: The Metamorphoses of Apuleius from Antiquity to the Renaissance*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 61-107.

- *Elaborates on how Pictor borrowed specific elements of his De Muliere Mala from Apuleius' descriptions of lustful women.*

Derolez, Albert. *The Making and Meaning of the Liber Floridus: A Study of the Original Manuscript, Ghent, University Library, MS 92*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.

- *A comprehensive introduction to the manuscript in which Pictor's poems were first transmitted.*

Muir Tyler, Elizabeth. "Reading through the Conquest." *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c. 1000-1150*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017, pp. 260-301.

- *Describes the link between Pictor's life experiences (e.g. his travels outside Flanders) and his poetic style, while also highlighting key contemporaries.*

Van Acker, Lieven, ed. *Petri Pictoris Carmina. Nec Non Petri de Sancto Audemaro Librum de Coloribus Faciendis. CCCM 25*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1972, pp. 103-116.

- *Most recent Latin edition of Pictor's complete works, including the De Muliere Mala.*

Wieser, Marie T. "Zu Petrus Pictors misogynem Carmen 14." *Wiener Studien*, vol. 115, 2002, pp. 315-20.

- *The best introduction to this text is in German. This article discusses the structure and misogynistic themes of the De Muliere Mala, and demonstrates that Pictor borrowed heavily from Roman declamation.*



Spacing: it makes sense, but numbers could be closer to the center of the page

May you, who seek to know the wicked tricks of Woman,
Read, learn, and keep in mind the the verses written below.
Indeed, if you wish to be happy, it is necessary that you read these words.
Here you will learn and see what you will dismiss and what you will remember.
5 Here lie open the caves of Scylla and Charybdis, along with a thousand Sirtes:
Here I describe whorish Circe and the all-consuming whale.
So that you will not fear these threats at sea, while you sail in a salutary ship,
You should love God, flee harlotry, and seek the port of chastity.
While I compose my verses, I twist and turn within my mind.
10 I can barely speak, write, and think:
How can I ever tell the entire truth about the savagery of women?
Nevertheless, although I cannot describe it all, as I wish to,
I shall speak a little – if the Muses come to my aid –
About that Scyllan beastliness that abounds in Woman.
15 The savagery of Woman exceeds that of all the beasts in the world;
It puts to shame the preying tiger and swift-footed lion.
On the one hand, the savagery of these creatures and the madness of all other beasts can be conquered,
As they learn to bear the yoke and tremble at men.
20 On the other hand, Woman alone is more ferocious than the fiercest beasts:
She is never appeased, and can in no way be tamed.
She does not yield to Man, nor favour him, nor obey him.
She cannot be led to the right path with beatings;
In fact, the more a wicked woman is harried by blows,
25 The greater fury she strives to exhibit.
Moreover, she does not cease becoming evil, but instead resists the spur.
Whoever considers the cases of Samson and Solomon,
And the many others brought to eternal rest by love of a woman,
Will learn, notice, criticise and marvel at
30 The real-life precursors of my ‘wicked woman’.



Nec nisi diuina ualet extinguere medicina.		is deservedly consumed by a wretched fire,
Haec hominem primum de celso trusit in imum,		which cannot be extinguished unless by some divine remedy.
Intulit et penam mundo, mortisque catenam.		It was Woman who first cast Man down from up high,
Sponsum, serpentem, uitam, genus, Omnipotentem,		bringing punishment and the chain of death to the world.
Prodidit, admisit, spreuit, uiciauit, omisit.	35	She betrayed her husband, welcomed the serpent, spurned life,
Et quis eam laudet? Quicquid male cogitat audet,		injured mankind, and lost the All-Powerful.
Et cupit expleri rem, qua rea possit haberi.		And who shall praise her? She dares to perform whatever evil she thinks up,
Nil fugit incestum, cupit omne quod est inhonestum,		and yearns to commit some act, so that she will be perceived as guilty.
Quicquid agit secum, fas siue nefas, putat equum.		She considers all her plans to be just, whether they be right or wrong.
Femina terrarum confusio, mors animarum,	40	Woman is the disorder of lands and the death of souls:
Ut mundo late resonet scelorum nouitate,		she is heard far and wide throughout the world due to the strangeness of her sins.
Nil dubium dubitat, nichil euitabile uitat,		She does not doubt that which is doubtful, nor avoid that which is avoidable,
Nil intemptatum sinit, it scelus omne patratum,		but leaves nothing untried, and commits every sin,
Ad causas quasque confundens fasque nefasque.		confusing right and wrong for her own purposes.
Quo magis obscenum scelus est, magis huic fit amenum,	45	The more obscene a crime is, the more pleasant it seems to her;
Quo magis horrendum, magis hoc putat esse colendum.		the more terrible a sin, the greater the glory she places upon it.
Imperium, sensum, uires, fastidia, censum,		She obtains power, weakens perception, diminishes strength,
Optinet, emollit, minuit, generat, male tollit.		creates annoyance, and exhausts wealth.
Femina tormentum iuuenum, mortis monimentum,		Indeed, Woman is a torment for young men and a reminder of death:
Mortem Samsoni dedit, interitum Salomoni.	50	she brought about Samson's demise and Solomon's end.
Femina priuauit pietatis robore Daud,		She also deprived David of the strength of his piety,
Quando per inuidiam iugulari fecit Uriam		when he ordered Uriah's murder out of lustful envy.
Coniuge pro pulchra multi subiere sepulcra.		Many have gone to their graves due to their beautiful wives.
Femina plena malis, faera, pessima, demonialis,		Woman is full of evils, wild, demonic, the worst of all creatures.
Priuauit uita Naboth, pro uitae cupita:	55	She took away Naboth's life to obtain his vineyard;
Causa necis subitae sunt res plerumque cupite.		she murders on sudden impulses, and especially out of greed.
Femina mors mundi, mala femina fabula mundi.		Indeed, Woman is the death of the world, and a wicked woman is its scandal.
Exicium, reges, insontes, federa, leges,		She brings destruction, murders kings, slaughters innocents,
Attulit, orbauit, strauit, soluit, uiolauit.		unbinds treaties, and violates laws.



Fabula Grecorum de libris promit eorum	60	The books of the Greeks tell of
Quomodo regina Cretensis, lege ferina,		How the Cretan queen, following the customs of beasts,
Carnis ob ardorem nimium, mentisque furorem,		Driven by mental madness and an excess of carnal lust,
Taurum decipit niueum, coituque recepit		Deceived a snow-white bull and copulated with him,
Et peperit natum, taurumque uirumque c[r]eatum:		Eventually giving birth to a son who was half man and half bull.
Turpi nempe nota res est, per secula nota.	65	This foul deed, which has been passed down through the centuries, is certainly infamous.
Quis non horrescat, quis non horrenda pauescat,		After all, who does not shrink in horror, and fear this repulsive act?
Dum contra legem nature, faemina regem,		That a woman, against the law of nature, should spurn a king
Regem formosum, prudentem, deliciosum		– And no mere king, but handsome, prudent, and pleasant –
Despiciat, atque fere succumbit plus muliere?		Only to have sex with a wild beast!
Femina, res fragilis, precio conducta monilis	70	Woman, a fragile creature, bribed with the price of a necklace,
In populo Danaum, male prodidit Amphiarum.		Betrayed Amphiarus to the Greek people.
Sic quoque priuignum uita non funere dignum,		Thus also did Phaedra betray Hippolytus, whom she desired unjustly,
Usque renitentem patriumque cubile uerentem,		And who was worthy of life and not of death,
Prodidit Ypolitum, contra ius Phedra cupitum.		All because he showed reverence for his father's bed by resisting her advances.
Naso suis libris inscribit quomodo Biblis	75	Similarly, Naso writes in his books about how Biblis
Igne sit illicito male saucia fratre cupito.		Was badly burnt by an illicit flame while she lusted after her brother.
Fraude quidem mira Cynare coiit sua Myrra,		Deceived in an astounding manner, Cinyras slept with his daughter,
Inque loco [matris] concepit semine [patris].		Who, taking her mother's place, conceived by the seed of her father.
Scilla patri Niso, fatali crine reciso,		In the same vein, Scylla preferred you, Minos, to her father Nisus; having cut off that fatal lock of hair,
Pretulit externum regem, regnumque paternum,	80	She handed her father's kingdom over to you,
Moinos, concedit tibi, dum fieri tua credit,		As she believed that she would be yours.
Sed detestatus tam diri monstra reatus,		You avoid both Scylla and her crime, fearing them both.
Et scelus et Scillam metuens, fugis hoc fugis illam.		I shall tell of one woman out of many, who must remain infamous throughout the centuries,
De multis quandam referam per saecula notandam,		So that other women might tremble at her example and learn
Ut relique discant mulieres, atque tremiscant,	85	Not to seek foul sex which exceeds the bounds of nature.
Ne poscant supra naturam turpia stupra.		This woman would have had a son, blessed in face and figure,
Huic fuerat natus, uultu formaque beatus,		Had evil fate not gotten in the way and killed the poor youth:
Si non obstaret mala sors, miserumque necaret.		Yet that serpent, who, through a thousand songs,



Exornat uultum sua gratia, gloria cultum.		Your face is graceful and your dress does you honour.
De puero tali, tam pulchro, tam speciali	90	However, I would rejoice more greatly in such a boy – so beautiful and so special –
Multum gauderem, tibi si plus matre placerem,		If I brought you more pleasure than a mother does,
Aut plus quam natus faceres michi consociatus.		Or if you became more than my son, having joined yourself to me.
Visus formosus, ridens et luxuriosus		Your lovely face, smiling and luxuriant,
Et bene pressa foris labra, dulcis plena saporis,		And your lips, so suited to the shape of your mouth, full of sweet flavour –
Que te condecorant penitus, penitusque decorant,	95	All these wholly adorn you, indeed they do,
Me nimis incendunt, et me, si uis, tibi uendunt.		And set me exceedingly aflame: if you want me, you can have me.
Quapropter, fili, dum flore nites iuuenili,		Therefore, my son, while you are in the flower of your youth,
Dummodo pubescis, primoque calore rigescis,		While you go through puberty and harden with the first flush of passion,
Ne perdas florem tenerum, tantumque decorem.		Do not waste your tender prime and all this beauty.
Immo sit ad cunctas ueneres tua prona uoluntas:	100	Instead, incline yourself towards all forms of sexual pleasure,
Canis confaecta celer aduolat, ecce senecta.		For soon grey old age will come upon you.
Tecum non ludemus, sed tristia cuncta feremus.		I am not joking with you, but rather suffering great sorrow at this prospect.
Et quia tiro rudis nescis his ludere ludis		Moreover, since you are but a young initiate, and do not know how to play the games
Quos amat ipsa Venus et Amor persuadet amenus,		Which Venus herself loves and pleasant Love suggests,
Tantum consenti michi, tantum crede docenti:	105	Simply agree to my proposition and trust in my teaching.
Illos complebo tecum, iamiamque docebo.		I will explore these games with you, teaching you to play again and again.
Ergo meis pare uotis, michi consociare,		Hence, obey my wishes, join yourself to me:
Quicquid agis meum celabo, con[s]cia tecum."		As your accomplice, I shall keep secret all that you do with me."
Tandem turbatus materno famine natus,		Disturbed by his mother's speech, the son
Heret, miratur, stupet, et quid agat meditatur,	110	Was lost for words. Flabbergasted and shocked, he thought of what he should
Speque bona fortis lacrimis ita fatur abortis:		do in response.
"Cara parens, pietate carens, miranda fateris,		Eventually, he spoke thus, shedding wasted tears in good faith:
Criminibus mirabilibus nos perdere queris.		"Dear mother, you lack piety in speaking of such unusual matters:
Quod loqueris suadet Venus puer ipse Cupido		You seek to destroy us with these astounding crimes.
Quo regitur, quo dirigitur mala cuique libido.	115	What you said must have been inspired by Cupid himself, Venus' son,
Non ualeo, prohibente Deo, tibi consociari		Who controls and directs each person's wicked lust.
Coniugio, sed amore pio uolo castus amari.		I am not able to join myself to you in marriage, since God prohibits it;



145

She accused her son and brought dreadful charges against him,



175

6



200

And the deadly toxin of death-bringing plants,



Nec contradici debere fatentur amici,	205	And her friends persuade her not to refuse him,
Laeticiae plenas uotorum laxat habenas,		She will gladly give in to happiness
Menteque iocunda, sponso sit sponsa secula.		And transform herself into a worldly wife for her new husband
Quodque propinauit primo, quem perfida strauit,		Yet if he proves difficult, he will drink the same potion
Si sit uir durus, erit alter idem bibiturus.		That she served her first husband, whom she treacherously murdered.
Femina formosa nimis esset res preciosa,	210	A beautiful woman is precious beyond all description
Si male nil cuperet, si sponso fida maneret.		If she has no bad intentions and remains faithful to her husband,
Sed, quod abhorrendum nimis est cunctisque pudendum,		But it should be a source of horror and shame to all women
Vix habet ulla fidem, qua credi possit eidem.		That none of them can be trusted.
Que quo diligitur magis, hoc grauior reperitur,		The more a woman is loved, the more troublesome she becomes;
Quo magis ornatur, magis inde superba notatur.	215	Similarly, she grows all the more arrogant as a result of rich ornaments.
Nescit maiorem, nescit se ferre minorem,		As a result, she does not recognise her superior, nor does she fulfill her inferior role in an
Par* quoque iuncta pari, cupit impariter dominari.		appropriate manner.
Res optatiua nimis est, animeque nociua.		Although she is joined to an equal in marriage, she wants to take an unequal share of
Illius uultus, bene conditus, et bene cultus,		power.
Allicit, innectit iuuenes, sua sub iuga flectit	220	Woman is too desirable and thus harms the soul.
Apte ludendo, psallendo, uana loquendo.		Through her well-formed and well-groomed face,
Que dum spectari, dum se presentit amari,		She attracts and ensnares young men; she enslaves them
Querit maiorem membris augere decorem.		By playing games, performing music, and chatting about empty matters.
Tunc pingit uisum gratum, format bene risum,		When she perceives that she is being watched and admired,
Vestibus ornatur nitidis, gemmis honeratur,	225	She seeks to enhance her physical beauty:
Floribus innectit crines, et se bene pectit,		Consequently, she paints her face beautifully, sets her mouth into a smile,
Stricta succiungit se zona, basia fingit		Dresses herself in shining garments, and weighs herself down with jewels
Qualia uelle putat iuuenes, iuuenesque salutat,		She weaves flowers into her hair and arranges it in a becoming manner,
Fertque manu flores, et dulces cantat amores.		And also girds herself with a tightened belt. She performs the sort of kisses
Si uero nescit cantare, loquendo capescit	230	Which she expects will please young men, greets them warmly,
Cor auditoris, quod uulnere languet amoris,		Carries flowers in her hands, and sings about sweet romance.
Factaque uenalis, uenatio demonialis,		However, even if she cannot sing, she uses her speech
Prostat, ut incaestum querat de corpore questum.		To capture her listener's heart, which throbs with the wound of love.



Vt sua postposito uelit esse puella marito.		So that she might give herself to him behind her husband's back.
Sed male securus coniuncx de coniuge durus,	235	Nevertheless, her strict husband begins to feel insecure,
Quam sic prostantem, sic cernit ubique uagamtem,		As he sees her offering herself freely and wandering all about.
Arguit etatem teneram, puerae leuitatem,		On account of her young age and her youthful levity,
Inque domo, tenere flentem cogit residere,		He forces his tearful wife to stay at home.
Vallatamque seris, custodibus atque seueris,		He walls her in with lock and key and assigns her care to austere guards,
Non sinit exire thalamis, ludosque subire.	240	Forbidding her from leaving the marital home and entering into her usual games.
Quam quia custodit, non diligit ille sed odit,		However, because he guards her, he ceases to love her:
Odit et infestat, et ut hec sit adultera prestat.		Instead he hates her and attacks her, treating her as an adulteress.
Cui custos durus nequid aut obsistere murus,		In any case, nothing - not a strict guard, not walls,
Non iugis pena, sed nec sera, siue catena,		Not punishments, bars, or chains -
Quin faciat secum, si uult, colludere mechum.	245	Can stop her from taking on a lover:
O male seruatus thesaurus sic uiolatus,		O badly-preserved treasure, thus violated,
Qui dum seruatur, furem uocat ut rapiatur.		Which encourages a thief to steal it even while it is being guarded!
Atque quod obscenum nimis est, querens alienum,		What is more, it is extremely obscene that a wife, while seeking another man,
Sponsa suum prodit sponsum, contempnit et odit.		Should betray, despise, and hate her own husband.
Ergo monstrierae metuens, homo, dampna Chimere,	250	Therefore, reader, fearing the injuries of that monstrous Chimera,
Sis exemplorum memor hic tibi propositorum;		Keep the aforementioned examples in mind.
Nuptas matronas, ad plurima crimina pronas		Remember to avoid married women, who are given to many offences,
Donaque prebentes uiduas, in amore furentes,		As well as love-crazed widows offering gifts.
Necnon uirgineas uitare memento choreas,		Leave dancing maidens alone,
Illarum mammas teneras fugiens quasi flammis.	255	And flee their tender breasts as if they were made of flame.
Hostibus his ternis, ut prescriptum bene cernis,		These three types of foes – as the preceding verses indicate –
Incentiuorum crescunt fomenta malorum.		Incite and encourage the growth of many evils.
Has fuge serpentes uirus letale uomentes,		Avoid therefore these serpents who spit out fatal venom,
Has hostes uita, ne te fugiat tua uita.		And flee these enemies, lest you should lose your life.
Clastra tue mentis signato meis documentis,	260	Seal the gates of your mind with my examples,
Ne liget illecebris uariis te fraus muliebris.		So that you will not find yourself entangled by the various traps of female deceit.
Quem semel illa ligat, curis sine fine fatigat,		Once a woman has trapped a man, she will harass him with unending cares;



Voluit, et euoluit, soluit, ligat atque resolut,		Untwists them, unties them, ties them again, then once more unties them:
Vt male seducat miseros, et ad infera ducat.		She does all this in order to seduce wretched souls and lead them to Hell.
Quisquis ei cedit, nec ab eius amore recedit,	265	Therefore, whoever yields to Woman and does not give up his love
Tandem falletur, tandem laqueo capietur;		Will find himself deceived and caught in a noose.
Cuius amor, uisus, caro mollis, basia, risus,		The love, sight, soft flesh, kisses, smiles,
Alloquium, tactus, uariique libidinis actus,		Conversation, touch, lustful acts,
Vox etiam lena, laqueus sunt atque catena,		And whorish voice of Woman are all nooses, chains,
Et graue tormentum quorumlibet insipientum.	270	And heavy torments for the unwise.
Felix est supere quisquis ualet ista cauere,		He who can avoid these things is truly fortunate;
Quem non haec tangit contagio, non furor angit.		For madness does not disturb the man who remains uncontaminated by Woman.
Hic infelicem probo quisquis amat meretricem,		I say truly, whoever loves a whore is most unfortunate indeed;
Cuius amor dirus, tandem pungens quasi uirus,		For her love is fatal and stings like venom,
Sub specie mellis distillat pocula fellis,	275	And she prepares a cup of bitterness in the guise of honey.
Cuius amor nex est, caro uermis, gloria fex est,		Her love is a chain, her flesh is vermin, her glory comprises the dregs of the earth;
Verba, lenis uentus, fumus decor, umbra iuuentus.		Her words are a soft breeze, and yet her smokescreen of beauty is but the shadow of youth.
Iam calamo fesso, que sit mala femina cesso		My pen is exhausted; I shall now stop writing about the wicked Woman.
Scribere. Quod scripsi minus est quam congruit ipsi.		Nevertheless, what I have managed to set down falls far short of Woman's fair share of censure.
Si michi Nasonis, si detur lingua Catonis,	280	Even if I should receive the tongue of Ovid or that of Cato,
Claraque linguarum facundia magniloquarum,		And the famed skill of linguistic eloquence,
Non tamen exsoluo uerbis, scriptisque reuoluo,		I would not be able to outline in words or describe in my verses
Quam sit uersuta, quam perfida, quam sit acuta,		How wily, treacherous, keen,
Quam sit dampnosa mala femina, quamue dolosa.		Dangerous, and sneaky a wicked woman is.
Nesciat hoc nemo, quod carmine signo supremo:	285	Let no one be unaware of the following truth, with which I shall round off my poem:
Femina rara bona, sed que bona digna corona.		'Rarely is a woman good, but a good woman is worthy of a crown.'



Critical Notes

Translation

- Line 5** The Gulf of Sirte, infamous for its hazardous sandbanks, is located on the northern coast of Libya.
- Line 6** This is perhaps a reference to Jonah 1.17.
- Line 14** There are two Scyllas mentioned in the poem – the aquatic monster Scylla (*Hom. Od.*) and Scylla, princess of Megara. In this case, the term *feritatis* ('[of] beastliness') evokes the former rather than the latter.
- Line 16** 'Puts to shame' is an idiomatic translation of '*prestat*' and its dative object; more literally, 'The savagery of Woman exceeds that of the preying tiger and the swift-footed lion'.
- Line 18** As is expected with medieval manuscripts, the '*ae*' digraph is confused with the letter 'e' throughout. I have preserved the [mis]spellings of the manuscript. In this case '*ae*' is used correctly, but often it is not (cf. line 78).
- Line 40** In the original Latin, this sentence is constructed using two asyndetic verses: 'Her husband, the serpent, life, mankind, and the All-Powerful / she betrayed, welcomed, spurned, injured, and lost'.
- Line 53** The original Latin is constructed in the same way as the note suggested on line 40.
- Line 57** This refers to 2 Samuel 11:5-27. David places Uriah at the front lines of a dangerous battle so as to eliminate him, as he was enamoured with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba.
- Line 60** This refers to 1 Kings 21:2-15. Jezebel has Naboth killed so that her husband, King Ahab, can have Naboth's vineyard.
- Line 64** The original Latin is constructed in the same way as the note suggested on line 40.
- Line 67** The aggressive *whore* refers to Salome.
- Line 70** The original Latin literally means 'at which I tremble'.
- Line 72** This refers to Pasiphaë.
- Line 82** This refers to Eriphyle, Amphiaras' wife, persuaded him to join a fatal raid. See Ps.-Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 3.8.2.
- Line 85** Cf., among others, Euripides' *Hippolytus*.
- Line 87** This refers to Ov. *Met.* 9.
- Line 89** BnF Ms. Lat. 16699, f. 176v reads: 'Inque loco patris concepit semine matris'. However this is illogical and likely the result of scribal error. My reading is supported by the critical edition, Van Acker, L. (ed.) (1972). *Petri Pictoris Carmina. Nec Non Petri de Sancto Audemaro Librum de Coloribus Faciendis*. CCCM 25. Turnhout (Brepols): 103-116, which is mainly derived from BnF Ms. Lat. 13768.
- Line 89** Ibid., 10.300ff. *Cinyras*' daughter was named Myrrha.
- Line 90** This is different from the note in line 14. In this case, this is Scylla, princess of Megara.
- Line 94** The abrupt shift to second-person from the original third-person omniscient viewpoint is noteworthy; in so doing, Petrus Pictor does not only address Minos, Scylla's love interest, but also involves the reader. He therefore rounds off his long invective against women, which has been building up in an increasingly emotional *crescendo*, by breaking the fourth wall. Moreover, lines 90 to 94 are especially noteworthy as they include a sliding scale of tenses—the ablative absolute (*recis* 'having cut off') gives way to the perfect indicative (*pretulit...credit*, 'preferred...believed'), and then to a perfect participle (*detestatus*,



'detesting'), which in turn yields to a present participle (*metuens*, 'fearing'), culminating finally in the present indicative (*fugis*, 'you avoid'). This gradual rise from the past into the present parallels the aforementioned shift in perspective, and underscores Petrus Pictor's message about the constant danger which women pose. He suggests that his warnings should not be dismissed as historical and biblical examples from the distant past, but as mere 'precursors' (line 29, *portenta*) to female wickedness in the reader's present life.

- Line 103 While present-tense verbs are used throughout the following narrative, I have translated it using past-tense verbs for two key reasons. Firstly, the historic present is commonly used for narratives involving a series of events, which applies to this case. Secondly, by translating the story of the wicked woman in the past tense, I distinguish it from the frame narrative which takes place in the author's present time.
- Line 112 Instead of 'indeed they do', the Latin (line 112) simply repeats the previous phrase with an inverted word order, which cannot be expressed in English: 'All these wholly adorn you, adorn you.'
- Line 144 '*Perdita tempora*', literally 'lost temples' (i.e. sides of forehead), is a metonymic construction, here used to mean 'wretched face'.
- Line 171 '*Incestus...aestus*' would typically be translated as 'impure heat', but due to the specific context in which this phrase is uttered—an accusation of incest—I have chosen the adjective 'incestuous'.
- Line 195 It is tempting to translate '*pietatem*' as 'your piety', but '*pietas*' really means '*miser cordia*' ('mercy') in this case.
- Line 199 This is more literally expressed as 'her broken modesty', or 'her damaged modesty'.
- Line 220 The original Latin is constructed in the same way as the note suggested on line 40.
- Line 225 '*Nec modo mater*' literally means 'and not only a mother' or even 'no mere mother', but these translations do not convey Pictor's negative tone.
- Line 228 In Classical Latin, '*draco*' denotes a large snake; in Medieval Latin it may well mean 'dragon'. However, as Petrus Pictor has utilised snake metaphors throughout to describe women—which corresponds to Biblical imagery—I would rather err on the safe side and translate '*draco*' as 'serpent'.
- Line 235 Petrus Pictor utilises the present tense throughout; nevertheless, I have employed the future tense to preserve the emphasis on cause-and-effect in this passage, the cause being the punishment (stick, scolding) and the effect being murder (by poisoning).
- Line 237 This sentence might seem incongruous with the following one, which describes other sources of poison; therefore it is best to take achonita, 'monkshood', as an umbrella term for all poisons.
- Line 258 BnF Ms. Lat. 16699, f. 177v reads: '*Pars quoque vincta pari*', but this is illogical and should read 'par', which is the preferred reading of Van Acker (1972).
- Line 269 '*Fingere*' here translated as 'perform', has a dual meaning which is also applicable to these verses on the trickery which accompanies seduction: it can also mean 'to invent'.
- Line 275 The scribe glosses 'amator', 'lover', for 'lupiter'.
- Line 297 In Greek mythology, the Chimera is a fire-breathing hybrid creature. '*Monstrifera*' is more literally translated as 'monster-bringing' but the Chimera, which symbolises Woman, does not usher in other beasts: it is monstrous in itself.
- Line 300 This verse strongly echoes Verg. *Aen.* 2.49: '*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*' ('I fear the Greeks, even bearing gifts').
- Line 319 '*Laqueus*' can also mean 'trap' more generally.
- Line 331 This is the literal meaning of '*calamo fesso*', but Pictor of course does not refer to the inanimate pen, but to himself: 'I am exhausted'.