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The Dog in the Middle Ages

Luisa Barbano
Bard College

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The Dog in the Middle Ages



A Senior Project submitted to
the Division of Multidisciplinary Studies
of Bard College
by Luisa Barbano
December 2016

To Mom and Dad
(and Ishmael, the dachshund)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: 1-9

CHAPTER I: THE WILD DOG: 10-33

CHAPTER II: THE AUXILIARY DOG: 34-56

CHAPTER III: THE PET DOG: 57-78

CONCLUSION: 79-84

FIGURES: 85-91

BIBLIOGRAPHY: 92-97

APPENDIX A. - Translation: “*De canis*” (from *De Proprietatibus Rerum*): 98-99

APPENDIX B. - Translation: “*Les Dits du Bon Chien Souillard*”: 100-101

APPENDIX C. - Translation: “*Pitulus*”: 102

INTRODUCTION

*Noþyng is more busy and witty þan þe hound for he haþ more witte þan opere bestes. And houndes knoweþ here owene names. And loueþ here lordes and defendeþ þe houses here lordes; and putteþ hem wilfulliche in peril of deþ for here lordes; and renneþ to take pray wiþ here lordes; and forsakeþ nought þe dede body of here lordes.*¹

Nothing is more diligent and intelligent than the hound, for he has more intelligence than other beasts. And hounds know their own names. And love their lords; and defend the houses of their lords; and put themselves willfully in peril of death for their lords; and run to take prey with their lords; and do not forsake the dead body of their lords.

Thus begins the medieval encyclopedia entry titled “*De cane*.” This particular entry is excerpted from the fourteenth-century, Middle English translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, which is itself a thirteenth-century, Latin encyclopedia that was arguably the most influential of its kind in the Middle Ages.² This encyclopedia is just one of the numerous medieval bestiaries that attempted to catalog the natural world and in which the dog, “*canis*,” is a staple entry. In this incipient passage, author Bartholomaeus Anglicus consolidates years of encyclopedic and bestiary tradition to give us a standard introduction to the creature called “dog.” Anglicus immediately places the dog upon a pedestal, praising its diligence and intelligence, qualities which he then demonstrates by showing the extent of loyalty that the dog will show to its master. This entry contends that not only are dogs cognizant of the name given to them by their master, but that they love their master, work for and alongside their master, and even seem to be in some sort of pact with their master, ready to die for him and refusing to leave his body should he die—a reference to a common bestiary fable.³ Although the entry continues for some length (see Appendix A.),

¹ John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1164.

² D. C. Greetham, "The Concept of Nature in Bartholomaeus Anglicus (FL. 1230)," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 41, no. 4 (October 1980): <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2709279>.

³ See: Stephen A. Barney, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 253; Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-family Bestiary* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 145; Figure 1.

going on to include entries on female dogs and “whelps,” one thing already becomes clear simply from this excerpted passage: the worth of the dog is completely dependent on its relationship with a human master. In my project, I will be looking at the inextricable link between dogs and humans in the Middle Ages, and how dogs had their place among humans, forged relationships with humans, and had their own function in the human world.

In order to study the spaces that dogs occupied, the dogs’ relationships with humans, and the functions the dogs served, we have to be accepting of the fact that the definition of a dog in the Middle Ages was more nuanced than the bestiary tradition suggests at first glance. Although the cited encyclopedia entry claims to represent all dogs, the dogs of the Middle Ages can hardly be grouped into one uniform category. This project splits the identity of the dog into three categories in an attempt to answer the question of what a dog meant to humans in the Middle Ages. We can begin by asking: were all dogs treated similarly? Encyclopedias and bestiaries tended to have simply one view of the medieval dog, much the same as the one catalogued by Bartholomaeus Anglicus. Can “dog,” then, be cited in such a singular category as that which was copied throughout hundreds of encyclopedias and bestiaries, or do these texts seem to be describing one particular type of dog? For example, several particular sets of characteristics emerge for the type of dog listed in the bestiary. These characteristics, such as diligence and intelligence, can help us better understand the identity, value, and role of canines in the medieval period. However, these characteristics are values, as we shall see, that apply particularly to auxiliary dogs. Yet, the bestiary entry also emphasizes the love and emotion that the dog expresses, qualities that are also characteristic of pet dogs. In my project, I also consider the wild dog, or the wolf, which has its own bestiary entry altogether, despite its close connections to the domesticated dog. Rather than speaking of a single type of dog, then, the bestiary either combines various qualities that different

types of dogs possess, or alienates qualities, as in the case of the separated wolf. Throughout the bestiary, different types of dog have different balances and combinations of qualities and different expressions of these qualities. In their assortments of characteristics, the bestiary entries raise important topics, such as space, human connection, and societal role, all of which guide my enquiries.

In this project, I therefore divide the medieval dog into three categories: the wild dog, the auxiliary dog, and the pet dog. These categories are not defined by breed, although breeds are a traditional way of categorizing dogs. Instead, I have categorized dogs by their different inhabited spaces in the medieval world, the different relationships they had with the humans around them, and the resulting functions they performed in medieval society. Each chapter represents a different category of dog.

It should be said that over the last decade in particular, interest in scholarship on animals in the Middle Ages has greatly increased, and dogs have not been ignored in this trend. There has been much research done on the subject, and here, in addition to explaining and outlining the categories of my chapters, I will also list the foremost secondary scholarship that has contributed to my project and that I have considered in forming my categories.

In Chapter One, I will discuss the wild dog, or wolf. Although technically an ancestor of the dog, the wolf has its own, preliminary chapter because of the ways in which its occupied space, relationship to humans, and societal function relate to those of the dogs of the other two categories, just as the wolf was almost always given its own, separate bestiary entry. The wolf is primarily defined by its species; it is uniquely undomesticated, and therefore neither behaves like domesticated dogs nor serves the same function as they do. Furthermore, in this chapter the species will be extended to include the werewolf, a hybrid between wolf and human. Information on the

medieval wolf is most prevalent in historical sources, such as records from game reserves and villages. However, more complex examples of the medieval wolf emerge in literary sources, in which one will find fictionalized wolves and werewolves behaving in ways that exemplify medieval thought and daily practice with regards to wolves. Firstly, we will be looking through historical sources at the space that the wolf occupied and the conflict that arose when the space of humans interfered. From there, using further historical sources, we see the way in which a hostile relationship was built between man and wolf out of man's fear of the beast mingling in human space. An illustration from a manuscript of the *Livre de Chasse* vividly illustrates the wolf hunts that ensued. From there, we will turn to literary sources to define the wolf's societal function, including a story from Gerald of Wales' *Topography of Ireland* and Marie de France's tale *Bisclavret*. These literary sources complicate the relationship between man and wolf, and show us how the wolf found a place among the humans that feared and hunted it. Throughout the chapter, we will be guided by another literary source, the hagiographical story of Saint Francis' taming of the Wolf of Gubbio. Excerpts from this tale highlight the different qualities of the wolf that help define its category.

A central secondary source on the medieval wolf is the chapter in Susan Crane's *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain*, "Wolf, Man, and Wolf-Man."⁴ This chapter brings in, among other things, historical sources to study wolves in the Middle Ages. The study is furthered by looking at literary sources regarding werewolves, on which Crane focuses. Like Crane, I use *Bisclavret* as an example of the medieval wolf, and I rely on Crane's analysis as well. In my chapter, however, I also expand the study to look at a wider range of examples drawn from historical as well as literary sources. At the same time, I also take a closer look at some of

⁴ Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 42-69.

the examples that Crane discusses. *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* by Joyce Salisbury is another informative study, providing lots of historical background and examples, including those relating to wolves.⁵ However, it is a sweeping view of medieval animals in general, among which is information about wolves and dogs. I have attempted to extract the relevant information and present it in a more analytical manner, using the information to build postulations not necessarily covered in Salisbury's text.

In Chapter Two, I turn to the auxiliary dog, which I classify as a dog whose primary function is to aid humans. This category is mostly comprised of hunting dogs, but extends to include guard dogs and herding dogs as well. In other words, auxiliary dogs are working dogs and therefore the most useful to humans out of the three categories. Firstly, we will be looking at the way in which we might conceptually transition between wild wolf and auxiliary dog by looking at the savage hounds in Sedulius Scottus' poem, "The Ram." Then, we will look at the way in which these dogs reacted to humans through the processes of collar and leash, exchange, and communication. In looking at collar and leash, we see the ways in which the master could control such savagery in the auxiliary dog. In looking at exchange, we see the ways in which auxiliary dogs were rewarded, through food and housing, in return for good performance, which further strengthened the bond between hound and master. In looking at communication, we see the ways in which good communication between hound and master cemented the relationship between the auxiliary dog and his master. Lastly, we will look at how the auxiliary dog could, in a last connection to his master, pass on its qualities to the master who tamed it. The chapter references *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* throughout, as the romance is famous for its hunting scenes, and furthermore exemplary of the different ways in which the huntsman shaped the space, function,

⁵ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

and relationship with his hound. For other literary texts, we will look at the *Mabignonion* for its strong emphasis on collar and leash, *Tristan* for discussion of communication and the hunting dog Husdant, and finally at the *Tain*, in which we can see another way in which a hound might function for its master.

In this second chapter, I rely on *Animals and Hunters in the Middle Ages* by Hannele Klemetilä.⁶ It is an important text in that it makes accessible the content of the *Livre de Chasse* of Gaston Fébus, which otherwise would have been inaccessible to me. *Animals and Hunters in the Middle Ages* also reiterates the information, including imagery, from the *Livre de Chasse* with good citations, which helped me know where to look for similar information in the English descendant of the *Livre de Chasse*, *The Master of Game*.⁷ Enough of the original text was restated for me to get an idea of what we know about auxiliary dogs in the Middle Ages, but this secondary source lacked much analysis. In my chapter on auxiliary dogs, therefore, I expand on the work done by Hannele Klemetilä, for instance, by including further literary examples where Hannele Klemetilä focused mainly on the historical and nonfictional text.

Chapter Three examines the “pet” dog. Although the word “pet” had not even yet been coined as a term in the Middle Ages in the way that we use it in modernity, and would not until centuries later, in this project the word “pet” is used to define an animal that is not kept for labor, as the auxiliary dog, but rather kept primarily for pleasure, or for reasons other than working for their master. We will look at the different aspects of pethood primarily through the lens of Souillard, the titular dog of an Old French poem, “*Les Dits du Bon Chien Souillard*.” Through Souillard, we will see exemplified the different ways in which pethood might be achieved, the

⁶ Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁷ WM A. Baillie-Grohman and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., *The Master of Game* (New York: Duffield & Company, 1909).

physical place that the pet held in medieval society, and the different purposes of pethood. Featured in this chapter will also be discussion of the lap dog Petitcreiu of the *Tristan* cycle, several other Old French poems, a medieval Latin poem mourning a puppy named Pitulus, and the historical story of Count Robert's wolf that while being kept as a pet terrorized the neighboring peasants, leading to discussion of the "failed pet."

In this third chapter, I relied heavily on Kathleen Walker-Meikle's work, *Medieval Pets*.⁸ This work helped provide the definition for my category of medieval "pet"—a domesticated animal kept solely for pleasure rather than functionality. In matters of content, the book relays historical examples of the fundamentals of owning a pet, such as care and keeping, and later devotes several individual chapters to pets in iconography and in literature. I hope to further Walker-Meikle's studies by focusing specifically on the dog as a pet. This allows me to contribute more sources, such as the Old French poem "*Les Dits du Bon Chien Souillard*," and to go into a more analytical approach where Walker-Meikle seems to strive for a more widespread study of the medieval pet. Also relevant to the study of pet dogs is a recently published a collection of fifteen essays gathered under the title *Our Dogs, Our Selves*, edited by Laura D. Gelfand.⁹ I do not reference the book in this project since it had not appeared at the time of my research, but this work is notable as a reference devoted completely to dogs in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern era. Like this project, it takes a multidisciplinary approach to looking at medieval dogs, and examines them in paintings, sculpture, manuscripts, literature, and legal records, with a particular focus on art history.¹⁰

⁸ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012).

⁹ I would like to thank Laura Gelfand for sharing with me pre-print proofs of the introduction of *Our Dogs, Our Selves*.

¹⁰ Laura D. Gelfand, *Our Dogs, Our Selves* (Boston: Brill, 2016)

In general, few pieces of past scholarship are devoted entirely to dogs. Exceptions are the aforementioned *Our Dogs, Our Selves*, which expressly covers medieval dogs, and another book by Walker-Meikle entitled *Medieval Dogs*, though this light book appeals more to those who are not scholars of the Middle Ages. Both of these works are quite recent, published in 2016 and 2013 respectively. I hope to contribute to this growing foundation of knowledge on medieval dogs through this project. Following in the tradition of these two works, I plan to focus entirely on dogs and to do so in a multidisciplinary style. Like *Our Dogs, Our Selves*, I include artistic examples from manuscript illustrations and jewelry decorations, but I also go beyond artistic examples to draw on examples from historical sources and literature, encompassing everything from romance poetry to epic prose.

I plan to execute this project by taking a multidisciplinary stance on the subject. In each chapter, sources of various types will be used for examples. From a historical standpoint, we will look at historical evidence gathered from various types of kept records to help understand the medieval world of the dog from a factual point of view. Through historical evidence, we see the basic structure of the medieval society in which dogs inhabited and functioned. Though useful, it is difficult to study historical evidence from anything more than an outsider's view. In order to better understand the intricacies of this medieval society, as well as the thinking about dogs in the period, we turn also to sources coming directly from the medieval people. One approach to this perspective is to look at the art that was produced. In this project, we will look at a selection of images from illuminated manuscripts to sculpture to fashioned jewelry in order to better understand the place and role of the dog in the Middle Ages. In the same vein, we will also look at literary sources both prose and poetry. Throughout the project, therefore, we will be looking at both factual and fictional sources, though in the Middle Ages this distinction was often blurred.

We will see, among other things, entries in encyclopedias; tales from hagiography; poems, lays, and romances; excerpts from epic sagas; and several stories from the *Tristan* cycle. I will be drawing from traditions throughout the map of medieval Europe. Therefore, I will also be dealing with different languages in these literary sources. For most literary sources, I have used the available, published English translation. However, for some sources I have done the translation work myself where the English was not readily available. I have chosen one piece each from Old French, Middle English, and medieval Latin to fully translate, and these can be found in the appendices of this project, along with footnotes directing to the original text.

Although I intend to focus on dogs, there will be necessary extrapolation from the medieval dog's world to include the humans that the dogs directly influence. In this way, a world that we can understand will be built around the dogs of the Middle Ages, using the canines themselves as a jumping-off point for understanding the human masters and the values of the authors and artists who included dogs of all sorts in their works. Furthermore, I believe that my use of three categories to define the medieval dog is unique to the studies already conducted on medieval dogs. Through its structure and three categories, we can break the singular way of looking at the medieval dog that may seem to be a natural next step from the bestiary tradition. Because dogs have always existed in various places and with various functions, the natural next step is actually to look individually to the differences between these places and functions. Rather than starting from the general, overall perspective, it is useful to examine more closely specific texts, references, and images. Only then can we put what we have discovered together and piece together a full picture of the dog in the Middle Ages.

CHAPTER ONE: THE WILD DOG

Introduction

*At the time when Saint Francis was living in the city of Agobio, a large wolf appeared in the environs, so terrible and so fierce, that he not only devoured other animals, but made prey of men...*¹¹

Thus begins the parable of Saint Francis and how he tames the savage wolf that has been terrorizing the Italian township of Gubbio. The wolf of Gubbio is a perfect representative of the medieval wild dog, the focus of Chapter One of this project. In this chapter, I will address this first category of medieval dog by looking at the wolf. Throughout the course of the chapter, I will discuss the wolf's setting in the midst of medieval society, its relationships with humans, and the wolf's overall societal function. To begin, we will delve into the space of the medieval wolf. Wolves made their home in the woodlands that surrounded many medieval towns, but the border of the forest and the border of the village were not always clear-cut. It is when wolves transgressed the border between the wilderness and human civilization that medieval culture became most fearsomely threatened by the animal. This threat was, as we shall see, both real and imagined, and thoroughly permeated medieval society. It is this threat that called for cultural masteries of the canine, both actual and psychological. It is also what fascinated medieval men and women as they wondered whether the natural wildness of the wolf could be tamed or altered. In this chapter, wolves will first be examined in their natural habitat and in their encroachment on human society. Then, we will consider the fear that led to retaliation, in the form of both historical actions and psychological response. This fear includes fearing not only literal encroachment, but encroachment on the psyche in the form of werewolves. Finally, the idea of the wolf in versions of saint's lives

¹¹ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 62.

will be discussed to demonstrate how these stories begin the process of reclaiming the power of the wolf and the wilderness.

The Wolf's Domain

*...out of fear of the wolf, they did not dare go beyond the city walls.*¹²

In the tale of Saint Francis and the wolf, the wolf enters the story by having “appeared in the environs,” emerging from relative invisibility once humans become involved. The wolf begins to terrorize the villagers of the town near the forest, causing them to remain within their city walls. This is an example of the beginnings of the wolf’s domain in the forest, and the eventual domain extended to encroach upon the spaces and the lives of the humans who had themselves once encroached on the wolf’s very own territory.

The wolf’s natural domain was the forest. Initially, the expanse of this forest seemed limitless, providing the wolf with a safe haven in which to dwell. However, the growing population of the Middle Ages challenged this habitat. In the thick of the medieval period, especially in the rough time between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, the climate changed, bringing increasingly warmer temperatures.¹³ This period has been termed “The Medieval Warm Period,” or “The Little Optimum,” and during it, crops thrived, encouraging agriculture.¹⁴ The increased agriculture fed the growing population, which claimed more and more territory. In the years of the Medieval Warm Period, the population in Europe at least doubled, with some estimates saying that it tripled.¹⁵ Assarting, or the clearing of brush and woodland for agricultural purposes, became ever

¹² Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 63.

¹³ John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 27.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26, 27.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

more prevalent, and thus the forests began to diminish and with them the habitat for wolves. Forests were cleared and wetlands were drained, depriving many native animals, including wolves, of their natural habitat. To take an example of the level of deforestation, it has been estimated that over the course of the medieval period the forest cover of central Europe was reduced from roughly seventy percent to less than half, with France alone going from over half to merely a quarter covered.¹⁶ Ironically, it was man invading the habitat of wolves that led to the threat and idea that wolves invaded and threatened the space of man.

Nevertheless, facing diminishing food shortages, wolves were indeed pushed to transgress their forest homes. This led them into the human's world, and thus into the realm of the medieval people and culture. For an example of this, the Italian Franciscan friar Salimbene of Parma wrote of the year 1234 that the winter was so fierce that "beasts of the forests were frozen to death, and wolves came into the cities by night."¹⁷ Salimbene also writes that when the wolves could find no food even among the diminishing flocks and herds of livestock, they spent nights "howling dismally for exceeding anguish and hunger; and they crept into the cities by night and devoured men and women and children who slept under the porticoes or in wagons. Nay, at times they would even break through the house-walls and strangle children in their cradles."¹⁸ Salimbene's likely exaggerated words describe a wolf's transgression into man's safest spaces and the destruction of the most innocent, creating, as Salimbene illustrates, a very real fear that we will later delve into.

It was not only that wolves transgressed into these sorts of distinctly human spaces, such as villages. Even in their forest homes, wolves were considered to transgress onto the tracts of woodlands parsed out to farmers to feed livestock, the wolves feeding on the animals kept there.

¹⁶ John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 97.

¹⁷ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 204.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

Wolves began hunting livestock that was sent to the forest to graze naturally. Swine roamed the woodlands feeding on beech nuts and acorns, while mares were often released into the forest around the time of their pregnancy when they could not work as draft animals.¹⁹ The newborn foal was then left to the forest until it could be put to use on the farm. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, while diurnally in the fields, sought shelter among the trees of the woodlands during the night. All of these species of livestock could fall prey to wolves.²⁰ The fact that these continued practices of allowing livestock to roam were continued suggests that the frequency of wolf attacks, even in the woods, was not high. Nevertheless, wolves were seen as posing a constant potential threat to livestock as well as humans.

In their destruction of livestock, if not humans, wolves were seen as lawless. Contrary to domesticated animals and their masters who were linked in mutual responsibility before the law, wild animals like wolves were exempt from such ties. One medieval Norwegian law reads, “Bears and wolves are outlawed everywhere, for no man wants to be answerable for their doings.”²¹ In this way, wolves were placed outside the community, exiled by their voracious and vicious tendencies because they were uncontrollable. The lone wolf, skirting the borders of villages and fields, became a symbol of the “collapse of civilization and the concomitant return of wilderness and chaos,” a far fling from the wild yet nurturing wolf of lore that suckled Romulus and Remus, the eventual founders of ancient Rome.²² With this in mind, it is easy to see how the wolf became one of the most feared wild beasts of the Middle Ages, and their portent of evil will be seen in the way humans react to them in historical action, inspired literature, and the sacred philosophy and religion of saints’ lives.

¹⁹ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 83.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 83.

²¹ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 39.

²² Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 4.

A Source of Fear

“Brother wolf, thou hast done much evil in this land, destroying and killing the creatures of God without His permission; thou hast not only destroyed animals, but thou hast dared devour even men...”²³

In the Franciscan tale, Saint Francis here speaks to the wolf, coercing it to change its murderous ways. Within Saint Francis’ entreaty, we see examples of what made the wolf so feared. For the most part, as we have discussed, they ravaged flocks of livestock that belonged to the shepherds of nearby villages. However, fear of the wolf grew at the notion that the wolf may be seeking human prey as well.

Nevertheless, wolves were more a threat to the psyche of the medieval people than they were a true threat to the lives of those people.²⁴ They were not simply feared because of their habit of attacking whole flocks or herds of domestic livestock, but also because of the perceived potential of wolves attacking and consuming humans, although documented cases of this happening are rare.²⁵ Still, such fear persisted, especially in the colder months when the wolf, famished by winter, would be more likely to cross the boundary between its home in the forest, where it remained only a looming threat, and the outskirts of the village, where its threat became an actuality. As the aforementioned Salimbene described, wolves appeared in the most trying times, like winter, and added trouble to what was already troubling.

Stories of the troubles of wolves paired naturally with stories of the troubles of war, as both were rife with the symbolism of cruelty and death. On the actual battlefield, armies were aware that wolves followed in their tracks, feasting on the corpses of dead horses that had fallen in the battle, but also on dead men.²⁶ This only fed the medieval fear of wolves feeding voraciously on

²³ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 63.

²⁴ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 69.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

human flesh. Concerning this matter, Edward, Duke of York, wrote that “man’s flesh is so savory and so pleasant” that wolves having tasted it will wish for nothing else, adding that when wolves “have lost the sheep, they have taken and eaten the shepherd.”²⁷ This operates on both a literal and symbolic level, using the trope of the man-eating wolf.

In literature, the theme of the man-eating wolf is only amplified from the true accounts of the battlefield or the hypotheses of Edward, Duke of York. In the Old Norse *King Harald’s Saga*, a man named Thord has a dream in which he sees the shores of England amid war, and fighting among the fray an ogress riding a wolf. “The wolf,” reads the saga, “was carrying a human carcass in its mouth, with blood streaming down its jaws; and as soon as the wolf had eaten the first corpse, [the ogress] hurled another into it mouth, and then another and another, and the wolf gulped them all down.”²⁸ In this story, the hideousness of the ogress is made even more horrendous by the man-eating wolf. This amplifying of the wolf’s appetite only led to a further feeling among men for the necessity of taming such a threat, if not eliminating it altogether.

Hunted by Man

*“All men cry against thee, the dogs pursue thee, and all the inhabitants of this city are thy enemies...”*²⁹

Saint Francis continues to converse with the wolf, explaining to the beast why he is found so evil and why the townsfolk despise him. As suggested in the excerpt, wolf hunts were quite common in the Middle Ages, and expressed a hatred for the wolf that had grown out of fear.

²⁷ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 69.

²⁸ Magnús Magnússon and Hermann Pálsson, trans., *King Harald’s Saga* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), 140.

²⁹ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 63-64.

Over the course of the Middle Ages, in many places wolves were hunted to near extinction. References to the wolf hunt are riddled through medieval literature. For example, in the ballad *A Gest of Robyn Hode*, Robin Hood, an outlaw, has the bounty of a “wolfshead,” the same amount as would have been applied to a wolf.³⁰ In fact, many outlaws were treated as wolves, with the traditional sentence on a man outlawed being, “Let him bear the wolf’s head.”³¹ Such a malefactor would be termed a *capo lupino* or excommunicated as a *loup-garou*.³² Like wolves, the marked outlaw was to be killed on sight. In a reversal of outlaws being treated as wolves, some wolves were even treated as these outlaws, sometimes being tried, condemned, and executed in due legal procedure.³³ In some instances, they were hanged as the malefactors they represented, a departure from the usual lawlessness of the wolf, and this was by no means the end of wolf killings.³⁴

In England alone, wolves were systematically poached to complete extinction by the end of the Middle Ages.³⁵ There are records dating from the thirteenth century that detail the bounties that could be collected for wolf pelts.³⁶ Specific traps were used to obtain these means, such as a particular “engine” that records show was still used in the forest of Macclesfield in Cheshire in 1303.³⁷ The forest of Macclesfield was the target of a campaign at the time to free the woodlands of wolves, where the townspeople of Cheshire set about with traps “in the Park,” as it was called, to annihilate the wolf population.³⁸ These traps included pits, nets, snares, and poisoned or booby-trapped bait. Such bait could contain tension-tied needles, which were designed to pierce the

³⁰ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 201.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 201.

³² *Ibid.*, 201.

³³ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁵ John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 184.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

³⁷ Clarice S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 27.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

innards of the wolf once the wolf had swallowed the bait.³⁹ Other trap assortments included hinged, wooden jaws for trapping the wolf's leg, similar to the modern, metal, spring-load variety.⁴⁰ Edward of Woodstock then rewarded the townspeople for the delivery of the ears of the slain wolf.⁴¹

We can see an example of a wolf net in the illustration in Figure 2, dating to around the year 1400, from a copy of one of the most celebrated hunting manuals of the Middle Ages, the *Livre de la Chasse*, which we will look into in more detail in subsequent chapters. The illustration is an interpretation of a wolf hunt, most prominently featuring a series of rope nets strung up on poles that even surpass the height of the trees. This is an example of the sort of device that would have been used to capture wolves. The net in the image shows a wolf entangled in it, unable to escape. Two other wolves are positioned in front of the net, tearing at a dead animal, possibly a cow. They are not captured, but well would be if they attempted to run from the three hunters brandishing spears in the foreground, who are already chasing a fourth wolf towards the net. The two wolves in front of the net seem oblivious, and are eating the remains of the cow, giving the illustration a flair of gruesome violence. The sky is the same blood red as the innards of the cow that has been torn apart, contributing to the mood of death. The violence of the wolves is here shown at the direct center of the image where the eye is first drawn, making the hunting of the wolves by man seem a response to the wolves' threat rather than a sport or show of gamesmanship. The response to the wolves' threat is to ensnare them, robbing them of the freedom of movement before presumably killing them, and once and for all restricting their domain.

³⁹ John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 184-185.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴¹ Clarice S. Davies, *A History of Macclesfield* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 27.

In this illustration, the hunters are possibly well-off members of society called upon for the high-end job of killing a wolf. In the many royal forest preserves, hunting and fishing were reserved as aristocratic activities, and of these activities the wolf hunt was among the apex. An excerpt from the fourteenth-century text *Piers Plowman* illustrates this as it details the ways in which “all manner of people” of different social standings ought “to be obedient and obliging to the law.”⁴² As it reads, religious officials ought to be obedient, “unlettered men,” and “lords [ought] to hunt / In woods and forests for fox and other beasts / That are in the wilderness as in waste places, / Such as wolves that worry men, women, and children.”⁴³ This excerpt illustrates the permeation of the concern for wolves even until the later Middle Ages, when *Piers Plowman* was written, and underscores the importance of their extermination by counting it an obligation for the aristocracy to hunt the predators. This obligation continued until the very late Middle Ages, as attested to by a certain Sir Robert Plumpton of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire in the fifteenth century owning a portion of Sherwood forest that he deemed “Wolf-hunt land.”⁴⁴

In general, wolves were seen as having little other purpose than to be hunted for extermination. Wolf meat was considered unfit to eat by both humans and their domesticated dogs.⁴⁵ Hunting dogs would be rewarded on the wolf hunt by a bit of chopped mutton in the cavity of the slain wolf.⁴⁶ Once killed, the hide of the wolf was also useless for use in vellum, as it was considered too difficult to tan properly, and the wolf odor was near impossible to remove.⁴⁷ The wolf pelt could, however, be turned in for a bounty, as earlier described. Even that which the wolf

⁴² George Economou, trans., *William Langland's "Piers Plowman": The C Version* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 86.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁴ Beryl Rowland, *Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1971), 103.

⁴⁵ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

had touched was considered unclean and damnable to interact with.⁴⁸ If an animal was found to have been partially eaten by wolves, no man was allowed to consume the rest of the meat or the marrow from the bones of the abandoned carcass.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, despite their apparent uselessness, wolves were considered top-class prey, ranking among the most prized such as the aforementioned hare, the hart, and the boar.⁵⁰

Wolves were not only conquered through physical means, but through magical means as well. In the *Liber de Quattor Confectionibus*, an Arabic text on magic, wolves were one of four categories of animals, the other three being wild beasts, birds, and reptiles.⁵¹ It seems here as if the wolf has somehow transcended the category of wild beasts, perhaps proving itself to be even more ferocious or feral than others of that category. In the text, the first preparation is for attracting wolves using a mixture of the blood, fat, gall and brains of a horse, wolf, black cat, raven, vulture, eagle, goat, hen, ass, fox, pig, and hare; snake skin; and various plant substances.⁵² The practitioner then summons the wolf through knowledge of correct celestial times, fumigations, and the recital of a prayer provided by the text.⁵³ The difficulty of obtaining the vast number of ingredients, not to mention the messiness of it all, most likely proved a summons such as this one impractical and expensive. However, it demonstrates the desire for mastery over the wild wolf, a point emphasized by an instruction in the text that the practitioner may either kill or tame the wolf once the wolf is in the practitioner's power.⁵⁴ This coincides with the medieval feeling of necessity to either dominate the wolf, as one would if the wolf was killed, or command the wolf, as one would if the wolf was tamed. Most wolves were likely killed rather than tamed.

⁴⁸ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

⁴⁹ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

⁵⁰ Beryl Rowland, *Blind Beasts: Chaucer's Animal World* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1971), 103.

⁵¹ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 54.

⁵² Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 54.

⁵³ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 54.

⁵⁴ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 54.

Once dead, the wolf itself could even become an instrument of magic. Albertus Magnus, in his discussion of wolves, states that burying a wolf's head in a dovecote or a wolf's tail at the entrance to a farm will successfully ward off predators.⁵⁵ In these examples of spells, the practitioner has mastery over the wolf and its components. However, it is more commonly found in stories from the period that the magic of the wolf overcomes the human. In these instances, man is transformed into wolf by some magical means or another.

Transformations

*[The wolf] lifted up his right paw and placed it familiarly in the hand of Saint Francis, giving him thereby the only pledge which was in his power.*⁵⁶

The wolf here has consented to Saint Francis' conditions under which the wolf is forbidden to terrorize the villagers any more. In this excerpt, we see the wolf exhibiting a human understanding, far surpassing what could be expected of a beast. In medieval literature, especially, there were numerous tales of wolves displaying human qualities; most often, they were actually humans transformed by magical means into wolves, still retaining their human soul. The tamed wolf assumed qualities more similar to the auxiliary dog or the pet dog, as we will see in later chapters.

An example of such magical means can be found in Gerald of Wales' *History and Topography of Ireland*. Here Gerald of Wales relates a story regarding a transformation in a tale so curious that Gerald of Wales deems it "worthy of wonder."⁵⁷ In the story, a Lord John and his page spend a night in the forest bordering Meath, the destination of the journey. Suddenly, they

⁵⁵ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 53.

⁵⁶ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 64-65.

⁵⁷ John J. O'Meara, trans., *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 69.

are approached by a wolf, who cries, “Do not be afraid! Do not fear! Do not worry! There is nothing to fear!”⁵⁸ The act of communication through language is the first sign of human attributes. Furthermore, the wolf talks some things of God that “seemed reasonable,” astonishing the travelers with not only his human comprehension, but his human learnedness.⁵⁹ When the Lord John commands the wolf to explain itself, the wolf gives “a Catholic answer,” further exhibiting an understanding of the human world.⁶⁰ In this answer, the wolf explains that due to the imprecation of the abbot of Natalis, a man and a woman are put into exile in the form of a wolf for seven years. If these two survive, their places are taken by two others in wolf’s form, while the two survivors are returned to humans. The wolf then explains that its partner lies ill not far off, and asks Lord John to give her the solace of priesthood and the gift of divine mercy in her last days. The fact that the wolf has turned out to be human reinforces the idea that the very definition of the wolf had to do with its ferocity. After all, through the wolf’s exhibiting of gentleness and communication, we discover his soul’s identity is not that of a wolf, but of a human, despite outwards appearances.

The she-wolf is also directly shown to be human-like as she is found “groaning and grieving like a human being,” and she welcomes Lord John “in a human way.”⁶¹ Lord John then performs the last rites and last communion with the help of the he-wolf, who fetches the priest’s items. The he-wolf proclaims the aid of Lord John was destined by divine providence, and to remove any doubts, pulls back the skin of the she-wolf, “folding it back with his paw as if it were a hand,” revealing the form of an old woman.⁶² Through religion, then, a distinctly human attribute, the true form of the woman is revealed. The he-wolf then shares Lord John’s fire for the night, in

⁵⁸ John J. O’Meara, trans., *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 70.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 70-71.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 71.

order to “[show] himself to them to be a man rather than a beast,” as if further proof were needed, and in the morning shows the travelers the quickest way to Meath.⁶³ In this story, the classic labels that the medieval people had attributed to wolves—lawlessness, viciousness, cruelty—are stripped away, revealing the wolves to be human. In a sense, the wolves have overcome and tamed their lupine form through human communication and knowledge, and Lord John only completes the exposure with his religious rituals.

The illustration in Figure 3 is a depiction of the same story from a copy of the *History and Topography of Ireland*, dating to around the year 1225. The illustration spans two folios and has three scenes, all of which enforce the story’s theme of a wolf revealed to be a human ally. The first is the he-wolf approaching Lord John by his campfire. In the second scene, the he-wolf is leading Lord John to his partner. The wolf looks back expectantly, as if to make sure Lord John is following, which the priest does. In this panel, the viewer is assured that the wolf has no intent to attack Lord John as a wolf normally would, for the look that the wolf and Lord John share gives a sense of mutual understanding between the two. In the third scene, we see the two wolves together. The he-wolf stands to the left of Lord John with what appears to be a small book, most likely a representation of a sacrament, tied around his neck. In the holding of this book, the wolf is again shown to be an ally instead of an enemy and the artist’s liberty in situating the book around the wolf’s neck possibly suggests that the wolf is not only fetching the item, but reading it as well. Lord John feeds the communion wafer to the she-wolf, who is enclosed in a womb-like structure. This structure could be as literal as a woodland niche in which she lays, or as abstract as an aura signifying the spell she is under. In any case, the illustration underscores elements in the story, such as the wolf’s ability to communicate, agency in contacting Lord John, and leading Lord John

⁶³ John J. O’Meara, trans., *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 72.

to his piety in seeking sacrament for his injured partner. In these elements, we see a human, though transformed, master his wolf form in order to create docile, human connection.

It is uncertain whether readers were expected to understand this tale by Gerald of Wales as an account of veritable events or as marvelous lore. Indeed, the modern division of these genres was much more fluid in the medieval period. While wolves were written about factually, they were also addressed in the realm of fiction. One prolific writer of wolf fiction was the twelfth-century Marie de France. Marie de France foremost addressed wolves and their character in a series of fables. In these fables, wolves are given human characteristics through moralistic actions and philosophical ponderings. True to the historical nature of the wolf, these fables almost always paint the wolf as an antagonist or else portray him as foolish. For an example of such foolishness, in Fable 81, “The Priest and the Wolf,” a wolf is comically learning the alphabet from a priest. When stumped over a letter, he is told to “Say whatever you think it is, and spell!”⁶⁴ The wolf replies with “Lamb! Lamb!” followed by a comment that “as one thinks, so one speaks.”⁶⁵ In this fable, the wolf is shown to be an undisciplined fool. Figure 3 shows an imagination of this encounter carved in marble. Interestingly, the teacher is not a human priest, but a donkey or some sort of equine creature, as can be deduced from its hooves. This choice of character only makes the wolf more degraded if one considers an animal already degraded, such as the donkey, then being put into a position of power over the lowly wolf. What further adds to the insult is the fact that a donkey, as livestock, would have been the natural prey for the thieving wolf, making it humorous or ironic that here the hunted has mockingly transcended its hunter. Furthermore, the church location of the piece is a setting where literate canons would have passed by the work regularly,

⁶⁴ Mary Lou. Martin, trans., *The Fables of Marie De France: An English Translation* (Birmingham: Summa Publications, 1984), 213.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

making the comedy all the more poignant, which the lettering would also accomplish: “*di que te semble, si espel!*,” “say what it looks like, spell it out!”⁶⁶

There are many other fables featuring the wolf, and in many of these the wolf is the villain. In “The Wolf and the Crane,” the wolf is a symbol for “an evil lord;”⁶⁷ in “The Wolf and the Dove,” the wolf is a symbol for “robbers, thieves, and tricksters;” and in “The Wolf and the Sheep,” the wolf is a symbol for “a man of evil heart” who “can’t give up his extravagance or his gluttony on any condition.” The list continues. In “Of Wolves [Part B],” Marie de France plainly comments, “No matter who would give a good master to the wolf to teach him to be a priest, he would remain a grey wolf—disloyal and sly, ugly and hideous.”⁶⁸ This last fable hearkens back to “The Priest and the Wolf,” confirming that a wolf could never be freed from his subordinate state. From her fables, it is clear the way that Marie de France follows conventions for antagonizing the wolf is clear. In her literature, she not only addresses the strictly lupine, but also in her lay, *Bisclavret*, the sort of wolf that is truly a transformed human, as we saw in Gerald of Wales’s account.

Bisclavret adds a story to the character of the wolf, featuring a werewolf who was once a man, much like the transformed wolves of Gerald of Wales. In the tale, a man turns into a werewolf for three days of the week, disappearing into the forest during this time. His wife soon becomes suspicious, and asks her husband the cause of his absences. He reluctantly tells her his plight, and the place he hides his clothes when he transforms. Disgusted, his wife calls upon an old suitor to help her gather up her husband’s clothes and hide them, thusly making him a werewolf indefinitely,

⁶⁶ Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 47.

⁶⁷ Mary Lou. Martin, trans., *The Fables of Marie De France: An English Translation* (Birmingham: Summa Publications, 1984), 49, 243, 145.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 173.

for the purpose of then marrying her suitor who still has feelings for her. This done, the husband, so named “Bisclavret,” is thereby forced to stay in his werewolf form. When he sees the king on a wolf hunt in the forest, Bisclavret shows himself to be docile to the king through his body language, and the king takes him in. During court, Bisclavret savagely attacks his wife’s old suitor-turned-husband, and also attacks his wife, tearing off her nose. Under torture, his wife reveals her plot and Bisclavret retrieves his clothing, his violence pardoned as it punished the evil actions of man. Even once restored to his human form, he continues loyalty to the king, while his wife is forced into exile, and, in an odd ending, her descendants are cursed to be without noses, just as hers was torn off by Bisclavret.

Bisclavret further shows man’s need to tame the wolf. Curiously, Marie de France begins the tale by noting of lycanthropy that “it often actually happened.”⁶⁹ To Marie de France, the plight of Bisclavret is considered common, which suggests a societal trope of lycanthropy that would have been recognized by a wide variety of readers. Interestingly, in this introduction to the lay, Marie de France uses the Norman French word for werewolf, *garvalf*, rather than the Breton *bisclavret* that is used throughout the rest of the lay. The former perhaps held a stronger connotation of evil than the Breton word that Marie de France settles on, for werewolves “were the worst of beasts while transformed, just as natural wolves were thought to be the worst of beasts in medieval Europe, the most violent and anthropophagous, the most evil-intentioned.”⁷⁰ Linguists see *bisclavret* as more simply a “speaking wolf” or “rational wolf.”⁷¹ It would thus make sense that Marie de France opens the lay, with its descriptions of violence, with the more volatile term,

⁶⁹ Robert W. Hanning and Joan M. Ferrante, trans., *The Lais of Marie De France* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 92.

⁷⁰ Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 56.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

and moves to the more descriptive term as we discover that Bisclavret is simply an average man cursed with a transformation of the skin, and furthermore a rational being.

Bisclavret's affliction proves the curse is universal and can happen to anyone. As we see, Bisclavret is "marvelously praised; / a fine, handsome knight / who behaved nobly."⁷² Furthermore, it is noted that he "was close to his lord, and loved by all his neighbors" and had "an estimable wife."⁷³ In these descriptions, we see that Bisclavret is not afflicted on account of some fault or vice. He is a successful and noble man, but despite this he is cursed to turn into a werewolf regularly through no fault of his own. The werewolf is made the villain just as the wolf is in medieval thought, and Marie de France makes this clear from the beginning of the lay: "A werewolf is a savage beast," she writes, "While his fury is on him / he eats men, does much harm, / goes deep in the forest to live."⁷⁴ Again, we see the trope of the man-eating wolf that caused fear among the medieval people. Also evident is the forest as the natural setting for the wolf. The described depth of this forest even further emphasizes its otherness – a perfect home for the otherness that is the werewolf.

Perhaps it is because of this otherness that Bisclavret is reluctant to tell his wife what happens to him three days of the week. He is afraid that he would "lose [her] love / and even [his] very self."⁷⁵ This is said as if he does not already lose himself when he regularly transforms into a werewolf. Truly enough, it is his admission that he is a werewolf is what loses him the fidelity of his wife, who turns against him astonishingly quickly after hearing of his plight. This was the result of Bisclavret's decision to place himself in a position of vulnerability. Because of the antagonizing nature of the wolf, and even more so of the werewolf, Bisclavret loses his wife. The loss is also

⁷² Robert W. Hanning and Joan M. Ferrante, trans., *The Lais of Marie De France* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 92.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

due in part to the terrorizing nature of the werewolf – the wife “turned scarlet from fear; / she was terrified of the whole adventure.”⁷⁶

Bisclavret proves this nature to be in part false when he, in werewolf form, makes human connections with the king who, ironically, is on a wolf hunt. Of him the king remarks, “Look at this marvel – / the beast is humbling itself to me. / It has the mind of a man, and it’s begging me for mercy!”⁷⁷ This is Bisclavret taming his wolf form through body language that humans will understand, which is a reoccurring trope that, as we will see, also makes an appearance in hagiographical tales. Furthermore, the king asserts, “This beast is rational – he has a mind.”⁷⁸ In this the king blatantly states what separates, in medieval terms, the animal from the human, just as the wolves of Gerald of Wales also prove themselves human by their rationality.

The king therefore extends peace to Bisclavret and “held him very dear.”⁷⁹ In many ways, Bisclavret is reduced to the figure of a domesticated dog. Just as he himself tamed his own wolf form, so does the king extend the process of domestication. He sees that Bisclavret “be well fed and watered,” and in turn Bisclavret “always accompanied the king,” as a pet; provided food and proximity to a master are qualities which, as we shall see, are important to pethood.⁸⁰ Even still, Bisclavret acts more like a hunting dog than a lap dog, for he still exhibits savageness when presented with his wife’s new husband – he “sank his teeth into him, and started to drag him down.”⁸¹ Nevertheless, he, tamed, still submits to his “master”: Marie de France writes that Bisclavret “would have done him [the new husband] great damage / if the king hadn’t called him

⁷⁶ Robert W. Hanning and Joan M. Ferrante, trans., *The Lais of Marie De France* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 92.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

off, / and threatened him with a stick.”⁸² Here, the king tames and tempers the lingering savagery of the wolf in Bisclavret.

Despite this, Bisclavret continues to exhibit further savagery. When Bisclavret sees his wife, he runs toward her “in a rage” and tears her nose from her face.⁸³ The narrator even questions, “What worse thing could he have done to her?”⁸⁴ In his own disfigurement, Bisclavret disfigures his wife, so much so that her some of her children are “actually born without noses, / and lived out their lives noseless,” forever marred by an action from the past.⁸⁵ However, this act of savagery is calculated and its motive comes not from its inherence to his form, but rather from his hatred for the infidelity of his wife. Bisclavret here is proving himself to have a rational mind, even in an act of savagery that would normally be ascribed to a feral beast. Furthermore, his rational mind outs the evil deeds of the villainous suitor, transforming Bisclavret, despite his shape, into the moral good of the story.

Readers know that Bisclavret is indeed human when, after his clothes are found, he is asked to put them on, but “[t]his beast wouldn’t, under any circumstances, / in order to get rid of his animal form, / put on his clothes in front of you; / you don’t understand what this means: / he’s just too ashamed to do it here.”⁸⁶ It turns out that shame is a quality of man, and that its presence in Bisclavret proves him to be human. This is a great turnaround from the monster described at the beginning of the poem, who without restraint furiously feasts on men and does them great harm. Through the process of his transformation, becoming stuck in that transformation, connecting with the king, distributing vengeance, and once again becoming his old self, Bisclavret both tames and

⁸² Robert W. Hanning and Joan M. Ferrante, trans., *The Lais of Marie De France* (New York: Dutton, 1978), 97.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 99.

channels his wolf form and is himself tamed by the king. In the end, it is his rationality that proves him to be a man and conquers the feral wolf form. Bisclavret is not the only character to achieve this; as we will see, numerous saints are also able to tame the wolf and put it to positive use.

Holy Submission

*The wolf lived two years at Agobio; he went familiarly from door to door without harming any one, and all the people received him courteously, and fed him with great pleasure, and no dog barked at him as he went about.*⁸⁷

Ultimately, the wolf of Gubbio lives at peace with the villagers, thanks to Saint Francis. This is an example of the kind of holy submission in which a saint would benefit from having tamed a wolf. The basis for this taming was the notion that wolves were wholly bad creatures, proven so through God. In much of medieval philosophy, it was believed that God created all animals good, and if an animal were to exhibit malicious qualities, it was because God willed it, or because the animal was a disguised demon acting as an instrument of divine justice.⁸⁸ This definition largely befits the wolf, whose maliciousness showed in its savagery and feral nature, as has been seen in many fields. However, it was difficult for many medieval people to believe that God willed such maliciousness when wolves ravaged the flocks of the countryside. A peasant named Arnaud Cogal of Lordat once told authorities that he did not believe that God could have made the wolf, instead believing that the first wolf came into being on its own.⁸⁹ God's connection with the wolf stretches back to Biblical sources, which a peasant such as Arnaud Cogal would probably have been aware of. In Genesis 49:27, Benjamin, the last-born son of Jacob, is described as "a ravenous wolf." In Matthew 7:15, false prophets are also described as "ravening wolves." In

⁸⁷ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 66.

⁸⁸ John Aberth, *An Environmental History of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 145.

⁸⁹ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 48.

Matthew 10:16, Jesus Christ sends His apostles out “as sheep in the midst of wolves;” the simile is repeated in Luke 10:3. In stark contrast to the sheep of Jesus Christ, the Devil was at work with wolves. The *Malleus Maleficarum* of 1486 A.D. argued that the Devil himself could possess wolves or cause people to imagine that they were wolves, although Albertus Magnus’ *De Animalibus* is cited to point out that some extremely dangerous or aggressive wolves were acting thus out of starvation or natural ferocity.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the Devil proved aptly analogous to the wolf when one considers the potential symbolism of the sheepfold of the faithful hunted by an evil predator. Sometimes the Devil’s Seven Deadly Sins were even associated with wolves, such as the wolf that approaches Dante in the Inferno, or Envy from the fifteenth-century poem *The Assembly of Gods*, who rides on the back of a wolf (“*Next whom came Envy, / Sytting on a wolfe*”).⁹¹

Perhaps because Christianity is so steeped with the image of the savage wolf that Christian saints are the ones who begin the process of taming the beast. There are numerous stories of saints taming wolves for the benefit of the townspeople, or even for other purposes. One example of this is the tale of the wolf of Gubbio, which we have been following throughout this chapter. The tale of the wolf of Gubbio itself most likely inspired the character of the wolf in another story of Franciscan legend in which Saint Francis instructs a common duck to rescue a child carried off by a savage wolf.⁹² In addition, wolves also feature in other Franciscan legends concerning the people of Greccio, whom Saint Francis delivered from the plagues of wolves and hailstorms.⁹³

⁹⁰ Brigitte Resl, ed., *A Cultural History of Animals*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 48.

⁹¹ John Lydgate and Oscar L. Triggs, *The Assembly of Gods: Or, The Accord of Reason and Sensuality in the Fear of Death* (London: Pub. for the Early English Text Society, 1896), 19.

⁹² Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 84.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 84.

Instances of wolves reoccur in many saints' hagiographies. A man-slaying wolf touched by the Cornish saint Meriadoc also became tame and lamb-like.⁹⁴ A wolf compelled by the staff of Saint Modwenna became shamefaced, like a dog, as if conscious of its own guilt.⁹⁵ When ordered to approach, a wolf signaled to Saint Fechin obedience through its body language.⁹⁶ Saint Clare herself is associated with two legends involving wolves. In the first, a mother prays to the saint when her baby was snatched by a wolf, and the wolf returns the infant.⁹⁷ In the second, a woman carried off by a wolf similarly prays to Saint Clare and is released.⁹⁸ Other holy figures also mimic the saintly tradition of taming wolves. For example, the Bishop of Fiesole interceded when a wolf stole a baby, and the wolf brought the child safely back.⁹⁹ The list goes on, showing the ubiquitous trope of saints using their powers to tame wolves.

In other hagiography, wolves, in their domesticity, not only act tame but perform functions in the community. In the Life of Saint Cainnich, a she-wolf comes morning and evening “*cum humilitate et penitentia*,” “with humility and penance,” to provide milk for a motherless calf.¹⁰⁰ Saint Ketingern yoked a wolf to his plow as a replacement of a stag that the wolf had killed. Saint Munn enlisted the help of two wolves to guard his sheep.¹⁰¹ For Saint Brigid, the wolves guarded hogs.¹⁰² A wolf guided the saint Trevarius when he had lost his way in the forest.¹⁰³ Saint Alban's corpse was protected by a wolf from other scavengers.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, a wolf guarded the severed

⁹⁴ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 211.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰⁴ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 212n.

head of Saint Edmund, as can be seen illustrated in Figure 5.¹⁰⁵ Again, the sheer number of these reoccurring instances points to a common narrative of the medieval world.

Saints were known to be of help to wolves themselves as well. In what could be a motion of thanks, Saint Molua provided a feast for wolves, just as saints sometimes even fed wolves directly from their flocks.¹⁰⁶ Laypeople also performed similar gestures. Caesarius of Heisternacensis tells of a wolf who brought a girl into the forest so that she might extract a bone lodged in another wolf's jaw; the girl was then promptly brought straight back.¹⁰⁷ We have also already seen the example told by Gerald of Wales, in which a traveling priest aids a wolf who had once been a human. All these examples seem to finalize one thing: it is possible to tame the wolf, even if it takes a holy man to do it, and such taming is perhaps the chief way of conquering one of the deepest fears in medieval society.

Conclusion

*...he reminded them of the virtue and sanctity of Saint Francis.*¹⁰⁸

As exemplified in this last excerpt, the wolf functioned as a means for humans to show themselves as masters over nature. Here, it seems as if the wolf existed simply for Saint Francis to tame, thusly proving the saint's holiness. The wolf must be necessarily evil in order to fulfill this role, which has been proven through the negative perceptions from history, literature, and religion of the Middle Ages. Negative perceptions rose from the threat, both real and imaginary, that the wolf posed. As the wolf transgressed its woodland boundaries, which perhaps at one time seemed

¹⁰⁵ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 213n.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 212n.

¹⁰⁸ Cardinal Manning, trans., *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi* (Old Saybrook: Konecky & Konecky), 66.

limitless, its interaction with human civilization only fed the fear of both townspeople with their livestock and aristocrats with their hunting parties alike. The enormity of the fear, however, would be the leading factor to change, as the medieval people felt the perceived necessity to either dominate, and exterminate, the wolf, or to tame it and bring it to the service man. Even though wolves had already been domesticated into dogs for centuries, in the Middle Ages we can see the domestication not through physical means, but through the means of ideas and representation in various fields. In her discussion of the domestication of the medieval wolf, Susan Crane writes, “By far the most thorough domestication in human history, *Canis lupus lupus* becoming *Canis lupus familiaris* is a wonder of nature even from a sober biological perspective: the universally feared, man-killing, herd-raiding predator becomes the most warmly trusted defender of herds and men *against* wolves and other dangers.”¹⁰⁹ In this, we see a drastic transition and one that is necessary to define an essential precursor to the dogs that chased the wolves themselves. Wolves were already being hunted and killed by their successors, hunting dogs, and were attacked with the same ferocity that they themselves had put forth. Yet, where the wolf was the responsibility of no man, hunting dogs had man as master.

¹⁰⁹ Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 56.

CHAPTER TWO: THE AUXILIARY DOG

Introduction

<i>Thenne thise cacheres that couthe cowpled hor houndes,</i>	Then these hunters knew how leashed their hounds,
<i>Unclosed the kenel dore and calde hem ther-oute,</i>	Opened the kennel door and called them out,
<i>Blewe bygly in bugles thre bare mote;</i>	Blew vigorously on bugles three, long notes;
<i>Braches bayed therefore and breme noyse maked;</i>	Brachets bayed, therefore, and made fierce noise,
<i>And thay chastised and charred on chasyng that went...</i>	And they curbed and turned back to the hunt and went... ¹¹⁰

This is an excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a fourteenth-century Middle English romance that is famous for its detailed descriptions of hunting. Intrinsic to these descriptions is the hunting dog, in this excerpt signified by the “brachets,” without which the hunt could not be carried out. The hunting dog is an example of what I will here term as an “auxiliary dog,” the focus of this second chapter. I classify the auxiliary dog as a working dog whose function it is to aid his master by hunting, herding, or guarding. The savagery that characterized the wolf, as we have seen, is still present in the auxiliary dog, though controlled. Strength and aggression were still important characteristics that dogs used to track and kill wildlife or chase off intruders, but an auxiliary dog’s aggression had to be in service of his master and directed at outside threats. To his master, and other humans, the auxiliary dog had to be obedient and faithful. Thus, on the spectrum of wildness from the wolf to the lap-dog, the auxiliary dog formed a kind of middle point. By looking at the means by which the master of the auxiliary dog was able to keep his pack in line, we can begin to understand the value of these dogs to humans. In addition, we can see how the auxiliary dog had a reciprocal relationship with humans: while the dog served men, he also

¹¹⁰ Lines 1139-1143; line numbers for *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* taken from: Battles, Paul, ed. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Ontario: Broadview Additions, 2012.

benefited from his owner's care. It is this mutually beneficial relationship between working dog and master that forms the core subject of this chapter.

In the historical study of medieval auxiliary dogs, no source is more important than *Le Livre de Chasse* by Gaston Fébus. It serves as an important reference in what follows for both text and images of this category of dog. For its thoroughness on the subject, *Le Livre de Chasse* has been acclaimed “indisputably the most famous hunting book of all times,” and likewise, *The Master of Game*, an English variant written in the early fifteenth century, has been considered “the oldest as well as the most important work on the chase in the English language that has come down to us from the Middle Ages.”¹¹¹ As mentioned before, I will also draw from the fourteenth-century Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, as it exemplifies different modes for controlling hunting hounds that were in use during the Middle Ages. The romance “showcases its intimate acquaintance with the hunting lore,” which could mean the author of the romance demonstrated knowledge of the contemporary *Livre de Chasse*.¹¹² Other texts I cite include the Latin beast poem “the Ram” by Sedulius Scottus, which showcases the feral nature of the auxiliary dog that calls to be tamed and the early Irish texts of the Mabigion and the Táin to further show how exactly medieval auxiliary dogs were tamed and what that meant for the taming master.

The Still-Savage Hound

As we will see, the hounds of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* behave in a manner representative of medieval auxiliary dogs. They seem to be a complete degree away from the wild nature of the wolf. However, the transition from feral wolves to auxiliary dogs is not cleanly

¹¹¹ WM A. Baillie-Grohman and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., *The Master of Game* (New York: Duffield & Company, 1909), xi-xii.

¹¹² Paul Battles, ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Ontario: Broadview Additions, 2012), 173.

defined. The auxiliary dog exhibits a wild savagery in its work, whether that be hunting or guarding, even if such wildness is controlled by the dog's master. Such savagery relates the auxiliary dog to its wolf ancestors, even though the dog's master's control has over the same savagery connects the auxiliary dog to its relatives that have been domesticated for the household. It was naturally important for the auxiliary dog to retain some of the wildness of its ancestors in order for it to complete its duties, such as hunting down and killing or rounding up animals.

A literary example of auxiliary dogs behaving with raw savagery can be found in a poem from the ninth century by Sedulius Scottus called "The Ram." The poem is a classic example of the genre of Latin beast poetry that emerged from the Middle Ages, which granted its animal subjects the ability to speak. Among these subjects in the poem is a pack of auxiliary dogs who, through a confusion, behave with wild frenzy in attacking the title ram, thinking him to be allied with a bandit that has passed through. The pack of auxiliary dogs is described as a "*vis rabiosa canum*" (line 51).¹¹³ The Latin is strongly worded, and translates literally to "a rabid force of dogs." Additionally, their group is called a "*cohors*," which describes a cohort with the possibility of military connotations (line 53). The members of this cohort also have "*oribus...rapidis*," "rapidly-moving mouths," which lends further imagery to the savagery and rabidity of this pack (line 55). The text also makes a point of emphasizing the amount of noise this pack of dogs is making by citing "*ingens fit strepitus, fit sonus atque fragor*," "there was a huge clattering and a crashing sound" (line 54). In using the phrase "*frondea silva latrat*," "the leafy woodlands barked" the text even suggests that the woodlands itself seems to be barking by placing the woodlands as the subject (line 56). Barking, as will be seen in this chapter, is an example of the wildness present in the auxiliary dog, and in "The Ram," the barking is emphasized to best exhibit the wildness of this

¹¹³ Line numbers taken from the Latin version published in: Jan Ziolkowski M., "Sedulius Scottus's De Quodam Verbece a Cane Discerpto," *Mediaevalia* 9 (1983).

pack of savage dogs. There is not even mention of a master from whom these dogs were released. Soon, the hounds catch up to the ram and through the ram's reasoning, are momentarily abated.

However, despite the almost human rationality that the ram exhibits, he ends up not being human enough to master the ferocity of the dogs (although the language suggests the ram to be a parable for a Christian martyr, if not Christ himself).¹¹⁴ Although the dogs are temporarily soothed by the ram, a leader among the dogs again incites the pack with his given speech. This dog is clearly meant to be an antagonist, even to the point of possibly standing in for the supernatural. It is mentioned that he has "*canis inferni Cerberus ater avus*," "the infernal dog, coal-black Cerberus as grandsire," alluding to the fact that his grandfather was the demonic Cerberus of the Roman underworld (line 78). To continue the associations, it is mentioned that this leader has "*guttur...triplici*," "a three-fold throat," which could mean that this dog literally follows his grandfather with respect to physical features. Later, when dealing death-blows to the ram, this dog is again called "Cerberus," along with the epithet "*maledictus*," which further seals his role as the "reviled" antagonist, despite being a dog and not a wolf. The distinction that the members of this pack of villains are dogs is clear, as the word for a domesticated dog is used consistently throughout the poem, rather than "*lupus*" or "wolf." Nevertheless, it is clear that this "rabid" pack exhibits the wild savagery that is often attributed to the wolf, especially in the absence of a man to master or calm the ravenous "cohort," which seem to have been put together by the dogs themselves. In the end, the ram is not able to convince the dogs of its innocence, and because of this lack of communication, the ram is killed by the dogs.

This poem exhibits the auxiliary dog in its rawest and wildest form, and it was this form that the medieval people set out to domesticate. By mastering and showing dominance over the

¹¹⁴ Jan Ziolkowski M., "Sedulius Scottus's De Quodam Verbece a Cane Discerpto," *Mediaevalia* 9 (1983), 4-5.

dog at its most “rabid,” medieval man was able to control the feral aspect of the dog’s nature and use it for his own purpose. From this came hounds that took down boar and harts on hunts, hounds who guarded households, and dogs who herded and protected flocks. In each of these “professions,” the dog uses a harnessed form of its wild nature to benefit his master.

In many cases, the wild nature of the auxiliary dog, while decidedly negative in “The Ram,” was essential to the role that the auxiliary dog played. This wild nature was especially important in venery. In *Le Livre de Chasse*, author Gaston Fébus differentiated what he would cover in his seminal work by what beasts were “hunted commonly and willingly by dogs.”¹¹⁵ This suggests that it was the dogs’ instincts of what to chase that drove the hunt. Furthermore, a dogs’ nature was often required to be divided between tasks. For example, Gaston Fébus praised the good character of the greyhound as “perfectly obedient, sweet, clean, joyous, willing, and gracious,” but only at home; on the hunt, the greyhound was expected to be “fearless and ruthless.”¹¹⁶ In this way, auxiliary dogs represented the perfect medium between the wild dog and the pet dog, expected to take on both roles depending on which role was needed of them.

Collar and Leash

*...thise cacheres that couthe cowpled hor houndes... ...these hunters that knew how leashed up their hounds*¹¹⁷

The leash and collar were important tools for tempering the auxiliary dog’s feral side. Leashes and collars were used as a form of restraint, and furthermore a display of an owner’s mastery over his hound. In this excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the phrasing

¹¹⁵ Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 24.

¹¹⁶ Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 102.

¹¹⁷ Line 1139

implies that there were some hunters who did not know how to properly leash their hounds. Therefore, the knowledge possessed by the mentioned hunters suggests a superior sort of mastery in matters of leashing, and by extension in the mastery of both the dogs and the hunt itself. Once the hunt has begun, the hunters allow their dogs to be “*kest*” or, “unleashed” (line 1147). This release allows the hunting dogs to perform their savage task of hunting the game, but ultimately their fate is still controlled by the master’s hand and when he decides to release the leash. There is further reference to the unleashed dog, “*uncoupled among tho thornes,*” which further provides imagery of the hound finally unbound and given relatively free roam as the hound runs easily through “*playnes*” and “*thornes*” (lines 1419, 1148-1149).

Both collar and leash, then, were not only practical and functional, but also highly symbolic of the submissive state of the dog. The collars of auxiliary dogs differed from those of pet dogs by their functionality. While the collars of pet dogs were often used solely as decoration, the collars of auxiliary dogs served multiple purposes. Some collars served highly practical purposes, such as fending off would-be attackers. *Le Bon Berger* cites that “a shepherd’s dog should be a large mastiff...and he should have around his neck a collar armed with studs of sharp iron or of long sharp nails with flat heads...to withstand wolves or thieves.”¹¹⁸ An example of these collars can be seen in an illustration (Figure 6) from a manuscript of *Le Livre de Chasse*. In the upper, right-hand corner, a spotted hound is attended by a man in a green tunic; around the dog’s neck is a collar similar to that described in *Le Bon Berger*. With these “wolf collars,” we see an extension of man’s need to conquer nature, as the dog’s collar is used to fend off the wilderness in creatures such as wolves or the potential savageness in people such as thieves. Furthermore, *Le Bon Berger* claims that “because of the collar’s armor, the mastiff is more courageous and emboldened and

¹¹⁸ Carleton Carroll W. and Lois Wilson Hawley, trans., *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean De Brie's Le Bon Berger (1379)* (Tempe: ACMRS Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 99.

will not be strangled by wolves, for with it he has greater protection against them.”¹¹⁹ Thus, the collar benefits the hound as well as the master. Another example of a wolf collar is seen on the dog of a tomb effigy (Figure 7). Placed beneath the feet of its owner, the dog, with its studded collar, is shown in a position of both submission and support. He serves an attribute of his master, representing the man’s strength and leadership. The dog’s ferocity, here symbolized by his collar, mirrors the arms and armor worn by his master. As we will see later in the chapter, masters sometimes took on the attributes of the dogs they mastered.

In *The Mabinogion* text, leash and collar are shown as important instruments for the process of taming an auxiliary dog. *The Mabinogion* is a collection of eleven prose tales from the fourteenth century. Of these, the tale “Culhwch and Olwen” relies heavily on the value of the auxiliary dog to prove the worth of the central characters. The construct of the tale is largely based upon a series of linked quests that the protagonist Culhwch must accomplish. In the chained nature of the quests, one quest must be completed before the next can begin, with the refrain, “Though thou get that, there is that thou wilt not get.”¹²⁰ To take the first example, in order to marry the daughter of the chief of giants, Ysbaddaden, Culhwch is first instructed to tend an overgrown field; however, before he can accomplish this, Culhwch must recruit a specific husbandman to till and prepare the land, and before that a specific pair of oxen to plow the field. The chain continues seemingly endlessly. As it turns out, dogs feature prominently in the chains of challenges that Culhwch must overcome.

Dogs are first mentioned when Culhwch is told he must hunt the great boar, Twrch Trwyth. Culhwch is told, “Twrch Trwyth will not be hunted till Drudwyn be obtained, the whelp of Greid

¹¹⁹ Carleton Carroll W. and Lois Wilson Hawley, trans., *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean De Brie's Le Bon Berger (1379)* (Tempe: ACMRS Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 99.

¹²⁰ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 101.

son of Eri.”¹²¹ However, in true fashion of the story, Culhwch is then told that “no leash in the world may hold on him, save the leash of Cors Hundred-claws,” and following that there “is no collar in the world can hold the leash, save the collar of Conhastyr Hundred-hands.”¹²² Of course, the chain continues through many permutations. Culhwch calls upon his cousin, the legendary Arthur, to help him with these quests, and together they systematically complete them, therefore proving their mastery by succeeding in these hound-related quests.

Not all the pursuits of the quests are described, but in what remains of the tale, there are multiple references to leashes and collars that are special both in their powers and in their origins, such as the leash made from the beard of the mighty Dillus the Bearded that is required to leash the hounds that will chase the great Twrch Trwyth.¹²³ Cors Hundred-Claws, another powerful figure, owns a special leash, which Arthur also obtains.¹²⁴

Historically, the leash was also emblematic of a special bond between hound and master. Specifically, we can see this in the example of the sort of hunting dog called a “lymer,” which derives its name from the leash, or “*lyam*.”¹²⁵ Whereas other dogs were allowed to run free, the lymer was always leashed; however, being controlled in this fashion meant that the lymer was rewarded specially before and apart from other hounds.¹²⁶ A lymer, specially chosen, accompanied its master everywhere and, unlike other auxiliary hounds, it was allowed to share its master’s living quarters. Incidentally enough, the lymer was prized for its silence, such as was taught to the hound

¹²¹ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 104.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 105.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹²⁵ Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 126.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

Husdant, whom we will encounter later, whereas other dogs were praised for communicating with their master.¹²⁷

Between Master and Hound

*Upon a felle of the fayre best fede thay thair houndes,
Wyth the lyver and the lyghtes, the lether of the
paunches,
And bred bathed in blod blende ther-amonges...*

Upon the skin of the fair beast they fed their hounds,
With the liver and lungs, the lining of their stomachs
And bread soaked in blood mixed in with it...¹²⁸

There were many other methods besides collar and leash that a master could use to control the feral instincts of the auxiliary dog and temper those instincts for the benefit of the master. One of these methods was the use of exchanges between dog and master. By providing the dog with food, shelter, and medicinal care, a master could train the dog's responses towards his own benefit. In this excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, we see an example of the master providing his dog with food as a lavishly-described prize from the hunt.

Food was foremost an aspect of life for both master and hound that brought the two together, yet also distinguished them from one another. In some instances, the hound was allowed to share the food of his master; Jean de Brie's treatise on shepherding, *Le Bon Berger* cites that the shepherd "should take along and gird on a scrip in which to put bread for himself and his dog," suggesting that master and dog eat from the same bread.¹²⁹ Bread was the common food for medieval dogs; for hunting dogs, bread was in fact the only food that they would receive in their kennels, as their masters saved meat as a reward for a successful hunt.¹³⁰ In this way, the master was able to train the hunting dog to his liking by using choice meat as a prize for good behavior. Nevertheless, bread also exemplifies the sort of sacrifice a master must make for his dog, as the

¹²⁷ Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 127.

¹²⁸ Lines 1358-1361

¹²⁹ Carleton Carroll W. and Lois Wilson Hawley, trans., *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean De Brie's Le Bon Berger (1379)* (Tempe: ACMRS Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 97.

¹³⁰ Joyce E. Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 48.

finest wheat bread (which manuscripts describe as *bon pain de fourment*) was costly, and itself was a category of luxury food reserved for privileged people.¹³¹ Besides establishing the link between master and hound, the reservation of this bread for dogs as well shows medieval appreciation for the dog in a caste higher than other beasts.¹³²

Meat, then, was always a reward for auxiliary dogs. During the hunt, it was customary to give the hounds special portions of the kill, as we have seen in the aforementioned excerpt from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in which the dogs receive choice meats as reward. Later in the text, after the second hunt on which a boar is killed, we read similarly, “*With bred blent ther-with his braches rewardes,*” “with bread mixes therein [with gore], he rewarded his brachets” (line 1610). In Figure 8, we see an illuminated example of what this kind of reward may have looked like. On the left side of the image, six dogs are crowded around an indistinguishable pinkish and red-spotted form. We can surmise that this is the fallen game, for on the right side of the image, a man holds up a handful of entrails. Below him is a dog who has been leashed, and the dog enjoys some form of innards that we can assume came from the stag, for the antlers are positioned close by. This is just one visual example that shows the rewarding of dogs. This sort of reward was called a *curée*.¹³³ The *curée* was not simply a mode of reward, but was also an intimate ritual between auxiliary dog and master, and served to reinforce a sense of community and communion between the participants.¹³⁴ In giving the *curée*, both human and animal were joined in enjoying the victory of a hunt that required both the skills of the dogs and the skills of the master.

The natural, wild tendency of the dog is in fact to eat its prey, and dog owners used this instinctive behavior to encourage the prowess of the dogs while at the same time controlling it. By

¹³¹ Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 123.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

limiting what the dog could eat, men demonstrated their mastery over their hounds and established a dependency that reinforced the dog-master relationship. Against their natural instinct, hunting dogs were expected to hold their prey until their masters arrived and took care of the kill, for they would be rewarded later with food.¹³⁵ The “good dog” was, by extension, the sign of a “good hunter,” so it was of utmost importance that hunters train their dogs well, for their mastery of their dogs reflected their own standing.¹³⁶

Auxiliary dogs also received shelter from their masters. *Le Bon Berger* describes how herding dogs accompany “portable cabins” in which their master sleeps at night and is sheltered from the rain.¹³⁷ Gaston Fébus’ “bird-dog” was not only allowed to share shelter with its master, but even rode on horseback alongside his master.¹³⁸ In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, there are several mentions of “*trystors*,” or hunting stations (e.g. line 1146). These stations would have included a kennel building, the ideal accommodation for hunting dogs. The kennel would have been spacious, as freedom of movement was thought to be linked to better health, and would have been an enclosed location that was sheltered from the elements and kept clean for the sake of the dogs’ health.¹³⁹ Cleanliness was essential; all waste was cleared away each morning and evening, straw bedding was turned over once every third day, and drinking water was changed twice a day.¹⁴⁰ The emphasis on cleanliness was widely applied; medieval experts saw proper hygiene concerning dogs to be essential in preventing dangerous diseases and in lengthening the lives of the dogs.¹⁴¹ Cleanliness, then, was the key to good health, and thus a good dog.

¹³⁵ Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 110.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 110.

¹³⁷ Carleton Carroll W. and Lois Wilson Hawley, trans., *The Medieval Shepherd: Jean De Brie's Le Bon Berger (1379)* (Tempe: ACMRS Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2012), 61-63.

¹³⁸ Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 104.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 120-121.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

As we can see from the prevalence of the topic in the main hunting manuals from the Middle Ages, the good health of the auxiliary dog was also the business of its master. Combing a dog's fur, treating tick infestations with salves, and clipping claws were the jobs of the page boys that worked in the kennels.¹⁴² These page boys would also take the dogs out for physical exercise.¹⁴³ Medieval writers argued that the same sort of human laziness that could lead to sin was equally harmful for dogs.¹⁴⁴ This further solidified psychologically the bond between master and dog.

Beyond the provision of physical goods such as food and space, the relationship between hound and master could also be marked by mutual affection. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for example, the auxiliary dogs are given affection: “*Hor houndes thay ther rewarde, / Her hedes thay fawne and frote,*” “their hounds they rewarded, their [hounds’] heads they patted and caressed” (lines 1918-1919). Gaston Fébus also emphasized the sort of kindness that must be present in the hunter in order to be successful in his tasks; for example, the dog should only be called *biau frere* (“brother”) or *mon amy* (“friend”).¹⁴⁵ Keeping the dogs happy, it seems, was equally essential as keeping the dogs well-kept and well-trained. As Gaston Fébus writes, such a well-kept and well-trained dog could lead to “the most beautiful chase;” however, an ill-kept and ill-trained dog was an example of a “bad hunter.”¹⁴⁶ Again, we see the dog’s performance representative of his master’s skill, as well as the bond between both hound and master modeled around performance. In the chapter entitled “What Manner and Condition a Good Hunter Should Have,” *The Master of Game* insists on knowing intimately each hound’s name, and furthermore

¹⁴² Hannele Klemetilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 124.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

“learn[ing] to put before them twice a day fresh water...and once in the day...empty the kennel and make all clean, and renew their straw, and put again fresh new straw a great deal and right thick.”¹⁴⁷ In this way, the hounds’ well-being reflected upon the master. This becomes even more expressly clear as dogs are taught to communicate with their masters, and vice versa.

Communication

<i>Unclosed the kenel dore and calde hem ther-oute,</i>	Opened the kennel door and called them out,
<i>Blewe bygly in bugles thre bare mote...</i>	Blew vigorously on bugles three, long notes... ¹⁴⁸

Medieval masters would temper the savage tendencies of their hounds into preferred behaviors through means of communication. This sort of communication could be accomplished through verbal commands or physical actions. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* does an exceptional job of showing the sort of communication that would have occurred on a hunt by lending descriptions of horn blowing, dogs baying, and masters shouting, as shown in the above excerpt. In *Le Livre de Chasse*, Gaston Fébus includes horn blowing among verbal commands and visual signs as ways of communicating intention to the hounds.¹⁴⁹ Simply in the very wording of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, we see an additional emphasis on noise during the hunt. During the third hunt in which the game is a fox, the group of hounds is called a “*rabel*” (line 1899). Although this word may have been chosen to keep the alliteration of the line, it also has connotations of not just any group of hounds, but a noisy one.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, the dog is expected to communicate himself with his master. Gaston Fébus praises the running hound, among other traits,

¹⁴⁷ WM A. Baillie-Grohman and F. Baillie-Grohman, eds., *The Master of Game* (New York: Duffield & Company, 1909), 124.

¹⁴⁸ Lines 1140-1141

¹⁴⁹ Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 127.

¹⁵⁰ "Middle English Dictionary Entry: Rabel," University of Michigan Middle English Dictionary, 2014, section goes here, accessed September 30, 2016, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED35712>.

for its “ability to bark informatively (rather than merely excitedly).”¹⁵¹ Fébus also emphasizes that besides being able to understand such verbal commands, visual cues, and horn blowing, auxiliary dogs themselves have their own “language” and it is up to a “good hunter” to understand, interpret, modify, and control that language.¹⁵² Again, we see the performance of the dog reflecting the skill of the master.

Communication continues to be an intrinsic part of the hunt; in fact, the term for the baying of the hounds is reduced to a single Middle English word, “*quest*” (line 1150). These hounds are only barking because they have scented prey; the aforementioned “three long notes” at the beginning of the hunt were meant to restrain any premature baying, as the hounds must learn to only howl once they have scented their prey.¹⁵³ As much as the communication between dog and the world through baying is aggressive, baying in particular being linked to death to prey on the hunt, so too is the aggression in the communication of master to dog, as the text reads, “*Wylde words [the hunters] warp wyth a wrast noy*” or, “the hunters shouted to them fiercely with great clamor,” (line 1423). The operative word being “*wylde*,” suggests the frenzied attempts of the master to control his dog through communication.

In commanding the auxiliary dog with such signals, the master of the dog was able to assert dominance. As we have seen, this usually took the form of encouraging noise, albeit noise made at the proper times. However, in medieval literature, the master can be seen to assert dominance also by encouraging silence, just as much as a medieval hunter would encourage a proper baying response. We see this in the twelfth century example of Tristan from Bérout’s *Tristan*, in which Tristan’s dog, Husdant is taught silence by his master Tristan’s training. Along the way, Husdant

¹⁵¹ Hannele Klemettilä, *Animals and Hunters in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 103.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 127.

¹⁵³ Paul Battles, ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Ontario: Broadview Additions, 2012), 82fn.

in turn works to communicate with Tristan, and through his actions shows admirable loyalty to his master, as well as the sort of human emotion that as, we have seen, separated the wild wolves from the tamed. This sort of human emotion is manifested in Husdant's physical expressions, and marks a departure from his instinctive wild savagery. Husdant here beseeches his master, and again Husdant is shown to be submissive to Tristan.

Bérout opens the episode of Tristan and Husdant by beckoning to any listener who wishes to hear a story "about the virtues of a good upbringing."¹⁵⁴ It is apparent from these very first words of the chapter that Husdant is to serve as an example of the man's mastery over the dog, for the dog's admirable qualities only come by the direct intervention of his master. Indeed, Husdant is considered "a hunting dog so fine that no king or count had a dog to equal him," and he is lauded as "fast, always on the alert, [and] quick and lively," with all of these praises stated even before the narrator mentions the dog's name.¹⁵⁵ However, in the tale, Husdant's spiritedness is hampered in King Mark's castle where the reader finds him, submissively tied by a leash to a block of wood. It is in this castle that the reader first sees Husdant display human emotion as he mourns the loss of his master. It is not only that Tristan has trained his dog well, but has done so in such a way that a fundamental change has occurred, replacing Husdant's animal sense with a more human one, and creating an even stronger bond between hound and master.

This transformation immediately becomes apparent as the narrator omnisciently states that Husdant is "very upset" because he cannot see his master.¹⁵⁶ Husdant refuses to eat anything, which is important when the exchange of food was so historically intimate between dog and master, as we have seen. Husdant is seen to "scowl" and paw the ground "with tears in his eyes,"

¹⁵⁴ Alan S. Fedrick, trans., *The Romance of Tristan; And, the Tale of Tristan's Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 80.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

both of which are primarily human reactions.¹⁵⁷ In fact, he exhibits so many human qualities that “many people” are moved to pity him, having been able to identify with his grief. The people note that “[i]t would be a shame if he were to go mad.”¹⁵⁸ Again, madness occurs when there is some mind to lose in the first place, and Husdant has proven that he has enough human a spirit to be susceptible to madness. Overall, those standing by beg King Mark to let Husdant off the leash, with the assumed expectation that Husdant would take this freedom to return to the wilderness not to pursue feral activities, but to find and be reunited with his master.

The king thinks to himself that Husdant is indeed going mad, as the villagers have suggested, and notes, “This dog is certainly very intelligent.”¹⁵⁹ He does not note that Husdant is intelligent by any means of inherence, but because he does not think “that...there has been a knight as valiant as Tristan.”¹⁶⁰ Thus, Husdant is considered intelligent because he knows the power of his master. However, Husdant’s intelligence is in jeopardy because of the threat of going mad over want of his owner. Three Cornish kings argue that Husdant, when let off leash, will not immediately go to his owner, and instead “bite someone, beast or man; he will be slavering at the jaws.”¹⁶¹ The fear rests in a possible lapse in Husdant’s domesticity caused by the lack of his master; without Tristan’s controlling and mastery of Husdant, Husdant may revert to the wild ways inherent in untrained dogs.

In the end, Husdant is indeed set free, and showing that he is not mad, goes off to find Tristan. To further exhibit his lack of wild, mad behavior and his attributes of domesticated, human behavior, Husdant rushes to a lodging place where he could usually find Tristan and, seeing it

¹⁵⁷ Alan S. Fedrick, trans., *The Romance of Tristan; And, the Tale of Tristan's Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 80.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

empty, “barked and growled and showed his grief,” again displaying human emotion.¹⁶² Husdant, “nimble [and] swift,” continues to run about, “jumping and barking” and looking for Tristan in all the places where Tristan had recently been in. In further attempts to communicate with his master, Husdant makes so much noise that “the whole wood rang with the sound of his barking.”¹⁶³ Here, Husdant’s barking shows his loyalty to Tristan, but Tristan will soon reverse what Husdant must do to be loyal. When Husdant finally finds Tristan, he showed his happiness and “shook himself vigorously, wagging his tail.”¹⁶⁴ At this point, the narrator even comments, “Whoever had seen the dog was all wet with joy could have said that he never saw such joy!”¹⁶⁵ In this case, the narrator states that Husdant’s joy is almost palpable, and could be easily recognized by a human. Indeed, it even surpasses most expressions of joy by men and women. This human emotion in Husdant is brought out by his master Tristan, and again Tristan has elicited human qualities from the dog through his status as master and through the emotional bond forged between master and working dog through human connection.

However, Husdant’s love for his master, exhibited by his doggedly tracking Tristan down, is not fully reciprocated. “God,” Tristan laments, “what a pity this dog has followed us. A dog who does not keep quiet in the wood is no good to a man who has been banished.”¹⁶⁶ In Tristan’s new role as escapee, it seems as if Tristan, in his exile, does not want a hunting dog, but instead something like a pet dog like the quiet lap dog Petitcreiu, who appears in other Tristan legends and to whom we will return in the next chapter. Unlike Petitcreiu, whose purpose and function is to please, Tristan notes that he and Yseut would only be “afraid and anxious” in keeping Husdant,

¹⁶² Alan S. Fedrick, trans., *The Romance of Tristan; And, the Tale of Tristan's Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 81.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

even going so far as to say that Husdant is better off killed than leading Tristan and Yseut to capture.¹⁶⁷ Tristan acknowledges the “greatness of heart” in Husdant, and asks Yseut her advice. It is Yseut who saves Husdant.

Yseut states, “A dog barks when it is hunting, both by its nature and by habit.”¹⁶⁸ Yseut attributes Husdant’s barking to the wildness in him, acknowledging that it is part of his nature, but also suggesting that a dog trained in barking would have to be further trained to be silent. At the very notion of Husdant’s barking being a product of the wilderness, Yseut remembers a story of a Welsh forester who had trained his dog to make no noise. She suggests that Tristan train Husdant the same way. Thus, Husdant will again be influenced and mastered by his owner, bending to Tristan and Yseut’s whims. Tristan admits he is “greatly afraid of the dog’s bark,” and agrees to teach Husdant silence.¹⁶⁹

So, Tristan trains Husdant to make no noise in his hunting, though his training is not without some degree of harshness to Husdant. When at first Husdant barks at and scares off a wounded deer, Tristan strikes Husdant hard, showing his dominance over the hunting dog. At this, Husdant “looked up at his master, not knowing what to do.”¹⁷⁰ Here, Husdant is submissive to Tristan, waiting for the next command, even when he himself is thrown into confusion after he has been punished for doing what he was originally trained to do, that is to bark. Tristan pushes Husdant about, and the omniscient narrator states that “Husant wanted to bark again.”¹⁷¹ Despite his apparent wish to follow his instincts, Husdant becomes mastered and learns to follow prey without barking, leading Tristan to the beasts the dog brings down. At this, the narrator concludes

¹⁶⁷ Alan S. Fedrick, trans., *The Romance of Tristan; And, the Tale of Tristan's Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 82.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 84.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

by exclaiming, “Dogs are very useful creatures!”¹⁷² Thus, Husdant becomes a perfect example of the ultimate function of the auxiliary dog – to be useful – where wolves are meant to be the subject of conquest and pet dogs are meant to be the catalyst of simple delight.

Husdant also appears in the Middle English poem *Sir Tristrem* under the name “Hodain.” Hodain enters the narrative with no particular introduction, much unlike Béroul’s telling of Husdant’s story. However, the Middle English text provides a background for Hodain’s loyalty, telling how Hodain licked a cup that held a love potion that both Tristan and Yseut had previously drank from. Thus, Hodain becomes bound in a sort of fealty to his masters Tristan and Yseut. Even though the love Hodain feels is obviously not the same type of love that Tristan might feel for Yseut, his love is nevertheless a human emotion, brought upon by a magical potion intended for humans, for as Tristan and Yseut “*loved with al her might / ...Hodain dede also*” (lines 1693-1694). In the same way that the man-made potion has taken over Tristan and Yseut, so too does it domesticate, in a way, Hodain. Hodain makes a later reappearance along with the lap dog Petitcreiu. Unlike Béroul’s version in which Hodain is left behind, in the Middle English lay, Hodain joins Tristan and Yseut in their exile in the woodlands. In this exile, Hodain is likewise trained as he was in Béroul’s version. In this instance, Hodain is tamed out of necessity, but submits to Tristan all the same, just as with Béroul.

Claiming Mastery

So far, passages from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* have guided us through the ways in which the auxiliary dog formed relationships with his master and the ways in which his master

¹⁷² Alan S. Fedrick, trans., *The Romance of Tristan; And, the Tale of Tristan's Madness* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 84.

benefited from owning an auxiliary dog. Although there has been much literature on the symbolism of the hunting scenes in the romance; studies have generally focused on the hunt as a whole rather than on the dogs in particular. Dogs, however, sometimes did take on a symbolic role themselves. Just as the hunting dogs exhibit controlled savagery, these positive attributes can be transferred to their master, as we have seen in the dog defining the “good hunter” or the “bad hunter.” In this way, auxiliary dogs serve the function of representation. As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, outlawed men could be given names that related to wolves, such as *capo lupino* or *loup-garou*, to emphasize their malevolence.¹⁷³ In the same way, to be termed a “hound” had its own connotations, as can be seen in the famous example in the tale of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, in which the chief hero Cúchulainn is granted the title the “Hound of Ulster.” In the epic, Cúchulainn wins this title for his mastery over an aggressive guard dog. This dog was not intended to hurt any man, only “to guard...cattle and other stock,” as its master Culann states.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the dog is dangerous, termed as being “savage;” Culann also mentions, “Three chains are needed to hold him, with three men on each chain,” thus reinforcing both the function and the symbolism of the leash.¹⁷⁵ The hound is released under Culann’s misunderstanding that there would be no one in the hound’s enclosure, and so it comes to rush at Cúchulainn. Cúchulainn nonchalantly plays games with his ball and stick while the hound advances and as spectators look on in dread. Against all odds, he manages to violently defeat the oncoming hound. In this instance, savagery was conquered by an even greater savagery, as Cúchulainn “smashed [the hound] against the nearest pillar and its limbs

¹⁷³ Edward A. Armstrong, *Saint Francis: Nature Mystic: The Derivation and Significance of the Nature Stories in the Franciscan Legend* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 201.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Tain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 83.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 83.

leaped from their sockets. (According to another version he threw his ball into its mouth and so tore out its entrails.)”¹⁷⁶

Despite the savagery of the attacking hound, now dead, it had been a valued creature. The master Culann exclaims, “My life is a waste, and my household like a desert, with the loss of my hound! He guarded my life and my honor...a valued servant, my hound, taken from me. He was shield and shelter for our goods and herds. He guarded all our beasts, at home or out in the fields.”¹⁷⁷ Here, the bond that was between master and hound is made clear. However, rather than being valued for companionship, although Culann’s morning demonstrates a strong emotional bond, Culann’s hound was rather valued for its dutifulness in guarding both household. Although companionship was certainly experienced between masters and their auxiliary dogs, the main purpose of the auxiliary dog was to service its master, as we can see so strongly illustrated in the case of Culann’s hound. Also valued was the savagery intrinsic to the auxiliary dog, as illustrated in Culann’s hound as it attacked Cúchulainn. However, this savagery was tempered by the dog’s master, and in that temperance the true value of the auxiliary dog emerged. After Cúchulainn hears how upset Culann is over the loss of his hound, Cúchulainn offers to take up the role that the dead guard dog left behind, saying, “I will be your hound, and guard yourself and your beasts.”¹⁷⁸ In this way, Cúchulainn becomes as valued, if not more valued, than the former auxiliary dog by taking mastery of its old role. The tale shows the value of Cúchulainn by first showing the value of the old hound and then by showing Cúchulainn’s mastery over the old hound.

In other places in the epic, epithets relating to dogs are used to describe the qualities of men. One good fighter is referred to as a “ravening mastiff,” which again places value on the

¹⁷⁶ Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Tain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 83.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

savage nature of the dog.¹⁷⁹ However, another fighter who dared take on the Hound of Ulster is called “an ignorant whelp...to pick a fight with the irresistible great Hound of Culann.”¹⁸⁰ Here we see how appropriation can be both positive and negative. In this case, the fighter is devalued by likening him to an untrained dog. In Cúchulainn’s case, positively re-appropriating the name of the hound, Cúchulainn shows further mastery over the slain auxiliary dog.

Conclusion

We have seen the ways in which the medieval master of an auxiliary dog might temper the observed feral nature of his hound, all of which affect both the master’s success as well as his image. We have seen how masters used collar and leash to control their hounds, used exchange to form a bond between themselves and their hounds, and used communication to cement the relationship. It may seem, at times, that the hounds only functioned as tools, a means towards an end. However, we have seen, for example, in *Husdant*, that individual personalities do emerge among specific hounds. Among packs of hounds grouped together for tasks, such as the hunt, sometimes a favorite will be chosen, as with Tristan’s hound *Husdant*. In *The Mabinogion*, Arthur and several of his mighty companions gather together the two dogs of Glythfyr Ledewig and the whelp *Drudwyn* to hunt the “Chief Boar,” *Ysgithyrwyn*. However, not one of these legendary dogs actually takes down the boar; the tale narrates, “It was not the dogs which *Ysbaddaden* had named to *Culhwch* which killed the boar, but *Cafall*, Arthur’s own dog.”¹⁸¹ It is not only here that *Cafall* is given special attention. In the tale from the same text, “*Gereint Son of Erbin*,” *Cafall* is blatantly

¹⁷⁹ Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Tain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 230.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁸¹ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 115.

termed “Arthur’s favorite dog” and is introduced by name.¹⁸² In the hunt that is described, Cafall “left all the dogs behind,” further distinguishing him from the unnamed mass of other dogs.¹⁸³ Although the legendary dogs are named, Cafall, who is also named, is able to succeed over even the legendary dogs, landing himself a place in the spotlight, just as Husdant did for Tristan. These two dogs are exemplary, serving their masters above and beyond the normal role of auxiliary dogs. Furthermore, we know what love their masters had for them in return. Cafall is immortalized historically; a physical monument, named “Cefn Carn Cavall,” is situated in Wales, where there is a stone in which Cafall’s “pawprint” is supposedly marked.¹⁸⁴ We have already seen Tristan’s love for Husdant as he rues the prospect of releasing or killing his beloved hound. In these cases, both masters have exhibited themselves to master their dogs especially. So, the question arises as to whether or not these auxiliary dogs, and other special auxiliary dogs in the Middle Ages, have transcended their role to also become pets themselves, giving their masters joy as well as their services. In the next chapter, we will look at pets specifically and the fine border that separates a pet from an auxiliary dog, and even, as in the case of the pet wolf of Count Robert, what separates a pet from a wild animal.

¹⁸² Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion* (New York: Knopf, 2001), 213.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁸⁴ Charlotte Guest, *The Mabinogion* (London: Quaritch, 1877), 290.

THE PET DOG

*Je suis Souillard, le blanc et le beau chien courant,
Du mon temps le meilleur et le mieulx pourchassant...*

I am Souillard, the white and handsome courser,
In my time the best, for most excellently pursuing...¹⁸⁵

These are the first lines of the early fifteenth century poem, “*Les Dits du Bon Chien Souillard*.” Though penned by Jacques de Brézé, the poem uses the narrative voice of Souillard himself, “*le blanc et le beau chien courant*,” “the white and handsome courser,” to regale the reader with the accomplishments of the dog’s life (line 1). Throughout the poem, Souillard does much bragging about his skills, firstly boasting that he was “*De mon temps le meilleur et le mieulx pourchassant*,” “In my time the best, for most excellently pursuing” (line 2). Furthermore, throughout the poem, Souillard affirms himself to have been one of the best auxiliary dogs belonging to his three former masters. He describes himself “*avec le pied, la gueulle longuement foysonnant*,” “hounding for a long time with paw and muzzle,” participating in the chase avidly and spiritedly (line 9). Here, he communicates well with his master, which we have seen was prized among dogs, literally by use of his “*gueulle*,” “throat,” and by “*tout le jour bien criant*,” “baying well all the day” (line 10). Souillard is also successful technically, saying, “*...ay faiz en plusieurs grans deffaulx, / Ou il c’estoit trouvé par pluyes et par grans chaulx*,” “I made many a great catch, even when he [the master] found himself in rains and great heat” (lines 13-14). Later in the poem, he again reaffirms that “*J’ay fait de plus grans traictes et moins failli de cerfs / Que ne fist jamais chien*,” “I made the greatest leads and the fewest losses of deer than a dog ever did,” adding his previous statements (lines 27-28). Souillard also pompously calls himself the “*chien bault*,” a specific phrase from Old French that means “a dog who chases all animals and who never

¹⁸⁵ Lines 1-2. Line numbering according to: De Brézé, Jacques, and Gunnar Tilander. *La Chasse ; Les Dits Du Bon Chien Souillard ; Et Les Louanges De Madame Anne De France*. Lund: Carl Bloms Boktryckeri, 1959.

turns from the game,” which further adds to his self-granted praises (line 15).¹⁸⁶ By this point, Souillard has placed himself on a higher pedestal than even his children, whom he also mentions were sired nobly and “*faisoient bien le mestier*,” “did their job well” (line 25). Nevertheless, Souillard yet again returns the attention to himself, saying of himself, “*Pour prendre cerfz a force, n’est chien qui fust mieulx duit*,” “To take deer by force, there is no dog who was better gifted;” (line 38). Here, Souillard employs the operative word: “*fust*,” a word in the literary Old French *passee simple*, the “simple past.” It emphasizes that Souillard indeed once was a formidable auxiliary dog, communicative with his masters and technically spectacular; however, that time is past. Souillard’s sole identity as an auxiliary dog is no longer valid.

Souillard has in fact transformed into the perfect definition of a medieval pet, having left behind his glory days of hunting under his masters for a life of comfort, as hinted by the poem. Souillard has entered into a life of privilege that defines what it means to be a medieval pet. Different components that Souillard mentions in the poem correspond to different components of pethood, and we will see why each element is so essential to Souillard’s new classification as pet. However, we must first bring into discussion what being a pet means nominally. To begin the discussion of the definition, we will turn to Kathleen Walker-Maikle, whose seminal work *Medieval Pets* on the title subject aims to define what it meant to be a medieval pet. According to Walker-Maikle, pets are “animals kept by humans for companionship. An animal only becomes a pet because its human owner chooses to keep it as one. There are no pets in nature. A ‘pet’ is thus an artificial, man-made category.”¹⁸⁷ Throughout the chapter, we will see examples of how this claim at times proves itself to be true, through themes presented by Souillard’s narrative. Some

¹⁸⁶ Jacques De Brézé and Gunnar Tilander, *La Chasse ; Les Dits Du Bon Chien Souillard ; Et Les Louanges De Madame Anne De France* (Lund: Carl Bloms Boktryckeri, 1959), 69.

¹⁸⁷ Kathleen Walker-Maikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 1.

themes hold true to Kathleen Walker-Maikle's statement. Souillard is the object of favoritism, which is in itself a choosing by the master that leads to a special place in the master's life and household. Souillard himself is shown to be preferable simply by the fact that he was chosen by Jacques de Brézé to be both narrator of the poem and subject of the accolades. Souillard is also representative as a symbol of his multiple masters as he is handed down through owners. In addition, as a privilege for pethood, Souillard receives choice food and living quarters, which are also other complements of his master. Some themes, on the other hand, seem to go against Walker-Maikle's theory. Souillard also fulfills the role of bringing enjoyment to his master, a function which Souillard does on his own accord rather than being "trained" to do so, as an auxiliary dog may be trained to communicate. In another theme, Souillard is the subject of old age, a trait which he comes upon inevitably rather than by means of his master, though his master may have chosen to enter Souillard into "retirement."

This work of observing the various themes of pethood is done to determine whether the category of pet depends on intrinsic characteristics or whether it is a construction based on what can be acquired from a master. We will find that Kathleen Walker-Maikle's categorization is just the start to explaining the complex relationship between the medieval pet and his master. The running dog Souillard will present various topics that can help us with the difficult definition of a medieval pet, and through this definition a view of the connection between pets and their masters. We will also see examples of medieval pet dogs from works of art and from other literary sources. Among these other literary sources, we will be looking at the puppy Pitulus from the twelfth-century Latin poem by Theodorich of Saint Trond, as well as the small dog Petitcreiu from Gottfried von Strassburg's *Tristan*. In addition, we will also be drawing from a historical source, the account of the pet wolf belonging to Count Robert of France from the thirteenth century. In

using these sources, we can examine how owners interacted with their pets, and whether or not pethood is indeed the ultimate mastery of medieval owners over dogs in the Middle Ages.

Favoritism Among Pets

...au maistre a qui je suis et me garde sic her... ...to the master to whom I am and who holds me so dear...¹⁸⁸

In his poem, Souillard references a sort of favoritism that his master has over him, and his pride in being his master's hound, as illustrated in this excerpt. At the end of the past chapter focusing on auxiliary dogs, we noted favoritism among dogs of the hunt. We have seen individual personalities emerge among certain hounds, as Husdant did under Tristan. Husdant was not only given a name among an otherwise anonymous rabble, such as the sort seen galivanting in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, but was given a special place in the Tristan cycle in which he played a key role that no nameless hound could have fulfilled. Subsequently, we saw in *The Mabigonion* Cafall, the dog of King Arthur himself, singled out to kill the "Chief Boar" Ysgithyrwyn singlehandedly. These two dogs can be viewed in common because they are both named, just as Souillard is in the very first line of the poem. It must be said that naming is historically not exclusive to the pet dog; *The Master of Game*, as referenced in the previous chapter, listed hundreds of names suitable for a hunting hound.¹⁸⁹ However, among literary sources, many dogs that were granted names had specific, important functions, like Husdant and Cafall. Furthermore, the names from *The Master of Game*, for example, were possibly also used for dogs kept as pets.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Line 41

¹⁸⁹ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 17.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

This could be because naming also suggested a greater sense of intimacy between master and dog. Kathleen Walker-Meikle does not address this specific bond with names, but she does mention that “pets are the objects of emotional attachment on the part of their owners,” and although “emotional attachment alone is not sufficient criterion to determine whether an animal is a pet,” it can still be considered a good measure of the amount of care and investment that an owner has devoted to his animal, possibly leading to favoritism. In the amount of emotional investment, we see the potentiality of an auxiliary dog, for example, to also be a pet dog. Later in this chapter, we will see a wild dog that is also a pet dog, though we will see that this much of a stretch on the spectrum proves disastrous for animal and master.

To further identify a master’s favoritism for his dog, we must leave the literary perspective of the story of Souillard and look at it from a historical perspective. Obviously, a dog is not writing this epitaph; the true author is Jacques de Brézé, who would have had to have knowledge of and some esteem for Souillard’s three previous masters: King Loys of France, the seneschal Gaston, and the Grand Seneschal. In any case, the dog Souillard himself was chosen as a vessel through which to convey praise for these three masters. However, the poem also conveys great praise for Souillard himself. Souillard consistently praises himself, as previously discussed, describing his heyday, and the author of the poem could only be thinking of a favorite dog who was valuable enough to be passed among the three, very-esteemed owners that he had in his lifetime. In being the subject of the poem, Souillard carries the qualities not only of an adored pet, but of a dog who has transcended the role of a simple auxiliary dog, finding intimacy in his name. Perhaps, however, there is even more of a last suggestion of intimacy in the excerpted line “...*au maistre a qui je suis et me garde si cher*,” “...the master to whom I am and who holds me so dear,” (line 41). If not by his name and his reason for being the subject of the poem, this shows that Souillard is cherished

by his master just as Souillard cherishes his master in return. Souillard is, in fact, so cherished, that he has actually been passed on through multiple masters, showing his good quality, if not as a courser, then as a pet. In this way, Souillard holds the ability to become a good companion to *any* master, suggesting that the qualities that make a good pet are to a certain degree universally sought after rather than specifically. We will see further specific examples of the way in which Souillard is cherished later in the chapter, but first we must look at another way in which Souillard has risen to the prominence of pethood.

Old Age and “Retirement”

Je suis maintenant viel et suis tenu bien aise... Now I am old, and I am held well at ease...¹⁹¹

Here, Souillard references his age and his comfort in that age, bringing up the question of pethood through a sort of “retirement.” To begin, some dogs were bred to be pet dogs, though it was done informally, and there is little documentary evidence about the process.¹⁹² The process is mentioned in Souillard’s poem as he references “*mes enfans, dont j’ay eu vint et deux,*” “my children, of which I had twenty-two” (line 17). This shows that Souillard had been part of the breeding process, though certainly for auxiliary dogs rather than pet dogs. Indeed, Souillard did not come into his pethood through breeding, as some pets did, but assumed the role of pet when he became too old or feeble to do his usual jobs. Several times we see this in Old French poetry. In our first example with Souillard, we understand that Souillard was once, as we have previously described, very successful as an auxiliary dog, bagging many deer and prized by his masters. However, there are also clues that Souillard is past his prime. Souillard references his imminent death early in the poem, saying “*Et croy que après ma mort il n’en demoura nulz,*” “And I believe

¹⁹¹ Line 39

¹⁹² Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 30.

that after my death, none like me will remain” (line 16). In the following line, Souillard continues the thought by saying, “*Si n’est de mes enfans, don’t j’ay eu vint et deux, / Qui par toutes forestz prennent leurs ceفز tou ceulz,*” “if not for my children, of which I had twenty-two, who through all forests take their deer all on their own” (lines 17-18). These lines suggest that Souillard is past his breeding time as he looks back to the complete number of whelps that he sired. However, they are no longer whelps, and have clearly grown old enough to independently take deer on the hunt. This means that Souillard is considerably aged, a fact that we clearly get in the line “*Je suis maintenant viel et suis tenu bien aise,*” “Now I am old, and I am held well at ease” (line 39). This rings with the same sense of favoritism previously discussed, as it is suggested that the master holds him dear and provides Souillard comfort. Moreover, however, it directly tells us that Souillard has passed his prime of hunting, and has effectively “retired” into the good graces of his master, who, as we shall see, welcomes him into his home and offers him the privileges of pethood.

The act of an auxiliary dog retiring into pethood is found in other examples from Old French literature. In an early fifteenth-century poem by Charles d’Orléans, we again see the contained life of an aged hunting dog. The poem first describes “*Le vieil briquette se repose,*” “The old hound is resting” (line 2).¹⁹³ To further emphasize the old dog’s inaction, the poem says that “*Desormais travailler n’ose, / Abayer, ne mot sonner,*” “Henceforth he dares not work, / Bay, nor sound a word” (lines 3-4). In this sense, one of the attributes that was at times the central use of the hunting dog, that is, loud communication, has been taken away, making this hunting dog more apt for a sedentary life (we have seen only Husdant retain his hunting abilities while silent). The poem even cheekily quips, “*Ung viellart peult peu de chose!*” “An old man can do few things!” (line 6). Unlike Souillard’s blissful retirement, however, the tone in this poem of confinement takes

¹⁹³ Line numbers taken from: John Fox et al., *Poetry of Charles D’Orléans and His Circle* (Tempe: ACMRS (Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies), in Collaboration with Brepols, 2010), 766.

on a negative tone, as the old dog is “imprisoned...in a closed room,” “*emprisonner...en chambre close*” (lines 8-9). Later in this chapter, we will see further examples of this restriction of space in pethood. The end of this poem becomes morbidly ambiguous as “Old Age” (“*Vieillesse*”) intends “*plus peine ne luy donner*” “to give him no more pain” (line 8, 11). Is the dog suffering? The poem does not mention what this dog now means to his master, but it seems as if the dog is a pain to himself. Therefore, the status of “pet” is not simply “better” than that of wild or auxiliary dogs. Instead, it is a category with a different set of advantages and disadvantages, which we see in Souillard.

The Privilege of Food

Qui me fait pain et cher pour mon vivre trencher... Who makes to cut bread and meat for my sustenance...¹⁹⁴

Some of the advantages of pets were the various privileges they had. One of the special privileges that pets received was special food from their owners. Souillard mentions this when he says of his master, “*qui me fait pain et cher pour mon vivre trencher,*” “who makes to cut bread and meat for my sustenance” (line 42). It is not simply that Souillard is given bread and meat, like the auxiliary dog he once was, but there is an implication that Souillard’s food is actually prepared for him. Food fed to pets was often of a quality that ordinary people could not afford, sometimes even imported.¹⁹⁵ Among records of food for medieval dogs, there is a specific sort called “*panes pro canibus,*” “bread for dogs,” which implies that it was made specifically for dogs.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, in the sixteenth century French court, there was a specific role for a “*boulangier des petits chiens blancs,*” “baker for the small, white dogs,” in which the dogs would have, essentially, their very

¹⁹⁴ Line 42

¹⁹⁵ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 41.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

own chef.¹⁹⁷ Although all dogs ate bread, a specific food reserved specifically for indoor dogs was milk, which in itself was often solely given to human children.¹⁹⁸ Pets, therefore, not only received a quasi-human treatment in being given a name, but also in their privileged diet.

The Pet's Environment

*Coucher dedens sa chambre pres du feu chaudement,
Paille et belle litiere acoutree nettement...*

To sleep snugly within his chamber near the fire
Furnished neatly with straw and a nice litter...¹⁹⁹

Another of the privileges that defined pethood was the privilege of being allowed in the private quarters of the masters. Souillard is allowed, as we see in the excerpt, “to sleep snugly within his [master’s] chamber near the fire, furnished neatly with straw and a nice litter,” a grand luxury (lines 43-44). As we have seen in the previous chapter, auxiliary dogs were consistently given good living conditions so that they might perform better on the hunt. However, the difference here is that Souillard is not *only* given a nice, straw litter as an auxiliary dog would have had, but also the privilege of sleeping within his master’s very chamber. As Kathleen Walker-Meilke writes, “Medieval pets had as their true milieu enclosed domestic space.”²⁰⁰ She continues, “physical proximity was an indicator of intimacy.”²⁰¹ Walker-Meilke is right in this sense, but proximity is not only with consideration to living quarters. In addition, pets sat on their masters’ laps, as often shown in iconography. In such iconography, close contact is an attribute of pets, who are almost always in a close personal space, or held in their master’s arms, or lying at his feet.²⁰² This restriction of space and closeness to master also points to a degree of domesticity and subjection that stands in stark contrast to the wild dog. In continuing her point, Walker-Meilke

¹⁹⁷ Kathleen Walker-Meilke, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 42.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹⁹⁹ Lines 43-44.

²⁰⁰ Kathleen Walker-Meilke, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 55.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 56.

goes into further detail about pets in their masters' bed chambers, as Souillard claims to be. There are numerous iconographic and literary sources of pets in their masters' bedrooms. For example, John Gower in the fourteenth century writes this short verse about his mistress' dog: "*I pleie with hire litel hound, / Now on the bed, now on the ground...*" "I play with her little hound, now on the bed, now on the ground," the bed here suggesting the intimacy of a bedroom.²⁰³ An iconographic reference from the sixteenth century is a sketch by Lorenzo Lotto from Italy, in which an ecclesiastic is in his study (which, furnished with a bed, also seems to be his bedroom); in the foreground is an extremely miniscule dog, no bigger than the ecclesiastic's hand, sitting in close proximity on a small pillow (Figure 9).

The small pillow that the ecclesiastic's pet dog sits on brings us to the actual illustration of Souillard from the manuscript in which his elegy is recorded (Figure 10). While the aforementioned ecclesiastic's small dog is seated upon a proper pillow, Souillard is also seated on some sort of pillow or rug. It seems to be a man-made floor because it is checked in a red and brown pattern. Also checked are the four walls surrounding Souillard and his name, suggesting a kind of inner chamber that not only is an enclosed space, but is an enclosed space furnished with decorative floor and walls. This means it is most likely the space of his master as Souillard described in the poem. Within these walls, Souillard bears a collar and a leash. The leash and collar are a symbol that a dog is connected to his owner, yet the owner himself is not shown.²⁰⁴ Rather, Souillard is granted an elevated status as the foremost subject of this "portrait." We also know that Souillard had a past as a hunting dog, and, as we discussed in the previous chapter, auxiliary dogs also wore collars. However, although not apparent in this image, the differentiation between auxiliary dog collars and pet dog collars was function; while the wolf-collars, as we looked at in

²⁰³ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 60.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

the previous chapter, had spikes to ward off feral animals, many pet dog collars had decorative bells, like that of the lap dog Petitcreiu of the *Tristan* cycle, which would have been a disadvantage to the hunting auxiliary dog.²⁰⁵

Continuing to look at the image of the docile, kneeling Souillard, we come to see that his quarters are surrounded by a tangle of trees, shrubs, and flowers. This flora could be one of two symbolic things. Firstly, the greenery could be symbolic of the forest and wilderness outside of the protected space that Souillard occupies. It could be that the box that Souillard appears to be drawn in is protecting him from the wilderness outside, though, as we know from his past, he once occupied and hunted in that very same wilderness. It could also symbolize a garden, which is made possible by the seeming pattern that the flowers make up. This again illustrates Souillard's confines, for although pets were sometimes let outdoors, it was always to an enclosed garden where the pet would still be confined, or else put on a leash.²⁰⁶

We also see the restricted living space in the story of Petitcreiu, the miniscule, pet dog featured in the *Tristan* cycle, who we will study more in depth later in this chapter. Petitcreiu is gifted the privilege of living space and intimate quarters with his mistress Isolde; there are "instructions to make him a delightful little kennel of gold and precious things, such as one might dream of. Inside, they spread a rich brocade for him to lie on."²⁰⁷ Although Petitcreiu is confined to a kennel, the make of this kennel of precious materials shows the love and endearment that is put forth for the small dog. Furthermore, "Petitcreiu was under Isolde's observation day and night, in public and in private – such was her custom wherever she was or wherever she rode. He never came out of her sight, he was always led or carried where she could see him."²⁰⁸ In this way,

²⁰⁵ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 50.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁰⁷ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 256.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

Petitcreiu is again limited with regards to space, but he is privileged in this space to be kept so close to his mistress Isolde all the time.

This brings to mind a detail from the Luttrell Psalter showing a woman in an elaborate carriage of gold and fineries (Figure 11). In the upper, left-hand corner, a crowned woman is receiving a small dog, much like Petitcreiu would have been received by Isolde. The pet dog is being carefully handed over, which is in stark contrast to the dog in the bottom, right-hand corner, walking beneath the wheels of the carriage, completely ignored. This is probably an auxiliary dog meant for guarding the carriage and its contents, as it is clearly being treated differently than the pampered pet dog being held by two pairs of careful hands. In this, we see the differences between a “true” auxiliary dog and a “true” pet dog, though the differences were not always so stark, as we have discussed.

Furthermore, as we can more clearly see in the enlarged scope of the illumination, the auxiliary dog is quite distanced from the humans in the illustration (Figure 12). The auxiliary dog is sniffing about in between the two clusters of humans in the carriage, one on the left centered around the pet dog, and the other on the right centered around a woman and her pet squirrel, and bit further out a man on a horse drawing the carriage. In contrast, the pet dog is surrounded by a group of humans. It looks as if the dog is being handed between two humans, and in this scene, much of the attention, both visual and tactile, is focused on this dog. This dog is being touched, almost cradled, by two humans carefully passing him between them. This is in stark contrast to this pet dog’s auxiliary brethren, who sniffs alone below the carriage with no regard granted him. The auxiliary dog here is simply serving another function, while the pet works to provide delight, as best a pet can do.

Delight and Joy

...*Maintz plaisirs luy*... ..Many a pleasure to him...²⁰⁹

As seen in the excerpt, Souillard mentions that he was “many a pleasure” to his master (line 13). This is evidence of one of the central functions that the pet had in the medieval household, that is to provide enjoyment for his master. This is arguably the more prominent function of the two discussed in this chapter. It could be argued that even Souillard’s poem itself was a form of entertainment for the reader; perhaps the medieval reader would have found it as charming as a modern audience might see it. We see more of the role of pleasing more thoroughly in some other literary examples of medieval pet dogs, namely the Latin puppy Pitulus and the aforementioned, semi-magical pet dog Petitcreiu from the *Tristan* cycle.

We begin by looking at the case of Pitulus. In the twelfth century, Theodorich of Saint Trond wrote a poetic eulogy to his small dog, Pitulus, which shows what Pitulus’ function was in the relationship between dog and master. The poem begins dramatically, calling on other dogs to lament or weep on behalf of Pitulus: “*Flete, canes, si flere vacat, si flere valetis / flete canes: catulus mortuus est Pitulus*,” “Lament dogs, if there is time to lament, if you have strength to lament; lament, dogs: the puppy Pitulus is dead” (lines 1-2).²¹⁰ It is interesting that humans are not called upon to lament the death of Pitulus, but instead Pitulus’ brethren are called upon. Furthermore, Theodorich is asking such brethren to participate in the human activity of lamentation, though dogs themselves have certainly been known to show forms of grieving in their own way. Perhaps what makes the scene more pathetic is that Pitulus is described as a “*catulus*,” “a puppy,” making Pitulus seem even more pitiful and deserving of such lamentation (line 2).

²⁰⁹ Line 13

²¹⁰ Line numbering taken from: F. J. E. Raby, *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 198.

This rest of the poem consists of a mixture of raising Pitulus in praise for being an asset to his master, and further diminishing the dog in order to evoke more sympathy. Pitulus is described as “*plus cane dignus*,” “more deserving than a dog,” lifting him up to exalted status (line 3). However, just lines later, he is also described as “*canis exiguous...brevis et catulus*,” “a scanty dog...slight and a puppy,” again invoking his identity as small and defenseless (line 6). He is said to perpetually appear to be a puppy, even if he was “twice ten years old” (line 7). Indeed, it is also noted that “*muri Pannonico vix aequus corpore toto*,” “his whole body scarcely equal to a Pannonian mouse,” which is an extreme diminution (line 8). Again he is diminished when the matter of his strengths comes into question; he has “*parvae, satis illo corpore dignae*,” “little, enough worthy of his body” (line 13). However, it is followed that this little amount of strength is “*ingentes animi robore dissimili*,” “huge spirits with dissimilar brawn” (line 14). At once, he is both magnified and made to seem a sympathetic figure by virtue of his small size.

Eventually in the poem, the description of Pitulus comes down to a question of what Pitulus’ function was, which reveals the classification that we can now attribute to Pitulus, that of a pet. The questioner in the poem asks, “*Quid fuit officium? Numquid fuit utile vel non?*” “What was his work? Was it useful or not?” (line 15). The narrator replies, “*Ut parvum magnus diligeret dominus. / Hoc fuit officium, domino praeludere tantum*,” “[His work was] that the great master might delight in the small. / That was the work, to play so much with his master” (line 16-17). In this line, we are able to see the play of power in the relationship, as the master is considered “great” and Pitulus “small,” and in that the sheer function of the dog, which was to give joy to his master and nothing else. With this line and those following, we are reminded of the role of the pet in the medieval household. When asked about what Pitulus’ “*utilitas*” (“usefulness”) was, the narrator replies, “*Non nisi risus erat*,” “None except being laughed at” (line 18). This fulfills the basic

definition that sets pets aside from lawless wolves or working auxiliary dogs, namely that they have no other function besides being enjoyable for their owner. The poem emphasizes this in the last stanza, where Pitulus, the “*dilecte canis*” (“delightful dog”) is “*ridende, dolende*” (“to be laughed at, to be mourned”) (line 19). If anything, in death, the second function of Pitulus is to be an object of sympathy: “*risus eras vivens, mortuus ecce dolor*,” “living you were laughter, dead behold grief” (line 19). Still, in life it is clear that Pitulus was meant to be an enjoyment to his master.

The small dog Petitcreiu from the *Tristan* cycle is another famous example of a pet dog whose sole purpose was to please his master. Petitcreiu originally belonged to Duke Gilan, where Petitcreiu is described as “[Duke Gilan’s] heart’s delight and balm to his eyes.”²¹¹ This also is reminiscent of the sort of favoritism affection previously discussed. Petitcreiu is often referred to as the “tiny dog” or the “little dog,” which also is emblematic of his pethood, as there did exist technical limits which defined what sorts of dogs were allowed in the privileged spaces of pets, with one source saying a mere five inches in diameter around the waist.²¹² Furthermore, “diminutive size, although not an absolute necessity for a pet, facilitated...closeness,” so Petitcreiu’s small size would have made him more ready to bond with Isolde.²¹³ Regardless of how small Petitcreiu actually was, he was treasured as a small, precious thing and also one that seemed to have magical properties. He sits on a rare purple cloth that is a gift from an Avalon fairy as a “token of love and affection,” a piece of symbolism for Petitcreiu’s purpose; this description of the cloth seems to fit Petitcreiu as well.²¹⁴ Petitcreiu is also multicolored:

²¹¹ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 249.

²¹² Anthony L. Podberscek, Elizabeth S. Paul, and James Serpell, *Companion Animals and Us: Exploring the Relationships between People and Pets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 50.

²¹³ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 56.

²¹⁴ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 249.

When you looked at its breast it was so many-colored that you would not have said otherwise than that it was whiter than snow; but at the loins it was greener than clover; one flank was redder than scarlet, the other yellower than saffron; underneath, it resembled azure, but above there was a mixture so finely blended that no one hue stood out from all the others – for here was neither green, nor red, nor white, nor black, nor yellow, nor blue, and yet a touch of all, I mean a regular purple.²¹⁵

Petitcreiu is described with a multitude of color-related superlatives, and it is noted of him that if one looked directly at him that not only would one be unable to discern his color, but it would seem as if he had no color at all. This ambiguity adds to the mystique and possible attractiveness of Petitcreiu as a pet. In this sense, perhaps part of Petitcreiu’s value and source of pleasing is his marvelous novelty.

Nevertheless, what is most important about Petitcreiu that makes him an object for pleasing is the bell around his neck on a chain of gold that “as soon as it began to tremble, melancholy Tristan sat there rid of the sorrows of his attachment and unmindful of his suffering for Isolde.”²¹⁶ To add to this supernatural power of dispelling any sort of sorrow, “the tinkling of the bell was so sweet that none could hear it without its banishing his cares and putting an end to his pain.”²¹⁷ This is seen as a further marvel and “filled [Tristan] with wonder.”²¹⁸ But, more importantly, “the marvel of the dog appeared to him more marvelous than the dulcet sound of the bell that sang into his ears and took his sadness away.”²¹⁹ Thus, as is described, as wonderful as Petitcreiu’s magical bell may be, the dog Petitcreiu himself, the being behind the magic, is valued even more. Later, when Isolde breaks the bell, it is unclear what remains of Petitcreiu, but it is made clear that it is

²¹⁵ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 249-250.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 250.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 250.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 250.

the “*bell* which made her forget her sorrow.”²²⁰ Despite this separation, as we will later see, the dog Petitcreiu answers for the bell’s failure, failing his role as a pet to bring delight.

Petitcreiu has several other notable features besides his coloring and his magical bell that dispels sadness. Petitcreiu neither eats nor drinks “so the tale declares.”²²¹ Besides being a marvelous trait, this could possibly further ease Tristan by sparing him the extravagant expense of food, a cost previously discussed. Also, when Tristan pets Petitcreiu, “it seemed to him as though he were fingering the very finest silk.”²²² This tactility is important, as it is not only a symbol of tactile proximity as has been discussed, but also tactility is emphasized in lieu of emphasis on sound. As we find out, Petitcreiu “neither growled nor barked nor showed any sign of vice, whatever games you played with it.”²²³ As we have seen with Husdant, silence could be prized among pets. We have seen the auxiliary dog Husdant trained into silence, which brings him closer to complete pethood as his name and favoritism have also done. Likewise, silence becomes one of Petitcreiu’s defining characteristics. We can also see how silence was prized in dogs in this signet ring, possibly from France (Figure 13). This golden piece is engraved with a sleeping dog, also notably bound by a leash. Most importantly, however, is the inscription of “*muet*,” which means “silent.” It is clear that silence is what is prized about this emblematic pet dog. There is further speculation that the silence of both Husdant and Petitcreiu have literary functions as well, acting as a symbol for the secrecy of Tristan and Isolde’s love.²²⁴

It should not be thought that silence is a lack of communication between pet and master. On the contrary, silence signifies a deep understanding between pet and master. It is unknown

²²⁰ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 256.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 250.

²²² *Ibid.*, 250.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 250.

²²⁴ Albrecht Classen, “The Dog in German Courtly Literature: The Mystical, the Magical, and the Loyal Animal,” in *Fauna and Flora in the Middle Ages* (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 81.

whether Petitcreiu is silent in deference to his master or because he is unable to make noise, but Husdant came about his silence, as was discussed in the previous chapter, through rigorous training from his master. Husdant's silence is a showing of submission to his master. Petitcreiu, as aforementioned, relies more on tactility to connect and bring joy to his master, where his audibility is nonexistent. In both cases, the relationship between master and pet is only strengthened by silence.

Furthermore, Petitcreiu reminds us of several other themes besides communication. We see further examples of Petitcreiu's role to please; the text mentions that the dog will remain silent through "whatever games you played with it," reinforcing that one of Petitcreiu's functions is for play and delight, like Pitulus. We again see Petitcreiu's function of pleasing in the exclamation that his former owner cries when Tristan inquires about taking the dog: "There is nothing I could have or that I ever cherished, apart from my life and honor, that I would not much rather give you than my dog Petitcreiu...In him you deprive me of my eyes' rarest pleasure and much delight to my heart."²²⁵ Like Pitulus, we see here that Petitcreiu is a catalyst for pleasure and delight, making him an emblematic pet. When Tristan later gains possession of Petitcreiu, "he would truly have rated Rome and all the kingdoms, lands, and seas, as nothing in comparison. He had never felt so happy as then, except in Isolde's company."²²⁶ Here, Isolde is held to higher standards than Petitcreiu, but this does not diminish the small dog's powers as a bringer of joy. Petitcreiu as a gift can also possibly be seen as a representation of the love between Tristan and Isolde. Moreover, Petitcreiu is moreover representative of his temporary master, the hero Tristan himself, for both fail to show "any sign of vice." As we shall see, representation was another function of the pet.

²²⁵ A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 255.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 255.

Pethood Role: Representation

Mon maistre aulcuneffoiz ay fait picquer si fort Sometimes my master spurred onward so harshly,
Que soubz luy en courant tumboit son cheval mort. That his horse, running, fell dead from under him.²²⁷

A second function of the pet was to embody a representation of his master. The dog could represent his master's social standing, reputation, or function. In Souillard's case, Souillard's elegy, besides describing his own life and accomplishments, at times pays homage to his previous masters. His first master, he says, "*tant ayma la chasse*," "loved so much the hunt" (line 29). In the above excerpted anecdote, Souillard's master is painted with such hyperbole that his narrated deeds approach ridiculousness. This paints a portrait of Souillard's first master as an avid hunter who took his sport so seriously that it even led to arguably ridiculous circumstances, such as killing his horse from over-exertion. Souillard himself can be seen reflecting the ardent nature of his first master in the chase. Souillard too, as we have already seen, takes the hunt very seriously and, like his first master, is very adept at the sport. Just as Souillard's first master is anecdotally placed on a high hyperbolic pedestal, so does Souillard also describe himself with grand claims, saying he is like "*le bel escu pour marque a croix droite au cousté*," "the fine heraldry for marching the right cross into battle" (line 45). Souillard summarizes the goodness of his masters by succinctly saying that they "*bien m'ont conduit*," "led me well" (line 37). This reflects Souillard's successes as attributed to the ability of his masters, therefore creating a good representation of his previous owners.

One historical example of pet representation is the pet wolf of Count Robert of Artois, the nephew of the thirteenth-century French king, King Louis IX. This wolf "was kept not for hunting,

²²⁷ Lines 31-32

or for food...or for protection..., or for spiritual or tactile companionship, or for anything else, except as a badge of his [Count Robert's] own awesome nobility."²²⁸ This wolf would have been impressive, an assertion of power, even more potent than a vicious auxiliary dog, such as the mastiff, that could be unleashed.²²⁹ We have already discussed in the first chapter how wolves were feared and revered in medieval society. Rewards could be reaped by claiming their power, whether this be wolf-trappers destroying them for a bounty, or saints taming them to prove their holiness. Count Robert's wolf was most likely found as a whelp on the hunt, and a groomsmen may have salvaged the pup for Count Robert.²³⁰ Eventually, the wolf, when released, began to kill peasants' livestock, for which Count Robert would compensate the owner. Count Robert became known for this; his legacy was branded by the misdoings of his "pet."²³¹

Tristan's Petitcreiu could also fall into a similar category of "failed pet," showing that pets did not always succeed in their mission to bring joy or represent well. Petitcreiu is also, in addition, a representative pet. On first inspection, Petitcreiu would seem to have been the perfect present from Tristan to Isolde, emblematic of their love for one another. On the contrary, Petitcreiu fails as a pet, solely for bearing the bell that, although meant to bring happiness, brings Isolde only sorrow. "Why am I happy for any time at all," Isolde exasperates, "while Tristan, who has surrendered his life and joy to sorrow for my sake, is sad because of me? How can I rejoice without him, whose sorrow and joy I am?...Should I now be living without him, happily and pleasantly, while he is pining?"²³² Isolde consequently breaks the bell around Petitcreiu's neck so that she can pine once more alongside her lover, even though they are parted. Isolde thus prefers to experience

²²⁸ William C. Jordan, "Count Robert's "Pet" Wolf," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 155, no. 4 (2011): 407, JSTOR.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ *Ibid.*

²³² A. T. Hatto, trans., *Tristan* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1960), 255.

sorrow and pain over happiness and joy, for the latter two sentiments would be a clear betrayal of her love for Tristan.²³³ And so, Petitcreiu, considered at once a “catalyst of human emotions” is reduced to a “mechanical instrument” substituting love for Tristan with the music of the bell that he wears around his neck.²³⁴ Though the bell is not part of Petitcreiu, we see the small dog answer for the bell’s failure, as Petitcreiu is rarely mentioned again.

Conclusion

In her preface to *Medieval Pets*, Kathleen Walker-Meikle writes, “Pet keeping is one of the most remarkable relationships between humans and animals.”²³⁵ She mentions the pet’s allowance into restricted spaces, creating close physical proximity to his master, the privileges of luxury food and goods, and being treated with an aggrandized kindness. “Unlike a fine horse or falcon, which might also be treasured,” she writes, “nothing is asked of the pet except to provide companionship and amusement.”²³⁶ We have seen all these features in Souillard, Pitulus, Count Robert’s wolf, and Petitcreiu, and through this study we have also come to better examine Kathleen Walker-Meikle’s other claim that “pet” is an “artificial, man-made category.” Some elements certainly are constructed by the master, namely the giving of privileges such as food and shelter, and the emphasis of favoritism bestowed on certain dogs. However, the relationship is more complex than that. In terms of becoming a pet, sometimes it is enforced by a master, such as Count Robert finding his pet wolf as a whelp and acclimating it to the life of pethood, but sometimes it comes naturally, such as Souillard coming into his pethood through the natural course of aging into retirement. As for existing for enjoyment, some pets in their diminutiveness seem to have been bred for the

²³³ Albrecht Classen, "The Dog in German Courtly Literature: The Mystical, the Magical, and the Loyal Animal," in *Fauna and Flora in the Middle Ages* (Frankfurt Am Main: Peter Lang, 2007), 80.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

²³⁵ Kathleen Walker-Meikle, *Medieval Pets* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), ix.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

purpose, but some seem to simply naturally be delightful, such as the puppy Pitulus. In the examples that we have examined, the question of pethood and the success of the pet in his role ultimately depends on a set of behaviors and the effect they have on the master. So, the definition of the dog as a pet is entangled in the question of what the pet might offer for the emotional wellbeing of his master. We have seen pets offer up both joy and symbolic meaning to their masters, giving two examples of what it could mean for a dog to be truly considered a pet. In previous chapters, we have seen the taming of the wolf work for the benefit of the master and auxiliary dogs work for the benefit of the master; it seems here, too, that a pet's defining characteristics must also benefit a master, though the master is also expected to contribute amenities, such as food and shelter to seal the bond between dog and human. Returning to Walker-Meilke's statements of pethood being a man-made construct, if it were, it would definitely have been made so for the benefit of man, once more showing a mastery over the medieval dog.

Ultimately, something else gleaned from the study of pethood is the fluidity of categories separating the wild dog or the auxiliary dog from the pet dog. Count Robert's pet wolf, who otherwise would have been a wild dog, was adopted into pethood. Souillard, who was once an auxiliary dog, enters pethood through retirement and becomes a pet. Even the category of pet is sometimes impermanent. While it cannot be known for sure, Pitulus, being only a puppy, could very well have outgrown pethood and become an auxiliary dog, had he lived. Pets were also not always successful at what little duty they had to their master, as Count Robert's wolf brought about financial and reputational ruin for his master, and Petitcreiu ironically only brought about sadness in the joy he offered. Fluidity, as we shall see, is the key that makes the three categories of dog successful and informative.

CONCLUSION

“[The Cynocephali] are better classed among beasts than men, since the form of their heads and their bark like a dog shows them more similar to beasts than to men...And men speak while dogs bark. Yet you claim the Cynocephali are for all this better seen to exhibit human reason than bestial sensibility.”²³⁷

So Ratramnus, a ninth-century Frankish monk, tries to make sense of the Cynocephali, or “dog-heads,” hybrid creatures supposedly found at the ends of the earth, described by Marco Polo and those before him, and marked by their human bodies and canine heads. But, as Ratramnus brings up, these creatures are liminal in classification, posing a problem for the monks’ need for categorization, a need we have seen in the very beginning of this project. On the one hand, the Cynocephali have, in part, the physical appearance of a dog, and sound like one, too. On the other hand, we have seen in various parts of this project, the ability to communicate plays a great role in classification. Furthermore, Ratramnus notes that these Cynocephali form societies and live in villages as humans do, cultivate fields and harvest crops, cover themselves through “human modesty” with clothes, though the clothes be nothing but skins.²³⁸ “All of this leads you to believe that they possess a rational soul,” Ratramnus remarks.²³⁹ A rational soul, like the one seen in Bisclavret, marks a medieval human. Throughout the Middle Ages, the category of the Cynocephali proved to be a significant problem within bestiaries, if they even truly belong there, and encyclopedias alike. Part of the problem is the difficulty that medieval scholars had with liminality and beings that fall between categories. Even in this project, I have attempted to argue for three categories of dog, but in doing so have also pointed out the potential for the categories to be transgressed.

²³⁷ Cited in: John B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 188.

²³⁸ John B. Friedman, *The Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 188.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

For the purpose of understanding the settings, functions and relationships of dogs in the Middle Ages, we have divided the medieval dog into three categories, wild, auxiliary, and pet. However, in making these categorizations, we must necessarily address the fluidity of these assignments. Each assignment of the medieval dog has been drafted from the place the dog of that assignment takes in the medieval world, its function within it, and its relationships with the humans that inhabit that same, shared world. In each chapter, we saw examples of dogs filling these spaces, working within them, and interacting with the humans who also inhabit such spaces. However, in these examples, we can see that the categories that the examples belong in are hardly static, and are in fact quite fluid. The categories in this project worked as an organizing mechanism to explore topics such as space, emotion, intellect, and role in relationships between human and dog. However, these categories exist to be broken, and we can see examples of this in each chapter.

Our first chapter dealt with the wild dog, which in this case took the form of wolves, and even extended into werewolves, which end up being closely connected to the Cynocephali. The wild dog was first defined by space. It was marked by its freedom to roam the wildernesses. Although wolves in the natural world hunted in packs, in the Middle Ages the trope was of the lone wolf, working by itself. So, the medieval wild dog existed in solitarily, with the entirety of the forest as its home. However, part of the medieval trope was the lone wolf transgressing beyond its natural boundaries, normally to attack the flocks of innocent sheep or roam into the village itself and prey upon people. In this, the wolf came to function as an antagonist among the medieval people, a thing to be feared and despised. Thus, its relationship to humans was one of antagonism. However, there are examples that we have looked at in which these definitions are reshaped. Although historical examples, which deal with themes such as wolf hunting, support the antagonism of the wolf, in literature we see such antagonism begin to be transformed. In their

interactions with wolves, it becomes clear that humans have learned to mine the antagonism through which the wolf functions, and use it for their own purposes. There are many examples of saints taming wolves, most notably, as was discussed, Saint Francis taming the wolf of Gubbio. In this action, the wolf's function is repurposed for the human's gain. This repurposing of the dog is a theme that we can see throughout the chapters. Furthermore, we also see humans who have turned into wolves. Gerald of Wales describes a man who came across two wolves who had once been humans. It is clear here, too, that these wolves have, in a way, been tamed by humans, for it is their humanity that marks them unthreatening. Similarly, the main character of *Bisclavret*, a werewolf, is able to tame his wild impulses by channeling his human side, and in this way, interacts with humans in a civil manner. When wild dogs are treated in this way, they lose their antagonistic traits, thusly breaking their categorization. In the case of taming, wolves essentially become auxiliary dogs, as they come to exist as an aid to their masters.

Auxiliary dogs are categorized next, in part due to the often-fluid transition from wild dogs. With regards to space, the auxiliary dog is marked by periods of both free rein and restriction. The auxiliary dog, like the wild dog, has the freedom to run about, whether it be a hunting hound in the forest or a shepherd's dog in the pastures, however their freedom will always be curbed by their master, who will always hold the leash, at times literally. The function of the auxiliary dog lies in its name; it exists to help its master. In this, we also see its relationship with humans. As the chapter discussed, it is a two-sided relationship, with the auxiliary dog receiving special attention in return for its services. This is much in line with how the taming of the wolf benefitted the tamer either by showing the tamer's prowess or resulting a happy ending to the tale. However, in this two-sided relationship, the master often becomes particularly attached to one dog among his pack of hounds. This breaches the professional function of the auxiliary dog, and ranges into the realm of the pet,

which in part exists to please its master. Sometimes the auxiliary dog, too, will simply retire into pethood once it has grown too old for its tasks.

The pet dog is the last categorization because it is starkly opposed to the wild dog in its place, function, and relationships, but also because of the transition that so often happens between auxiliary dog and pet dog. The setting of the pet dog is the most restrained, as pets were often restricted to the house or an enclosed garden. However, in this space the pet was best able to fulfill its functions, its primary one being to please its master. In this, we also see the pet dog's intimate relationship with humans, in fact the most intimate of any of the other categories. However, even this categorization is susceptible to be broken. We have discussed the "failed" pets who simply fail to fulfill their duties of pethood. Petitcreiu is severed from Isolde, his purpose to bring happiness gone unfulfilled, and Count Robert's wolf became savage and ravaged the flocks of neighboring peasants. Furthermore, it was not simply a dropping out of pethood. Pitulus, the small puppy who had died, may very well have grown up to be an auxiliary dog, leaving pethood behind, and becoming one like Souillard, who also functioned as an auxiliary-pet dog hybrid.

It is with the true fluidity of these categories that the medieval dog can be studied, as the nuances of the dog's spaces, functions, and relationships can only be integrated into our knowledge of the Middle Ages if we accept the complexity of the "*canis*." Furthermore, it is not just the categorizations that accompany comparing dogs with dogs that are fluid; in expanding the world of the medieval dog to include anomalies like the Cynocephali, there comes a point where the category defining the dog reacts with the category defining the human. This is the ultimate breach of the spaces that medieval dogs inhabited, a breach of the ways in which medieval dogs functioned within society, and most importantly a breach of the relationship between human and dog. This

rupture, however, is part of a much larger study on the definition of animal and human in the Middle Ages.

There is still work that needs to be done in the study of medieval dogs. For the most part, we have limited this study to three kinds of dogs and their spaces, functions, and relationships. Dogs, however, are only representative of a larger question of animals in the Middle Ages, in particular such animals' relationships with humans as we have in this project studied dogs and humans. Here, we have seen relative consistency in the ways in which dogs were treated throughout the different geographical areas of the medieval world. In this way, I encourage further work on this global consistency, and the possible global consistency of basic human connection, evident through treatment of dogs, for different places and different times from the medieval era.

We began this study by looking at a bestiary entry on dogs; however, it remains to be seen how the various animals in the bestiary tradition, any of which could have a study devoted solely to them, function as a whole in opposition, or perhaps conjunction, with humans. It is often said that one can judge the character of a human by the way in which he or she treats animals; perhaps in the same way, we can learn of the character of the medieval people by the way they treated the animals that shared and were intrinsic to their world. Looking at such dogs—their place, their role, their relationships—in the Middle Ages is the start of a much greater story of human and animal connections. From looking at dogs alone, we have seen the drive of the medieval people to come to terms with the foreign wilderness around them, to overcome that wildness, and harness the wildness for their own purposes, even to the point where little of the original nature remains in the that which was being mastered. All of this is exemplified in the ways humans lived with the wild dog, the auxiliary dog, and the pet dog, and how those dogs in return lived with humans. Together, the relationships formed are just pieces in a larger picture of human-animal connections, which, if

studied, can help reveal the drives of human nature, just as the drives of humans brought the dog to the prominent place it held in the society of the Middle Ages, and quite likely to the prominent place the dog is held in today.

FIGURES



FIGURE 1.

Kongelige Bibliotek, Gl. kgl. S. 1633 4^o, Folio 18r.

A dog stays by the side of his dead master.



FIGURE 2.

Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, MS fr. 616, folio 107.

Illustration from a manuscript of Gaston Phébus' *Livre de la Chasse* showing a wolf hunt using nets.



FIGURE 3.

British Library, Royal MS 13 B. viii, folio 47v.

Illustration of Gerald of Wales's tale of a wolf talking to a priest from Ulster.



FIGURE 4.

"Wolf at School." Duomo, Parma, Italy.

A stone column capital depicting the wolf at school.



FIGURE 5.

Yates Thompson MS 47, folio 54r.

Illustration of the head of Saint Edmund guarded by a wolf.



FIGURE 6.

Le Livre de Chasse, fol. 31v.

Various breeds of hunting dogs receive grooming and veterinary treatment.



FIGURE 7.

Tomb of Ermengol X, Count of Urgell, Spain. Housed at the Cloisters.

A dog in a studded collar rests at the feet of his master.

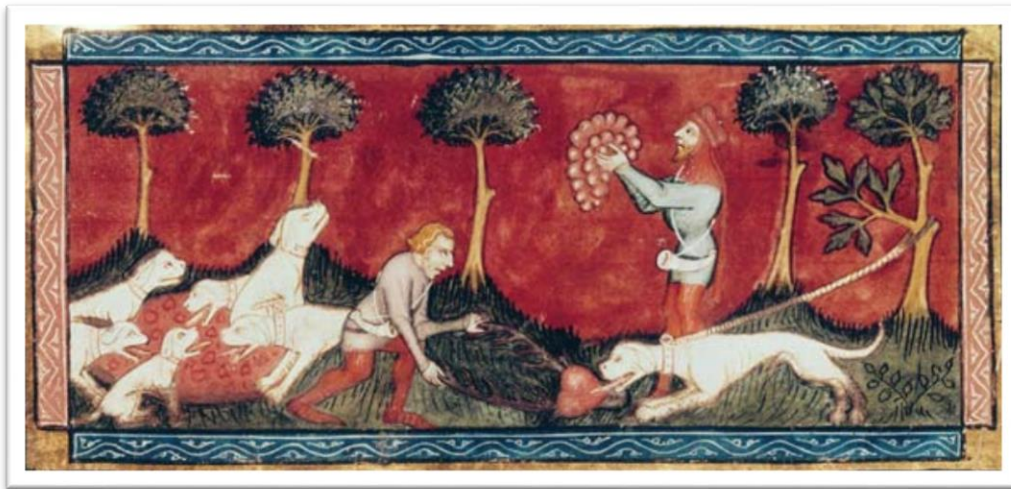


FIGURE 8.

Henri de Ferrières, Livre du Roi Modus et de la Reine Ratio. Paris, 1379.
Hunting dogs receive their *curée* on a successful hunt.



FIGURE 9.

Lorenzo Lotto sketch, Italy, early 16th century.
Ecclesiastic in study with pet dog.



FIGURE 10.
MS FR 12398, fol. 145r.
 “Souillard le Blanc.”



FIGURE 11.
Luttrell Psalter, fol. 25r. Lincolnshire, ca. 1320.
 A carriage party (detail).



FIGURE 12.
Luttrell Psalter, fol. 25r. Lincolnshire, ca. 1320.
 A carriage party.



FIGURE 13.
France (?), ca. 1400-1500.
 Gold ring engraved with sleeping dog and the inscription "muet" (silent).

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APPENDIX A.

*The following is the full entry De Cane (Liber XVIII, capitulum xxv) from the encyclopedia De Proprietatibus Rerum. I have translated from the Middle English of John Trevisa's fourteenth-century translation of the original, thirteenth-century Latin of Bartholomaeus Anglicus.*²⁴⁰

CHAPTER XXV. *On dogs.*

The hound is called *canis* and takes that name from the Greek, as Isidore says, for a hound is called *canos* in Greek. And some men convey that he has that name *canis* because of his loud barking, as he says. Nothing is more diligent and intelligent than the hound, for he has more wit than other beasts. And they love their lords and defend the houses of their lords; and put themselves willfully in peril of death for their lords; and run and take prey with their lords; and leave not the dead body of their lords. And the hounds pursue the trail of prey by smell and by blood. And they love the company of men and must not be without men, as Isidore says. And here it is said that often hounds bred with wolves and thereof come cruel hounds that some men call *lincisci*. Also often the Indians tether bitches and leave them in the woods by night so that tigers might lie and mate with them, and thereof come hounds most sharp and swift and so strong that they throw down cruel beasts, such as lions.

Pliny speaks of the hound and says that among beasts that live with us, hounds and horses are the most gracious. We have conceived that hounds fought for their lords against thieves and were sorely wounded; and that they kept away beasts and fowls from their dead lord's body; and that a hound compelled the slayer of his lord with barking and biting to acknowledge his transgression and guilt. Also, we read, Caramentes the king came out of exile and brought with him two hundred hounds and fought against his enemies with extraordinary haleness. Also, Jason's hound from Cicilia would take no meat when his lord was killed and so he died in hunger and sorrow. Also, we read that Colinus the senator of Placencia defended a hound that was assailed by armed men and neither he nor the hound was neither wounded nor killed. So Ticius Sabinus' hound forsook him neither in prison nor in death but remained with the dead body with doleful and sorrowful noise and howling. And a man gave the hound meat and the hound took the meat and would have put it in the mouth of the dead. And when the dead body was thrown into the Tiber, the hound leapt in and swam in the river to hold up the dead body. And many people came to see and behold the kindness of that true beast.

Hounds remember many long distances, and if they lose their lords, they go over a broad space of lands and countries to their lord's house. The cruelty of a hound abates if a man sits on the ground. In hounds is great intelligence and diligence in hunting. For by wind and by smell, and also by water, they pursue and follow beasts that run and flee, and find their furrows and dens and warn thereof by pursuit and by barking. Of tigers and hounds come hounds so strong that they overcome lions and elephants, as the great Alexander was helped by the hound that the king of Alania sent him, that first, in his presence, overcame a lion; and then an elephant was brought, and when the hound saw the terrible beast, his hair stood up on his whole body and he first barked terribly and then shook skillfully and fought so long with the elephant that he drew him down to the ground.

After the age of one year, a hound reproduces. And the bitch goes with the whelp in her womb four score days and births blind whelps. And the more filled they are with milk, the later

²⁴⁰ Full Middle English text: John Trevisa, *On the Properties of Things: John Trevisa's Translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus De Proprietatibus Rerum: A Critical Text*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 1164-1167.

they gain sight after the one and twentieth day. Some men convey that when one is birthed at once, the later it has its sight. There are more whelps than one, so their sight is delayed. And the best whelps gain their sight last, and the mother brings them first to the bed. *From here Pliny, book viii, chapter xli*, there he reckons many other things. *Or Aristotle, book ii*, says that hounds replace their teeth on only two occasions, and the younger they are, the whiter teeth they have and the more sharp. And thereby I distinguish between young and old hounds for old hounds have black and blunt teeth, and young hounds aforesaid.

Also therein *book v*, male hound are more moved to the work of breeding than females. And greyhounds breed more than other hounds, as says *book vi*. And his female sometimes goes with whelps in her womb the sixth part of the year, that is forty days, and her whelps are blind for twelve days. And then the male does not come to her except in the sixth month after the whelping. And some female greyhounds go with whelps in their womb three score days and thirteen, and that is nigh the fifth part of the year, and her whelps are blind seventeen days. And so the sooner the whelps are made perfect in their mother's womb, the sooner they have their sight when they are whelps and come into the world. And the males are more moved to works of breeding from when they begin to heave up their leg to urinate, and that is after six or seven months, when they grow strong. And greyhounds have this property, that they may breed more when they are working than when they are at rest.

And the male may live x. years. And the male lives less long than the female and that is for the work of the male. And this otherwise [i.e. in other sources] is not true, for the male lives longer than the female, as he says here. And other hounds as guarders of houses [and] of cities live longer, for around xviii. years and some twenty, as Homer says. Also *book viii*, when there are known hounds that eat the root of a certain herb and vomit, and take medicine in that way. Also *book xxiii*, Pliny says that a hound full of yellow meat ate an herb and was delivered by vomiting and casting [up] and purgation.

APPENDIX B.

The following is the full English translation of the fifteenth-century poem by Jacques de Brézé, “Les Dits du Bon Chien Souillard.” I have translated the piece from Old French.²⁴¹

I am Souillard, the white and handsome courser²⁴²,
 In my time the best, for most excellently pursuing,
 Of a good Saint Hubert dog²⁴³, who had the name Souillard,
 I was son and heir, who had such great renown,
 For after his decease he left me his inheritance.
 In the year before his death, he had already trained me.
 I wanted well to be kept among all the dogs well-trained,
 To be placed among those with noses highest raised,
 Hounding for a long time with paw and muzzle,²⁴⁴
 Along the road in my rightful place, baying well all the day.
 I feared, believed in, and loved above all others my master,
 As much as one dog ever did or could ever do.
 Many a pleasure to him, I made many a great catch²⁴⁵,
 Even when he found himself in rains and great heat.
 I was the infallible²⁴⁶, right-hand dog, one whom Phoebus²⁴⁷ praises,
 And I believe that after my death, none like me will remain,
 If not my children, of which I had twenty-two,
 Who through all forests take their deer all on their own.
 From the time that I reigned, Baude was in her prime,
 The good red bitch who knew so much well.
 Hoise, the lovely and good, and Cerault, and Jonbart
 Kept me company in many a foreign place.
 The good little Mirault and Mesgret and Marteau
 Took me on great chases by land and by water.
 On the hunt and after the hunt, they did their job well.
 But always needed, I did what was necessary for them.
 I made the greatest leads and the fewest losses of deer
 Than a dog ever did, which my muscles felt.
 Many a horse I wore out by their following me on the chase,
 Some dead or sick, and the others exhausted.
 Sometimes my master spurred onward so harshly
 That his horse, running, fell dead from under him.

²⁴¹ Full Old French text and source of footnoted terms: Jacques De Brézé and Gunnar Tilander, *La Chasse ; Les Dits Du Bon Chien Souillard ; Et Les Louanges De Madame Anne De France* (Lund: Carl Bloms Boktryckeri, 1959).

²⁴² Old French: *chien courant* (“a dog who pursues the beast on the chase”)

²⁴³ A generic breed of white hunting dog (see Chapter III)

²⁴⁴ Old French: *Avec le pied, la gueulle longuement foysonnant* (“continuing for a long time to follow and cry out, [with the master] talking to the hound”)

²⁴⁵ Old French: *deffaulx* (“what is said when the dogs have lost the scent or taken the game [latter more likely with context]”)

²⁴⁶ Old French: *bault* (“a dog who chases all animals and who never turns from the game”)

²⁴⁷ Possibly Gaston Fébus, author of *Le Livre de Chasse*?

To the King Louis of France, who loved the hunt so much,
I was a youth presented as a dog of good stock,
And by him was given to the seneschal Gaston,
Who made of it a gift to the grand seneschal.
In this way, I served these three, those who treated me well;
To take deer by force, there is no dog who was better gifted.
I am now old and I am held well at ease,
For the love of the good king I do nothing to displease
The master to whom I am and who guards me dear,
Who makes to cut bread and meat for my sustenance;
To sleep snugly within his chamber near the fire
Furnished neatly with straw and a nice litter.
As the fine shield for marching the true cross into battle,
I am in this state that I tell you as a treatise.
God, through his holy grace, grant peace and paradise
To the king, my first master, and to he who placed me
In his service, from which I had my life assigned,
To the grand seneschal where it will be ended.

APPENDIX C.

The following is an English translation of an abridged, untitled, twelfth-century poem by Theodorich of Saint Trond. I have translated the piece from Medieval Latin.²⁴⁸

“Lament, dogs, if there is time to lament, if you have strength to lament;
Lament, dogs: the puppy Pitulus is dead.”
“Pitulus is dead, Pitulus who?” “More deserving than a dog.”
“Pitulus who?” “The care and grief of his master.
Not an Albanian dog, nor was that dog Molossian,
But a scanty dog, but slight and a puppy.
He was five years old; if that one were twice ten years old,
You might even think him, when you saw him, a small puppy.
His whole body scarcely equal to a Pannonian mouse,
Not so much similar to a mouse than to a hare,
White-colored face begemmed with little black eyes.”
“Begotten from where?” “Mother Fresian, Fresian father.”
“What strengths?” “Little, enough deserving his body,
Huge spirits with dissimilar brawn.”
“What was his work? Was it useful or not?”
“So that his great master might delight in the small.
This was the work, to play such with the master.”
“What was his service?” “There was none except laughter.”

Such you were, delightful dog, to be laughed at, to be mourned,
Living you were laughter, dead behold grief.
Whoever saw you, whoever knew you, loved
And grieves now by your end, to be mourned.

²⁴⁸ Full Medieval Latin text: F. J. E. Raby, *The Oxford Book of Medieval Latin Verse* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 198.