

“Hélisenne aux Lisantes”: Address of Women Readers in the *Angoisses douloureuses* and in Boccaccio’s *Fiammetta*¹

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ABSTRACT

Hélisenne de Crenne’s *Angoisses douloureuses qui procèdent d’amours* (1538) uses Boccaccio’s *Fiammetta* as one model among others. Ostensibly, the *Fiammetta* should be easy for a woman writer to adapt, since its narrator is a woman, and it addresses women readers. But in looking at differences between the versions of this story by Boccaccio and Marguerite de Briet, we find that the adaptation was not, in reality, so straightforward as it might appear. Boccaccio’s *Fiammetta* provides an interesting example of “écriture féminine travestie.” This fact only becomes apparent, however, when we look at the work of a woman writer who tries to imitate Boccaccio’s literary transvestism, and to take it seriously as real woman’s discourse.

RÉSUMÉ

Lesangoisses douloureuses qui procèdent d’amours d’Hélisenne de Crenne (1538) utilisent la *Flammette* de Boccace comme un modèle parmi d’autres. Il paraît que la *Flammette* aurait été facile à adapter par une écrivain femme, étant donné que sa narratrice est féminine, et qu’elle s’adresse aux lisantes plutôt qu’aux lecteurs. Mais en étudiant les différences entre les versions de cette histoire par Boccace et par Marguerite de Briet, nous trouvons que l’adaptation n’était pas, en réalité, si facile qu’on ne le croirait. La *Flammette* de Boccace nous fournit un exemple intéressant d’écriture féminine travestie. Mais ce fait ne devient apparent que lorsque nous étudions l’oeuvre d’une écrivain femme qui essaie d’imiter le travestissement littéraire de Boccace, et de le prendre au sérieux comme un exemple de discours féminin réel.

MANY STUDIES OF SUCH SIXTEENTH-CENTURY French women poets as Pernette du Guillet and Louise Labé have focused on these writers’ adaptations of Petrarchan conventions, not only from the fourteenth century to the sixteenth, and from Italian into French, but also from a male perspective to a female one. Questions about narrative voice and address of the lover/reader have been carefully examined in the work of these women poets (Jones, Ch. 3, Ch. 5). Some patterns of address and response could become nonsensical or even ridiculous when translated directly from male to female discourse. But Du Guillet and Labé take these dangers into considera-

tion in adapting or reversing many Petrarchan conventions for a female speaker and male reader.

Similarly, in examining French Renaissance women writers who choose the *novella* or novel genre, many of the same questions arise, with respect to these writers’ adaptations of Boccaccio. The most obvious example of this adaptation is Marguerite de Navarre’s personalized version of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. She not only moves the setting of the story from Florence to south-western France, but also tells her stories from a woman’s perspective, and highlights the response of the “devisantes,” as

opposed to those of the "devisants" (Bauschatz).

A particularly problematic case in the sixteenth-century French feminine adaptation of Boccaccio is Hélienne de Crenne's *Angoisses douloureuses qui procèdent d'amours* (1538), which uses his *Fiammetta* as one model among others.² Ostensibly, the *Fiammetta* should be easy for a woman writer to adapt, since its narrator is a woman, and it addresses women readers. But in looking at differences between the versions of this story by Boccaccio and Marguerite de Briet (the historical author who used the pen-name Hélienne de Crenne), we find that the adaptation was not, in reality, so straightforward as it might appear. A comparison of the two books reveals clearly that the author of the *Fiammetta* did *not* always write convincingly in a woman's voice. Boccaccio's *Fiammetta* provides an interesting example of *écriture féminine travestie*. This fact only becomes apparent, however, when we look at the work of a woman writer who tries to imitate Boccaccio's literary transvestism, and to take it seriously as real woman's discourse. The changes she makes, in spite of her desire to imitate Boccaccio, show the weak points in his attempt to assume a female persona. This is evident not only in Hélienne's revisions to the female voice, but also in her remarks directed to female ears or eyes: women listeners or readers.

Marguerite de Briet begins her book, *Les Angloisses douloureuses qui procèdent d'amours*, with a dedicatory poem, "Hélienne aux Lisantes." In this poem she uses the first person singular to refer to the experience of the character Hélienne, which is presented as autobiographical. But in naming "Hélienne" in the third person in the title of the poem, she makes it clear that this Hélienne is the narrator, who writes about the character: one is quoting the other. The narrator here addresses anonymous women readers or narratees ("lisantes") rather than specific people Hélienne the character would have known:³

Hélienne aux Lisantes
Dames d'honneur et belles nymphes
Pleines de vertu et douceur

Qui contemplez les paranymphe
Du regard, de cueurs ravisseur
L'archer non voyant et mal seur
Vous picquera, prenez y garde.
Soyez tousjours sur vostre garde:
Car tel veult prendre qui est pris.
Je vous serviray d'avantgarde
A mes despens, dommage et pris.

(Vercruyse ed., p. 33)

In this poem the narrator spells out the fact that she intends her book for women readers, and for virtuous women-readers, at that: "Dames d'honneur," "pleines de vertu." She outlines in this little poem a theory of audience response which she is generally believed to have taken from Boccaccio's *Fiammetta*.⁴

Hélienne the narrator warns women readers that like her character, they too, if they have not already, will probably suffer the pain of love. They must always be on their guard, and should use "my" example (that of Hélienne the character) as a model of what *not* to do, "A mes despens, dommage et pris."⁵ The writer is drawing a salutary lesson at the expense of the painful experience of the character. This mechanism, typical of confessional or autobiographical writing, requires a split or doubling between the self who writes and the self written about (Winn). But this subject/object relationship is complicated by the fact that Hélienne the writer also draws on fictional antecedents such as those of Boccaccio and Caviceo, which Hélienne the character may not be familiar with.⁶ The novel is only partly autobiographical: its affiliation with literary antecedents is what makes it exemplary, and worth reading by an educated public already familiar with the earlier models.

The writer ("dame Hélienne") goes on to compose a prose "Epistre dédicative" to the same "honnestes dames," once again warning them to avoid "vaine et impudique amour." This "Epistre," as Paule Demats has shown, seems largely adapted from the "Prologue" to Boccaccio's *Fiammetta* (p. 120, Note 1).

The first sentence stresses the fact that one feels better when confiding in a friend: "Les anxietez et tristesse des misérables, comme *je peux penser et*

conjecturer, se diminuent quand on les peult déclarer à *quelque sien amy fidelle*" (p. 34). This general truth is presented by the narrator, for as we will learn, Hélienne the character has very few "amis fidèles," if any. This first sentence is almost an exact adaptation of Boccaccio's first sentence, also presented as in the words of the narrator "Flammette aux Dames:"⁷ "Les douleurs des miserables *croissent* habondamment, quand ilz congnoissent ou sentent que *aucune* a compassion" (fo.ij.). Both introductions state a general law about the consolation found in confidence. Hélienne does personalize this ("comme *je* peux penser et conjecturer"), and refers to the interlocutor as an "amy fidelle." Boccaccio was more impersonal, not using the first person singular, and speaking of the interlocutor as "aucune".

But these are not the only differences: while Hélienne stresses a diminution of pain, Fiammetta actually spoke of "douleurs [qui] *croissent*".⁸ Fiammetta the narrator, as she would do throughout her book, focused self-centeredly on the painful but cathartic value of her constant lamentations: she purposely re-lived her pain in telling the story. But Hélienne as narrator seems able to distance herself from the pain by story-telling, and is generally more concerned with communication, here with the "amy fidelle."

As we continue through the two prologues, we find that there are in fact many subtle differences between them, although the general idea of address of women readers remains the same. Hélienne stresses the fact that she addresses the book to women, knowing through her own experience that they are compassionate: "Par ce que je suis certaine *par moy mesmes* que les dames naturellement sont inclinées à avoir compassion, c'est à *vous mes nobles Dames*, que je veulx mes extrêmes douleurs estre communiquées" (p. 34). Fiammetta, however, focused from the start more narrowly on herself, and appeared to compete with her women readers, finding them to be somewhat happier than herself, thus causing her own suffering to stand out: "nobles dames, qui avez les cueurs en amours *plus heureux que moy* [...]." Rivalry was established here, as would be true throughout the book. Like the ancient tragic heroines

mentioned frequently, with whom she also competed, Fiammetta the character was remarkable for the extremity of her suffering – which in fact went far beyond the norm. But the narrator seemed to take pride in this extremity.⁹

While Hélienne selects women as probably more compassionate than men (without stating this comparison explicitly), Fiammetta definitely excluded men:

[...] et ne me chault si mes parolles ne sont communiquées *aux hommes* [...], pource que si aucune de mes ameres douleurs leur est descouverte, plusieurs en feront publiques *preschemens, risées et mocqueries*, plus tost que larmes piteuses (fo.ij.).

Was this Fiammetta speaking, or Boccaccio? Uncertainty about narrative voice in this story was often connected with ambivalence about the writer/reader relationship. This is not surprising in the case of a male author assuming a female persona, and therefore speculating about the reactions which a reader of his own gender would have to this (false) persona. There is an ironic element to this statement about the negative reaction expected from males, for the reader who keeps in mind the fact that the real author of the book *was* male.

Boccaccio went on, in the voice of Fiammetta, to claim that *she* recognized her own good qualities in the woman reader: "Mais seulement, mes Dames que *par moy mesmes* cognoys estre piteuses et debonnaireaux aux infortunées, je vous prie que les veuillez lire." Hélienne also makes this claim, using the very same phrase ("par moy mesmes"), as we saw above. Hélienne again takes an idea which may well have been ironic when written by Boccaccio (the idea that he recognized "his" own good qualities in the woman reader), but she turns it into a simple statement of fact coming from a woman writer, who does resemble the woman reader.

Boccaccio then advertised the book following as a series of "[...] miserables larmes, impetueux souspirs, doulentes voix, et tempestueuses pensées." These were clichés of the *Heroides* tradition, which Boccaccio built upon, in his assumption of a female

voice, with a series of supposedly autobiographical lamentations.¹⁰ Hélienne is not as expansive as Boccaccio (her Prologue is much shorter), and she does not describe or advertise the book as he did. Rather, she moves on to consider the effect which this book will have on her women readers: “Car j’estime que mon infortune *vous provoquera* à quelques larmes piteuses, qui *me pourra donner* quelque réfrigération médicamente” (p. 34). *They* may weep, and this may console *her*. Sympathy and parallelism are established: a sort of reader/writer sisterhood is envisaged, unlike the rivalry described above between Boccaccio’s narrator and readers.

Boccaccio also speculated that the tears of the reader would send grief back toward Fiammetta. However, she wanted this grief all to herself (“à moi seule”). As would be true throughout the story, there was a self-centered wallowing in her own grief in the *Fiammetta*, which often became a form of self-indulgence bordering on masochistic pleasure. But in his Prologue, Boccaccio did not stress that he described this pain as a warning to others, as Hélienne does, especially in her introductory poem. Despite the fact that Boccaccio has been viewed as providing a model for Hélienne, a comparison of the two prologues shows that, from the beginning, Hélienne’s is in fact much more moralistic than his. Fiammetta, in her Prologue, simply went on to describe the varied emotions which would be revealed in the book: “[...] je m’efforcerai à [...] *descrire* mes amoureuses fortunes *plus heureuses que constantes*, à ce que par comparaison de *cette félicité amoureuse* [...] me puissiez congoistre et juger *plus que nul aultre malheureuse*” (fo.ij.v.). The focus was on the character’s present unhappiness, contrasted with her earlier (fleeting) happiness, rather than on any particular lesson which could be learned from this contrast.

Hélienne, however, does not mention happiness at all in her dedication:

Hélas, quand je veins à remémorer *les afflictions* dont mon *triste coeur* a esté et est continuellement *agité* par infiniz désirs et amoureux aguillonemens, cela me cause *une douleur* qui excède toutes autres en sorte que *ma main tremblante* demeure immobile (p. 34).

While Boccaccio saw a gap between the original experience (happy) and the writing of it (unhappy), Hélienne sees continuity between the two: both are unhappy. Throughout, Hélienne, a woman writer, appears to feel closer to the experience of her character than did Boccaccio’s narrator.

The image of the “main tremblante” Hélienne does take directly from Boccaccio, but again, there is a subtle difference in the way that the two authors use the image. Toward the end of his Prologue, Boccaccio had Fiammetta ask: “Je supplie s’il y a au ciel *dieu* qui ait de moy pitié, qu’il luy plaise d’aider à ma triste memoire, et soubstenir *ma main tremblante* à l’oeuvre presente” (fo.ij.v.). He appeared to suggest here, ironically, that male inspiration was behind the book. This male deity should provide the power which would allow the female narrator to write, “Et *me donner* puissance que *ma pensée* puisse [...] se rappeler de] ce qu’elle a senty et sent, et *ma main* vous le sçavoir bien escrire.” The emphasis was on literary production, and on the difficult relationship between past and present, experience and writing, “pensée” and “main;” Boccaccio focused on problems of creation rather than reception.

Hélienne, however, concludes her prologue by considering seriously the woman reader and the effect which the book will have on her:

O treschères dames, quand je considère qu’en voyant comme j’ay esté surprise, *vous pourrez éviter* les dangereux lacqs d’amour en y résistant du commencement sans continuer en amoureuses pensées. *Je vous prie de vouloir éviter* ociosité, et *vous occuper* à quelques honnestes exercices.

Not only does the narrator warn the woman reader to avoid love while considering the experience of her heroine – she also provides some suggestions of other activities the reader could engage in!

She concludes with a request for inspiration similar to Boccaccio’s, but rather than asking for the help of a male, pagan deity, she calls on the “mère et fille de l’altitonant plasmateur,” possibly the Virgin Mary (Veracruzse, p. 34), “pour *vous* le sçavoir bien escrire.” Once again, she is doing this to serve the

reader, not herself. In invoking the Virgin she is also placing emphasis on feminine virtues such as modesty and chastity, as she does in the introductory poem, but as Boccaccio did not.

Despite the fact that many features of the poem and preface are taken from Boccaccio, the orientations of the two are completely different. Boccaccio's prologue, it is true, ("Flammette aux dames") was directed by the narrator to women in love.¹¹ But this address, like the many references to "noble ladies" and "compassionate ladies" throughout the book, was quite perfunctory. Rather, the Prologue, and in fact the entire book, were narrator and character centered. Boccaccio's attention was directed toward writing a book which would sound as though it were written by a woman: he had to create the fiction of a female narrator, as well as that of a female character. He was less concerned to prove that the book was written for women readers, which in fact it may not really have been (the same could be said of the *Decameron*, or the *De Mulieribus*, for example).¹² In other words, the fictions of female author and character were balanced by those of equally fictitious female readers. This is not the case, as we have seen, in Hélisenne's address of women readers.

Other instances of address of the woman reader occur later in the *Angoisses Douloureuses*, as well as in the *Fiammetta*. In Ch. 22 of the *Angoisses*, "Exclamation piteuse d'Hélisenne contre son amy," the heroine has withdrawn to her room to bemoan her pain, and feels better after having done so. Immediately, the narrator addresses her women readers, showing that she is able to go beyond those who simply want to compare their misery to that of others (which was in fact the usual approach of Fiammetta):

O mes nobles Dames, considérant l'extrémité où je suis réduite pour ne vouloir ressembler aux misérables desquelz le souverain refuge est voir les autres de semblables passions oppressez, mais au contraire, je me resjouy à rédiger par escript mon infortune: affin qu'il passe en manifeste exemple [...] (p. 140).

Hélisenne in fact feels better, not just because she has the pity of others, but because she is able, through

writing, to help them.

There are some similarities between the passage quoted above and the beginning of Ch. 5 of the *Fiammetta*, the next to last chapter which Hélisenne may have read of Boccaccio's work.¹³ Fiammetta warned women readers ("Dames") that what they were about to read would be even worse – more painful – than what they already had. This chapter represented something of a turning point in the book (Smarr, VI: 138). Flammette then explained why she was telling the reader all this:

Et en verité je ne le dis pas pour vous esmouvoir à avoir pitié de moy. Mais affin que cognoissez la malice et meschance de celluy pour qui tous telz maux me viennent et que en le cognoissant, soyez plus caultes et que ne commettez vostre honneur à tels et semblables jouvenceaulx. Et ne soubmettez vos cueurs à leurs desloyalles volutez. Et de tant serez obligées à moy par l'experience de ma follie vous puis adviser et donner seur conseil (fo.xliij).

Flammette claimed in this passage, reversing her earlier stance, that gaining the pity of the reader was not her goal, but rather, that she wanted the reader to appreciate the true wickedness of Pamphile, and also to learn from her experience. This was one of the very few passages, in fact, where Boccaccio made this claim – his more normal approach was to ask only for the reader's pity. This change, however, may have been connected with the worsening state of Fiammetta's soul, which placed her beyond pity. There had been some development in Fiammetta's relationship to the reader since the Prologue. Boccaccio seemed to warn the reader in Chapter 5 that, despite appearances, he did expect the book to have a didactic purpose.¹⁴ It remains for us as readers to ask, as we do in the *Decameron* and the *De Mulieribus*, whether this claim is a truthful one.

Hélisenne, however, consistently takes this theme and repeats it straightforwardly. Her theme of service to others is developed once again in the conclusion to her book (Ch. 28), which apologizes to women for having spoken of something which she ought perhaps to have kept silent. But she hopes to serve them by doing this:

Mais si bien sçaviez avec quelle force amour m'a contrainte et parforcée, de nulles je ne serois incrépée, et avec ce, comme j'ay prédit, ayant par plusieurs fois laissé et infesté la plume, *l'affectueux désir que j'ay envers vous, mes nobles dames*, à ceste occasion que je me suis esvertuée de vous déclarer le tout sans rien réserver. Car par *l'expérience de ma furieuse folie, vous puis aviser et donner conseil qui vous sera utile et prouffitable* pour de tel embrasement vous conserver (p. 159).

There are several stylistic similarities between this passage and the one quoted above from *Fiammetta*, Ch. 5: in particular, the phrase "l'expérience de ma [...] folie," which is repeated exactly, as is "donner conseil." A difference seems to be that while *Fiammetta* stressed that readers would be obliged to her (focusing attention back on herself), *Hélisenne* is more concerned with the "utile et prouffitable," for the benefit of the reader. *Hélisenne* closes with a list of faithful women in antiquity, whose example she hopes will inspire her women readers: positive exemplarity is being added to the negative example developed in the book, as well as that presented by Boccaccio, and the lists of "bad" women in his *Fiammetta*.¹⁵

Et pource, mes dames, je suplie et requiers le souverain plasmateur qu'il vous octroye à toutes la continence de Penelope, le conseil de Thetis, la modestie d'Argia, la constance de Dido, la pudicité de Lucesse, la sobriété et espargne illarité de Claudia, à fin que par les moyens de ces dons de grâce puissiez demourer franches et libres, sans que succomez en semblables inconveniens (p. 160).

She closes the book clearly on the side of positive exemplarity, on that of the women readers whom she hopes to help by writing of her difficulties, and also of the many good women who have existed throughout history.

A problem is posed in comparing *Hélisenne's* conclusion with that of Boccaccio: the 1532 Nourry translation of the *Fiammetta*, as mentioned above, does not contain the last three chapters of the book. The translator closes with Ch. 6, in which *Fiammetta* tries to commit suicide (something which *Hélisenne*

will consider but not do).¹⁶ An adaptation of Boccaccio's last sentence (from his Ch. 9) is tacked on to the end of Ch. 6, by the French translator: "Et dont *mes dames*, en faisant fin de *la dolente complainte pourrez considerer quel est ou peult estre mon mal*" (fo. xcvi.v.). This version of the *Fiammetta* ends, as the original did, on a very negative note, claiming the narrator's intention, once again, to be that of proclaiming her misery to the world at large, and especially to women. *Hélisenne's* final recourse to positive examples, seen above, is in stark contrast to the Boccaccian model that she read.

I would like to suggest in concluding that, rather than following Boccaccio slavishly, Marguerite de Briet actually made many changes in her version of the story. She may have learned, in fact, from some of the weaknesses and inconsistencies of Boccaccio's *Fiammetta*, altering that book's address of women readers, in particular. *Hélisenne* outlines a much more positive relationship between narrator and reader than did her predecessor *Fiammetta*.

More importantly, the writer may show *Hélisenne* the character to have learned from the *Fiammetta* too, suggesting the real effects of reading on behavior as we never actually see in Boccaccio. While *Fiammetta* the character frequently referred to negative examples of women from antiquity, she did not in fact avoid their mistakes, but plunged ahead to imitate or even out-do them, placing in doubt the theory of negative exemplarity, and its effect on behavior, supposedly illustrated by the book.

But *Hélisenne* the character, despite her self-recriminations, may actually be presented as having learned from the bad example of *Fiammetta*. *Hélisenne* is concerned that Guénélic will betray her (as Panfilo did *Fiammetta*). *Hélisenne* does not explicitly admit her love to Guénélic, as *Fiammetta* did. Most importantly, *Hélisenne* does not actually commit adultery! Despite her sense of guilt, she has in fact not sinned except in intention, and so in fact will not suffer eternal punishment, as it was suggested, through several Dantesque references, that *Fiammetta* eventually would.¹⁷ Surely these important differences between the two stories are not coincidental.

tal. In many ways, the *Fiammetta* itself provided a negative example to the *Angoisses douloureuses*, not a positive one. Hélienne's book does show the success of negative exemplarity, as a theory of reading for women, as Boccaccio's did not.

Marguerite de Briet shows a character who has learned from her reading, and engages her own women readers through realistic advice and parallels with the experience of her character. Like many women writers of the Renaissance, Marguerite de Briet takes a fictionalized medieval convention about address of women readers, and turns it into reality. As is also true for Marguerite de Navarre in the *Heptaméron*, when Hélienne de Crenne addresses women readers, she expects some sort of response or reaction. She seems to believe more pragmatically than did Boccaccio that didacticism works: that women can learn from their reading, and change their behavior accordingly.

It is apparent that "écriture féminine" is not the only key issue with respect to early women writers and their texts to define here. Rather, "lecture féminine" is as significant a theme, and in fact helps to elucidate the former. Through an examination of differences in address of women by Boccaccio and Marguerite de Briet, we come to an understanding of one aspect of "écriture féminine" itself. Rather than focusing on theories of address and reception, women's writing is much more focused on their practice, and often succeeds in transforming some of the earlier unrealistic forms of address so that they actually create a dialogue with real women readers. In rhetorical terms, this could be called a *renouveau de cliché* – a meaningless form of address is taken seriously, and in the process, becomes meaningful, perhaps for the first time.

NOTES

1. The research for this essay was carried out with the help of a Fulbright grant, in the summer of 1990, at the Centre d'Etudes de la Renaissance in Tours.
2. In 1908, Gustave Reynier noticed the remarkable similarity between the two books: "Il faut d'abord constater que l'influence de la *Fiammette* s'y marque fortement" (p. 112). More recently, M.J. Baker has outlined some of the differences between the two: she cites Reynier and Vercruyse on fundamental differences between the two books at the plot level, but then goes on to note that "these critics fail to indicate that the purpose of the narrators in recounting their woes is not the same" (p. 304). Baker sees the major difference as being that Hélienne rejects love outright, whereas *Fiammetta* only urged caution.
3. I am indebted to Robert D. Cottrell for his insightful analysis of the relationship among author, narrator and character in the *Angoisses*, as well as the implications for the implied reader of this relationship.
4. Jérôme Vercruyse comments: "comme son aînée [*Fiammetta*] (et signalons en passant que le ton est identique dans *Il pèlerin de Caviceo*), Hélienne veut que le récit de ses aventures serve d'exemple salutaire" (Intro., p. 14).
5. Emphasis mine, as will be the case throughout this study.
6. See Jean-Philippe Beaulieu's exploration of the gap between the knowledge of the narrator and relative ignorance of the character, in the *Angoisses*.
7. I will be using the sixteenth-century translation of the *Fiammetta* into French, the *Complainte des tristes amours*, attributed by Vercruyse to Chappuys (p. 14), which Marguerite de Briet presumably used as her source. I have modernized the spelling somewhat.
8. Paule Demats has noted this difference: "[...] mais l'intention qu'elle exprime est toute contraire à celle de sa soeur italienne [...]" (p. 125, note 1).
9. In his study of the *exemplum*, John Lyons describes the extremity of many examples with the term "Rarity": "Rarity is the term I will use to describe a complex system of values and expectations based on both extratextual and textual ideas about frequency of occurrence or normal behavior. One face of this concept is the notion that certain individuals act in a way far above or far below average achievement" (Intro., p. 32).
10. Marina Scordilis Brownlee states this resemblance to be a commonplace: "[...] the *Elegia di madonna Fiammetta* [...] constitutes an expanded heroid, as Vincenzo Crescini observed one hundred years ago" (Chap. 3, p. 58).
11. The original Italian version of the *Elegia* addressed the book to women in love: "alle innamorate donne mandato" (p. 3). The French translator left out this address, already beginning the transformation of the story which Marguerite de Briet would continue, to make it more moralistic (addressing "Dames d'honneur" rather than "innamorate donne").
12. See Maureen Quilligan's position that the *De Mulieribus* was actually written for men (Ch. 1): "It is not to be supposed that Boccaccio's first audience for the *De mulieribus claris* was women; rather, written in Latin, the text is aimed at a principally male audience. Its purpose is not to praise women but to spur men on to humanist achievements by goading them with the examples of heroic pagan women" (p. 39).

13. The 1532 translation of the *Fiammetta* does not contain its last three chapters, as Paule Demats has also noted: "[...] des trois derniers chapitres de l'*Elegia di madonna Fiammetta*, sacrifiés par le traducteur anonyme, rien ne se retrouve dans les *Angoisses* [...]" (Intro., xviii).
14. Boccaccio did something similar in the *Decameron* when he stated that, despite appearances, it was destined for the woman reader: "Some of you may say that in writing these tales I have taken too much license, by making ladies sometimes say and often listen to matters which are not proper to be said or heard by virtuous ladies. This I deny, for there is nothing so unchaste but may be said chastely if modest words are used; and this I think I have done" (Concl., p. 637).
15. Martine Debaisieux makes the interesting point that Hélienne leaves the task of differentiating between good and bad models up to the reader: "[...] Hélienne confie paradoxalement la mission de différenciation aux lectrices" (p. 32).
16. The French translation thus omits Ch. 7, where Fiammetta learns of another Panfilo moving to her city; Ch. 8 which contains a long list of unhappy women in antiquity, than whom she still feels herself to be more unhappy; and Ch. 9 which addresses the book itself, asking it to go forth and show "happy" people how truly unhappy the heroine was. Although it is tempting to speculate that Hélienne may have seen the original Italian version, I will refrain from making direct comparisons with it. Reynier compares the two conclusions, but uses the French translation of Boccaccio from 1585, which Marguerite de Briet obviously could not have seen (p. 113, note 3).
17. See Janet Smarr's analysis of what she perceives as Fiammetta's downward course: "In the *Elegia di Madonna Fiammetta*, however, the narrator descends dramatically straight toward hell. Fiammetta is another Francesca, telling her story as if she were a victim; but her deterioration involves a descent farther and farther into hell" (p. 130).

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