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Semiotics of Deceit: The Pathelin Era

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THE PATHELIN ERA

Donald Maddox

*With a new English Prose translation of Maistre Pierre Pathelin
by ALAN E. KNIGHT*

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Extensive critical study of the late fifteenth-century comic masterpiece *Maistre Pierre Pathelin* focuses on the narrative and discursive aspects of deceit found throughout the play. In the initial chapter narratological analyses show how the anonymous playwright wove the intricate intrigue from several clever variants of the "deceiver-deceived" paradigm widespread in folktales and in Old French *fabliaux*. Subsequent chapters take up the elaborate figures of deceit derived from medieval proverbs, the rhetoric of portraiture, and the intertextual evocations of the woodcuts that illustrate the late medieval Arts of Dying – the *Ars moriendi*. Also analyzed are configurations of deceit in juridical discourse; strategies of delusive manipulation; and deceptive speech acts. The study also includes Alan Knight's admirably lucid and engaging English prose translation of the play.

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