



# Transforming Tales: Rewriting Metamorphosis in Medieval French Literature

*Miranda Griffin*

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*Transforming Tales* argues that the study of transformation is crucial for understanding a wide range of canonical work in medieval French literature. From the *lais* and Arthurian romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, through the *Roman de la Rose* and its widespread influence, to the fourteenth-century **Ovide moralise** and the vast prose cycles of the late Middle Ages, metamorphosis is a recurrent theme, resulting in some of the best-known and most powerful literature of the era. *Transforming Tales* is the first book in English to explore in detail the importance of ideas of metamorphosis in French literature from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. This book's purpose is twofold: it traces a series of figures (the werewolf, the snake-woman, the nymph, the magician, amongst others) as they are transformed within individual texts; and it also examines the way in which the stories of transformation themselves become rewritten during the course of the Middle Ages. Griffin's approach combines close readings and comparisons of literary texts with readings informed by modern critical theories which are grounded in many of the ideas raised by medieval metamorphosis: the body, gender, identity and categories of life. Literary depictions and reworkings of transformation raise questions about medieval understandings of the differences between human and animal, man and woman, God and man, life and death--these are the questions explored in *Transforming Tales*.

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