The Textual and Visual Uses of the Literary Motif of

Cross-Dressing in Medieval French Literature, 1200–1500

Vanessa Elizabeth Wright

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD in Medieval

Studies

University of Leeds

Institute for Medieval Studies

September 2019

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis investigates the uses of the literary motif of cross-dressing in medieval French literature, focussing on texts written between 1200 and 1500. It combines analysis of literary, legal, and visual material in order to demonstrate the ways in which this motif interacts with contemporary concerns. Chapter I examines the manuscript contexts of the literary corpus so as to determine ownership, audience, and popularity of the texts as well as discussing the texts and genres with which this corpus is most commonly associated in medieval manuscripts.

Chapters II to V are each centred on a different theme to illustrate how the cross-dressing motif draws attention to these social and legal concerns. Chapter II analyses how both text and image depict the gender expressions and identities of cross-dressing characters. Focussing on how dress and status, marriage, and sex and desire are portrayed in the literary corpus and accompanying manuscript illuminations, chapters III, IV, and V demonstrate how literature engages with canon law debates and practice. This approach reveals the connections between literature and law, deepening our understanding of how medieval writers interacted with legal material and revealing areas of shared and diverging concern. Through the motivations, experiences, actions, and relationships of cross-dressing characters, texts containing this motif consider issues of gender, sexuality, love and marriage, and status. As a consequence, analysis of the cross-dressing motif in literature highlights the importance of these subjects to medieval society and aids our appreciation of how these issues were conceptualised and reflected upon in medieval French culture.

Table of Contents

Lists of Tables and Figures

Tables

Figures

Fig. 16: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610, fol. 98v. *The Countess/Phlipot arranges a tryst with the Count.*

Fig. 17: Darmstadt, HLH, MS 2524, fol. 114r. *Marte arrives at a friend's home to hide.*

Fig. 18: Darmstadt, HLH, MS 2524, fol. 121r. *Marte sings to an ill Ysaïe.*

Fig. 19: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 93, fol. 242r. *Helcana/Helcanor and Ydoine greet Polus outside of the hermitage.*

Fig. 20: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 54r. *Katherine/Conrard embraces Gerard; Conrard leaves a letter to Gerard; Conrard returns home with their uncle.*

Fig. 21: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 179r. *A priest stands in public holding a book; the priest is criticised for his appearance by a court.*

Fig. 22: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610, fol. 79r. *The Countess/Phlipot introduces themselves to the Count.*

Fig. 23: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610, fol. 94r. *The Countess/Phlipot gives the Count a ring belonging to the daughter of the king of Castile.*

Fig. 24: Brussels, BRB, MS 9245, fol. 245r. *Helcana/Helcanor greets the duchess and the 'pucele'.*

Fig. 25: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2188, fol. 14r. *Trubert ties the duke to a tree and beats him.*

Fig. 26: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2188, fol. 5v. *Trubert prepares to pluck hairs from the duke's buttocks in payment.*

Fig. 27: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610, fol. 13r. *The Countess/Phlipot and the Count marry.*

Fig. 28: Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 470, fol. 116v. *The king betrothes Olivier to Elaine.*

Fig. 29: Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 470, fol. 121r. *Olivier and Elaine marry.*

Fig. 30: New York, Morgan Library, MS 672–75 (675), fol. 136r. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien marries; Pelagien's body is being prepared for burial by nuns.*

Fig. 31: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 177v. *A husband and wife converse; the mother petitions a court for the annulment of her daughter's marriage.*

Fig. 32: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 244–45 (244), fol. 137r. *In the foreground, Theodora/Theodore rejects a suitor's advances. In the background, Theodore accepts exile and the child they are accused of fathering.*

Fig. 33: Michelino da Besozzo, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, c. 1420, tempura on panel, 78cm × 58cm, Pinoteca Nationale di Siena.

Fig. 34: Pinturicchio, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, c. 1480–1500, tempura on wood, 45 cm × 34 cm, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

Fig. 35: Correggio, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, 1526–27, 105cm × 102cm, Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 36: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242, fol. 137r. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

Fig. 37: Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3, fol. 191v. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

Fig. 38: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 6448, fol. 177r. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

Fig. 39: Brussels, BRB, MS 9401, 167r. *Helcana/Helcanor and Cassidorus return to Constantinople.*

Fig. 40: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50 (22549), fol. 47v. *Helcana/Helcanor and Cassidorus return to Constantinople.*

Fig. 41: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 132v. *The husband meets his spouse cross-dressed as a Franciscan friar; three husbands beat three friars whilst the wives watch.*

Fig. 42: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 3r. *A husband sees a naked woman in his neighbour's bed but does not realise it is his wife.*

Fig. 43: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 26r. *A husband and wife have sexual relations whilst a man watches from a tree.*

Fig. 44: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 33r. *A monk tries to pass off another monk's penis as his own to a nun he desires.*

Fig. 45: Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252, fol. 109r. *Two lovers, a monk and nun, show their genitals to each other whilst someone watches from a tree.*

Fig. 46: Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 266 fol. 166r. *Theodora/Theodore converses with a suitor.*

Fig. 47: New York, Morgan Library, MS 672–75 (674), fol. 310r. *Theodora/Theodore converses with a suitor; Theodore joins a monastery.*

Fig. 48: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2188, fol. 4r. *Trubert embraces the duchess.*

Fig. 49: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242, fol. 120v. *Marine/Marin cares for the child in exile.*

Fig. 50: Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3, fol. 100v. *Marine/Marin cares for the child in exile; the mother of the child is freed of the Devil's temptation.*

Fig. 51: Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3, fol. 198v. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison and a monk brings them bread and water.*

Fig. 52: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 6448, fol. 315v. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison and a monk visits them.*

Fig. 53: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 244–45 (245), fol. 132r. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison after being accused of impregnating a woman.*

Fig. 54: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242, fol. 205v. *Eugenia/Eugene is miraculously saved from drowning; Protus and Hyacinth are beheaded.*

Fig. 55: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 93, fol. 245v. *Helcana/Helcanor, Ydoine, the duchess, and the 'pucele' dine together.*

Fig. 56: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50 (22549), fol. 21v. *Ydoine burns his fingers in punishment for desiring Helcana/Helcanor.*

Abbreviations

BAV   Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

BL   British Library

BnF   Bibliothèque nationale de France

BNU   Biblioteca nazionale universitaria

BRB   Bibliothèque royale de Belgique

BSB   Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

HLH   Hessischen Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek

KB   Koninklijke Bibliotheek

ON   Österreichische Nationalbibliothek

SBB   Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin

Introduction

On 2 September 1425, Jacqueline of Bavaria, the countess of Hainault, Holland and Zeeland, escaped house arrest by disguising herself in men's clothing.[1] Chronicles describe Jacqueline's plan and escape: 'tandisque ses gens soupoient, elle, vêtue en habit de homme, et une femme pareillement habillée, et deux hommes avec elles, se départit de ladite ville de Gant à cheval'.[2] Accompanied by these three individuals, Jacqueline travelled to Holland in order to oppose the Burgundian occupation of the area and to assert her claim to and authority over the land.[3] Exact details of garments and identities adopted are lacking, but we learn how changing clothing allowed Jacqueline and her female companion to flee Ghent unnoticed and regain their freedom. In this dramatic episode, one finds a historical example of a motif that pervades medieval French literature: cross-dressing. In the literary motif, characters often cross-dress in order to escape a situation, like Jacqueline, but the motif is connected to a wide variety of motivations and plots. Each varying appearance of the motif brings to the fore different social and legal concerns. Exploring the uses of the motif of cross-dressing in medieval texts provides an opportunity to learn about how subjects like gender, status, marriage, and desire were approached in medieval culture. The insights gained from this analysis not only reveal areas of contemporary concern but also underline the connections between literary and legal discourse.

---

[1] Hanno Wijsman, *Luxury Bound: Illustrated Manuscript Production and Noble and Princely Book Ownership in the Burgundian Netherlands (1400–1550)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), p. 227; J. M. Bennett and S. McSheffrey, 'Early, Erotic and Alien: Women Dressed as Men in Late Medieval London', *History Workshop Journal*, 77.1 (2014), 1–25 (p. 7).

[2] *Chroniques d'Enguerrand de Monstrelet*, ed. by J. A. Buchon (Paris: Verdière, 1826), V, 137; This episode is also covered in other medieval chronicles, such as Jean de Wavrin, *A Collection of the Chronicles and Ancient Histories of Great Britain, Now Called England*, trans. by Edward L. C. P. Hardy, 3 vols (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1891), III, 127–28; *Chronicles of London*, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 129–30.

[3] Marc Boone, 'Jacqueline of Bavaria in September 1425, a Lonely Princess in Ghent?', *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 75–85 (pp. 79–80); Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), pp. 39–40; Robert D. Smith and Kelly DeVries, *The Artillery of the Dukes of Burgundy, 1363–1477* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), p. 95.

Aims

This thesis aims to demonstrate how the literary motif of cross-dressing was used in medieval French literature, both in the narratives themselves and in accompanying manuscript miniatures, in order to foreground social and legal issues. Through a comparative analysis of literary, visual, and legal sources, it seeks to understand how the cross-dressing motif reveals and engages with contemporary concerns, such as the significant changes made during the thirteenth century to marriage law. The five chapters of the thesis address a number of questions pertaining to the motif of cross-dressing but also interrogate the literary corpus more generally. What can we learn from extant manuscript witnesses about the literary texts' popularity and about those who owned or read these texts? How are cross-dressing characters portrayed and what can this tell us about medieval attitudes towards non-normative gender identities and expressions? What approaches were taken by artists to represent cross-dressing characters in manuscript illustrations and what were the most common ways in which the characters were depicted? What issues, other than those related to gender, are raised by the cross-dressing motif, and how do the narratives containing the motif address these issues? How are legal debates and knowledge of contemporary legal practices portrayed within literary texts? These interdisciplinary questions approach the cross-dressing motif from a number of perspectives allowing for a deeper understanding of the motif to be gained.

Methodology

This thesis is an interdisciplinary study, using canon law and manuscript illuminations to develop our understanding of the motif and the concerns that are raised by cross-dressing characters. The arguments set out are drawn from close readings of literary episodes including the cross-dressing motif and informed by an analysis of legal and manuscript sources. The discussion of contemporary legal discourse provides important

legal context whilst the manuscript context offers information about the literary corpus and its circulation as well as allowing one to explore artistic interpretation of the narratives.

This thesis' interdisciplinary methodology explores how the cross-dressing motif connects with contemporary concerns. The types of issues, questions, and topics raised by the cross-dressing motif vary across the literary corpus: some texts explore subjects like incest and consent in marriage whilst others consider the connections between clothing and identity. It is important to note that these different social and legal topics, often grouped together in this thesis as 'contemporary concerns', do not always elicit the same response from the narrators or characters in a text. In literary sources, they are not always connected with feelings of intense worry or anxiety; they can also be areas of social interest or topics raised for intellectual contemplation and discussion. One should also consider that the extent to which a topic was deemed problematic for a medieval audience might change according to social group; for example, it is likely that the subject of clerical celibacy was more concerning for the Church and members of the clergy than for the laity.

This thesis places a significant emphasis on the manuscript context of the corpus of literary texts. Manuscripts are used in several ways: to explore visual representations of cross-dressing characters and to analyse how artists approached the motif; to gauge the texts' popularity, audience, and dissemination; and to gain an understanding of reader response through physical evidence of reader interaction left in the codices. When analysing medieval literature, engaging with the manuscript sources can offer new perspectives on how the contemporary audience read, understood, and engaged with the material. Each reader's reaction and interpretation of the narrative would have been informed by accompanying images, marginalia completed by the artist(s) or previous readers, and any other texts included in the codex. Other factors might affect

an individual's response to a text if the narrative was read publicly rather than privately; for example, the location and circumstances in which the text was read, who formed the audience as well as what other narratives, if any, were read alongside the text may influence the reader's interpretation of a narrative or character. Although this corpus of manuscripts does not yield specific information about their public reading, we do know that public reading was a common practice.[4]

As well as using codicological and text/image analysis, this thesis also approaches medieval literature from a legal perspective. It highlights the connections between literature and canon law in order to illustrate that literary and legal texts often share areas of concern. Cross-dressing brings the literary and the legal together not because canon law has a particular interest in cross-dressing itself, but rather because texts, through the cross-dressing motif, raise issues that were frequently discussed by canonists and regulated by canon law. Although the reactions of narrators, characters, and canonists to these concerns may differ, in terms of why a certain issue like non-marital sexual intercourse is problematic, and the responses and solutions they offer, one can learn how medieval literature explored and engaged with legal questions. It is important to note that although there are examples of texts that explicitly address legal developments, narratives do not have to refer directly to changes in law to demonstrate an awareness of and interest in the law. Many texts analysed in this corpus not only closely reflect contemporary legal thought but also offer examples of legal practice, with issues being addressed privately or with recourse to the courts. Combining analysis of literary and legal sources is an approach that has been usefully applied in previous scholarship on medieval topics but it has not often been applied to literary texts containing the cross-dressing motif.[5] Studies have demonstrated moments when

---

[4] For a discussion of public and private reading practices, see section I.4.

[5] R. Howard Bloch, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Christopher Callahan, 'Canon Law, Primogeniture, and the Marriage of Ebain and Silence',

literature involving the cross-dressing motif connects with legal discourse, often in association with a single text and one legal issue or changing legal thought.[6] However, this thesis' large corpus and the centrality of canon law to its methodology means that it can explore these connections in greater depth. It provides more nuanced readings of the literary texts through its emphasis on how medieval literature brings legal issues to the fore through the cross-dressing character, their behaviour, and relationships.

Scope

Selection of Literary Corpus

A large number of medieval texts written in French and other vernacular languages contain the literary motif of cross-dressing. Consequently, many different combinations of texts could have been selected for analysis. Although much can be learnt from in-depth examinations of single narratives, this thesis takes a comparative approach, aiming to analyse the motif across texts and genres in order to show the various ways that the motif was used and represented by narrators. This thesis includes a corpus of fifteen literary texts, including two compilations of individual narratives, meaning that twenty-one narratives and twenty-seven cross-dressing characters are examined in total.[7] These are not the only French literary texts that included the cross-dressing motif

Romance Quarterly, 49.1 (2002), 12–20); William E. Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Conor McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England: Law, Literature, and Practice* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004); Sarah-Grace Heller, 'Anxiety, Hierarchy, and Appearance in Thirteenth-Century Sumptuary Laws and the "Roman de la Rose"', *French Historical Studies*, 27.2 (2004), 311–48; F. R. P. Akehurst, 'Customary Law in Old French Fabliau', in *The Old French Fabliaux: Essays on Comedy and Context*, ed. by Kirsten L. Burr, John F. Moran, and Norris J. Lacy (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), pp. 42–54; *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant, Anne D. Hedeman, and Bernard Ribémont (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

[6] Callahan, pp. 12–20; Craig A. Berry, 'What Silence Desires: Female Inheritance and the Romance of Property in the "Roman de Silence"', in *Translating Desire in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Heather Richardson Hayton (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 191–206; Elizabeth Archibald, 'Incest between Adults and Children in the Medieval World', in *Children and Sexuality*, ed. by George Rousseau (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 85–107; Sahar Amer, *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p. 61.

[7] The texts are as follows with the cross-dressing characters listed in parentheses (see also Appendix A): *Berengier au lonc cul* (the wife/Berengier); the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (tale 26 (Katherine/Conrard), tale forty-five (Margarite), tale sixty (three *bourgoises*)); *Clarisse et Florent* (Clarisse); *Floris et Lyriopé* (Floris and Florie); *Frere Denise* (Denise); the *Légende dorée* (Eugenia/Eugene, Marine/Marin, Margaret-

but a comparison of all possible narratives would not be feasible within the scope of a doctoral thesis.

Four selection criteria have been used to choose the primary texts. First, a text had to be in French and written between 1200 and 1500. Second, the texts must come from a range of genres and include the cross-dressing motif in a variety of plots and contexts. The twenty-one narratives belong to several genres, namely romance, *chanson de geste*, hagiography, and comic genres, such as *fabliaux* and *nouvelles*.[8] These narratives also show cross-dressing in different circumstances, offering different plots, characters, and both permanent and temporary cross-dressing. Consequently, this corpus is diverse in the identities and statuses that cross-dressing characters adopt, these running from squires and knights, hermits and monks, to servants and minstrels. Some characters maintain their social position whilst cross-dressed; other characters move up or down the social hierarchy or change from a lay to a monastic identity. This diversity is important not only to highlight how (and the contexts in which) the cross-dressing motif is used, but also because it is through these various uses that texts raise different issues and questions. Comparing the use of the motif across a large corpus of texts allows us to learn if genre has an impact on the themes and concerns raised by cross-dressing characters, and how the specificities of cross-dressing episodes, like a character's motivation for and length of time spent cross-dressing, affect how non-normative gender identities and expressions are presented.

The third criterion for selection was that the cross-dressing episode had to be developed for more than just a few lines. An example of a less-developed use of the

---

Pelagia/Pelagien, Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch, Theodora/Theodore); *Meraugis de Portlesguez* (Meraugis); the *Roman de Cassidorus* (Helcana/Helcanor, Licorus); the *Roman du Comte d'Artois* (the Countess/Phlipot); *La Saineresse* (the 'Saineresse'); *Tristan de Nanteuil* (Aye/Gaudïon, Blanchandine/Blanchandin); *Trubert* (Trubert/Couillebaude); the *Vie de sainte Eufrosine* (Eufrosine/Esmarade); *Ysaïe le Triste* (Marte, Tronc); and *Yde et Olive* (Yde/Ydé).
[8] The only text which was not originally written in French is the *Légende dorée*. The *Légende dorée* is a translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*. Many different translations of the *Legenda aurea* exist in a range of vernacular languages, and other versions of these lives by other writers are also available.

motif is in *Witasse le Moine*, which was not included because Witasse cross-dresses for around eighty lines, containing mostly dialogue with little to no comment made by the narrator about the cross-dressing.[9] One should note that the length of a text itself did not preclude it being selected because shorter narratives can include representations of cross-dressing as significant as those found in texts that run to tens of thousands of lines.

A considerable effort has been made to select texts that have been under-appreciated by scholarship. Consequently, one title which is conspicuously absent from the corpus is the *Roman de Silence*. *Silence* is a thirteenth-century text that is focussed around the title character Silence who was assigned female at birth but was raised as a boy in order to secure their inheritance of their father's wealth and land.[10] In modern scholarship, *Silence* is the most well-known example of the cross-dressing motif in medieval French literature and has received significant critical attention since the publication of the critical edition in 1972. Many studies have examined this text and have questioned what the narrative can tell us about medieval understandings of and attitudes towards gender, identity, and sexuality. This means that *Silence* has been the subject of considerable debate and discussion, far more than any other text containing the motif. It is for this reason that *Silence* does not form part of the corpus of this thesis. Although *Silence* is rich with interesting features and portrayals of non-normative gender practices and expressions, this thesis aims to analyse texts that have not been subject to sustained critical attention, such as *Floris et Lyriopé* and *Ysaïe le Triste*, or where scholarship on the texts has not explored the cross-dressing motif in either text and/or image, such as the *Roman de Cassidorus* and *Clarisse et Florent*. It highlights

---

[9] *Li romans de Witasse le Moine roman du treizième siècle: édité d'après le manuscrit, fonds français 1553, de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris*, ed. by Denis Joseph Conlon (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

[10] Heldris de Cornauälle, *Le Roman de Silence: A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse-Romance by Heldris de Cornauälle*, ed. by Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge: Heffer, 1972). Hereafter referred to as *Silence*.

the insights such narratives provide on the motif, as well as offering new interpretations of cross-dressing episodes that have received more in-depth analysis in the past, such as cross-dressing saints in the *Légende dorée* and characters from various *fabliaux*.

The texts chosen for inclusion are by no means the only narratives that met the criteria. Other texts could have been selected, like *Baudoin de Sebourc* or *Claris et Laris*; however, the fifteen texts that make up the corpus are representative of the wider context both in terms of genre and the varying ways in which they use the motif.[11] This means there are significant possibilities for fruitful future research that could be undertaken by applying this study's methodology to other combinations of texts.

Selection of Manuscripts

This thesis' corpus of fifteen literary texts is extant in, as far as I am aware, fifty-eight pre-1500 manuscripts.[12] To retain a focus on medieval material, this thesis does not take into consideration any manuscripts produced post-1500. The corpus also does not include any printed books. This is because few of the texts studied are extant in printed form and, with the exception of those of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, any printed copies tend to have been produced after 1500.[13] Given the emphasis on visual representations of the cross-dressing motif, most of the discussion of manuscripts in chapters II to V will concentrate on the illustrated manuscripts.[14] However, chapter I, which presents the manuscript context and sets out what one can learn about a text's audience and popularity from it, considers both illustrated and non-illustrated manuscripts. This is to avoid focussing solely on luxury, single-text manuscripts, which in this corpus tend to be the most heavily illustrated whereas many of the anthologies

---

[11] *Li Romans de Baudouin de Sebourc. IIIe Roy de Jhérusalem*, 2 vols (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1972), I; *Claris et Laris*, ed. by Corinne Pierreville (Paris: Champion, 2008).

[12] See Appendix B for a list.

[13] The texts from this corpus that are extant in are the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, the *Légende dorée*, and *Ysaïe le Triste*.

[14] Two manuscripts (Turin, BNU, MS L. II. 14 and Turin, BNU, MS 1650) are two of the fifty-eight manuscripts in this corpus. Although they are illustrated, this thesis does not discuss their images because I have been unable to consult them to establish their nature.

often have little to no illustration. It is also important to note that not all manuscripts contain large numbers of evenly spaced miniatures, so whilst a manuscript might have illuminations, cross-dressing episodes may not be illustrated. Considering that analysis of miniatures will be predominately centred on images that represent cross-dressing episodes, 'illustrated manuscripts' will be used henceforth as a shorthand for 'manuscripts in which the cross-dressing episode is accompanied by one or more images'. When one looks at the list of extant manuscripts and the texts contained therein, one notices that over half of the manuscripts – thirty-two of the fifty-eight manuscripts – are copies of the *Légende dorée*. Given this large number, this study concentrates on the *Légende dorée* manuscripts that include illustrations of one or more cross-dressing saints. The resulting corpus, whose images will be discussed in chapters II to V, consists of seventeen manuscripts: nine hagiographic manuscripts, seven romance manuscripts, and two manuscripts of comic tales.

Selection of Legal Sources

Many different law systems with overlapping boundaries and areas of jurisdiction existed in medieval Europe, but whilst many were limited to certain geographical areas, canon law had a more universal application within Latin Christendom.[15] Canon law dealt with the governance and running of the Church, but also regulated the behaviour of all Christians in the Western Church as well as providing exclusive jurisdiction over any crimes committed by those with clerical status. Canon law affected many aspects of lay and religious life as it regulated issues such as the creation and dissolution of marriages, commercial and non-commercial activities, sexual acts, and frequency of confession amongst many other aspects of everyday life.[16] This research focusses on canon law for two main reasons. First, because for most of the texts in this corpus little

---

[15] James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995), pp. 2–3.
[16] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, p. 71.

is known of when, where, or by whom they were written and therefore the universal application of canon law within the western European context is more appropriate than regionally specific secular laws. Second, many of the concerns that are raised by cross-dressing characters were, as noted earlier, of considerable interest to canonists, being frequently addressed in decretal collections, as well as at ecumenical councils and synods, and they generated, especially those surrounding the sacrament of marriage, a significant amount of the cases brought to ecclesiastical courts. Although most of the legal sources examined here are related to canon law, there is some examination of evidence from other legal systems where relevant. For example, appropriate dress and behaviour for certain (generally monastic and clerical) social groups is discussed in canon law, but dress was also considered in detail by secular law makers across Europe. Consequently, although analysis of dress and social status takes into account both secular and canon law, in most cases the emphasis is on canon law.

The legal sources used in this thesis are canons of ecumenical councils, decretal collections, synodal statutes, and court records. The main sources are ecumenical council canons from Lateran II (1139) to the Council of Constance (1418); Gratian's *Decretum* (c. 1140), the *Liber Extra* (1234), the *Liber Sextus* (1298), the *Clementines* (1317), and the *Extravagantes Joannis XXII* (1484); and thirteenth-century French synodal statutes.[17] From this selection of source materials, one can see Church-wide rulings as well as those that were regionally-specific. Decretal collections disseminate large numbers of laws as well as sharing the views of various authorities, both past and contemporary, on various issues. Although the literary texts examined in this thesis

---

[17] *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. by Norman P. Tanner, 2 vols (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), I; *Corpus Iuris Canonici*, ed. by Emil Friedberg and Aemilius Ludwig Richter, 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879); *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle: Les statuts de Paris et le synodal de l'Ouest : XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Odette Pontal, 12 vols (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1971), I; *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle: Les statuts synodaux angevins de la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle*, ed. by Joseph Avril, 12 vols (Paris: Éd. du comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1988), III.

were written from the thirteenth century onwards, earlier legal discussions and amendments are discussed as well as those contemporary to the texts' production. Not only is this because decretals from earlier periods continued to be cited and interpreted by later canonists, but also because certain changes in law had immense impact on medieval society, such as the prohibition of clerical marriage, that had both immediate and long-term effects. It is also clear from the repetition of certain laws across decades and centuries, that change did not happen at once and that in reality some laws had limited impact or were ignored by many.[18] Therefore, a slightly wider view of legal issues can, in certain circumstances, show both contemporary reactions to changes and the Church's long-term attempts to regulate certain behaviours.

Scholarship and Contribution of the Thesis to the Field

Literary texts including cross-dressing characters have received sustained interest, and the characters and their behaviour have been examined in different ways. Unsurprisingly, most studies have questioned what these texts reveal about attitudes towards and understanding of gender in the Middle Ages. This scholarship shows how medieval literature reveals the limitations of an essentialist understanding of gender by showing characters whose skills and qualities are not limited to those deemed appropriate for their assigned gender.[19] However, this is not to say that all texts

---

[18] An example of this is clerical celibacy, in which laws prohibiting clerical marriage and concubinage were continually made indicating that many ignored these rules. For more on clerical celibacy in the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, see chapters three and four of Helen Parish, *Clerical Celibacy in the West, c.1100–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

[19] Vern L. Bullough, 'Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 223–42; Jane Gilbert, 'Boys Will Be ... What? Gender, Sexuality, and Childhood in "Floire et Blancheflor" and "Floris et Lyriopé"', *Exemplaria*, 9.1 (1997), 39–61; Valerie Hotchkiss, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross-Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York: Garland, 1996); Ad Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 279–302; Lorraine Kochanske Stock, 'The Importance of Being "Stable": Masculinity and Feminine Empowerment in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 7–34; Elizabeth A. Waters, 'The Third Path: Alternative Sex, Alternative Gender in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 35–46; Diane Watt, 'Behaving like a Man? Lesbian Desire, and Gender Play in "Yde et Olive" and its Adaptions', *Comparative Literature*, 50.4 (1998), 265–85; Roberta Davidson, 'Cross-Dressing in Medieval Romance', in *Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary*, ed. by Lori Hope Lefkovitz (Albany:

consistently present gender in this way, as some narratives suggest that gender is inherently connected to the physical body.[20]

Gender and the cross-dressing motif have been explored with a variety of emphases. For example, some studies analysed cross-dressing saints and the relationship between gender and monasticism/asceticism.[21] Another subject examined in many of the studies cited is the use of language, with discussions focussed on how medieval writers played with language, including naming, pronouns, and other gendered language, so as to question or to reinforce a binary understanding of gender.[22] In-depth analysis of language has been used to great effect to show how writers employed gendered language to signal the perceptions of different characters to a cross-dressing individual as well as to draw attention to how cross-dressing characters trouble binary categories. In recent years, critics have considered how texts containing this motif can

State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 57–74; Kimberlee Campbell, 'Performing Gender in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. by Eglal Doss-Quinby and others (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 79–89.

[20] This is often found at the conclusion of hagiographic texts involving the cross-dressing motif when, after death, the saints' bodies are uncovered and because of this they are celebrated as female. However, there are other examples of essentialist perspectives in these texts. For examples; see, Simon Gaunt, 'The Significance of Silence', *Paragraph*, 13.2 (1990), 202–16; Simon Gaunt, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 250–58; Gilbert, pp. 52–53.

[21] Elizabeth A. Castelli, '"I Will Make Mary Male": Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity', in *Body Guards. The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991); Hotchkiss, pp. 13–32; S. J. Davis, 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex: Intertextuality and Gender in Early Christian Legends of Holy Women Disguised as Men', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 10 (2002), 1–36; Amy V. Ogden, *Hagiography, Romance, and the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"* (Princeton: Edward C. Armstrong, 2003); Sandra Lowerre, 'To Rise Beyond Their Sex: Female Cross-Dressing Saints in Caxton's "Vitas Patrum"', in *Riddles, Knights and Cross-Dressing Saints*, ed. by Thomas Honegger (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 55–94; Sarah Schäfer-Althaus, *Gendered Body* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017).

[22] Michèle Perret, 'Travesties et Transexuelles: Yde, Silence, Grisandole, Blanchandine', *Romance Notes*, 25.3 (1985), 328–40; Gaunt, 'The Significance of Silence', 202–16; Erin F. Labbie, 'The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 63–77; Janet L. Solberg, '"Who Was That Masked Man?": Disguise and Deception in Medieval and Renaissance Comic Literature', in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. by F.R.P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 117–38; Michelle Szkilnik, 'The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 61–88; Katherine H. Terrell, 'Competing Gender Ideologies and the Limitations of Language in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Romance Quarterly*, 55.1 (2008), 35–48; Helen Swift, '"Pourquoy appellerions nous ces choses differentes, qu'une heure, un moment, un mouvement peuvent rendre du tout semblables?": Representing Gender Identity in the Late Medieval French "Querelle des Femmes"', in *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600–1530*, ed. by Elizabeth L'Estrange and Alison More (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 89–106.

indicate transgender or other non-normative gender identities.[23] This is part of the

growing interest in transgender experiences and identities in medieval culture within

medieval studies more generally. The increase in scholarship using transgender theory

indicates that this can be a productive way to approach medieval literature.[24]

Although it generally remains an element of the discussion, gender is not the

only way in which these texts have been analysed. How narratives involving cross-

dressing characters demonstrate different romantic and sexual possibilities has also been

the subject of frequent discussion.[25] Critics have explored how such texts represent

various sexualities, and whether different types of relationships are portrayed positively

or as transgressive, with studies by Diane Watt and Jane Gilbert examining how

narratives that include both queer and incestuous relationships portray these different

relationships and depict the various reactions of characters to them.[26] Readings of cross-

dressing characters focussing on sex and sexuality have highlighted how medieval

literature often portrays positive examples of queer love and attraction, but there are

---

[23] Francesca C. Sautman, 'What Can They Possibly Do Together? Queer Epic Performances in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 199–232; Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 82–132; 201–5; Blake Gutt, 'Transgender Genealogy in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', *Exemplaria*, 30.2 (2018), 129–46; Vanessa Wright, 'Illuminating Queer Gender Identity in the Manuscripts of the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, Forthcoming).

[24] M. W. Bychowski, 'Trans Textuality: Dysphoria in the Depths of Medieval Skin', *Postmedieval*, 9.3 (2018), 318–33; Gutt, 129–46; *Special Issue on Transfeminisms*, ed. by Gabrielle M. W. Bychowski and Dorothy Kim (*Medieval Feminist Forum*, Forthcoming); *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019). This use of transgender theory is being applied to literature from other periods and cultures; for example, see; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[25] Perret, pp. 328–40; Simon Gaunt, 'Straight Minds/"Queer" Wishes in Old French Hagiography: "La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine"', *GLQ*, 1.4 (1995), 439–57; Davidson, 'Cross-Dressing in Medieval Romance', in *Textual Bodies*, ed. by Lori Hope Lefkovitz, pp. 57–74; Gilbert, pp. 39–61; Waters, pp. 35–46; Robert L. A. Clark, 'A Heroine's Sexual Itinerary: Incest, Transvestism and Same-Sex Marriage in "Yde et Olive"', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 89–105; Watt, pp. 265–85; Sautman, 'What can they possibly do together?', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, pp. 199–232; Anna Kłosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Amer, pp. 50–87; Williams Robins, 'Three Tales of Female Same-Sex Marriage: Ovid's "Iphis And Ianthe", the Old French "Yde et Olive", and Antonio Pucci's "Reina d'Oriente"', *Exemplaria*, 21.1 (2009), 43–62.

[26] Gilbert, pp. 39–61; Watt, pp. 265–85.

also instances where characters who express queer desire are criticised or punished. The variety of depictions of queer sexualities demonstrates the range of medieval attitudes towards and understandings of queer relationships and desire.

Although scholarship has been centred mostly on gender and sexuality, critics have also investigated how narratives containing cross-dressing characters engage with issues related to marriage as well as associated subjects like lineage and inheritance.[27] A comparative analysis of texts reveals that marriage, its formation, individual choice, and sexual incapacity are subjects frequently raised and questioned by a wide range of cross-dressing characters. Therefore, greater focus on these areas is needed and, as will be shown in chapter IV, much can be gained from analysing contemporary legal understandings and debates in order to show how texts discussed and offered responses to these issues.

This study contributes significantly to existing scholarship by means of its combination of textual and visual analysis. Many manuscripts that include texts from this corpus are highly illustrated, but few scholars have taken advantage of this rich material when considering literary representations of the cross-dressing motif.[28] Most analysis of the manuscripts containing this corpus tends to be focussed on their production, often revealing significant information about the codices and the artisans who created them as well as their ownership.[29] Images are often discussed when

---

[27] Sharon Kinoshita, 'Heldris de Cornuâlle's "Roman de Silence" and the Feudal Politics of Lineage', *PMLA*, 110.3 (1995), 397–409; Elizabeth Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), chap. 4; Callahan, 12–20; Berry, pp. 191–206; Rosalind Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages: Gender, Morality, and Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), chap. 3; Archibald, 'Incest between Adults and Children in the Medieval World', pp. 85–107.

[28] For examples of scholarship that combines literary and visual analysis of cross-dressing characters, see; Ogden, chap. 1; Kirk Ambrose, 'Two Cases of Female Cross-Undressing in Medieval Art and Literature', *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 23.3 (2004), 7–14; Kłosowska, chap. 3; Martha Easton, '"Why Can't a Woman Be More like a Man?" Transforming and Transcending Gender in the Lives of Female Saints', in *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, ed. by Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pastan, and Ellen M. Shortell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 333–47; Saisha Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 45 (2009), 138–74.

[29] Jean M. Caswell, 'A Double Signing System in the Morgan-Mâcon "Golden Legend"', *Quaerendo*, 10 (1980), 97–112; Hilary Elizabeth Maddocks, 'The Illuminated Manuscripts of the "Légende Dorée": Jean

identifying artists who may have been involved in their production, rather than addressing artistic representation.[30] The often extensive programmes of illumination found in these manuscripts allow for exploration of how cross-dressing episodes were portrayed by medieval artists. This thesis, therefore, examines how narratives and their accompanying images depicted or hinted at contemporary legal and social issues as well as comparing the different approaches artists took to present cross-dressing characters visually.

This study provides a significant contribution to the existing scholarship on literature including the cross-dressing motif. Its interdisciplinary approach, combining analysis of literary, visual, and legal sources, to a wide-ranging corpus of texts allows for the motif to be explored from a new perspective. It demonstrates how the cross-dressing motif is used to highlight and engage with a range of social and legal issues, including but not limited to gender, illustrating how the motif brings to the fore concerns regarding dress, status, marriage, sex, love, and desire.

Terminology

Medieval French literature offers a wealth of examples of gender practices, many of which could be viewed and categorised within medieval society as non-normative. The

---

de Vignay's Translation of Jacobus de Voragine's "Legenda Aurea"' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Melbourne, 1990); Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller (Munich: Fink, 1996), pp. 127–41; Alison Stones, 'The Stylistic Context of the "Roman de Fauvel", with a Note on "Fauvain"', in *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 146*, ed. by Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 529–67; Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols (Turnhout: Miller, 2000); Keith Busby, *Codex and Context*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002); Alison Stones, 'Appendix IV: Illustrated "Miracles de Nostre Dame" Manuscripts Listed by Stylistic Attribution and Attributable Manuscripts whose "MND" Selection is Unillustrated', in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 374–96; Keith Busby, 'Post-Chrétien Verse Romance: The Manuscript Context', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes*, 14, 2007, 11–24; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*.

[30] For example, Maddocks' study of the *Légende dorée* manuscripts is focussed mostly on cataloging manuscripts and identifying their makers and owners (Maddocks, 'The Illuminated Manuscripts'). Another example of images being analysed in this way is in the debate on whether work attributed to the *Fauvel* Master was completed by one or two different artists (Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 208-12; and Stones, 'The Stylistic Context of the "Roman de Fauvel"', pp. 529–67).

variety of gender expressions and identities portrayed show characters interrogating perceived notions of gender, and these characters and their behaviours often show the limitations of a binary understanding of gender. Not all texts celebrate or promote the non-normative behaviours and expressions depicted in the narratives. Some texts explicitly criticise where other praise, but the most common response is to explore and question ideas of gender before bringing the text and character's actions to a more normative conclusion.

Narratives that include the literary motif of cross-dressing tend to show a character or characters wearing clothing and other visual signifiers not commonly associated with their assigned gender, and they often change their name and status along with their clothing. There has been significant critical discussion about how one should understand and analyse non-normative gender practices and what terminology should be applied to gender-non-conforming historical and literary figures. A key example of this is the debate that surrounds the figure of John/Eleanor Rykener, whose testimony appears in a fourteenth-century document after Rykener were arrested for engaging in sexual activity with a man in a public place. Many studies have examined the Rykener case and testimony; such scholarship has used various terminology to describe Rykener, such as 'transvestite', 'cross-dresser', or as 'transgender', and these identifications have had an impact on the pronouns and names used to describe Rykener.[31] Many scholars, including Jeremy Goldberg, Cordelia Beattie, Judith M. Bennett and Shannon

---

[31] Ruth Mazo Karras and David Lorenzo Boyd, '"Ut cum muliere": A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London', in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. by Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 101–16; Cordelia Beattie, 'Gender and Femininity in Medieval England', in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. by Nancy F. Partner (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), pp. 153–70; Robert Mills, 'Male-Male Love and Sex in the Middle Ages 1000–1500', in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex between Men since the Middle Ages*, ed. by Matt Cook and others (Oxford: Greenwood World, 2007), pp. 1–43 (pp. 42–43); Bennett and McSheffrey, pp. 1–25; Jeremy Goldberg, 'John Rykener, Richard II and the Governance of London', *Leeds Studies in English*, 45 (2014), 49–70; Tom Linkinen, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015); Ruth Mazo Karras and Tom Linkinen, 'John/Eleanor Rykener Revisited', in *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns*, ed. by Laine E. Doggett, Daniel E. O'Sullivan, and E. Jane Burns (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), pp. 111–21.

McSheffrey, have applied he/him pronouns and used Rykener's birth name, John, in their analysis, whereas Robert Mills identifies Rykener as John/Eleanor and uses he/she and him/her pronouns. A 2016 article by Ruth Mazo Karras and Tom Linkinen directly addresses terminology and interpretation. Karras revisits her earlier studies' labelling of Rykener as a 'transvestite', and the use of he/him pronouns, and instead examines Rykener as a transgender or 'transgender-like' person and adopts gender-neutral language.[32] The example of John/Eleanor Rykener reveals the complexities of researching premodern gender identities and practices. It is not only difficult to determine the gender identity of a person who does not explicitly declare their identity to others, but some might view the applying of current vocabulary, terms, and labels to premodern people and experiences as anachronistic, especially considering the constant evolution of terminology on gender.

Although one should be cautious of assigning identities, pronouns, and terminology to any individual who cross-dresses in medieval literature and be aware that the types of behaviours and relationships are unlikely to map exactly onto twenty-first-century identities, some terms can be helpful in articulating non-normative gender practices. The umbrella terms of *transgender* and *genderqueer*, because of their wide range of meaning, can be applied to cross-dressing characters whose non-normative gender expressions often reveal the limitations of a binary understanding of gender.[33] *Transgender* can be used, as suggested by David Valentine, as an umbrella term for 'gender variance' and, as argued by Jack Halberstam, can be applied to 'all kinds of people who challenge, deliberately or accidentally, gender normativity'.[34] *Genderqueer*

---

[32] Karras and Linkinen, p. 111. The works to which Karras refers are the following co-authored papers published in 1995: Karras and Boyd, 'Ut cum muliere', pp. 101–16; David Lorenzo Boyd and Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1.4 (1995), 459–65.

[33] In this thesis, when *transgender* and *genderqueer* appear in italics, this references to them as umbrella terms. When they are not italicised, the terms refer to individual gender identities.

[34] Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), p. 55; David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 39.

is a term that describes a specific gender identity, one which falls under the *transgender* umbrella, or it can be used in itself as an umbrella term 'for those outside the gender binary' and for identities 'not reconcilable with a binary understanding of sex'.[35] As umbrella terms, both *transgender* and *genderqueer* can be associated with different cross-dressing characters, as many challenge normative expressions of gender, show the limits of binary categories, or reveal identities and experiences that cannot be understood as either male or female. Although transgender or genderqueer gender identities cannot be associated with all cross-dressing characters in medieval literature, there are texts in which characters exhibit behaviours and/or make statements that could be read as declarations of a transgender or genderqueer identity.

Other key terms related to gender used in this thesis need to be defined. These terms are found in other disciplines, such as the social sciences, but also in other social contexts, and with potentially varied definitions and usages, so it is important to explain how they are understood and deployed here. The terms 'gender expression' and 'gender presentation' are used to describe external manifestations of gender such as dress, hairstyle, names, and behaviours; for example, an individual could be described as having a feminine gender expression if they wear clothing and hairstyles typically associated with women. Gender expression does not necessarily correspond to or reveal someone's 'gender identity', which is an individual's innate sense of their gender that may or may not be the gender they were assigned at birth. Another important term for this thesis is 'queer'. Here, this term is understood as a general term describing gender, sexual and romantic orientations that do not conform to the dominant expectations of medieval society. In this study, 'queer gender', 'queer desire', and 'queer

---

[35] Christina Richards and others, 'Non-Binary or Genderqueer Genders', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28.1 (2016), 95–102 (p. 96); Christina Richards, Walter-Pierre Bouman, and Meg-John Barker, 'Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders', in *Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders*, ed. by Christina Richards, Walter Pierre Bouman, and Meg-John Barker (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 1–8 (p. 2).

love/affection' are used to focus discussion on these non-conforming aspects of a character's expression, identity, experiences, and relationships. This does not mean that more specific terminology will not be applied; where relevant, terms for specific gender identities and sexual orientations will be used, for example, 'genderqueer', 'transgender', and 'same-gender desire/love'. However, given that explicit declarations of gender, sexual and romantic preferences are not often found in the primary sources, the general terms will be preferred, to avoid misrepresenting the material. Another useful term is 'non-normative gender', one that, like 'queer', can be used to describe gender expressions and identities that do not fit social expectations.

When analysing and discussing characters who cross-dress, one must consider how to apply names and pronouns to a character whose gender expression is not stable. This is something that the texts themselves often address. Some narrators consistently use one pronoun or name. For example, in the *Roman du Comte d'Artois* the Countess/Phlipot is identified by the narrator using she/her pronouns and as 'la comtesse' throughout, whereas other texts, like *Yde et Olive* and the *Vie de sainte Eufrosine*, move between pronouns and names to highlight the cross-dressing character's non-normative gender practices.[36] Another factor to consider is that many of the characters cross-dress temporarily, but some do live the rest of their lives in their adopted identity, which, as is discussed in chapter II, has an impact on how their lives and gender identity can be interpreted. On first mention in each section, characters are named using both their birth and chosen name; for example, Marine/Marin. Thereafter, characters who cross-dress temporarily are identified using the name appropriate for the narrative context; for example, when analysing *Trubert*, the cross-dressing character Trubert/Couillebaude is identified as Trubert when not cross-dressed and Couillebaude

---

[36] Hereafter, the *Roman du Comte d'Artois* and the *Vie de sainte Eufrosine* are referred to as *Comte d'Artois* and *Eufrosine*.

whilst cross-dressed. However, any characters who remain in their cross-dressed identity until the end of their life or the narrative's conclusion are, after the first mention, named using their chosen name; for example, the cross-dressing character in the Life of Theodora/Theodore would be named Theodore. It is also important to note that many characters do not change their name whilst cross-dressing, like Marte from *Ysaïe le Triste*, or are not given a forename at all, such as the 'Saineresse' from *La Saineresse*. Instances where names are not given or changed are noted in a footnote when relevant.

This thesis' use of personal pronouns is similar to the approach taken with names. Although it may initially seem to be the most obvious approach, it would not be feasible to follow each text's pronoun usage. This is because texts that move between different gendered language and names do not do so within discrete episodes or consistently, but generally move between pronouns and other gendered terms within the space of a few lines. As will be explored through this thesis, these shifts may be for a variety of reasons, including narrative effect. It would not be possible for this study to analyse and discuss these shifts in pronouns and other gendered language without a consistent basis of its own. In addition, there are instances in some texts where the pronoun used within the narrative may not be appropriate for a character considered in this discussion to have a trans or genderqueer identity. Therefore, if a character cross-dresses temporarily, the pronouns associated with their assigned gender are used when describing any actions taking place before or after cross-dressing; for example, Helcana/Helcanor from the *Roman de Cassidorus* is referred to as Helcana and with she/her pronouns before and after cross-dressing, but as Helcanor and with they/them pronouns whilst cross-dressing.[37] Any characters who cross-dress, or intend to cross-dress, permanently, like St Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, will be referred to using their

---

[37] The *Roman de Cassidorus* is hereafter referred to as *Cassidorus*.

chosen name and they/them pronouns throughout. The gender-neutral singular pronoun they/them is used to avoid mis-gendering characters whose gender presentation and/or gender identity do not fit into a binary model.

There are critical discussions of the term 'cross-dressing' and if or how it should be used. Along with 'transvestite', 'cross-dresser' is a term that was previously used in medieval studies and other disciplines to describe individuals who dress in clothes not associated with their assigned gender. However, 'transvestite' and 'cross-dresser' are now considered offensive by many transgender and genderqueer people because, as Kay Siebler explains, 'these terms imply a superficial or playful performance of gender'.[38] The terms 'transvestite' and 'cross-dresser' have been used in literary scholarship for decades without any derogatory intention; however, the growing fields of queer and transgender studies have offered new perspectives and terminology that can be useful for medievalists. Instead of identifying characters as 'cross-dressers', this thesis uses the expression 'literary motif of cross-dressing'. This not only acknowledges the responses of transgender and queer communities to the term 'cross-dresser' but also distinguishes between the motif's usage in medieval literature and 'cross-dressing' in other contexts. One could suggest that the term 'cross-dressing' should be avoided; however, I am hesitant to recommend this when discussing this corpus of medieval French literary texts. This is because the act of 'cross-dressing' is generally described in these texts as a physical change of gendered clothing. For instance, specific items of clothing are adopted, such as when the exchange of a nun's habit for a noble's clothing is described in *Eufrosine* 'Chemise de cansil vestit por l'astamine; / En liu de la cucule le peliçon d'ermine' (*Eufrosine*, ll. 495–96). Alternatively, more general statements of clothing changes are offered, as seen in *Ysaïe le Triste*: 'A tant vesty Marte une robe d'homme'

---

[38] Kay Siebler, *Learning Queer Identity in the Digital Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 126–27.

(*Ysaïe le Triste*, 266). I, therefore, consider it to be important that the element of changing dress is not obscured by using another term, such as 'transition', which places the emphasis on the gender transition itself, but which does not highlight how transition was begun. In addition, it seems important to stress that the motif is a common literary device that has a narrative function, as it often facilitates a character's actions, as well as raising questions of gender and identity. Although 'transition' is a useful term to describe an individual whose gender expression changes to reflects their gender identity, it works less well for characters whose exchange of gendered clothing functions as a temporary disguise. As this thesis aims to cover instances of 'cross-dressing' in a wide variety of narrative contexts and genres, it is important that the vocabulary applied fits as many different plots and characters as possible. Consequently, this thesis uses the term 'cross-dressing', and any derivation of the verb 'to cross-dress', as a shorthand for 'adopting clothing and signifiers not typically associated with the individual's assigned gender' but does recognise the limitations of these terms.

Outline

A preliminary contextual chapter examines the manuscript context of the corpus of literary texts, exploring their production, content, popularity, and audience. This provides a basis for the analysis of manuscript miniatures that underpins the thematic analysis of cross-dressing motifs in chapters II to V. The following four chapters each consider how the corpus of texts addresses the themes of gender, dress and status, marriage, and sex and desire.

Each of the thematic chapters, where relevant, includes sections outlining the canon law views of each issue, like marriage, and presents any debates surrounding that subject, before considering how these issues are introduced and examined in medieval literature. The thematic chapters also contain analysis of how the themes were treated, or not, in manuscript miniatures and differences in representation across other codices

by the same or different artists. Whilst not all cross-dressing episodes discuss each theme, the themes chosen are those that are most commonly found in this corpus of texts. Chapter II is centred around how gender is portrayed in text and image. This chapter outlines how a character's motivation for and length of time spent cross-dressing affect the types of gender identities and expressions presented in the narrative. In addition, it examines the most common ways that artists depict cross-dressing characters in manuscript miniatures. Dress and status are the focus of Chapter III, which explores concerns regarding differences between appearance and reality, and the desire for individuals to dress according to their social position found in literature and law. The following chapter examines how anxieties about marriage, specifically the issue of consent, are represented in the literary corpus. It considers the significant changes made to marriage law and how literary texts explores issues of personal choice, marital separation, and sexual incapacity. The final section of this study, Chapter V, analyses how this corpus approaches sex and desire, which are subjects frequently connected to the cross-dressing motif. This chapter explores the representation of the three most frequently discussed issues: non marital-sex, accusations of assault, and queer desire.

Chapter I: Medieval Manuscripts: Production, Content, and Ownership

Manuscripts can reveal a great deal about how medieval readers engaged with a literary text. Not only can they provide evidence of production and ownership, but the internal organisation of the contents can also reveal the interests of the commissioner and demonstrate links between different texts, genres, and writers. By examining the manuscripts of texts that include a cross-dressing character, one can gain an understanding of who read these narratives and how they might have responded to the themes and questions raised by the cross-dressing motif.

The corpus of manuscripts discussed in this thesis has been examined from a range of perspectives.[39] Book historians, such as Richard and Mary Rouse and Hanno Wijsman, have made considerable contributions to scholarship through their work on manuscript production, commission, and collection.[40] Many of these manuscripts have extensive programmes of illumination; this has led to an interest in this material from art historians. For example, Hillary Maddocks's unpublished doctoral thesis focussed on the illustrated manuscripts of the *Légende dorée*. Maddocks's work is unusual, as most work on these codices explores the output of a single artist, such as Alison Stones' research on the *Fauvel* Master (whose work appears in several codices in this corpus) or is centred on specific manuscripts, like Jean Caswell's examination of the production of

---

[39] For information on how they were selected see the Introduction.

[40] For example, Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'The Commercial Production of Manuscript Books in Late-Thirteenth-Century and Early-Fourteenth-Century Paris', in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. by Linda Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), pp. 103–15; Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse, 'The Book Trade at the University of Paris, ca. 1250–ca. 1350', in *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. by Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), pp. 259–338; Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, pp. 127–41; Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I; Hanno Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la révolte des villes flamandes des années 1482–1492: Relations entre les bibliothèques de Philippe de Clèves et de Louis de Bruges et la librairie des ducs de Bourgogne', in *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'Etat: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Hanno Wijsman, and Céline Van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 245–78; Hanno Wijsman, 'Les manuscrits de Pierre de Luxembourg (ca 1440–1482) et les bibliothèques nobiliaires dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons de la deuxième moitié du XVe siècle', *Le Moyen Age*, 113.3–4 (2007), 613–37; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*.

the Morgan/Mâcon *Légende dorée*.[41] A third perspective that is particularly relevant to the questions addressed in this chapter is the discussion of anthologies and their production, which shows how themes and connections between texts can be found through analysis of a codex and its contents.[42] This chapter combines the wealth of information gained from these previous studies with new analysis of codicological and documentary evidence to examine this corpus of manuscripts' production, content, and ownership.

This chapter focusses on four main areas. First, a contextual section discusses how manuscripts were produced during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and how trends in production are reflected in the manuscripts of texts that include the cross-dressing motif. The second section considers the other texts and genres that are found alongside texts from the literary corpus in anthology manuscripts. This is of particular relevance as a considerable number of the manuscripts are anthologies. An examination of their contents and organisation can inform us about the commissioner's interests. As well as examining the context in which one finds the cross-dressing motif, this chapter uses manuscript and inventory evidence to provide some indication of how well-known this corpus of texts was. Finally, evidence of commission and ownership, in the form of marginal notes, decoration, and inventory entries, goes some way to identifying the audience of these narratives.

There are fifty-eight extant manuscripts in the corpus of texts examined in this thesis.[43] Given the large number of surviving manuscripts, it would not be possible to analyse each codex in the detail required, therefore this chapter uses nine manuscripts as

---

[41] Jean M. Caswell, 97–112; Hilary Elizabeth Maddocks, 'The Illuminated Manuscripts'; Alison Stones, 'The Stylistic Context', in *Fauvel Studies*, ed. by Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 529–67.

[42] Busby, *Codex and Context*; Wagih Azzam, Olivier Collet, and Yasmina Foehr-Janssens, 'Les manuscrits littéraires français: Pour une sémiotique du recueil médiéval', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83.3 (2005), 639–69; Busby, 'Post-Chrétien Verse Romance', pp. 11–24; *Le recueil au Moyen Âge: le Moyen Âge central*, ed. by Yasmina Foehr-Janssens and Olivier Collet (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

[43] See Appendix B for details.

case-studies. These codices have been chosen because they exemplify trends in

production, but they also show the diversity of the manuscript corpus in terms of date,

decoration, contents, and ownership. These nine manuscripts date from the mid-

thirteenth to the late fifteenth centuries and range from large anthologies with little

decoration to heavily illuminated single-item manuscripts. The chapter is centred on

these case-studies, but other codices are discussed if they offer a different perspective

that is relevant to the analysis. Appendix C contains detailed information on the

production, ownership, and contents of the nine case-studies, but to briefly summarise

the main details, Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 837, produced between 1275–80, has

246 items including *La Saineresse*, *Berengier au lonc cul*, and *Frere Denise*.[44] Bern,

Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 is another large anthology, containing seventy-six items and

Berengier¸ and was completed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.[45] Vatican

City, BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725 dates from c. 1300 and contains four texts with one being

Raoul de Houdenc's *Meraugis de Portlesguez*.[46] Turin, BNU, MS L. II. 14 is an

anthology whose date of production, 1311, is signalled in a marginal note on fol.

583v.[47] This manuscript contains narratives including *Clarisse et Florent* and *Yde et

Olive*, which are both part of the Huon de Bordeaux cycle. *Eufrosine* is included in two

of the case-studies: Brussels, BRB, MS 9229–30 and The Hague, KB, MS 71 A 24,

which were both produced in Paris in late 1320s.[48] The final three case-studies are from

the fifteenth century: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610 is a manuscript of *Comte

d'Artois* that was completed between 1453–67[49]; Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 93

---

[44] Olivier Collet, 'Du "manuscrit de jongleur" au "recueil aristocratique": réflexions sur les premières anthologies françaises', *Le Moyen Age*, 103.3 (2007), 481–99 (p. 491). *Berengier au lonc cul* will hereafter be referred to as *Berengier*.

[45] Collet, 'Du "manuscrit de jongleur"', p. 482.

[46] Busby, *Codex and Context*, II, 518.

[47] Barbara Anne Brewka, '"Esclarmonde", "Clarisse et Florent", "Yde et Olive I", "Croissant", "Yde et Olive II", "Huon et Les Geants", Sequels to "Huon de Bordeaux", as Contained in Turin MS. L.II.14: An Edition' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1977), p. 65; Keith Busby, *Codex and Context*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), I, 402.

[48] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 189.

[49] *Le Roman du Comte d'Artois*, ed. by Jean Charles Seigneuret (Geneva: Droz, 1966), p. xxix.

includes *Cassidorus*, as well as the rest of the *Sept Sages* cycle, and dates from 1466[50];

and Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 244–45 is a copy of the *Légende dorée* and was

produced between 1477–85/86.[51]

I.1: Manuscript Production

In the late Middle Ages, manuscripts written in French were produced throughout

France and the Burgundian Netherlands, with Paris, Ghent, Lille, Bruges, amongst

others, being areas of intense manuscript production. This section outlines manuscript

production practices during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuriesso that one can learn how

this corpus fits into the broader context and if they exemplify trends in production.

For centuries, most manuscripts were produced in monastic communities.

However, from the mid-thirteenth century onwards, manuscripts were generally

planned, produced, and sold by *libraires*.[52] *Libraires* were lay professionals who

coordinated production and hired artists and scribes. These individuals may also have

worked as flourishers, those who added linear embellishments to initials and other

decorative elements, as copyists, or as artists. For example, the Parisian *libraire* Richard

de Montbaston was also an illuminator.[53] In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth

centuries, manuscripts were made throughout France, catering to local nobility and

ecclesiastical institutions. North-eastern France was an area with significant activity in

book production, particularly in thriving commercial centres like Arras. As Keith Busby

states, this region was home to a considerable number of writers, such as Gautier

d'Arras or Jean Renart, as well as many high-profile noble families, such as the Counts

of Hainault and Flanders, making it an area with a rich literary culture and

---

[50] The date is written in a colophon by the scribe.
[51] Maddocks, pp. 112–13.
[52] Busby, *Codex and* Context, I, 57; Although most codices in this corpus appear to have been completed by lay professionals, one exception is BnF, MS fr. 93, which was copied by Micheau Gonnot, a priest living in Crozant. Bart Besamusca notes that Gonnot copied at least five luxury manuscripts for Jacques d'Armagnac (A.A.M Besamusca, *The Book of Lancelot: The Middle Dutch Lancelot Compilations and the Medieval Tradition of Narrative Cycles* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), pp. 2–3).
[53] Rouse and Rouse, 'Book Trade', p. 280.

consequently, an important region for book production.[54] Manuscript production was not limited to the north-east; areas like Champagne, Burgundy, and Lorraine were also important centres for this type of work during this period.[55]

In the fourteenth century, whilst centres like Arras remained important, most manuscripts were copied and illuminated in Paris.[56] At this time, manuscripts were being made on a commercial basis, including both texts for use by students at the universities and texts commissioned by high-status individuals for their personal use. The University of Paris regulated the book trade in Paris and by 1316, *libraires* were required to swear an oath to the University.[57] This oath, secured with a bond, had to be sworn by any *libraire* who sold books over the price of ten *solidi*, a French unit of currency, and who had a permanent shop in Paris.[58] The Paris book trade not only served those who lived in the city, since there is evidence that individuals were commissioning manuscripts from *libraires* at some distance from their places of residence. Two such examples are Mahaut d'Artois (1268–1329) and Guillaume I de Hainaut (1286–1337) who were both based in the north-east but ordered manuscripts from Parisian workshops.[59] This explains why manuscripts made in Paris are found in the inventories and libraries of individuals based throughout France and the Burgundian Netherlands.

By the mid-fifteenth century, however, Paris did not hold the same importance as a centre of manuscript production that it had in the previous century. From the 1420s

---

[54] Busby defines the north-eastern part of France as being from the borders of Normandy and Artois, moving eastwards to include Boulonnais, Flanders, Hainault, and Brabant (Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 513–14).

[55] Busby, *Codex and Context*, II, 535–95.

[56] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 563.

[57] Rouse and Rouse, 'Book Trade', p. 268; Godfried Croenen, 'Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400', in *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400*, ed. by Godfried Croenen and Peter F. Ainsworth (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), pp. 1–20 (p. 3).

[58] Rouse and Rouse, 'Book Trade', p. 270.

[59] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*. I, p. 189; Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 135.

to the 1480s, production shifted to the Burgundian Netherlands.[60] One of the reasons for this was Paris's political and economic instability: between 1410 and 1450 a number of crises had a significant impact on manuscript production.[61] During the Burgundian-Armagnac civil war, thousands of people were banished, by both sides, from Paris in 1411, 1413, and 1414, and in the massacres of 1418 around two thousand people were killed, many of whom, such as bibliophiles Guichard Dauphin and Gontier Col, would have been potential commissioners of manuscripts.[62] The battle of Agincourt (1415) also indirectly affected manuscript production. As with the Parisian banishments and massacres, many nobles were killed at Agincourt, but Bozzolo and Ornato also note that financial resources that might have normally been used to the commission manuscripts or other luxury goods were redirected to fund the payment of ransoms.[63] Godfried Croenen also suggests that the establishment of an Anglo-Burgundian regime in Paris (1420–36) would have affected the book trade because it would have made it difficult to start or maintain relationships with clients during a time of significant political upheaval.[64] These various external factors seriously affected manuscript production in Paris. Artists began to move north from Paris to work for those *libraires* producing manuscripts for Burgundian society.[65] This shift in the location of production is reflected in the number of manuscripts made locally for the Burgundian court: production rose in 1420 before reaching its pinnacle in the 1470s.[66] After this point, production slowed as a result of a change in demand and the saturation of the market.[67]

The Burgundian Netherlands was an area in which manuscript production flourished on account of demand from the nobility. In particular, Philippe le Bon (1396–

---

[60] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 563.
[61] Carla Bozzolo and Ezio Ornato, *Pour une histoire du livre manuscrit au Moyen Age: trois essais de codicologie quantitative* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1980), p. 90.
[62] Ibid., pp. 107–8.
[63] Ibid., p. 108.
[64] Croenen, p. 8.
[65] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 564.
[66] Ibid., p. 555.
[67] Ibid., p. 564.

1467), duke of Burgundy, was a renowned bibliophile, having collected or commissioned around six hundred manuscripts from 1445 to his death in 1467. It is difficult to match every item in the inventories of Philippe le Bon's library to extant manuscripts of texts including the cross-dressing motif. However, his collection did contain a copy of *Eufrosine*, (Brussels, BRB, MS 9229–30, n.739), a *Meraugis de Portlesguez* (Vienna, ON, MS 2599, n. 1957), a *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* (n. 1261/1689), two copies of *Cassidorus* (Brussels, BRB, MS 9245, n. 1238/1641; Brussels, BRB, MS 9401, n. 1236/1757), *Comte d'Artois* (BnF, MS fr. 11610, n. 1284/1930), one copy of *Ysaïe le Triste* (Darmstadt, HLH, MS 2524, n. 1282/1834), and at least five copies of the *Légende dorée*.[68] Other nobles of the Burgundian court, who had a similar interest in book collecting or sought to emulate the ducal library, also had extensive collections and commissioned new manuscripts: for example, Charles de Cröy (1455–1527), Jean de Wavrin (1400–74), Margaret of Austria (1480–1530), and Philippe de Clèves (1459–1528).[69] One should not assume that these individuals had a specific interest in reading texts involving cross-dressing, but the codices can nevertheless reveal information about the range of items found in aristocratic libraries. Noble book collections contained a wide variety of material both in terms of the

[68] The numbers are those from Joseph Barrois, *Bibliothèque protypographique: ou Librairies des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean de Berri, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1830). It is difficult to ascertain how many copies of the *Légende dorée* were held by Philippe le Bon as the 1467 inventory appears to have duplicate entries (nos 724, 725 and 1509, 1510); it seems more likely that these would be duplicate entries rather than two sets of identical manuscripts. Another issue is that the descriptions for possibly the same items are different enough between the 1467 and 1487 inventories to make it difficult to determine conclusively which entries refer to one or two separate codices.

[69] Each of these individuals owned at least one manuscript from this corpus. For more on their collections, see Antoinette Naber, 'Jean de Wavrin, un bibliophile du quinzième siècle', *Revue du Nord*, 273 (1987), 281–93; Antoinette Naber, 'Les manuscrits d'un bibliophile bourguignon du XVe siècle, Jean de Wavrin', *Revue du Nord*, 284 (1990), 23–48; Anne-Marie Legaré, '"La Librairye de Madame": Two Princesses and Their Libraries', in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. by Dagmar Eichberger and Yvonne Bleyerveld (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 206–19; Anne-Marie Legaré, 'Les Bibliothèques de deux princesses : Marguerite d'York et Marguerite d'Autriche', in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 253–65; Anne Korteweg, 'La bibliothèque de Philippe de Clèves: inventaire et manuscrits parvenus jusqu'à nous', in *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'Etat: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Hanno Wijsman, and Céline Van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 183–221; Wijsman, 'Les manuscrits de Pierre de Luxembourg', 613–37; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*.

manuscripts' content, like the genre and language of the texts included, and the

manuscript itself, such as the size of the codex, its degree of decoration, and

programmes of illumination. An example of a noble book collection is that belonging to

Philippe de Clèves, which has been described as being 'intrinsically well balanced and

(…) a typical Burgundian collection'.[70] Hanno Wijsman notes that his library contained

items that were often found in Burgundian collections, such as texts related to the Order

of the Golden Fleece and Burgundian romances, as well as many didactic, scientific,

and history texts but his collection suggests that Philippe was less interested in

theological and philosophical volumes.[71]

The general trends in the location of production and ownership outlined earlier

in this section are reflected in the case-studies. For those completed from the late-

thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries, two manuscripts were completed in Paris

(BRB, MS 9229–30 and KB, MS 71 A 24), three were made in north-eastern France

(BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725, BnF, MS fr. 837, and BNU, MS L.II.14), and one in eastern

France (Burgerbibliothek, MS 354).[72] However, as mentioned, from the mid-fourteenth

to early-fifteenth century, book production was based predominantly in Paris, which is

reflected in the corpus of *Légende dorée* manuscripts: of the twenty-eight manuscripts

whose place of production is known, twenty-one were produced in Paris between 1348

and 1450.[73] The case-studies dating from the fifteenth century also broadly reflect the

trends outlined earlier. Each was commissioned by a member of the nobility with a keen

---

[70] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 296.

[71] Ibid., pp. 297; 299.

[72] See Brewka, p. 65 (BNU, MS L.II.14); Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 189–96 (BRB, MS 9229–30, KB, MS 71 A 24); Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 462 (BnF, MS fr. 837); Busby, *Codex and Context*, II, 518 (BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725). Busby also discusses the suggestion that BnF, MS. fr. 837 and BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725 were produced in Champagne, noting that it is difficult to determine conclusively the location of production (Busby, *Codex and Context*, II, 584–85).

[73] Four Parisian manuscripts were produced between 1450–90 (Brussels, BRB, MS 9282–85; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 2682–83; BnF, MS fr. 244–45; and Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 6448). Three manuscripts were produced outside of Paris between 1470 and 1500 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 22; London, BL, MS Stowe 50–51; and New York, Morgan Library, MS 672–75). All dates and locations are from Maddocks.

interest in book collecting. BnF, MS fr. 11610 is an example of one of the many codices completed in the Burgundian Netherlands for a member of the local nobility, in this case, Jean de Wavrin. However, BnF, MS fr. 244–45's production in Paris in the 1480s and BnF, MS fr. 93's completion in central France in 1466 shows that, although much of the production was centred in the Burgundian Netherlands, this did not mean that production ceased elsewhere. Examining how case-studies map onto trends in production shows how they fit within the wider context, but similarities between the manuscripts are not limited to location and date of manufacture. There are also many similarities between the texts selected for inclusion in these codices, as is demonstrated in the next section's discussion of trends in the contents of anthologies.

I.2: Texts and Genres Associated with Narratives Containing the Cross-Dressing Motif

Much can be learnt from an examination of the combination of texts found in anthologies. Many of the manuscripts in this corpus contain more than one text with some of the larger codices including up to 250 narratives. An analysis of the manuscript context of the literary corpus shows that there are trends in the types of texts found alongside narratives containing the cross-dressing motif. These trends are not always genre-based; instead, texts are frequently implicitly connected through links in plot, theme, or author. By exploring the types of text associated with this corpus of narratives and examining the connections between them, one can learn about the interests of the commissioners and how these manuscripts were planned, which help us to better understand why a text containing the cross-dressing motif was included in a codex.

In this corpus of manuscripts, it is generally the case that if a manuscript is an anthology it will include texts from a range of genres. For instance, BNU, MS L.II.14 and BnF, MS fr. 837 both have diverse contents with hagiographies and devotional texts being found alongside romances, *chansons de geste*, *fabliaux*, and other types of literature. Other anthologies are more focussed on specific types of text. For example,

KB, MS 71 A 24, BRB, MS 9229–30, and Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5204, which have almost identical contents, contain popular short hagiographic and devotional texts, such as the *Vie de Sainte Eufrosine* alongside Gautier de Coinci's *Miracles de Nostre Dame* and the *Quinze signes du jugement dernier*.[74] There are few manuscripts in this corpus that include only a single genre. Most examples of this are codices that contain multiple texts from one narrative cycle, such as Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1451 that has alexandrine versions of four texts from the *Huon de Bordeaux* cycle and BnF, MS fr. 93 that has the full *Sept Sages* cycle. There are other examples in which different copies use varying terms to describe a text's genre: for example, in the manuscripts of *Meraugis de Portlesguez*. Keith Busby categorises *Meraugis de Portlesguez* as a romance, meaning that BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725, which contains this text alongside *Le Chevalier de la Charette*, *Le Chevalier au Lion*, and *Guillaume de Dole*, could be described as a single-genre manuscript.[75] However, Olivier Collet notes that the terminology related to genre varies between and within the manuscripts. The *explicit* of ON, MS 2599 describes the text as a romance but the terms 'conte' and 'livre' are also found in this codex, and *Meraugis de Portlesguez* is identified as a 'conte' multiple times in BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725.[76] The issue of variations in terminology is not limited to *Meraugis de Portlesguez* or this literary corpus, but this example illustrates the potential difficulties with categorising texts and manuscripts by genre.

Rather than being organised principally by genre, manuscripts from this corpus appear to have been compiled with themes and plot similarities in mind, potentially

---

[74] Ogden, p. 35.

[75] Busby, 'Post-Chrétien Verse Romance', p. 20.

[76] Olivier Collet, 'L'œuvre de Raoul de Houdenc et la définition des cadres littéraires du XIII siècle', in *Raoul de Houdenc et les routes noveles de la fiction 1200–1235*, ed. by Sébastien Douchet (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2018), pp. 33–42 (p. 36). This thesis will follow modern scholarship in its categorisation of this text as a romance but does recognise the limitations of assigning medieval texts to specific genres.

reflecting the commissioner's interests. I will offer several examples here, but such connections could be made for many of the codices in this corpus. The profession of the commissioner can be inferred from the contents of BnF, MS fr. 837 and Burgerbibliothek, MS 354. It has been argued that the focus on trades, like butchery, finance, and ropemaking, might indicate that the commissioners were involved in these types of industry.[77] However, considering the large size and quality of these manuscripts, they would likely have had to be business owners or merchants, rather than artisans and workers, to be able to afford such items.[78] Thematic links in narrative plot could also provide information about the commissioner's interests. In BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725, Busby suggests several connections, thematic and otherwise, between the four narratives, such as male friendship, a central female character, and the figure of the *jongleur*.[79] Thematic links can also be identified in the contents of Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 25293, which includes a version of the *Comte d'Artois*. The commissioner had a clear interest in fifteenth-century literature: two texts by Alain Chartier (*Complainte contre la mort* and *Lay de paix*) sit alongside *L'Abuzé en court, Avis au courtesan*, and the *Roman du Comte d'Artois*. Emma Cayley discusses the links between these texts, such as the criticism of life at court found in the *Lay de paix* and *L'Abuzé en court*, as well as that *L'Abuzé en court* was likely inspired by another of Chartier's texts *De vita curiali*.[80] It is evident that this codex was carefully compiled with the texts chosen to complement each other. This is similarly the case with KB, MS 71 A 24, BRB 9229–30, and Arsenal, MS 5204, which were all produced by Thomas de Maubeuge in the late 1320s.[81] Amy V. Ogden argues that the selection of texts makes codices 'coherent in

---

[77] Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 447.

[78] Manuscripts ranged in price depending on the size, quality of materials, and the programmes of illumination. Looking at Mahaut d'Artois's purchases from Thomas de Maubeuge, Mahaut paid from seven to one hundred pounds for vernacular manuscripts (Rouse and Rouse, 'Commercial Production', pp. 112–13).

[79] Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 426; Busby, 'Post-Chrétien Verse Romance', p. 20.

[80] Emma Cayley, *Debate and Dialogue: Alain Chartier in His Cultural Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 99–100.

[81] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 188–89.

genre and matter' because each text included discusses in some way 'the conflict between the attractions of worldly and ascetic life'.[82]

Another, much less common, way that texts from this corpus are connected to each other is by the cross-dressing motif itself. In fact, there are only two manuscripts that include more than one text containing a cross-dressing character: BNU, MS L.II.14 contains *Clarisse et Florent* and *Yde et Olive*, and BnF, MS fr. 837 includes *La Saineresse*, *Berengier*, and *Frere Deni*se.[83] In these examples, there are clear links between these texts. *Clarisse et Florent* and *Yde et Olive* are not only two of the multiple sequels of *Huon de Bordeaux* but the cross-dressing characters Clarisse and Yde/Ydé are parent and child.[84] In BnF, MS fr. 837 *Berengier* and *La Saineresse* are found on fols 209r– 210r and 211v– 212r respectively, with one other *fabliau* in between: Jean Bodel's *Gombert et les deux clers*. This grouping is linked through their plots: each of these three narratives include a sexual deception. *Frere Denise* (fols 329v– 331r), which also includes a character deceiving another into sexual activity, is not included here but is found instead alongside other texts written by the same author, Rutebeuf, such as *L'Ave Maria* and *Renart le Bestourné* (fols 328r– 329v). That *Frere Denise* is found separately highlights that *Berengier* and *La Saineresse* were not connected by the cross-dressing motif itself, but rather by the types of trickery facilitated by cross-dressing.

Although only two of fifty-eight manuscripts include multiple texts from this corpus, there are other links between the contents of these codices. First, there are

---

[82] Ogden, p. 36.

[83] Keith Busby notes that in BNU, MS L.II.14 there are no breaks between the sequels *Esclarmonde*, *Clarisse et Florent*, and *Yde et Olive* (Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 402). This could indicate that these are one text, rather than three; however, these narratives have always been treated separately in the scholarship. I will follow the precedent in this thesis. The compilations of the *Légende dorée* and the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* are not discussed here because, even though they contain multiple instances of cross-dressing in different tales, they can be viewed as a single text rather than as an anthology of individual narratives composed separately.

[84] BNU, MS L.II.14 is the only extant witness of the decasyllabic versions of *Clarisse et Florent* and *Yde et Olive*. Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1451 contains versions of *Huon de Bordeaux*, *Esclarmonde*, *Clarisse et Florent* and a summary of *Yde et Olive* all written in alexandrines.

authors whose work is often associated with a narrative containing the cross-dressing

motif. Second, there are a significant number of individual texts from outside this

corpus that are frequently found in these manuscript contexts.[85] The work of Jean

Bodel, Rutebeuf, and Raoul de Houdenc are commonly found in manuscripts in this

corpus. Jean Bodel's works occur in three of the large anthologies in this corpus (BnF,

MS fr. 837, Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, and Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 19152) and,

as mentioned above, one of his texts is found between two *fabliaux* containing the

motif. Both Rutebeuf and Raoul de Houdenc wrote texts that included a cross-dressing

episode: *Frere Denise* and *Meraugis de Portlesguez*; however, their other works are not

found in the same manuscript contexts as *Frere Denise* and *Meraugis de Portlesguez.*

Rutebeuf's *Frere Denise* is included in two author collections, BnF, MS fr. 837 and

BnF, MS fonds français 1635. Although BnF, MS fr. 837 contains more than just the

work of Rutebeuf, all of his works are grouped together and it is the only manuscript

that explicitly states that it includes an author collection.[86] This does not mean that

works attributed to a single author would be automatically grouped together in a codex,

as can be seen with the example of Raoul de Houdenc. It is only in Berlin, SBB, MS

gall. qu. 48 that Raoul de Houdenc's *Meraugis de Portlesguez* is accompanied by

another of his works, the *Roman des eles*. His other texts are found in various

combinations in large anthology collections, such as BnF, MS fr. 837 and

Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, as well as in many manuscripts from outside this corpus,

including Nottingham, Wollaton Library Collection, MS WLC/LM/6 which contains

Silence.[87] It is notable that in BnF, MS fr. 837 and Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 his texts

---

[85] This discussion will be limited to texts that are found in at least three manuscripts from this corpus.

[86] Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 215. The collection of Rutebeuf's work in BnF, MS fr. 837 begins with the title 'Ci (com)mencent li dit rustebeuf' (fol. 283v) and ends with 'Expliciunt tuit li dit rustebeuf' (fol. 332v).

[87] His other works are the *Songe d'enfer, Li dis de Raoul de Hosdaing* (also known as *Le borjois borjon*), the *Roman des eles*, and the *La vengeance Raguidel.*

are not linked. In BnF, MS fr. 837, the *Roman des eles* appears thirty folios before the *Songe d'enfer*, with *fabliaux*, didactic poetry, and other texts in between, and in Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 the *Songe d'enfer* is on folios 12r–16r with *Li dis de Raoul de Hosdaing* being found much later in the codex on folios 114r–115r. The frequent inclusion of the work of these writers in these large anthology collections remind us that these codices included not just *fabliaux*, the genre with which they have become most commonly associated, but that they had wide-ranging content in terms of length, tone, and plot. These examples have shown that items within codices were not always arranged to be close to those by the same author or belonging to the same genre, suggesting that their internal organisation is more closely connected to plot and themes.

As the above discussion regarding the inclusion of Bodel, Rutebeuf, and Raoul de Houdenc in BnF, MS fr. 837, BnF, MS fr. 19152, and Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 has shown, there is significant overlap in the contents of these manuscripts. This is illustrated by the texts *Constant de Hamel*, *Aubree*, and *Vilain qui conquist paradis par plait*. The positioning of the narratives within the manuscript shows connections between these texts. *Constant du Hamel* and *Aubree* are closely associated in three manuscripts: in BnF, MS fr. 837, they are items four and seven; in BnF, MS fr. 19152, they are forty-one and forty-two, and in Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1553, another anthology, they are thirty-six and thirty-nine. These narratives complement each other in terms of their plots: *Constant du Hamel* shows a married woman punishing would-be suitors and *Aubree* includes a woman who facilitates the extra-marital affair of an unhappily married woman. The *Vilain qui conquist paradis par plait* and *Berengier au lonc cul* are similarly linked by their place within the codex: in Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, they are items sixty-two and sixty-three, and in BnF, MS fr. 19152, they are fifteen and twenty-two. The thematic connections are not as evident in this example, but one link is that both show an individual successfully tricking another by adopting something

that is not typically associated with their social position or identity: in the case of the *Vilain*, it is his use of legal language, and in *Berengier* the wife/Berengier adopts knightly dress.[88]

Texts with religious themes, as well as devotional and didactic material, are also frequently associated with this literary corpus. The *Dit de l'unicorne*, the *Quinze signes du jugement dernier*, and the *Vengeance nostre seigneur* were popular texts, found in a large number of manuscripts including seven from this corpus.[89] In hagiographic and devotional manuscripts, they are closely associated with cross-dressing saints. In KB 71 A 24 and Arsenal 5204, the *Dit de l'unicorne* is followed by the *Vie de sainte Thaïs*, *Eufrosine*, and the *Quinze signes du jugement dernier*. It is notable that such texts are not only found alongside hagiographic narratives, but also *fabliaux* and romances. For example, in Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS, 5201 *Vengeance nostre seigneur* is part of a selection of religious poems that follow an author collection of Robert de Blois' work, including *Floris et Lyriopé*. The contexts in which religious and didactic material occur are varied, further emphasising the often diverse combinations of texts found in anthologies and that it was not unusual to, for example, find comic texts in close proximity to devotional literature.

By examining examples of texts frequently associated with this corpus of literary texts, both in terms of their inclusion in the same manuscript and their positioning within the codex, one can identify connections between texts, their themes, and plots and gain a greater understanding of how such anthologies were compiled. The different manuscript contexts in which texts from this corpus are found and the narratives with which they are associated do not suggest that the texts were chosen because they contain the cross-dressing motif. However, it does seem that in some cases

---

[88] Although *Silence* is a text not examined in this thesis, it is notable that the *Vilain* is also found in Wollaton Library Collection, MS WLC/LM/6, preceded by a text by Raoul de Houdenc.
[89] BNU, MS L.II.14, KB, MS 71 A 24, BnF, MS fr. 837, Arsenal, MS 5201, BnF, MS fr. 19152, Arsenal, MS 5204, and Burgerbibliothek, MS 354.

they were included because they feature certain plots that were facilitated, or themes that were raised, by a character's cross-dressing. Although connections between texts found in anthologies are not always clear, more research into how and why these anthologies were compiled may reveal more links between narratives and lead to a greater understanding of why texts from this corpus appear in different manuscript contexts. Such information could aid future analysis of this corpus of literary texts and the texts with which they are associated.

I.3: Circulation and Popularity

Although the cross-dressing motif was commonly used in medieval literature, it is difficult to determine how well-known the texts that include it were. A key indicator for popularity is the number of manuscripts that house a specific narrative. However, it is important to remember that such data is not complete as it does not take into account manuscripts that have been lost. Many studies have attempted to determine the numbers of manuscripts produced in the Middle Ages and the proportion of those that survive, with Uwe Neddermeyer suggesting a survival rate of seven percent.[90] When considering lost manuscripts, library inventories can be a helpful tool because they include entries of items that are no longer extant; they therefore allow one a glimpse at an individual's collection at a particular moment in time, revealing the types of items an owner was interested in. There are nevertheless challenges with using library inventories and trying to match entries to lost and surviving manuscripts. For example, inventories do not always contain detailed descriptions of contents and appearance. Even if they do contain such details, there can be mistakes in the information or a manuscript may have been subject to substantial alterations, like a change in binding, which can make it challenging to match inventory entries with extant manuscripts.

---

[90] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 17–20. Wijsman discusses the limitations of Neddermeyer's study (Uwe Neddermeyer, 'Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer quantitativen Bestimmung der Buchproduktion im Spätmittelalter', *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 28 (1996), 23–32) on pp. 19–20.

Inventories that encapsulate these challenges are those of the libraries of Charles V (1338–80) and Charles VI (1368–1422) of France. Eight inventories (including some duplicate copies) were made of this collection between 1373 and 1424.[91] In 1373, the Louvre library held seven manuscripts of texts from this corpus: three copies of the *Légende dorée*, two copies of *Cassidorus*, one *Eufrosine*, and one *Meraugis de Portlesguez*.[92] Despite the inventory entries, it is difficult to determine if these items correspond to extant manuscripts because entries in the 1373 inventory can be quite general, but the inventory of 1411, due to its inclusion of *incipits* and *explicits*, can help to distinguish between multiple copies of a single text. Five of these seven manuscripts were lost, with some being given as gifts or taken from the library without being recovered. Despite the information about their date of removal and, when relevant, the name of to whom the manuscript was gifted, these manuscripts have not been connected to extant codices.

Two of these lost manuscripts include *Cassidorus*: one was a full *Sept Sages* cycle and the entry for the other manuscript states that it contains the *Sept Sages* and *Cassidorus*.[93] Both manuscripts were included in the 1373 inventory, at numbers 303 (fol. 15v) and 516 (fol. 22r) of BnF, MS fr. 2700, and remained in all other inventories until 1413. At some point between 1413 and the 1424, when the last inventory of the Louvre library was made, the manuscript of the *Sept Sages* cycle was lost, but the

---

[91] Léopold Delisle, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 3 vols (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1868), III, 114.

[92] This inventory is in Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2700, fols 2–39r.

[93] Rouse and Rouse argue that, in the case of the latter, that this combination of texts is found in no other manuscript of the *Sept Sages* cycle and therefore suggest that this manuscript was instead a full *Sept Sages* cycle (Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 137). These inventories were compiled by more than one person over forty years and Jean de Bègue, who completed the inventories of 1411, added more information about the manuscripts including the *incipit/explicit*. This indicates that he had consulted the manuscripts and it is therefore possible that he would have noticed an incorrect listing of the contents and corrected the inventory. No such amendment was made for this copy of the *Sept Sages* and *Cassidorus* which may indicate that the inventory reflects the true contents of the codex. The contents of this manuscript can be disputed but neither theory can be verified and therefore it is important the various possibilities are considered.

second manuscript of the *Sept Sages* and *Cassidorus*, was listed, at number 410, in the final inventory.[94] This manuscript was therefore lost at some point after the library was purchased by John, duke of Bedford, (1389–1435) in 1424. It is difficult to know when this happened because few books are included in the inventories of the duke of Bedford's possessions.[95] The other three manuscripts that have been lost were either removed for the king's personal use or were given as gifts. One copy of the *Légende dorée* was taken from the library by the King Charles VI on 24 September 1392 and was not returned.[96] Two other copies of the *Légende dorée* were presented as gifts: one was given on 28 January 1381 to the Sire de Gonnant or Joument[97] and the other was given to 'Madame de Bourgo(n)gne' on 14 October 1381 but no further details are provided about the recipient.[98] It is likely that she was Marguerite III de Flandre (1350–1405), the wife of Philippe le Hardi, duke of Burgundy, who was the duchess of Burgundy at this time. Her library was inventoried after her death in 1405 and the inventory shows two copies of the *Légende dorée* (nos 158 and 176).[99] Further evidence for this is provided in the 1420 inventory of the library of her son, John sans Peur, and his wife, Marguerite de Bavière, which includes a similarly described *Légende dorée*

---

[94] Delisle, III, 168.

[95] Jenny Stratford, 'The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford: Library and Chapel', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994), pp. 339–40.

[96] Léopold Delisle, I, 49.

[97] BnF, MS fr. 2700, fol. 13r (no. 241) and fol. 44r (no. 71). Delisle states that this manuscript was given on 28 January 1382 but by looking at the entries for this manuscript on fols. 13r and 44r one will note that this is a mis-transcription (Delisle, III, 156); The spelling of the name differs from the marginal note in the 1373 inventory to the 1411 list of missing/gifted manuscripts and it is possible that the recipient was the sire de Jeumont. Due to the date that this gift was made it is more likely to have been Jean I de Barbaçon, the grand-bailli of Hainault, rather than his son Jean II, the seigneur de Verchin, la Longueville, Valincourt, who was born in 1370 and died at Agincourt (Z.J. Piérart, *Excursions Archéologiques et Historiques* (Maubeuge: Levecque, 1862), p. 332). However, without further evidence or access to inventories of his possessions this cannot be verified.

[98] BnF, MS fr. 2700, fol. 4r (item 22).

[99] Patrick de Winter states that, on the same day, Charles VI gave her this *Légende dorée*, a Bible in French, and a volume of Arthurian legends. At another time, he also gave her a book of hours (Patrick M. De Winter, *La bibliothèque de Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne (1364–1404): étude sur les manuscrits à peintures d'une collection princière à l'époque du 'style gothique international'* (Paris: Editions du centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1985), p. 58).

(no. 238). This item has a marginal note indicating that the volume was 'presté à ma dame'.[100]

The inventories of the Louvre library are a useful source of information, but they are also unusual. Individuals like the king of France or the duke of Burgundy had large manuscript collections and inventories; however, this was not the case for all households and even if they did, not all owners would have had inventories made as frequently as those compiled by the ducal and royal households. As the example of the Louvre library inventories has shown, inventories can be used to identify lost manuscripts, which can help to gain a comprehensive understanding of a text's history and popularity by taking into consideration all known, not just all surviving, manuscripts. If inventories are not available, household records can sometimes provide details of purchases or commissions and can often give information about the purchase, such as the date at which an item was acquired, the seller, and the cost.[101] However, as with the inventories, such records were not universally kept or do not survive. Another problem with using manuscript evidence to understand how well-known an individual text was is that manuscripts often contain a range of material and one cannot know which narrative interested the commissioner or owner the most. Around forty-five percent of the fifty-eight manuscripts are anthologies or include an entire cycle of narratives. Many of the anthologies contain a large number of texts with some codices, like BnF, MS fr. 837, having up to 250 narratives. Another limitation to using manuscripts as markers of popularity is that a manuscript may not have been read solely by the owner or it could not even have been read at all. Libraries may have been shared

---

[100] Delphine Jeannot, *Le mécénat bibliophilique de Jean sans Peur et de Marguerite de Bavière (1404–1424)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 238. This item is cited in the 1467 inventories of the ducal library at numbers 743 and 1509.

[101] Such records have been helpfully used by Rouse and Rouse to identify commissioners of manuscripts and patrons of *libraires* like Thomas de Maubeuge, for example in Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 136; Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 178; 188.

and items could have been read publicly, dramatically increasing the potential number of readers/listeners, and consequently, increasing awareness of the text and its plot.[102] Despite the various problems with using manuscripts to determine the popularity of literary texts, they can provide an indication of how widely a narrative was read and, if there are marks of ownership, who the audience was.

The most popular texts containing the cross-dressing motif, in terms of numbers of extant manuscripts, were the cross-dressing saints' lives included in the *Légende dorée*. The original Latin text, the *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine, was translated into various vernacular languages soon after its composition. There are over one thousand manuscripts of the Latin text and around five hundred extant vernacular translations, which testifies to the immense interest in this material.[103] There are thirty-three extant manuscripts of the Jean de Vignay translation and eleven individual translations into French.[104] This interest in the *Légende dorée* is illustrative of manuscript collection more generally as Diane E. Booton notes that, in medieval Brittany, twelve percent of manuscripts acquired were hagiographies and other moral treatises.[105] The second most popular text, *Cassidorus*, is found in considerably fewer manuscripts. There are six extant manuscripts and, as mentioned previously, there were a further two manuscripts, now lost, detailed in the Louvre library inventories. The six manuscripts mostly contain a full or partial *Sept Sages* cycle but there is a single-item manuscript: BRB, MS 9401.[106] The joint third most popular texts, with four extant

---

[102] The issues of multiple readers and public reading is also addressed in section I.4, which focusses on audience and questions who read the texts from this corpus.

[103] Eamon Duffy, 'Introduction', in *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Jacobus de Voragine and William Granger Ryan (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. xi–xx (p. xi).

[104] Ten of the Jean de Vignay *Légende dorée* manuscripts also contain the *Festes Nouvelles* and consequently can be considered as anthologies. There are two other manuscripts of the Jean de Vignay translation that were sold in 1921 and 1931 respectively but their current location is not known (Maddocks, p. 17).

[105] Diane E. Booton, *Manuscripts, Market, and the Transition to Print in Late Medieval Brittany* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 206.

[106] Marguerite III de Flandre owned a copy of *Cassidorus* (no. 180), which was inherited by her son, and can be found in the 1420, 1467, and 1487 inventories at numbers 214, 1236, and 1757 (De Winter, pp. 252–53).

manuscript witnesses each, are the verse *Eufrosine* and *Meraugis de Portlesguez*. Most other texts from the corpus survive in just one or two codices.

One could also use manuscript evidence to ascertain whether interest in a text changed over time. Generally, most of the extant manuscript witnesses of a narrative were produced around the same period. For example, those of *Berengier* were completed in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, and both copies of *Floris et Lyriopé* are in manuscripts dating from the last third of the thirteenth century.[107] The texts from this corpus that were produced over a longer stretch of time were *Cassidorus* and the *Légende dorée*. Most of the surviving manuscripts of *Cassidorus* were completed in the second quarter of the fourteenth century in Paris, with the latest produced in 1466 (BnF, MS fr. 93).[108] The long time between the production of most of these codices and the last can be partially understood by the fact that BnF, MS fr. 93 is a copy of one of the earlier manuscripts, Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50.[109] This shows that the commissioner, Jacques d'Armagnac (1433–77), had access to BnF, MS fr. 22548–50, but this does not explain why the texts in this cycle interested him or why he desired to own a copy of it himself. The *Légende dorée*'s popularity was sustained over a long period of time: the first extant and datable codex, Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 241, was produced in 1348 and manuscript copies continued to be made until c. 1500, with clusters of production around 1360–80, 1400–20, and 1470–80.[110] People not only continued to commission manuscripts of the *Légende dorée*, but they were exchanged as gifts, as seen with Charles VI's gift to Marguerite III de Flandre in 1381, and bought second-hand, such as Philippe de Clèves' purchase of BRB, MS 9282–85.[111]

---

[107] Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 239; 443; 451; *Robert de Blois's Floris et Lyriopé*, ed. by Paul Barrette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 1.

[108] De Winter, pp. 252–53; Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, pp. 132–35.

[109] Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 134.

[110] The dates of production are taken from Maddocks' study of *Legende dorée* manuscripts (Maddocks).

[111] Maddocks, p. 166; Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la revote', pp. 186; 191–92.

Such evidence demonstrates that the *Légende dorée* continued to interest the nobility and copies continued to be sought. One could suggest that owners may have desired to own copies because they were often luxurious and high-status objects, rather than because of an interest in the text itself, which might explain why libraries like those of Charles VI and the dukes of Burgundy had multiple copies and continued to acquire them.[112] However, this remains speculation and would be difficult to prove without examining each codex for signs of reading or use, and many of these items are lost or have not yet been identified from the corpus of surviving manuscripts. Nevertheless, it is evident that, for whatever reason, the *Légende dorée* continued to be popular and a common feature in noble book collections during the later Middle Ages. Due to the diverse contents of anthologies and the much smaller numbers of manuscript witnesses for other narratives containing the cross-dressing motif, it is difficult to ascertain how widely the texts were known; however, some general trends can be identified. When looking at the numbers of manuscripts from the top four texts, the audience's interest in hagiography is clear. The *Légende dorée* was evidently popular or, at least, it was considered to be an important text for inclusion in a noble book collection. However, manuscript evidence demonstrates that hagiography did not circulate solely in collections like the *Légende dorée* or *Vies de saints*. Volumes like BRB, MS 9229–30 and BNU, MS L.II.14 reveal that saints' lives were read alongside secular literature as well as other devotional material. Romances also form a large part of this manuscript corpus: eighteen manuscripts contain a romance, with thirteen of these codices containing a romance involving the cross-dressing motif. Although there are limitations to trying to establish popularity through physical evidence and the frequency with which a text is included in a manuscript, the evidence examined in this section

---

[112] For example, Philippe le Bon and Marguerite de Flandre bought a copy for 500 *écus d'or* in 1400 from Jacques Raponde even though they already owned two copies (Jeannot, p. 184).

demonstrates that some texts in this corpus were well-known, at least amongst members of the French and Burgundian nobility. This means that the cross-dressing motif would likely be familiar to them from these texts, and others not included in this corpus, and consequently, they may have expectations about cross-dressing characters and the roles they held in medieval literature.

I.4: Audience

Extratextual evidence can not only reveal how manuscripts were produced and the choices that were made when compiling a codex, but it can also tell us more about a manuscript's ownership and use. Evidence left by readers, such as coats of arms, marginal notes, signatures, and initials, can increase our understanding of a manuscript's history and also illustrate the different audiences who read literature containing the cross-dressing motif. It is also important to consider that a manuscript's readership was likely to be wider than just the commissioner and later owners, and consideration of contemporary reading practices can inform this discussion.

In the later Middle Ages, a greater number of noble households established private manuscript collections. Changing reading practices and social trends offer an explanation for this interest in book collecting. Public reading was the practice of a professional reading aloud to one or more people making it a shared and social practice.[113] Public reading was not limited to specific languages, types of text, or time period; as Joyce Coleman notes from the twelfth to the mid-fourteenth century, public reading of texts in Latin, English, French, and Anglo-Norman was common in England.[114] Paul Saenger states that until the mid-fourteenth century public reading was the preferred mode for the nobility.[115] The writings of Christine de Pizan and Froissart

---

[113] Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 35.

[114] Ibid., p. 84.

[115] Paul Henry Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), p. 265.

support Saenger's argument as they describe the reading habits of different high-status

people. Christine de Pizan, in the *Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du sage roy Charles V*,

comments that public reading was feature of Charles V's routine and Froissart notes that

he read his *Méliador* to Gaston III de Foix over a period of ten weeks, demonstrating

that public reading commonly occurred in these social groups.[116] This is also reflected

in manuscript illuminations with scenes of public reading being included, often as in the

frontispiece.[117] For example, the frontispiece of Brussels, BRB, MS 9243 (*Chroniques*

de Hainaut) depicts Philippe le Bon, Charles le Téméraire (1433–77), and a small

audience listening to a public reading.[118] However, from the mid-fourteenth century

onwards, private reading became more common. Hanno Wijsman notes that an increase

in private reading practices led to a corresponding increase in book production because

it was quicker to read in this way and consequently, books were read faster.[119] It is

important to consider reading practices when discussing the audience of specific texts.

As noted, public and private reading were not limited to a specific time period but were

practised alongside each other throughout the Middle Ages. This means that whilst one

may be able to identify a manuscript's owner from physical and documentary evidence,

its texts may have been read or listened to by a wider and potentially more diverse

audience, in terms of their gender, status, provenance, and profession.

As discussed in section I.3, manuscripts were shared among social groups, with

individuals lending or giving codices, highlighting again that there is a much larger

potential audience than can possibly be identified from the manuscript itself. For

example, items were frequently lent and given between the Berry and Burgundian

---

[116] Coleman, *Public Reading*, pp. 111–12; 118; Booton, pp. 203–4.
[117] Joyce Coleman, 'Aural Illumination: Books and Aurality in the Frontispieces to Bishop Chevrot's *Cite de Dieu*', in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and Its Consequences in Honour of D.H. Green*, ed. by Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 223–52 (p. 224).
[118] Coleman, *Public Reading*, p. 119.
[119] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 128.

libraries, but giving books as gifts was not just common between family members as John sans Peur also gave such presents to members of his household.[120] Evidence that books were temporarily borrowed is found in inventories as well as in the manuscripts themselves. Folio 216r of Arsenal, MS 5204 reveals that whilst the codex was owned by a church in St Quentin, in modern-day Aisne, it was borrowed by Jehan Fremin on 9 September 1506 for two days (fig. one). The inventories of the Burgundian library include some evidence of borrowing. For example, Philippe de Clèves borrowed eight manuscripts from the ducal library between 1487 and 1497, including a bible, a copy of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and a translation of Aristotle's *Ethica*.[121] A note in the 1487 inventory also states that Engelbert de Nassau (1451–1504) borrowed, but did not return, a copy of *Ysaïe le Triste* (Darmstadt, MS 2524; no. 1834) from the ducal collection.[122]

The increase in noble collections was not just the result of private reading; it was also influenced by the advent of royal and ducal libraries that began a trend for commissioning and purchasing manuscripts as nobles sought to emulate the royalty.[123] Although, as Wijsman notes for the corpus of manuscripts discussed in *Luxury Bound*, most manuscripts were commissioned by men, it was common for women and married couples to commission items and build collections.[124] An example of this is BnF, MS fr. 244–45, which was commissioned by Antoine de Chourses (d. 1485/86) and/or Catherine de Coëtivy (c. 1460–1529) whose library consisted of twenty-five manuscripts and two incunables.[125] Antoine de Chourses was the lord of Magné and

---

[120] Jeannot, pp. 72; 80.

[121] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 300–301; Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la revote', pp. 190–91. The *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* will hereafter be referred to as the *CNN*.

[122] Barrois, p. 262; Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la revote', p. 267.

[123] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, p. 129; Wim Blockmans, 'The Splendour of Burgundy: For Whom?', in *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, ed. by Wim Blockmans (London: Harvey Miller, 2013), pp. 17–24 (p. 23).

[124] Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 133–34.

[125] Maddocks, p. 109; Roseline Claerr, '"Que ma mémoire 'là demeure', en mes livres": Catherine de Coëtivy (vers 1460–1529) et sa bibliothèque', in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 101–18 (p. 102).

Echiré, a royal chamberlain and counsellor to King Louis XI; he married Catherine de Coëtivy in 1477 and died in 1485/6.[126] The couple's coat of arms and initials (AK) are found in the lower and right-hand margins of ten full-page miniatures, indicating that the manuscript was completed in the short time between their wedding and his death (fig. two). Catherine de Coëtivy came from a family that had a considerable interest in manuscripts and collecting.[127] After her husband's death, Catherine continued building her collection, both commissioning and purchasing manuscripts that were often decorated with her name, arms, emblems, and, in the case of a copy of the *Vie, mort et miracles de saint Jérôme*, included a textual and visual dedication to Catherine.[128] Her evident interest in book collecting might suggest that it was she, rather than her husband, who was the patron of BnF, MS fr. 244–45.

It was commonplace to signal ownership through the inclusion of personal identifiers in the decoration, such as initials or coats of arms, or through written notes as can be seen in BnF, MS fr. 11610 and Morgan, MS 672–75.[129] Jean de Wavrin can be identified as the commissioner of BnF, MS fr. 11610 because his arms appear within the decoration on fol. 1r (fig. three).[130] One can learn about the commission but also the later ownership of Morgan, MS 672–75 from its decoration and notes (fig. four). It is possible to partially trace its ownership from its commissioner Jean IV d'Auxy (1422–74), whose arms decorate the manuscript, to a later owner Charles de Chabannes (c. 1518–52) who added a series of brief biographies of members of the Chabannes to folio

---

[126] André du Chesne, *Histoire Généalogique de la Maison des Chasteigners* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1634), p. 516; Maddocks, p. 113; Booton, p. 174.

[127] Claerr, 'Catherine de Coëtivy (vers 1460–1529) et sa bibliothèque', in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré, p. 101.

[128] Claerr, pp. 101; 105–6; Booton, pp. 174–76.

[129] Kathryn M. Rudy, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016), p. 65.

[130] For further information on Jean de Wavrin and his book collection; see, Naber, 'Jean de Wavrin, un bibliophile du quinzième siècle', 281–93; Naber, 'Les manuscrits d'un bibliophile bourguignon du XVe siècle, Jean de Wavrin', 23–48; Wijsman, *Luxury Bound*, pp. 473–79.

270r of volume 673.[131] It is important to remember that manuscripts were not always commissioned. If a codex had been bought second-hand, it was common for owners to update the decoration to reflect the change of ownership. BRB, MS 9282–85 is a copy of the *Légende dorée* that is notable for having two programmes of illumination, being completed c. 1460 and 1470–80 respectively.[132] The previous owners have not been identified, but it was subsequently acquired by Philippe de Clèves some point after 1492 and the decoration updated with his and his wife Françoise de Luxembourg's initials and arms replacing those of the first owner within the decorated border (fig. five).[133] However, establishing readership from physical evidence can be difficult. Not every owner left a physical trace on a manuscript and, as mentioned, earlier marks of ownership were often removed or obscured when sold. Coats of arms are frequently used to determine ownership; however, multiple members of a single family might have used the same arms. For example, Counts Guillaume I (1286–1337) and II (1307–45) of Hainault both used the same coat of arms therefore, when identifying the ownership of BRB, MS 9245, a manuscript of *Cassidorus* that is marked with their arms, one must rely on other evidence to determine conclusively who commissioned this manuscript.[134] Another issue when using coats of arms is that there are many which have not yet been associated with specific individuals. Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 17000 (and its second volume London, BL, MS Harley 4093) include the coat of arms of Aymar de Poitiers and his first wife Marie, who married in June 1467, on fol. 2r, but these manuscripts also include a number of, as of yet, unidentified coats of arms.[135] This

---

[131] Maddocks, p. 214; Kathryn Rudy discusses other examples of family information being added to manuscripts (Rudy, *Piety in Pieces*, pp. 67–70).

[132] For a discussion on when this manuscript was acquired; see, Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la revote', pp. 192–93.

[133] Maddocks, pp. 166–67; Wijsman, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la revote', pp. 192–93.

[134] Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 135.

[135] Marie was the illegitimate daughter of King Louis XI of France and she used the arms of France: three *fleurs de lis* on an azure background, with the addition of a gold band running diagonally from the top right. Aymar married his second wife, Jeanne de la Tour d'Auvergne, in November 1472, meaning that

makes it difficult to determine convincingly when this manuscript entered into the library of this family. Library inventories and records of purchase can help to establish commission and ownership, but, as mentioned earlier, such documentary evidence is not available for many families and the records themselves can often lack detail.

The manuscripts from this corpus provide some indication of the audience of texts containing cross-dressing characters. However, as mentioned, there are significant limitations for this evidence: only a small proportion of manuscripts survive; not all codices include marks of ownership; public reading or performance may have reached a wider audience, and some books may have been owned but never read. Most of the known medieval owners of manuscripts from this corpus were of noble birth, including kings, dukes, counts and countesses but also members of the lower nobility, such as Jean de Wavrin. A manuscript being illustrated might also suggest that the owner was of a high social status or was wealthy enough to afford the cost of commissioning an illustrated manuscript. Given that seventy percent of manuscripts including the cross-dressing motif contain illuminated miniatures or historiated initials, one can suggest that the commissioners of this corpus held high-status social positions. Although one should note that not all manuscripts are decorated to the same extent: some manuscripts, like BnF, MS fr. 837, contain a small number of decorations whilst others, like the *Legende dorée* manuscript Brussels, BRB, MS 9228, are more highly decorated with full-page frontispieces and hundreds of miniatures.

However, some manuscripts had different readers/users. At least two manuscripts were owned by religious institutions: BRB, MS 9229–30 was owned by a Carthusian Charterhouse and Arsenal, MS 5204 belonged to a church in St-Quentin, as indicated through notes by later hands. It is not surprising that manuscripts containing

---

this manuscript was owned by the family, at least, between 1467 and 1472 (Étienne Baluze, *Histoire genealogique de la maison d'Auvergne* (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1708), p. 344).

the cross-dressing motif were found in the libraries of religious institutions as these

codices are religious anthologies that contain the lives of cross-dressing saints.

However, it is important to note that these manuscripts were commissioned by lay

people: BRB, MS 9229–30 by Gérard de Diest and Jeanne de Flandre and Arsenal, MS

5204 by Mahaut, Countess of Artois, which means that their contents may indicate the

interests of the laity, rather than that of religious communities.[136] No manuscripts from

this corpus appear to have been commissioned directly by an ecclesiastical institution or

religious order and only the two examples above show any physical indication that they

belonged to a religious institution or individual. This reinforces the argument that this

corpus of manuscripts and the texts found therein were predominately associated with

lay society and the nobility.

There are users who might have owned a manuscript from this corpus for

professional reasons. Keith Busby suggests that two anthologies may have been owned

and used by performers: BnF, MS fr. 837 and BnF, MS fr. 19152.[137] Both codices have

an extensive collection of texts from a range of genres, including a considerable number

of *fabliaux*, and this, combined with their lack of miniatures, might indicate that they

were compendia of performance pieces. The large anthologies BnF, MS fr. 837,

Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, and BnF, MS fr. 19152, amongst others, have often been

considered as *manuscrits de jongleur* because of their contents and that they have little

decoration. However, it has been convincingly argued that these manuscripts were

unlikely to have been used by a performer. Olivier Collet demonstrates that these

codices would not have been practical for use in performance: the manuscripts do not

contain the tables of contents or reference systems needed for locating texts easily and

quickly; they are large codices, making them both expensive and not particularly

---

[136] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 188–95.
[137] Keith Busby, 'Narrative Genres', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 139–52 (p. 149).

portable; and the texts included are not all generally associated with *jongleurs,* such as the moral and religious texts.[138] One can learn more about how these codices may have been used from the *tituli* and *explicits*. Only Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 contained *tituli* and *explicits* for each text from its creation whereas BnF, MS fr. 837 has no *tituli* and the *explicits* were added by a later hand, and in BnF, MS fr. 19152, the *explicits* were copied by the scribe but the *tituli* were later additions.[139] The later addition of *tituli* or *explicits*, which helped the reader recognise the start and end of a given text, may indicate that the manuscripts were altered to make them easier to use for public reading. That these manuscripts did not have a table of contents and that they did not consistently include titles would have made them impractical for use by performers.

It seems more probable that, instead of being *manuscrits de jongleur*, these anthologies were commissioned by the nobility, because they are large manuscripts produced commercially and copied on good quality parchment, and they include some decoration, such as illuminated initials.[140] Although one does not know about their commission, some physical evidence of ownership was left on BnF, MS fr. 19152 as well as on Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, which will be discussed later. On folios 8v and 127v of BnF, MS fr. 19152, there is a signature reading 'ph(ilipp)e alamande dame de chassenaige'. It has been argued that this signature could refer to one of two noblewomen: either Philippe Alamande, the wife of Amédée de Chaste, who wrote a will in 1333 or Philippe Alamande (d. 1478), wife of François III de Sassenage (d. 1447).[141] It is likely to be the latter because there is a marginal note, on fol. 80v,

---

[138] Collet, 'Du "manuscrit de jongleur"', pp. 483–84.

[139] Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 459–60.

[140] BnF, MS fr. 837 has a miniature on fol. 1r, illuminated initials, and decorated paragraph markers; BnF, MS fr. 19152 includes illuminated and decorated initials; and Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 is the least decorated of the three with a single historiated initial, and alternating red and blue initials.

[141] Stones argues for the former (Alison Stones, 'Appendix VI: Owners of "Miracles de Nostre Dame" Manuscripts', in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 407–42 (p. 418)); Crapelet and J.B.B de Roquefort (author of the *Notice*) argue for the latter: *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale, et autres bibliothèques* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1813), IX, part II p. 3; Georges-Adrien Crapelet, *Partonopeus de Blois*, 2 vols (Paris: Crapelet, 1834), I, 29.

reporting a burst dam in Luc-en-Diois (19 August 1443), that offers additional evidence connecting the codex with Philippe Alamande (d. 1478). The date of the burst dam coincides more closely with her life, and potential ownership, and also the location of the dam, Luc-en-Diois, is around fifty miles south of François III's lands. This evidence demonstrates that these large anthologies can be associated with members of the medieval nobility.

Although there is no evidence identifying the commissioner of Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, two of its later owners are known: namely, the printers and booksellers Henri Etienne and his grandson Henricus Stephanus (also called Henri Etienne), who both left signatures on fol. 1r (fig. six).[142] Henri Etienne (d. 1520) began printing in the early 1500s in Paris and Henricus (d. 1598) began printing in Geneva after travelling extensively and learning Latin and Greek.[143] Henri Etienne's son Robert was also a printer, working initially for his stepfather, the printer Simon de Colines, before establishing his own business in Geneva.[144] It is not known when and why Henri Etienne acquired Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, but it is possible that he used the contents of this manuscript as exemplars for his work.[145] Whether Henri Etienne and Henricus Stephanus used this codex for professional reasons or read it for personal pleasure is not clear, but that this manuscript was owned by several generations of one family working in the book trade demonstrates that owning these manuscripts was not limited to the nobility.

---

[142] Raoul de Houdenc, *The 'Songe d'Enfer' of Raoul de Houdenc: An Edition Based on All the Extant Manuscripts*, ed. by Madelyn Timmel Mihm (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984), p. 24.

[143] Louis Moréri, 'Henri Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV, 277; Louis Moréri, 'Henri II Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV, 278–79.

[144] Louis Moréri, 'Robert Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV 277.

[145] It has also been suggested that BnF, MS fr. 837 and BnF, MS fr. 19152 may have been owned by *libraires* to be used as exemplars (Busby, 'Narrative Genres', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay, p. 149). This is possible, but there is little evidence to support this theory.

From aristocrats to printers, manuscripts of texts involving cross-dressing characters were commissioned or owned by a variety of social groups and as a result the texts could have had a large and diverse audience. Although information about commission is not available for each manuscript in this corpus, that all of them appear to be commercially produced using high-quality materials suggests that the commissioners were likely to have been people from the nobility or wealthy business owners, such as merchants. This is also indicated by the extensive programmes of illumination and decoration found in a large proportion of these manuscripts. The potential number of readers increases when one considers that giving and lending books seemed to be a common practice in certain social circles, but, unfortunately, information on such exchanges is not always available unless written in documents or in marginal notes. It is clear that manuscripts often changed ownership either through inheritance, purchase, loan, or gifting, and it is possible to track the movement of manuscripts between different households through the addition or changing of marks of ownership. Information on owner and readership is useful as not only does it reveal the types of texts that interested particular individuals or social group, but, when exploring the themes and questions raised by cross-dressing characters, an awareness of a text's audience can inform our understanding of how these texts may have been read and interpreted.

I.5: Conclusion

This thesis explores how texts including the cross-dressing motif represent themes related to gender, status, marriage, and desire, not only in the texts under discussion but also in terms of their interpretation and representation in manuscript illuminations. It is therefore essential to consider the wider manuscript context and how audiences might have understood and read these texts. Through case-studies, chapter I has offered important context information on overall trends in manuscript production and

ownership in period between 1200 and 1500 and how the manuscripts of texts containing the cross-dressing motif fit within them. As a number of texts in this corpus are extant in the same manuscript, this chapter considered how some of the anthologies in this corpus were compiled and the connections that existed between texts. It suggested that texts were not associated in a codex specifically because they contained the cross-dressing motif, but rather, were positioned according to thematic connections, similarities in plot, and authorship. This chapter used extratextual features, like marginal notes or coats of arms, and documentary evidence, such as inventories, to learn about the commission and ownership of different manuscripts to gain an understanding of the audience of different texts. This information has highlighted that, although there is evidence of a range of owners like printers and monasteries, most of these manuscripts were commissioned by noble families, as is also indicated by the high-quality and value of these codices and their rich decoration. Having an increased awareness of who the owners and audience of these narratives were not only improves our understanding of a manuscript's history, but also allows for questions of audience interest and knowledge to be considered. By taking into consideration the awareness a text's reader may have had about certain subjects, such as regulations on marriage, this information can then be used to explore how the reader might have interpreted various parts of the narrative and the behaviours of different characters. Awareness of a text's audience is therefore important context for the discussions of reader response to and understanding of various legal and social questions that are found in chapters II to V.

Chapter II: Gender

The previous chapter examined the literary corpus in its manuscript context to consider what physical and documentary evidence reveals about its production, popularity, and audience. This, and the following three chapters, turn to consider how the narratives themselves, and their accompanying manuscript miniatures, approach different themes and issues. This chapter focusses on gender, showing the diverse ways gender is considered in the texts and how the cross-dressing motif highlights non-normative gender practices, expressions, and identities.

Given the centrality of gender to the cross-dressing motif, it is understandably the area that has received the most critical attention, but there is still a lot that can be learnt from how texts that include the cross-dressing motif discuss gender. A comparative analysis of the literary corpus demonstrates that how writers utilise the motif affects the way gender is represented. This chapter establishes the main ways that one can group instances of cross-dressing in this corpus and how differences in a character's motivations for cross-dressing influence how gender is presented in the text. It is not only textual representations that vary: visual depictions in manuscript miniatures also show a range of portrayals of cross-dressing characters. Therefore, this chapter also examines some examples from the over seventy miniatures that illustrate episodes of cross-dressing to give an overview of representations offered in manuscripts.

II.1: Variations on the Cross-Dressing Motif and the Representation of Gender

On reading a range of medieval French texts that include the cross-dressing motif, it becomes clear that the cross-dressing characters tend to fall into two main groups. These groups affect how issues of gender are raised in these texts. Although there are many variables that affect the representation of cross-dressing characters, the motivation for cross-dressing is the most significant one. While the exact reason for cross-dressing is

narrative-specific, motivations can be separated into those that are internal or external to the character. In the corpus of texts examined in this thesis, just over half of the characters cross-dress for others: they do so either at the request of another or in order to search for, or have access to, another character. The other group of characters are motivated to cross-dress for themselves, rather than for a third party; this is often to escape an undesirable situation, to achieve a goal, or to fulfil a personal desire. An element that also has an impact on how issues of gender are presented in different texts is whether the cross-dressing is permanent or temporary. These two groups of characters can therefore be sub-divided again, according to the duration of the cross-dressing, thus giving us four variations distinguished by either motivation or duration (table one).

Table 1: Cross-dressing characters grouped by motivation and the permanency of cross-dressing

		Duration	
		Permanent	**Temporary**
Motivation	**For others**	• Denise (*Frere Denise*) • Marine/Marin (*Légende dorée*)	• Helcana/Helcanor (*Cassidorus*) • Licorus (*Cassidorus*) • The three *bourgoises* (*CNN*, tale sixty) • Katherine/Conrard (*CNN*, tale twenty-six) • Clarisse (*Clarisse et Florent*) • The Countess/Phlipot (*Comte d'Artois*) • Floris (*Floris et Lyriopé*) • Florie (*Floris et Lyriopé*) • Marte (*Ysaïe le Triste*) • Tronc (*Ysaïe le Triste*) • **La Saineresse (*La Saineresse*)**[146]

---

[146] *La Saineresse* and *Trubert*, which are in bold, are separated from the other texts in their category. This is because neither text gives full details of the length of their cross-dressing. The 'Saineresse' enters and leaves the narrative cross-dressed and *Trubert* ends without stating whether Trubert/Couillebaude remained cross-dressed. They have been assigned to the category of temporary cross-dressing because, on analysing the texts, it seemed to be most likely and appropriate group for these two characters.

For themselves	• Margarite (*CNN*, tale forty-five) • Eufrosine/Esmarade (*Eufrosine*) • Theodora/Theodore (*Légende dorée*) • Eugenia/Eugene (*Légende dorée*) • Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch (*Légende dorée*)[147] • Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien (*Légende dorée*) • Blanchandine/Blanchandin (*Tristan de Nanteuil*) • Yde/Ydé (*Yde et Olive*)	• The wife/Berengier (*Berengier*) • Meraugis (*Meraugis de Portlesguez*) • Aye/Gaudïon (*Tristan de Nanteuil*) • **Trubert/Couillebaude (*Trubert*)**

It is worth noting that there is a strong correlation between the permanency of a character's cross-dressing and their motivation. It is more common for those who cross-dress for others to do so only temporarily, whereas in the case of individuals whose cross-dressing is motivated by a personal desire this tends to lead towards more permanent changes of identity and status. A focus on gender and explorations of non-normative gender identities appears in narratives that show personally-motivated permanent cross-dressing, with characters who fit into this category being more likely to reveal *transgender* experiences and possibilities.[148] Taking into account elements such as motivation and length of time spent cross-dressed can be helpful when grouping instances of cross-dressing, as narratives that share similar plot points often present similar themes; however, there are characters who do not fit neatly into such categories. One such example is St Marine/Marin who cross-dresses permanently from childhood to their death but, unlike most other similar saints, the initial motivation for cross-dressing is familial obligation.[149] This is because their father brought Marin into the

---

[147] There being two cross-dressing saints with the name Pelagien: Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien and Pelagia/Pelagien. To differentiate between the two saints, Pelagia/Pelagien will be referred to using the city with which they associated as Pelagien of Antioch.

[148] See the Terminology section of the Introduction for information on how this term is used here.

[149] Jacobus de Voragine, *La Légende dorée*, ed. by Jean Batallier and Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, trans. by Jean de Vignay (Paris: Champion, 1997), pp. 543–44. St Marine/Marin enters a monastery as a child.

monastic life as a child. Although Marin's motivation for cross-dressing is to fulfil another's wish, their life and gender expression correspond more closely to those of characters whose motivation for (permanent) cross-dressing is personal, such as Sts Eufrosine/Esmarade and Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien. There are also some narratives that do not tell the reader about duration of cross-dressing or motivation; for example, in the *fabliau La Saineresse*, the character of the 'Saineresse', who has non-marital sex with the main character of the text as part of a trick, enters and leaves the narrative cross-dressed.[150] The reader is given no further information about their cross-dressing and, therefore, cannot determine if it was permanent or undertaken solely for the purpose of the trick. These are just two examples of plots and characters that do not fit easily into the four categories, or whose experiences do not reflect the correlation of permanency and motivation outlined above.

Although each text in this corpus offers a different representation of cross-dressing and the significance of non-normative gender practices varies depending on plot, genre, and any change of social status, it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to explore each instance of cross-dressing and its gendered implications. Consequently, this chapter analyses several key examples in each of the four groups outlined earlier: those who cross-dress for themselves temporarily and permanently; and those who cross-dress for another temporarily and permanently.

II.1.1: Temporary Cross-Dressing for Others

Of the four categories of cross-dressing characters discussed above, the largest group comprises those who cross-dress temporarily and who are motivated to cross-dress by

---

During their life, Marin is falsely accused of impregnating someone and is exiled from the monastic community. Whilst exiled Marin raises the child and, after several years, they are both welcomed back to the monastery. Marin lives as a monk until death, after which the monks learnt of Marin's cross-dressing and the saint is celebrated as female.

[150] *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, ed. by Willem Noomen and Nico Van Den Boogaard, 10 vols (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), IV, 309–12. *La Saineresse* is the tale of a woman whose husband claims that he cannot be tricked any woman. She arranges for the cross-dressed 'Saineresse' to visit and, under the guise of medical treatment, engages in sexual activity. The wife describes her 'treatment' to her husband but at no point does he realise what the 'treatment' entailed.

another. *Floris et Lyriopé*, *Cassidorus*, and tale twenty-six from the *CNN*, show that texts in this cross-dressing category tend not to explore non-normative gender identities and practices in great detail; instead they often reinforce a binary understanding of gender and suggest that there are inherent differences between genders.

A text that shows both types of external motivation is *Floris et Lyriopé*.[151] In this text, the lovesick Floris, who is assigned male at birth, asks his twin Florie to exchange identities so that Floris can spend more time with Lyriopé, the woman whom Floris loves and whom Florie serves as lady-in-waiting.[152] The two external motivations are related to love; for Floris, this is romantic love, but for Florie it is familial love as Florie wishes to fulfil her twin's request for help. Floris tells Florie the possible consequences of her not helping him, 'Se tu vuez, bien m'en aideras, / Et se ce non, morir m'estuet' (*Floris et Lyriopé*, l. 821–22), and appeals to Florie's familial loyalty. Florie agrees to help, declaring that 'je te afis loialmant' (l. 825), before learning that Floris wants the two of them to exchange identities and clothing. Florie's motivation for cross-dressing is highlighted again when, after Floris outlines the plan, Florie comments 'Por toi de la mort garantir / En ferai je tot ton plaisir' (ll. 846–47) and she also helps Floris to prepare for his new identity by combing Floris' hair. The narrator focusses on the exchange of identity as a process, shown through the use of adverbs, increments of time, and verbs of transformation: 'Apertemant et sanz targier / Est cil de noveal adoubez. / Bien est en pou d'oure muez. / Or ains fu il, or est il elle / Et damoiseaux la damoisele' (ll. 875–79).[153] The use of the verb *adouber*, which is more commonly

---

[151] Barrette, pp. 73–131. This text follows the twins Floris and Florie. Floris falls in love with Lyriopé and asks Florie to swap identities so that Floris can be close to Lyriopé. Floris and Lyriopé fall in love and conceive a child. Fearing Lyriopé's father, Floris decides to leave for a time and returns after several years, at which point the couple marry. The narrative then turns to focus on the child Narcissus.

[152] As both cross-dressing characters in *Floris et Lyriopé* adopt the other's identity and name, it is difficult to utilise the naming conventions outlined in the introduction without causing confusion for the reader. Consequently, I use the character's birth name throughout, but will maintain the approach to pronouns presented in the Introduction.

[153] The narrator's focus here is solely on Floris' cross-dressing, which is true of the text more generally as little time is dedicated to describing the other twin's experiences.

associated with the conferring of chivalric status, may seem misplaced as Floris is choosing to move from a masculine to a feminine presentation, but it does highlight that Floris intends to change their status and identity, not just clothing. The gendered aspect of this change of identity is highlighted by repeated phrasing and the juxtaposition of personal pronouns and gendered vocabulary. These lines are followed by comments that after cross-dressing no one realised that Floris had adopted Florie's identity, not even their parents.

Remarks about the twins' physical similarity are found elsewhere in the narrative, especially when the narrator describes their appearance as infants. The narrator frequently reminds the reader that onlookers could not tell them apart: 'Si furent si d'une semblance / Que nuns n'i savoit desavrance' (*Floris et Lyriopé*, ll. 328–29). Despite this emphasis on the twins' appearances, the narrator is keen to reinforce differences between them: namely, their sexual difference.[154] This difference in assigned sex is similarly stressed and presented in the descriptions of their personal qualities. In lines 364 to 372, the narrator comments on Florie's beauty whereas the description of Floris, who is also described as beautiful, focusses on Floris as having the more typically masculine traits of being 'prouz et apers' (l. 364), with 'toz les biens c'on puet loer / En home (ll. 367–68). This reinforcement of ideas of the twins' gender and sexual difference means that this text does not explore alternative experiences of gender or question the validity of the gender binary. The characters are not affected or changed by their cross-dressing, and, as Jane Gilbert argues, Florie is eager to give up their new identity, and its associated activities of horse riding, thereby promoting the idea that one's interests and skills are influenced by one's assigned sex.[155] Thus the narrator retains he/him pronouns and Floris' birth name when describing Floris whilst

---

[154] Gilbert, pp. 51–52.
[155] Ibid., p. 52.

cross-dressed. No time is spent on Floris and Florie's second exchange of identities, as the narrator briefly states 'Or ne est plus Floris Florie' (l. 1164) and the narrative quickly moves on, with little to no further references to the cross-dressing episodes. This reinforces the argument that cross-dressing is not an important element to the text in itself; it allows for access to certain people and the achievement of personal desires, but little consideration is given to expression of gender identity or the impact of cross-dressing on the characters. Floris' cross-dressing, however, does allow for other topics to be brought to the fore; for example, queer desire and affection are explored in this text, as will be discussed in chapter V.4, as Floris and Lyriopé explicitly discuss sexuality and the possibilities of different sexual preferences. This example shows how cross-dressing characters often reveal areas of tension other than gender, facilitating discussions, be they accepting or not, of non-normative behaviours, identities, and relationships.

A common motivation for cross-dressing is to try to find a spouse or lover after a separation. In tale twenty-six from the *CNN,* the character Katherine/Conrard cross-dresses in an attempt to reconcile with their lover, Gerard.[156] Other texts share this plot, such as the *Comte d'Artois* in which the Countess/Phlipot cross-dresses in order to secure their husband's return home, and the couple are eventually reconciled after the Count learns the error of his ways.[157] The conclusion of tale twenty-six differs as Katherine marries another man after realising that Gerald is 'desloyal' (*CNN*, tale twenty-six, p. 179). The characters' motivation affects which subjects and plot points

---

[156] *Les cent nouvelles nouvelles*, ed. by Franklin P. Sweetser (Geneva: Droz, 1966), pp. 163–81. This tale focusses on the unmarried lovers Katherine/Conrard and Gerard whose love became well-known. To avoid their dishonour, Gerard decides to leave the area for a time but the couple agree to be faithful. After receiving a marriage proposal, Katherine decides to seek Gerard, doing so cross-dressed as Conrard. On meeting Gerard, Conrard learns that he has not remained faithful. After testing his fidelity, Conrard breaks off their understanding and returns home.

[157] This text depicts the Countess of Artois/Phlipot who, having been abandoned by their husband, cross-dresses in order to find the Count. After locating him, Phlipot becomes the Count's servant in order to fulfil the conditions. The Count set to secure his return. Phlipot completes them and returns home to Artois where the couple are reconciled.

are focussed on; consequently, when characters are motivated by a third party, there is more emphasis on the cross-dressing character's interactions with their lover than on their non-normative gender practices. For example, in tale twenty-six there is no description of cross-dressing, the reader is told that 'lors conclurent qu'il (Katherine's uncle and escort) appellera sa niepce Conrard' (p. 172) and most of the subsequent narrative is centred on Conrard's testing of Gerard's loyalty and love.

This does not mean that the cross-dressing motif is ignored in tale twenty-six; rather, the narrator uses he/him pronouns and the name Conrard in descriptions as well as in direct speech. However, this is not consistent, as the character is referred to as Katherine and by she/her pronouns too, with this gendered language most commonly being applied when the narrator is describing past events or the character's thoughts and emotions. In examining the frequency of this different gendered language, the name Conrard features much more during the cross-dressing episode with twenty-one instances compared to the five uses of Katherine, yet she/her pronouns are more common than he/him, with thirty-four compared to five instances. The significant difference in numbers of gendered pronouns versus names shows that the writer did not simply substitute a pronoun for a name and vice versa, but rather they made a deliberate choice to use different gendered language. This kind of linguistic indeterminacy is found in other texts involving cross-dressing characters, for example in *Silence*, *Tristan de Nanteuil*, *Yde et Olive*, and *Eufrosine*, and has been subject to critical analysis.[158] In these texts, pronouns, names, and gendered vocabulary are also used inconsistently, which has been interpreted in different ways. Some have suggested that varying the use of gendered language functions to reveal how other characters read the cross-dressing character and their gender, or shows the writer revealing shifts in a character's

---

[158] Perret, pp. 328–40; Labbie, pp. 63–77; Szkilnik, 'The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance', in *Gender Transgressions*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor, pp. 61–88; Watt, pp. 277–78; Ogden, pp. 87–91; Terrell, pp. 35–48; Angela Jane Weisl, 'How to Be a Man, Through Female: Changing Sex in Medieval Romance', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 45.2 (2009), 110–37.

identity.[159] Such linguistic inconsistencies also serve to highlight the character's cross-dressing to the reader, drawing attention to the character as not conforming to a binary model of gender and as holding a linguistic position that is simultaneously within and outside the binary.[160] Binary language can indicate a character's changing gender expression, but it is limited in its ability to describe the range of gender possibilities explored in this corpus as it requires a character to be either/or but not both or neither. These limitations do not have the same impact on all texts and characters; for example, with tale twenty-six the focus is less on gender than on Conrard's repeated attempts to discover whether Gerard has been faithful, but the choice to use different gendered vocabulary means that Conrard's cross-dressing is represented and non-normative gender expression explored even if only implicitly.[161]

The only part of the tale that directly addresses issues of gender is when supposedly masculine and feminine qualities are contrasted: after Conrard learns that Gerard has a new lover, the text states 'Non pourtant elle adossa la teneur feminine, et s'adouba de virile vertu' (*CNN*, tale 26, p. 178). The examples of 'teneur feminine' mentioned are Conrard's feelings of grief and dismay at Gerard's actions, and the 'virile vertu' appears to be equated with how Conrard deals with this news: femininity is associated with emotion and masculinity with action. Conrard's reaction is to speak with Gerard's lover in order to hear more about the romance, before writing a letter to Gerard explaining how they had learnt about Gerard's disloyalty and that they would be returning home. It is notable that during this enacting of 'virile vertu', only she/her pronouns are applied to Conrard, suggesting that such qualities are not limited to one gender. One could suggest that the limited engagement with questions of gender is

---

[159] Watt, pp. 277–78; Ogden, pp. 87–91.

[160] The inconsistent use of gendered language has different implications when considering characters who indicate a transgender or genderqueer identity. By inconsistently applying pronouns, names, and gendered vocabulary this ignores such declarations of identity, obscuring such identities from the reader.

[161] The miniature that accompanies this tale uses ambiguous physical appearances to show Conrard's changing gender expression. This will be discussed further in section II.2.

linked to the tale's form, as one of a hundred short comic tales, and therefore it does not

have the space to explore gender in great detail. Yet, tale twenty-six is considerably

longer than most of the other tales, covering fols 54v to 62r of Hunter, MS 252, whereas

tales forty-five and sixty, which also contain the cross-dressing motif and actually

foreground cross-dressing and gender more than tale twenty-six, are around one folio in

length each.[162] Therefore, it seems that the narrator's intention was not to interrogate

gender and Conrard's non-normative gender practices, but rather to focus more on

Conrard and Gerard's relationship.

Another way in which writers use the cross-dressing motif, and which can reveal

their approach to gender, is by including multiple cross-dressing characters in a single

narrative. The inclusion of a secondary cross-dressing episode serves to offer some

comment or perspective on the first episode. The cross-dressing characters often, but not

always, fit into the same category of cross-dressing. For instance, in *Ysaïe le Triste*,

there are three episodes of temporary cross-dressing for others: Marte cross-dresses

once to find Ysaïe and once to save him, unnecessarily, from an attack, and Tronc, who

eventually is revealed to be fairy king Auberon, cross-dresses as a chambermaid so that

Ysaïe can gain access to a castle to defeat an evil lord.[163] Ysaïe is central to both Marte

and Tronc cross-dressing as they try to find or help him.[164] Another example is in

Cassidorus, where both Helcana/Helcanor and Licorus cross-dress temporarily at the

request of others.[165] The hermit Ydoine asks Helcana/Helcanor to cross-dress to avoid

---

[162] Tale forty-five begins on fol. 108r and ends on 108v. Tale sixty begins on fol. 132v and ends on 134r.
[163] *Ysaÿe le Triste: roman arthurien du Moyen Âge tardif*, ed. by André Giacchetti (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1989). In *Ysaïe le Triste* Ysaïe, who is the son of Tristan and Iseut, is raised partly by Tronc who then accompanies Ysaïe on his chivalric endeavours. Tronc cross-dresses as a chambermaid so that Tronc and Ysaïe can defeat Brun de l'Angard. Brun imprisons Ysaïe and tries to seduce Tronc, who uses their position to free Ysaïe to combat Brun. The second and third episodes involve Marte. Marte, after giving birth to Ysaïe's child, decides to go searching for Ysaïe, cross-dressing as a squire and then a minstrel. Later, Marte cross-dresses as a knight to save Ysaïe from attack, but Ysaïe rebukes Marte for behaving rashly.
[164] Neither Marte nor Tronc take on new names whilst cross-dressed.
[165] *Le Roman de Cassidorus*, ed. by Joseph Palermo (Paris: Picard, 1963). Helcana/Helcanor is exiled from Constantinople after receiving a forged letter from their spouse, Cassidorus. Helcana leaves with

suspicion whilst Helcana stays with him. Licorus, whilst travelling to Constantinople to learn more of Helcanor's identity, decides to pass the night at an all-female household; however, there is a condition of the stay: Licorus must cross-dress for the duration.[166] The connection between Licorus and Helcanor stem from Helcanor rejecting the sexual advances of the unnamed 'pucele'. After being rejected by Helcanor, the 'pucele' seduces and is impregnated by Licorus, but names Helcanor as the father, resulting in Helcanor's exile.[167]

The attempted seduction of a cross-dressing character is also found in other texts containing the motif, with Roberta Davidson noting that the cross-dressing characters who were assigned female at birth are often chaste but they are frequently associated with 'a sexually corrupt woman'.[168] Although these two characters are linked by their mutual association with the 'pucele', their responses to her differ: where Helcanor rejects the repeated attempts at seduction and rebukes the 'pucele' for her behaviour, Licorus willingly enters into a non-marital sexual relationship. The narrator signals their disapproval of the 'pucele' and her sexual conduct through Helcanor's speeches, but also by a narrative punishment of being unable to deliver her child until she reveals the truth of the baby's parentage. This plot point of two cross-dressing characters being connected by a woman who is criticised for her promiscuous behaviour and false accusations is similar to that in *Silence*. But there are differences between the two texts. In *Silence*, the woman, Eufeme, who accuses Silence is also having non-marital sexual relations with an individual assigned male at birth and cross-dressed (as a nun) whereas

---

their child to seek the hermit Ydoine. After losing the child, Helcana joins Ydoine as a hermit. During this time, Helcanor becomes a renowned healer and is the object of unwanted sexual attention leading to Helcanor being exiled for a second time. Eventually the truth about the letter is revealed and Cassidorus locates Helcanor to take them home. The second episode of cross-dressing includes Licorus, who impregnates the 'pucele' and who is tasked with recovering Helcanor from exile and finding out about their identity. Licorus cross-dresses whilst staying overnight on their journey.

[166] Licorus does not take on a new name whilst cross-dressed.

[167] This failed seduction is discussed in chapter V.3.

[168] Davidson, 'Cross-Dressing in Medieval Romance', in *Textual Bodies*, ed. by Lori Hope Lefkovitz, p. 68. This is the case with a number of the characters in this corpus, such as St Eugenia/Eugene and Marte fron *Ysaïe le Triste*.

Licorus cross-dresses later, after having sexual relations with the 'pucele'. The minor

characters of the nun from *Silence* and Licorus serve as counterpoints to the main cross-

dressed characters: their cross-dressing invites the reader to draw comparisons between

the minor and major cross-dressing characters and the differences in their behaviour.

Similar approaches are taken in other texts; for example, the characters of Clarisse and,

their child, Yde/Ydé from *Clarisse et Florent* and *Yde et Olive*, which are both sequels

of *Huon de Bordeaux* and appear in Turin, MS L.II.14. Both Clarisse and Ydé cross-

dress and are motivated to do so in order to secure greater personal choice in marriage.

These episodes are connected by the characters' familial relationship, cross-dressing,

and issues related to marriage, which leads the reader to draw parallels between the

episodes. This 'doubling' of certain characters is not limited to those that cross-dress;

for example, Lorraine Kochanske Stock discusses the characters of Eufeme and

Eufemie from *Silence* as doubles, revealing the connections and differences between

these figures.[169]

The inclusion of multiple episodes of cross-dressing in one narrative does not

mean that the characters respond in the same way to cross-dressing or that the writer

makes the same narratorial decisions about naming and pronouns. Helcana readily

accepts Ydoine's request of adopting the clothing and status of a hermit before being

baptised as Helcanor. After this point, the narrator generally uses he/him pronouns,

grammatically masculine agreements and gendered signifiers. Helcanor is committed to

their new status as a hermit and is shown to be pious and gifted at healing. These

qualities, plus their resistance to temptation, bring Helcanor closer in representation to

cross-dressing saints than to the cross-dressing characters in other romances whose

cross-dressing is typically motivated by romantic love. Licorus responds differently to

the idea of cross-dressing: when the women bring him 'une robe de femme'

---

[169] Stock, pp. 20–23.

(*Cassidorus*, 344) and tell him 'Sire, il vous couvient vestir ceste robe' (344), Licorus'

immediate thought is one of shame. The exact reason why Licorus feels 'moult grant

vergoigne' (344) at the thought of wearing women's clothing is not described, but he is

so reticent that the woman carrying the robe puts it on Licorus herself. It is implied that

Licorus' shame derives from a sense of emasculation because they are forced, notably

by a group of women, to move down the gender hierarchy and take on a lower social

status. This is supported by the narrative that states Licorus, whilst cross-dressed, thinks

about their horse and lion, which are symbols of Licorus' chivalric identity.[170]

Licorus' reaction to seeing themselves dressed in the robe is notable because

Licorus believes that they have become a woman. Despite there being no explicitly

implied magic or further changes made to Licorus' appearance, just the addition of the

robe changes the way Licorus views themselves and their gender expression. Licorus'

assumed gender transformation is highlighted again, with the use of the imperfect

subjunctive 'fust' indicating his misplaced belief, but the narrator makes it clear that no

such transformation had taken place: 'Lycorus, qui de son sens n'avoit riens perdu, fors

que tant qu'il li sambloit que femme fust, a pensé a son afaire' (*Cassidorus*, 346). When

undressing that evening, Licorus is relieved to realise that their physical body has not

been altered – the thought of this had caused Licorus 'tel painne' (449) –, and the next

morning they awaken to find themselves, inexplicably, fully armed. The narrator does

not comment on the potentially magical nature of the household or explain why cross-

dressing was required. Michelle Szkilnik suggests that the requirement to cross-dress

could have served as a punishment for Licorus' sexual misconduct because it caused

them sadness and shame.[171] Although this is a persuasive argument, the lack of

information from the narrator makes it difficult to determine why the element of cross-

---

[170] This focus on chivalric identifiers is also found in *Meraugis de Portlesguez* with the emphasis on
Meraugis' sword, which will be discussed in II.1.3.
[171] Szkilnik, 'The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance', in *Gender Transgressions*, ed. by
Karen J. Taylor, pp. 62–63.

dressing was added to this scene. Nevertheless, it does invite the readers to compare Helcanor, Licorus, and their cross-dressing. The reader sees that that Helcanor readily accepts the request to cross-dress whereas Licorus is forced to submit; that, whilst cross-dressed, Licorus mourns their lost chivalric identity whereas Helcanor enters willingly into their new life of prayer; and that whilst Helcanor rejects temptation, Licorus accepts it.

II.1.2: Permanent Cross-Dressing for Others

There are only two examples of characters in the corpus discussed in this thesis that fit into this category: St Marine/Marin (*Légende dorée*) and Denise (*Frere Denise*).[172] Both of these characters cross-dress on the request or recommendation of another in order to enter the religious life. Although these texts come from different genres, Marin's Life is a hagiography whereas *Frere Denise* is a *fabliau*, there are similarities in the representation of the cross-dressing character. This is partly due to the author of *Frere Denise*, Rutebeuf, using examples of cross-dressing saints, particularly Eufrosine/Esmarade, as inspiration for Denise.[173] Despite the similarities in the positive characterisation of Marin and Denise, these texts have different reasons for presenting the characters as such: Marin's Life serves to celebrate the saint and show their path to sanctity whereas the positive portrayal of the cross-dressed Denise functions as a point of contrast to the object of the text's criticism, the Franciscan Simon.

St Marin does not cross-dress and join a monastery of their own volition but rather on the request of their father who, after the death of his wife, wishes to enter the religious life and decides that Marin should cross-dress in order to be able to accompany him. The father's involvement is foregrounded in this Life. It is he who changes Marin's clothing and requests that Marin, 'son filz', be received into the

---

[172] Denise does not change their name.
[173] Roy J. Pearcy, 'The Source of Rutebeuf's "Frere Denise"', *Neuphilogische Mitteilungen*, 83.2 (1982), 118–26 (pp. 119; 121).

monastery: the father 'mua l'abbit de sa fille si que l'on cuidoit mieulx que ce fust homme que femme' (*Légende dorée*, p. 543). On his deathbed, the father calls Marin to him and he 'lui commanda que elle ne revelast a nul qu elle fust femme' (p. 543). In this early part of the Life, there is little discussion of Marin, their thoughts, actions or even their reaction to their father's decisions and orders. This is one of the ways in which this Life portrays Marin's obedience: not only do they obey their father's wishes, but also those of the other monks as, on joining the monastery, Marin learns to 'vivre moult religieusement et estre obedient' (p. 543).

Marin is described as a dedicated member of the monastic community. There is no indication that they will leave the religious life. Considering that their cross-dressing is permanent, the use of personal pronouns, agreements, and gendered vocabulary is of note. The father's understanding of Marin's gender remains unchanged after Marin cross-dresses. Although direct speech is not used in this narrative, when the narrator reports the father calling Marin to his deathbed only she/her pronouns and gendered terms, like 'fille' (*Légende dorée*, p. 543), are used. In this way, gendered language is used to show how other characters view Marin's gender identity rather than indicating the perspective of the narrator. In fact, when the narrator reports Marin's actions and speech, they apply both she/her and he/him pronouns but in most cases the narrator uses he/him pronouns, reflecting Marin's chosen identity. Marin, after being falsely accused of impregnating someone, is punished by raising the child in exile and then, when welcomed back into the monastery, by being required to undertake 'toutes les vilaines offices' (p. 544). Valerie Hotchkiss argues that Marin's punishments are gendered punishments and that Marin 'conforms to the model of the female sinner'.[174] However, one could argue that Marin's obedience and willingness to accept the tasks required of them by their superiors are not gendered attributes but rather were qualities required in

---

[174] Hotchkiss, p. 26.

all members of a monastic community.[175] The Life of Marin ends like those of other

cross-dressing saints like Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch, amongst others, in which the

monks discover the saint's 'true' identity whilst preparing the body for burial.[176] The

discovery of Marin's assigned sex signals a change in the monks' perception of Marin's

gender. The monks then revere Marin as a woman and the text refers to the saint using

gendered language as 'la vierge' and the 'chamberiere de Dieu' (p. 544), which,

notably, the Virgin Mary uses to describe herself in Luke 1:38.[177] At this Life's

conclusion, the physical body is presented as the locus of gender identity as the monks,

and consequently the narrator, privilege the body over lived experience.

By contrast, *Frere Denise* follows a hypocritical Franciscan friar who, in order

to seduce them, convinces Denise to cross-dress.[178] Although by the end of the narrative

Denise is no longer cross-dressed, Denise's intention was to enter the religious life and

join the Franciscan order. Given this intent, Denise's cross-dressing can be categorised

as permanent. Like many cross-dressing saints, Denise wishes to enter the religious life

and, similarly to the plot of the Life of Esmarade, Denise is prevented from doing so by

their family. Denise asks the friar for his help in convincing Denise's mother to allow

them to join a convent, but Simon uses this opportunity to advise Denise to join his

order instead, promising that it will allow Denise to remain a virgin and he even offers

the possibility of sanctity. Denise follows Simon's advice, cutting their hair and

---

[175] For example, the Rule of St Benedict praises obedience as the 'first step in humility' and states 'immediately when something has been commanded by a superior, it is for them as a divine command' (*The Rule of St Benedict*, trans. by David Parry (Leominster: Gracewing, 2003), p. 21).

[176] Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 963–66. Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch is known for their beauty and rich, worldly life. After hearing the bishop Nonnus preach, Pelagien of Antioch decides to be baptised. The Devil tries to tempt the saint to return to their wordly life, but Pelagien refuses. The saint then cross-dresses and lives as a hermit for the rest of their life. Their assigned sex is discovered after their death.

[177] Luke 1:38: 'dixit autem Maria ecce ancilla Domini fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum et discessit ab illa angelus' which is translated as 'And Mary said: Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her'.

[178] *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, ed. by Willem Noomen, 10 vols (Assen: van Gorcum, 1991), VI, 15–23. *Frere Denise* presents Denise, who wants to enter the religious life, and Simon, a Franciscan friar, who frequents Denise's family home. Simon advises Denise to cross-dress to join the Franciscan order, which facilitates Simon's seduction of Denise. After joining the order, Denise and Simon travel together. Whilst staying overnight somewhere, the lady of the house realises Denise is cross-dressed. After Denise confesses all, Simon is punished and Denise is returned to their family.

adopting laymen's clothing, before presenting themselves at the order where Simon

gives Denise a habit and the tonsure: 'La robe de l'ordre li done / Et li fist faire

grant corone' (*Frere Denise*, ll. 147–48). After this point, the reader learns more about

Denise's life in the order, dedication to their duties, and positive qualities, which are

interwoven with criticisms of Simon and his inappropriate behaviour.[179] The inclusion

of a cross-dressing character in *Frere Denise* serves as a point of contrast to Simon,

with Roy J. Pearcy arguing that 'Rutebeuf is clearly uninterested in her (Denise) except

as the persecution object necessary to reveal the viciousness of her persecutor'.[180]

Another consequence of this focus is that there is little interrogation of Denise's gender

or the impact of their cross-dressing. The narrator does not apply different pronouns or

gendered language to them. Larissa Tracy suggests that the narrator retains she/her

pronouns so as to remind the reader to read Denise as a woman; this interpretation

suggests that the narrative tries to draw the reader's attention away from potential

ambiguity.[181] However, this ambiguity is highlighted somewhat by Denise's gender-

neutral name, which reminds the reader of Denise's non-normative gender practices.[182]

Although Denise's story is similar to other characters who cross-dress to join a religious

community, it does not question gender identity and expression in the same way. This is

because Denise is not meant to be the focus of this text. The narrator associates Denise

with cross-dressing saints, in their religious devotion, desire to remain virgins, and

service to God, in order to create a character who is the direct opposite of the villainous

Simon, who embodies none of these qualities.

---

[179] There are various interpretations of how *Frere Denise* presents Simon and Denise's relationship. Simon Gaunt argues that the narrator questions Denise's innocence and virtue (Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, pp. 243–47). Holly A. Crocker argues that the friar's advances are predatory (Holly A. Crocker, 'Disfiguring Gender: Masculine Desire in the Old French Fabliau', *Exemplaria*, 23.4 (2011), 342–67 (p. 349)) and Larissa Tracy suggests that Denise becomes more complicit in Simon's plans as the narrative goes on (Larissa Tracy, 'Chaucer's Pardoner: The Medieval Culture of Cross-Dressing and Problems of Religious Authority', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 54.2 (2018), 64–108 (pp. 86–87)). This will be discussed further in section III.2.2.

[180] Pearcy, 'The Source of Rutebeuf's "Frere Denise"', p. 124.

[181] Tracy, p. 71.

[182] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, p. 247.

II.1.3: Temporary Cross-Dressing for Self

In terms of the plot points that are the catalyst for their cross-dressing, the four

characters who fit into the category are quite diverse. Even so, there are similarities

between the types of behaviour shown, and these similarities are generally found

between characters of the same assigned gender. Aye/Gaudïon (*Tristan de Nanteuil*)

and the wife/Berengier (*Berengier*), both of whom are assigned female at birth, become

knights and demonstrate that knightly status, and its associated skills and qualities, are

not limited to those assigned male at birth. The characters of Trubert/Couillebaude

(*Trubert*) and Meraugis (*Meraugis de Portlesguez*) both cross-dress to escape either

punishment or imprisonment, and neither character changes behaviour significantly

after doing so. Couillebaude continues to cause chaos in the duke's household and

Meraugis uses a symbol of their chivalric identity, their sword, to aid their escape. The

case-studies focused on here are those of Aye/Gaudïon and Meraugis.

Aye/Gaudïon is the first of two characters assigned female at birth who cross-

dress in *Tristan de Nanteuil*.[183] Unfortunately, the scene in which the cross-dressing

takes place, and the moment when the motivation for cross-dressing is given, are

missing from the only extant manuscript of the text, Paris, BnF, MS fonds français

1478. Consequently, it is difficult to fully interpret the implications of Gaudïon's cross-

dressing and analyse their gender identity. However, there is a scene later in the

narrative when Gaudïon speaks to their imprisoned family and states 'Pour l'amour de

---

[183] Tristan de *Nanteuil; chanson de geste inédite*, ed. by Keith Val Sinclair (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971). Aye/Gaudïon completes many valiant deeds whilst cross-dressed. As a reward, Gaudïon is betrothed to Aiglentine (Aye/Gaudïon's daughter-in-law) and the couple make a pact that Gaudïon will return her to husband. Whilst away, Gaudïon is betrayed by Galafre and they are put in prison. After a brief escape, Gaudïon is imprisoned again and remains there until their death. Whilst travelling Blanchandine/Blanchandin (whose father is the sultan Galafre) is attacked by wild animals and it is here that Blanchandin meets Tristan. They fall in love and conceive a child, Raimon. Blanchandin and Tristan are attacked and Blanchandin is imprisoned. Blanchandin marries Tristan and cross-dresses as a knight in order to escape. On arriving at court, the sultan's daughter Clarinde falls in love with Blanchandin and the couple become engaged. Blanchandin is betrayed and Clarinde commands Blanchandin to bathe to proof their maleness. At this moment, Blanchandin follows a deer that runs through the court into the forest where divine intervention performs a gender transformation. Blanchandin then marries Clarinde and they conceive Gilles.

vous tous qui cy prison tenés, / Ay prins icest habit que vous ycy veés. / Chevaliers suis nouveaulx, ja mal en doubterés, / S'ay esté en bataille o les Turs deffaés / Pour aquerre proesse' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 3050–54). Gaudïon's motivation for cross-dressing was to gain martial prowess in order to free their family. Gaudïon's chosen identity is different from that of most other cross-dressing characters. They chose a name that has no connection to their birth name and most unusually, despite being a Christian and having no change in religious belief, they take on the identity of a Saracen warrior. One could suggest that this in to associate Gaudïon with the other cross-dressing character Blanchandine/Blanchandin, who is married to Aye/Gaudïon's grandson (the eponymous Tristan de Nanteuil) and who was saved from imprisonment by Gaudïon. Blanchandin is the child of a Saracen sultan, but was baptised before marrying Tristan. Although there are many links between these characters, both in terms of plot, familial connections, and their cross-dressing, the connection of their names and religion is tenuous, especially because, as is common in the *chanson de geste* genre, many other characters also change religion in the course of the text.

Two aspects of Gaudïon's identity are frequently reinforced by the narrator: their martial prowess and their familial role. Gaudïon is an excellent warrior – being repeatedly referred to as 'le plus hardi au monde' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, l. 2122) –, is skilled at strategy, has mastered multiple weapons, and leads a victorious army:

> Vistement se leva et se fut tost armee ;
> Et on lui amena la dehors en la pree
> Son bon courant destrier a la regne doree.
> Elle monta dessys qui n'y est arrestee,
> Entre ses mains porta une hache asseree
> Dont les Turs pourfendoit jusques a l'eschinee (ll. 3472–77).[184]

The combination of she/her pronouns and typically masculine actions suggests that prowess on the battlefield is not limited to a single gender and that women can

---

[184] Campbell, 'Performing Gender in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France*, ed. by Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger, E. Jane Burns, and Nancy F. Regalado, p. 84.

demonstrate such skills. This is found elsewhere in the narrative when gendered vocabulary and Gaudïon's birth name are associated with their actions whilst cross-dressed, such as 'Aye la dame fut chevauchans ou moillon, / A loy de chevalier, vestu le hauberjon' (ll. 1816–17). Gaudïon is shown as fully able to keep up and even surpass men in martial endeavours.[185] As well as their identity as a battle-hardy warrior, Gaudïon is also depicted as a mother. Not only is Gaudïon's connection with their family stressed frequently, along with references to childbearing and breast feeding, but Gaudïon is even compared to the Virgin Mary by Ganor (ll. 2976–85). Gaudïon's identity as a mother is stressed at two key moments in the cross-dressing episode: firstly, when they meet and are eventually incarcerated with their husband and sons, and secondly, when Gaudïon comes across their grandson in the forest. When Gaudïon visits the prison, they describe themselves in terms of their role as mother as well as their political position: when speaking to their son Guy, Gaudïon states: 'Ta jouvente et ton corps portay dedans mes flans; / Tu es Guy de Nanteul que je fu alaittans. / Je suis Aye ta mere, la roÿne poissans' (ll. 3675–77). This type of description and focus on childrearing is found elsewhere; for example, during the scene with Tristan in the forest. During this relatively short episode, the narrator describes the child sleeping on Gaudïon's chest three times: '(Gaudïon) Lui monstra ses mamelles dont son père nourry, / Hors de son sain les trait que l'enffens les choisy ; / Par-dessus les mamelles se coucha et cati' (ll. 2539–42).

The narrator and Gaudïon place significant emphasis on Gaudïon's role within their family and the physical connection they have with their children and grandchild. This is revealed through Gaudïon, and other characters' speech, but also through the narrator's gendering and naming of the character whilst cross-dressed. They tend to be

---

[185] Sautman, 'What can they possibly do together?', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, pp. 211–12.

referred to by their birth name, often coupled with a gendered identifier, such as 'dame Aye d'Avignon', 'dame Aye la senee' and 'la roÿne' and she/her pronouns. Cross-dressed or not, they are most frequently named as 'dame Aye d'Avignon', which highlights their country, social status and gender to the reader. The use of the name Gaudïon is much less frequent, being only found in direct speech and in narration that shows the viewpoint of a specific character. Gaudïon's frequent declarations of their identity and social role using gendered descriptors like 'wife' and 'mother' as well as their use of their birth name suggests that this character associates with their assigned female gender. Their actions whilst cross-dressed makes it clear that knighthood is not the preserve of men and that women can successfully fight and achieve renown for martial endeavours.

The motivation for cross-dressing in *Meraugis de Portlesguez* is to allow the eponymous Meraugis to escape from a restrictive custom, along with their friend Gauvain.[186] The custom of the Île sanz Non is that any knight approaching the island must fight the knight who currently resides in the castle with the lady; if the approaching knight kills the resident knight then he will take his place, owning the castle and land until he himself is beaten. At first hearing that he will be forced to participate in a custom, Meraugis is angry and states 'Se biens me viegne, / Ceste coustume voel oster' (*Meraugis de Portlesguez*, ll. 2909–10), but is convinced once he hears about the reward of land and status. Whilst fighting the knight, who turns out be Meraugis' friend Gauvain, Meraugis learns more about the custom and how the lady takes away all agency from the resident knight. The pair make a plan: after feigning

---

[186] Raoul de Houdenc, *Meraugis de Portlesguez: roman arthurien du XIIIe siécle, publié d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque du Vatican*, ed. by Michelle Szkilnik (Paris: Champion, 2004). In the cross-dressing episode, Meraugis is approached and asked to take part in the custom of the Île sanz Non. Meraugis travels to the island and enters into combat with the castle's incumbent knight. During the long fight, it is revealed that the unknown knight is Gauvain, and Meraugis and Gauvain create a plan to escape from the custom. The plan allows Meraugis to take control of the castle and free Gauvain and cross-dresses to secure their escape via boat. Meraugis does not change their name.

death, Meraugis comes to the castle, threatens and imprisons the lady before adopting her clothing and leaving the island by boat. Meraugis is able to regain their and Gauvain's lost autonomy by reversing the custom: Meraugis constrains the most powerful person by imprisoning the lady of the castle and adopts her identity therefore appropriating her power for themselves.

There is a detailed description of Meraugis donning the lady's clothing, which will be discussed further in chapter III.2.1. The narrator observes that Meraugis was prettier than a 'popine' (*Meraugis de Portlesguez,* l. 3303). This comparison lends an element of comedy to this scene as the reader imagines the knight, who has recently been fighting valiantly and threatening the lady, as a doll. Meraugis retains an important aspect of their knightly identity as they keep 'S'espee desoz son mantel' (l. 3305). One could suggest that this is because Meraugis is uncomfortable with relinquishing all masculine signifiers. The 'l'espee nue' is used as a symbol of masculinity in two ways: it associates Meraugis with their preferred identity, the fearsome warrior, and associates masculinity with the phallic symbol of the unsheathed sword.[187] Meraugis' outlandish displaying of the phallic sword is reminiscent of *fabliau*. By referring to the sword as 'Vostre dame', Meraugis transfers the lady's power to themselves and into an object commonly associated with men. This does detract from Meraugis' cross-dressing but it also draws attention to the violence being threatened. This may have been to minimise the transgressive potential of the cross-dressing. Ad Putter argues that male cross-dressing is rendered safe by either making it overtly comedic or completely transparent.[188] The interaction between Meraugis and the mariners suggests that this could be the case here:

---

[187] Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, p. 289; Weisl, p. 116; Carine Giovénal, *Le Chevalier et le pèlerin: idéal, rire et réalité chez Raoul Houdenc, XIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2015), p. 123.

[188] Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, p. 297.

> S'aperçurent e si tramblent
> De paor de lui. Si samblent
> Qu'il fussent pris, si erent il.
> De souz le mantel a porfil
> Tret Meraugis l'espee nue
> E dit: "Vostre dame est venue."
> "Ou est ?" "Vez la ci en ma main" (ll. 3322–28).

The mariners' question 'Ou est?' reveals that, despite Meraugis' cross-dressing, the mariners do not believe Meraugis is their Lady. This is reinforced when they address Meraugis as 'Sire' (l. 3344). The romance's interest in cross-dressing is minor. The motif is used to facilitate a dramatic escape, but the use of comedy and the focus on the sword as a symbol of masculinity hint towards a discomfort with discussing gender presentations and practices that do not fit a strict gender binary. This variation on the cross-dressing motif offers the least consistent presentation of gender. This partly results from the texts' diverse plots and the different circumstances in which cross-dressing occurs: *Tristan de Nanteuil* features a cross-dressing character who demonstrates that gender does not limit one's skills and abilities whereas *Meraugis de Portlesguez* shows are character using clothing to assert dominance over a powerful female character and her rules. But through cross-dressing both are able to escape either figurative or literal restrictions. Studying further instances of personally-motivated, temporary cross-dressing found outside this corpus could deepen our understanding of this variation and its use of gender.

II.1.4: Permanent Cross-Dressing for Self

The category of personally motivated, permanent cross-dressing more frequently raises the question of transgender or genderqueer identities than any of the other three categories outlined in this chapter. Saints' lives in particular offer many different examples of individuals assigned female at birth living as monks, but such representations are not confined to hagiography. There are examples of comic texts, like

tale forty-five from the *CNN*, as well as *chansons de geste,* such as *Tristan de Nanteuil*, that also present potentially transgender characters.

Possible transgender identities can be found in texts involving the cross-dressing motif, for several reasons. There are characters assigned female at birth, like St Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien and Blanchandine/Blanchandin from *Tristan de Nanteuil*, who express openly that they are or would like to be men. St Pelagien, having entered a monastery and been falsely accused of impregnating a nun, writes a letter before their death to the monks from their monastic community.[189] The letter states: 'Je me mis nom Pelagien; je suis homme, je n'ay pas menti pour decepvoir, car j'ay monstré que j'ay eu vertuz d'omme et ay vertuz du péché qui me fut mis sus' (*Légende dorée*, p. 968). This declaration of an identified gender along with Pelagien's decision to live a monastic life, presenting as male, until the end of their life, would suggest that Pelagien should be viewed as a transgender saint. Other saints who retained their male monastic/religious identity until death, such as Marin, Pelagien of Antioch, and Theodora/Theodore, could similarly be understood as transgender. One should note that the narrator does not always entirely support or promote such identifications; for example, as will be discussed in chapter IV.3, Theodore's previous social role as a wife is frequently stressed by the narrator. However, the saint's actions show repeated rejections of this aspect of their life in order to continue living a monastic life. It is also important to recognise representations of *genderqueer* identities, such as that found in the Life of Eufrosine/Esmarade. Esmarade, like the other cross-dressing saints, joins a monastery where they remained for the rest of their life. However, what makes Esmarade's Life different is that the saint is presented at the monastery as a eunuch with the gender-

---

[189] Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 967–68. Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien was of noble birth and engaged to be married. They were saddened by the idea of losing their virginity and decided to leave the wedding after the ceremony but before consummation. They cross-dressed and joined a monastery. Pelagien became the abbot of a nunnery but, when a nun became pregnant, was accused of being the father. They are imprisoned and, just before their death, Pelagien writes to the monastery revealing their innocence.

neutral name Esmarade. As I argue elsewhere, the eunuch stands outside of a binary model of gender and therefore can be understood as a *genderqueer* identity.[190]

Transgender characters are not solely found in hagiography, comic and epic narratives also offer transgender experiences to the reader. The cross-dressing figure of Blanchandine/Blanchandin accepts a divinely offered gender transformation, in which their physical body is transformed to 'match' their masculine gender expression: their 'physical transformation (…) is merely a confirmation of what already exists'.[191] Through bodily transformation, this narrative troubles the idea that the body is the locus of gender identity, a concept which is often presented in this and other texts involving the cross-dressing motif. For example, Blanchandin continually avoids situations in which their body may be uncovered as they are concerned that their 'true' self will be discovered in this way. Yet the transformation of the cross-dresser's body suggests that the body itself is not fixed and is subject to change; indeed, it is not the 'truth'. This idea is supported by the fact that Blanchandin's transformation results from divine intervention. The higher power, by offering Blanchandin a choice, provides Blanchandin with an opportunity to establish a transgender identity and, in this way, the text gives preference to Blanchandin's cross-dressed identity and behaviours over their pre-cross-dressed life.[192] In using a divine messenger to make the offer, the text gives legitimacy to transgender identities. However, at the same time as the transformation privileges identified gender, it obscures other non-normative and *genderqueer* identities from view. This is because Blanchandin is asked to choose only between male and female, thereby the narrative confirms and perpetuates a binary model of gender.

---

[190] Wright, 'Illuminating Queer Gender Identity in the Manuscripts of the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt, forthcoming.
[191] Weisl, p. 117.
[192] Gutt, p. 141.

A text which shows a different response to permanent cross-dressing is tale forty-five from the *CNN*.[193] This tale describes the life of Margarite: whose birth name is not given and they are referred to only as 'un Ecossais', who cross-dresses from the age of eight and who works in local houses and inns as a 'lavendiere' (*CNN*, tale forty-five, p. 302). Whilst undertaking these duties, Margarite engages in sexual relations with women of the household, both married and unmarried. The narrator states that Margarite 'par l'espace de XIIIJ ans se maintint et conduisit en l'estat et habillement de femme (…) et se faisoit appeller donne Margarite' (p. 302), revealing that they had lived as a woman long-term, including choosing a preferred name for themselves. In this way, the character of Margarite is unique in this thesis' corpus of texts, as no other cross-dressing character assigned male at birth lives permanently in their chosen identity. Although it is not stated explicitly, the narrator implies that Margarite cross-dressed and became a 'lavendiere' to get easy access to women for sexual activity; however, that they have been cross-dressing since before puberty, from age eight, would suggest that this was not their sole motivation. Vern L. Bullough notes that cross-dressing to have access to women for sexual activity was assumed to be the only suitable reason for a person assigned male at birth to cross-dress.[194] However, in the examples discussed in this thesis, this is rarely the main motivation. For example, Floris from *Floris et Lyriopé* cross-dresses for love, but does have sexual intercourse with Lyriopé whilst cross-dressed, and Trubert/Couillebaude cross-dresses to avoid punishment but uses the opportunity to engage in sexual activity. The only potential example is that in *La Saineresse*, but, as discussed earlier, the reader is not given any

---

[193] Sweetser, pp. 302–4 Tale forty-five presents Margarite, a character assigned male at birth but who has cross-dressed from a young age. Margarite is employed as a 'lavendiere' and, whilst completing their work frequently has sexual intercourse with female members of the household. This becomes public knowledge when someone accuses Margarite of assault at which point Margarite's assigned sex becomes known. They are then punished publicly and exiled from Rome.

[194] Bullough, p. 225.

information about whether or not the 'Saineresse' cross-dressed only for the sexual trick.

In tale forty-five, the narrator describes that, unbeknownst to the men of the house, Margarite was sleeping with their maids, daughters, and wives. During the accounts of these sexual activities, Margarite is described not by name but by he/him pronouns and it is commented that, when meeting a pretty woman, 'il luy monstroit qu'il estoit homme' (p. 303). The use of the verb *montrer* would suggest that Margarite does this by showing their genitals. Genitals have an important role in this tale as they are also what is used to judge whether Margarite is guilty of assaulting a woman: 'elle avoit tous telz members et oustilz que les hommes portent, et (…) vrayment elle estoit homme, et non pas femme' (pp. 303–304). Gender is reduced to genital difference, and the opposition of 'homme' and 'femme' in these lines indicates that only a binary gender is acceptable. The focus continues with Margarite's punishment, which is the public display of their genitals. However, one should consider that not all characters in this tale view Margarite in this way. Although the narrator uses he/him pronouns for description, when the narrator describes the thoughts and speech of the women with whom Margarite has sexual intercourse often she/her pronouns or gendered agreements are used; for example, the women regret Margarite's exile because they were a 'bonne lavendiere'. Although this is meant as innuendo, as by referring to Margarite's capability as a 'lavendiere' they are implicitly also praising their sexual prowess, by using the gendered term 'lavendiere' instead of some other gender-neutral vocabulary, the tale suggests this is how the women viewed Margarite and read their gender. As we have therefore seen, Margarite and the other characters discussed in this sub-section present examples of non-normative gender identities through their personally-motivated permanent cross-dressing.

II.2: Visual Representations of Cross-Dressing Characters in Medieval Manuscripts

When considering how literary characters were understood by readers during the Middle Ages, one cannot examine the text alone. Although by no means all medieval manuscripts were illustrated, in those that were the images that accompanied sections of text would have contributed to a reader's understanding and interpretation of a character. By analysing manuscript miniatures that illustrate texts including the cross-dressing motif, one can learn how they depicted the gender expression of the characters. There are differing ideas of how one might represent 'cross-dressing' in images. For example, Saisha Grayson argues that 'picturing transvestism is almost universally avoided', but this is because Grayson considers that in order to depict an individual as cross-dressed, there would need to be a visual indication that this is not their 'true' identity, this 'true' identity being their assigned, rather than identified, gender and identity.[195] This thesis understands cross-dressing as having been portrayed if the character is shown in their chosen identity.

In the corpus of texts examined in this thesis, only the manuscripts of seven texts have miniatures depicting cross-dressing episodes: the *Légende dorée*, *Eufrosine*, the *CNN*, *Cassidorus, Comte d'Artois*, *Yde et Olive*, and *Ysaïe le Triste*.[196] This equates to over seventy miniatures, which often include one or more images of a cross-dressing character within them. Given the large number of images available, it would be impossible to analyse how they each represent cross-dressing in this chapter, but some general comments will be provided on the types of portrayal found, before focussing on some specific examples.

First, it is important to note that how artists illustrated texts was affected by the manuscript's planned programme of illumination, which may have influenced how

---

[195] Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises', pp. 144; 155.
[196] I have been unable to view the manuscript of *Yde et Olive* (Turin, MS L.II.14) and one manuscript of *Cassidorus* (Turin, MS 1650) and therefore have not included them in the following calculations.

certain characters were presented. For instance, illustrated manuscripts of compilations of saints' lives generally only have space for only one miniature to represent each individual Life. This means that the artist had to find a way to represent the saint and their Life in a single image, resulting in their foregrounding some aspects of the Life, and obscuring others. There are artists who approach this problem by using multiple registers in one miniature to show multiple scenes, by manipulating the fore and background, or by condensing multiple parts of the Life into a single scene. The manuscripts of longer texts, like the romances *Cassidorus*, *Comte d'Artois*, and *Ysaïe le Triste*, often have illustrations placed throughout the manuscript and, therefore, artists can represent episodes in more detail and be less selective with the material to be included because there are more miniatures to fill.

From examining the corpus of manuscript illuminations, one learns that it is most common for artists to represent the cross-dressing character as cross-dressed, generally, but not always, in the type of clothing appropriate for their cross-dressed identity. For example, cross-dressing saints are most often presented as monks and in monastic contexts. The second largest category, including twenty-six images, is of miniatures in which characters are not presented as cross-dressed. This can either mean that the character is shown undertaking activities completed whilst cross-dressed, but in the clothing and appearance of their assigned gender, or that an episode where the character is not cross-dressed is depicted instead. Examples of these approaches can be seen, in order, in figures seven and eight. Figure seven from BRB, MS 9245 shows the character of Helcana/Helcanor providing advice in their role as hermit, but they are shown in their identity of Empress of Constantinople instead. Figure eight from Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3 includes St Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch being baptized, which occurs before they cross-dress and this is the most common way this

saint is portrayed.[197] A third way that a cross-dressing character can be portrayed is being shown during part of the narrative in which they are cross-dressed but their clothing is different to that stated in the text. There are few instances of this type of representation. For example, there are three examples in Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 266 and Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS français 57: one of Marine/Marin and two of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien being illustrated wearing a nun's habits rather than that of a monk, which is indicated by the inclusion of the white veil (figs nine, ten, and eleven). The final type of representation is when the artist portrays them in an unusual or idiosyncratic way. For instance, in KB, MS 71 A 24, Eufrosine/Esmarade is shown in the process of cross-dressing: they appear in clothing associated with laywomen, but a monk is depicted dressing them in a habit (fig. twelve). This image is therefore of considerable interest as no other character is shown in a comparable moment of transition.[198]

Despite texts frequently reinforcing a connection between the physical body and gender identity, it is rare for cross-dressing characters to be depicted as naked or with sexual characteristics on view. Two examples of this are of Pelagian and Margarite from the *CNN* who both present transgender identities.[199] The cross-dressing saint's 'true' identity is generally discovered after death and miniatures occasionally focus on this moment; for example, in Morgan, MS 672–75, saints Marin, Pelagien of Antioch, and Pelagien are all shown on their deathbed. However, the only image that shows the

---

[197] Similar images are found in six of seven miniatures depicting the saint. The only codices that depict their cross-dressing at all are in BnF fr. 6448, fol 314v, and Morgan 672–75 (675), fol. 134r.

[198] This miniature is discussed in more detail in Wright, 'Illuminating Queer Gender Identity in the Manuscripts of the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt, forthcoming.

[199] It is notable that variations on the name Marguerite are commonly connected with cross-dressing characters. St Pelagien and St Pelagien of Antioche are both associated with Marguerite before cross-dressing and Margarite is the chosen name of the character in tale forty-five from the *CNN*. The name is associated, particularly in the *Légende dorée*'s mediations of names and their meanings, with both purity and sexual sin. It is therefore of interest that the character of Margarite is described engaging in frequent sexual activity with a large number of sexual partners. It is not clear whether there is a link between these three characters or if it is a coincidence, but more research into the name Marguerite and its symbolism may be fruitful.

saint's naked body is in BRB, MS 9282–85, which portrays Pelagien's body being

prepared for burial by nuns, as requested by the saint in a letter to the monastery written

before death (fig. thirteen). The saint is positioned in the centre of the frame, surrounded

by three nuns, a shroud, and a coffin. Pelagien appears naked with their arms folded

across their body. Their breasts are presented and, although their genitals are hidden

from view, the nun's pointing index finger draws the viewer's gaze towards the saint's

groin. The pointing, the nuns' gestures of surprise, and Pelagien's monastic tonsure

each indicate the saint's cross-dressing to the viewer. In illustrating this scene, the artist

foregrounds the saint's body over their life and experiences as a monk; however, in

presenting the tonsured saint's naked body in this way, this image depicts the saint's

transgression of normative gender practices. In the Life of Pelagien, the revelation of

their body leads to their holiness being recognized by others, whereas in tale forty-five

from the *CNN*, Margarite's body is forcibly uncovered as punishment. Figure fourteen,

which depicts tale forty-five in Hunter, MS 252, shows Margarite standing on a cart

with their robe being raised to reveal their genitals in front of a crowd. Margarite is

shown with short hair, wearing a blue and white robe, with their penis on view. Their

eyes are downcast, suggesting sadness or a lack of agency, but also drawing the

viewer's eye towards their genitals. The inclusion of genitals is not unusual for this

manuscript, as Hunter, MS 252 contains many representations of nakedness, but the

artist does not portray other cross-dressing characters, from tales twenty-six and sixty,

in the same way, even though their tales also involve scenes of clandestine relationships

or sexual activity.[200] By choosing to depict the punishment, the artist draws attention to

Margarite's cross-dressing as a 'crime' rather than their life as Margarite. On closer

---

[200] Dominique Lagorgette, 'Staging Transgression through Text and Image: Violence and Nudity in the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles" (Glasgow, University Library, Special Collections, MS Hunter 252, and Vérard 1486 and 1498', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 89–104 (p. 93).

inspection of the image, one can see that the area around Margarite's genitals is worn. That only a particular area of the image is affected, indicates that this damage was caused by repeated touching by readers. Dominique Lagorgette notes that three of eight images of genitalia show evidence of rubbing, such as that on fol. 109r, suggesting at least one or more previous readers were attracted to or concerned about these images.[201]

A different approach to the representation of cross-dressing characters and nakedness is taken by the Wavrin Master, who illustrated the *Comte d'Artois* in BnF fr. 11610. Instead of presenting the body in detail and foregrounding sexual characteristics in an image, as seen in figures fifteen and sixteen, the Wavrin Master offers indeterminacy to the viewer. In miniatures showing the naked or partially naked characters of the Count and the Countess/Phlipot, the artist does not add detail to their bodies, but sexual characteristics are hinted at through shapes instead of being clearly painted. Consequently, the viewer is unable to identify characters through their physical body alone. The Wavrin Master's stylized way of representing human figures allows for representations that are less clearly gendered and therefore is able to showcase Phlipot's non-normative gender presentation.

In addition to visual depictions of a character's body, clothing is one of the more common ways in which artists signalled identities to the viewer. Cross-dressing characters therefore tend to be shown in garments appropriate to their cross-dressed identity.[202] However, artists sometimes took different approaches to making a cross-dressed character recognisable to the reader, and the choices made also reveal how the artists portrayed gender through clothing and other gendered signifiers. The artist of

---

[201] Lagorgette, 'Staging Transgression through Text and Image', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon, p. 101. Such wear is not uncommon in medieval manuscripts, particularly those including devotional material; for examples of such use, see Kathryn M. Rudy, 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals They Reveal', *The Electronic British Library Journal*, 2011 <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/articles.html> (accessed 25 February 2017).

[202] Grayson, 'Disruptive Disguises', p. 140.

HLH, MS 2252 maintained Marte's hairstyle across their cross-dressed and non-cross-dressed identities (figs seventeen and eighteen). Their long, loose blond hair is uncovered and this style, which was typical of unmarried women in romances, may have been used to signal Marte's assigned gender whilst cross-dressed.[203] Other artists made the cross-dressing characters recognizable by differentiating them visually from other similarly dressed figures. For example, the artist of BnF, MS fr. 93, a fifteenth-century manuscript of *Cassidorus*, illustrated the hermits Helcanor and Ydoine with the same clothing, but Helcanor's hair is covered whereas Ydoine has long hair and a beard (fig. nineteen). The reader's interpretations of these different choices and signifiers will influence how the reader genders the characters. This in turn may affect how they understand the characters' identity and behaviour and respond to different events in the narrative.

A contrasting approach was taken by the artist of Hunter, MS 252 in their portrayal of tale twenty-six and the character of Katherine/Conrard on fol. 54r (fig. twenty) because the artist foregrounded ambiguity over making the characters recognisable. The artist portrayed the cross-dressing character, their lover, and their uncle in similar dress thereby making the figures, and the image, ambiguous. In each of the three scenes included in the single miniature, two figures are presented: Katherine and Gerard, Conrard and Gerard, and Conrard and Conrard's uncle. Each of the sets of two figures are dressed very similarly, with only small differences in gendered clothing in the left-hand scene, which shows Katherine and Gerard embracing: Katherine wears a headdress whereas Gerard's hair is uncovered, but both wear long-sleeved floor-length robes. In the central and right-hand scenes there is no difference in the appearance of the two figures. In the central scene, the narrative context helps the reader to identify

---

[203] Long, uncovered hair was also associated with virginity as well as promiscuity. For more on the symbolism of this hairstyle; see Roberta Milliken, *Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), pp. 171–77.

Conrard as the standing figure, as this shows the scene in which Conrard hides their letter to Gerard in Gerard's clothing. However, it is not possible to make such identifications for the right-hand scene because both figures have the same hairstyle and clothing, and the artist increases the ambiguity of the figures by painting them from behind and not showing their faces. In portraying Conrard as identical to Gerard and the uncle, the artist explores and expresses the ambiguity shown by cross-dressing character. Instead of differentiating between the figures to make their identities clear, the artist's depiction requires the reader to contemplate each figure and determine for themselves which figure represents which character.

The manuscript miniatures presenting cross-dressing episodes are a rich source of information on how such characters and non-normative gender practices were portrayed visually. Although there are cross-dressing characters who are never or rarely depicted as such, like Licorus from *Cassidorus* or Pelagien of Antioch, an analysis of miniatures shows that artists did explore this motif and that it was more common than not for cross-dressing characters to be shown in their adopted identity. Although the illustrated manuscripts date from the mid-fourteenth to late fifteenth centuries, there are no obvious changes over time in the types of images included. The main differences between representations are that some manuscripts include more detailed miniatures and follow the narrative more closely than others do, which often appears to be the result of a manuscript being more expensively produced or the artist having a greater familiarity with the text.

II.3: Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that gender was not viewed or understood in the same way across the literary corpus and that some texts explored non-normative gender expressions and identities whilst others conceptualized characters and their gender within a binary framework. This chapter has revealed that questions of why a character

cross-dresses and for what duration are important when trying to differentiate between groups of cross-dressing characters. This chapter set out a new way to classify cross-dressing characters, explaining that they can be separated into four groups and presenting how each group addresses issues of gender. For example, this chapter argued that characters who cross-dress permanently and for a personal reason often reveal transgender identities or, at the very least, they raise more issues about gender identity. This approach offers a new framework for understanding and interpreting different uses of the cross-dressing motif. It is less easy to group the visual representations of cross-dressing characters. The way in which different texts and characters are portrayed varies depending on the artist and how they chose to approach the material, with some artists, like the Wavrin Master, playing with ideas of identity and ambiguity more so than others. However, from the analysis presented in this chapter, the observation can be made that, for the manuscripts in this corpus, most artists did not obscure cross-dressing, but rather tended to portray characters in the clothing associated with their cross-dressed identity.

Chapter III: Dress and Status

One way in which we identify individuals is through their physical appearance. Social groups are often associated with specific clothing, hairstyles, and other visual signifiers as well as with non-physical attributes, such as language and customs. The importance of appearance for the purpose of recognition is emphasised in medieval French literature. A common trope in medieval literature is the character who, by changing dress, their coat of arms or colours, becomes completely unrecognisable to all who know them.[204] This is frequently the case in texts featuring cross-dressing as there are very few instances of cross-dressing characters who are recognised in their new identity by family or friends.[205]

An interest in dress and appearance is not limited to medieval literature. The Church, governments, chroniclers, and theologians often discussed dress, status, and identity, revealing a range of different concerns. A wealth of information about contemporary anxieties regarding dress can be gained from an examination of legal discussions and regulations. Dress was debated in many forums; this chapter focusses on the regulation of clothing in canon and sumptuary law. There are differences of emphasis in secular and canon law, but these regulations share a common concern regarding the visual identification of social groups and dressing appropriately for one's status or rank.

This chapter examines the contemporary legal and social debates on dress and status showing how they are discussed in and often reinforced by texts including the

---

[204] For discussions on chivalric incognito, identity, and naming; see, Susan Crane, 'Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry', in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. by F.R.P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 63–79; Morgan Dickson, 'Verbal and Visual Disguise: Society and Identity in Some Twelfth-Century Texts', in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. by Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 41–54; Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), pp. 36–40.

[205] One example is in *Tristan de Nanteuil*. Blanchandine/Blanchandin is recognised by an acquaintance but they are able to convince him otherwise.

cross-dressing motif, which, by their nature, have an interest in questions of dress and identity. Sarah-Grace Heller has previously taken this approach in her discussion of the *Roman de la Rose* and French sumptuary laws. She argues that reading the *Rose* against the context of sumptuary legislation can shed new light on its characters, like Mal Marié and Faus Semblant, and can reveal other social issues which are subject to the texts' satirical commentary.[206] This chapter builds upon Heller's work by discussing a larger corpus of regulations than those which she looked at, examining both secular and canon law, to uncover the connections between literature and law on dress. The chapter consists of two sections. The first presents the way dress was regulated by ecumenical councils and sumptuary laws as well as discussing contemporary moral commentaries on clothing. The second section focusses on how the concerns discussed in section one regarding dress and status are engaged with in texts from this corpus of tales featuring the cross-dressing motif.

III.1: The Regulation of Dress

The association of certain garments or items with specific social groups is demonstrated in contemporary legal discourse. Ecumenical councils and sumptuary laws often sought to restrict certain items of clothing, and the dress of certain social groups, such as the clergy, was subject to strict regulations. By focussing on conciliar canons and sumptuary ordinances issued by French monarchs, one can compare the types of behaviours that were regulated and the social groups that were of most concern to ecclesiastical and secular law-makers. Analysis of changes in law, in terms of the types of clothing regulated, can also reveal the issues that were of particular relevance at different moments in time. The wording of laws can also be significant when, as is especially common in canon law, explanations are given of why certain clothing or behaviours are being regulated and the moral and legal implications of transgressing

---

[206] Heller, pp. 311–48.

them. Although these laws on clothing do not address the question of cross-dressing directly, they are important to our understanding of the narratives containing the motif. This is because, even though they were issued by different authorities and had different emphases, they all demonstrate anxieties about dress, status, and identification. As will be discussed in section III.2, such concerns are also frequently expressed through cross-dressing characters, their behaviours, and relationships. This chapter begins with an examination of the contemporary legal context discourse around dress in order to aid the later discussion of dress and the cross-dressing motif.

III.1.1: Ecumenical Councils: Lateran II, Lateran IV, Vienne, and Constance

Ecclesiastical rulings on dress could come from many different sources, such as local synods or the large ecumenical councils. There are four ecumenical councils from this period that included canons on dress: Lateran II (1139), Lateran IV (1215), the Council of Vienne (1311–12), and the Council of Constance (1414–18). Naturally, these councils are most concerned with the dress of the clergy and those in religious orders. An examination of these canons demonstrates that these councils had a significant interest in visible signifiers of identity for a number of reasons. Being clearly recognisable by one's dress also had important legal consequences because one's status, whether lay or clerical, affected the type of court an individual was tried in. This is because, regardless of the crime, anyone with clerical status had to be tried in an ecclesiastical court. As a consequence, the clergy, by having their legal status reflected in their appearance, could ensure that they avoided secular legal recourse for crimes committed.[207] With some crimes, this could mean receiving a less severe punishment. For instance with the crime of murder, a member of the clergy might lose their clerical

---

[207] The connection between clothing and the Church's protection is made in several synodal statutes. Statute forty-nine from the synod de l'Ouest and statute two from the 1265 Pentecostal synod in Angers, which cover the dress of the clergy and monastic oblates respectively, indicate that individuals must conform to the rules on dress to receive the Church's protection; see Pontal, I, 168; no. 49; Avril, III, 88; no. 2.

status in punishment whereas a layperson tried in a secular court might be sentenced to death.[208] Another issue often at the forefront of conciliar legislation was the adoption of secular dress and habits, which reveals the importance of differentiation between social groups through both dress and behaviour as well as the Church's wish for the clergy to act appropriately and for their religious devotion to be reflected in their dress and behaviour.

The clergy and their dress had been a topic of discussion for the Church since the eleventh century.[209] At Lateran II (1139), modesty in dress was explicitly linked to holiness. Canon four states that bishops and the clergy should set a good example for the community: 'nec in superfluitate, scissura aut colore vestium nec in tonsura, intuentium, quorum forma et exemplum esse debent, offendant aspectum, sed potius, quae eos deceat, sanctitatem prae se ferant'.[210] This concern with modesty and excess is reflected in the canons of later councils, which go into much greater detail, prohibiting specific colours and styles. In Lateran IV, the context in which one finds regulations on dress is revealing. They are included in canon sixteen, which deals more generally with the clergy adopting a secular lifestyle in their appearance and their pastimes. That such entertainments or garments are *secular* is significant. The first line of the canon is explicit about this: 'Clerici officia vel commercia saecularia non exerceant, maxime inhonesta'.[211] This canon therefore places a moral judgment on certain activities, such as going to taverns, watching entertainers, and playing games. Similar criticisms are also found in canons fifteen and seventeen. Canon fifteen discusses clerical drunkenness

---

[208] F. Donald Logan, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p. 166.
[209] Julia Barrow, 'Clergy and IV Lateran', in *The Fourth Lateran Council: Institutional Reform and Spiritual Renewal: Proceedings of the Conference Marking the Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Council, Organized by the Pontificio Comitato Di Scienze Storiche (Rome, 15–17 October 2015)*, ed. by Gert Melville and Johannes Helmrath (Affalterbach: Didymos-Verlag, 2017), pp. 125–36 (p. 133).
[210] Tanner, I, 197, 'Let them give no offence in the sight of those for whom they ought to be a model and example, by the excess, cut or colour of their clothes, nor with regard to the tonsure, but, rather, as is fitting for them, let them exhibit holiness'.
[211] Ibid., I, 243, 'Clerics should not practice a calling or business of a secular nature, especially those that are dishonourable'.

and gluttony as well as prohibiting hunting, noting that 'ebrietas et mentis inducat exilium et libidinis provocet incentivum', and canon seventeen condemns those who spend time feasting, leading them to neglect their duties.[212] Canon seventeen also criticises clerics who have an interest in secular society, which again attempts to separate the clergy and their behaviour from that of the laity.[213] This is not a problem specific to the thirteenth century; indeed, in the eleventh century, the Gregorian reform was concerned with the separation of the clergy and the laity, both in terms of power and authority as well as behaviour.[214] This continued interest in regulating clerical activity and secular interests is reflected in many other conciliar decrees. For example, one of the three aims of the Council of Constance (1414–18) was to reform the church, with particular emphasis on clerics' morality, their qualifications, and their performance of duties.[215] In session forty-three (21 March 1418), it is noted that the clergy share secular interests and dress: they 'cupiunt laicis conformari et quidquid mente gerunt, habitu profitentur'.[216] This not only serves to criticise the clothing choices of the clergy but also their dedication to their role. If their outward appearance reflects their thoughts, this would suggest that they are preoccupied with worldly concerns, rather than with religious ones.

Of the seventy canons that were published from Lateran IV (1215), twenty-two were concerned with the clergy. These canons covered a range of issues from clerical education to prohibiting drunkenness.[217] Canon sixteen from Lateran IV prohibits garments and accessories that are overly ornate, such as belts with silver or gold decoration, but clothing in red and green and shoes with pointed toes are also

---

[212] Tanner, I, 242, 'Obscures the intellect and stirs up lust'.
[213] Ibid., I, 243.
[214] Jacques Le Goff, *The Birth of Europe* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), p. 60.
[215] Tanner, I, 404; Phillip H. Stump, *The Reforms of the Council of Constance, 1414–1418* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 139. The other two aims were to end the papal schism and to eradicate heresies.
[216] Tanner, I, 449, 'They seek to conform to the laity and they exhibit outwardly in their dress whatever they are thinking in their minds'.
[217] Barrow, p. 125.

forbidden.[218] The canon also states 'Clausa deferant desuper indumenta, nimia brevitate vel longitudine non notanda'; concern about the length of robes is something which was a common point of anxiety for centuries of lawmakers, moralists, and chroniclers alike.[219] Over the course of the Middle Ages, different lengths of garments were popular in lay society. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries, laymen began to wear long, flowing garments.[220] Around 1340, there was a move in secular dress from long robes to short, fitted, garments, but by the turn of the fifteenth century, clothing styles shifted again with the short tunics and *pourpoint*, a quilted jacket, being replaced by the *houppelande*, a long outer garment with sleeves.[221] As canons frequently note that the clergy were influenced by lay practices and dress, it is understandable that conciliar canons addressing clerical clothing would recognise changes in lay clothing and styles. This would ensure laws reflected contemporary practice and therefore regulate the clergy effectively as well as more generally promote moderation over excess in dress.

The issues raised on clerical dress and behaviour at Lateran IV are also reflected in synodal statutes, with similar regulations being issued to tackle inappropriate dress and activities. The similarities in content are unsurprising because one of the primary functions of diocesan synods was to inform the local clergy of changes in canon law and to outline new regulations arising from regional and ecumenical councils.[222] The types of clothing, hairstyles, and activities that were deemed acceptable are similar across different dioceses and decades. One such example is the issue that priests should be (but

---

[218] Tanner, I, 243.
[219] Ibid., I, 243, 'Their outer garments should be closed and neither too short nor too long'.
[220] Henri Platelle, 'Le problème du scandale: les nouvelles modes masculines aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 53.4 (1975), 1071–96 (p. 1077).
[221] Odile Blanc, *Parades et parures: l'invention du corps de mode à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), p. 36; Andrea Denny-Brown, 'Rips and Slits: The Torn Garment and the Medieval Self', in *Clothing Culture, 1350–1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 223–37 (p. 224).
[222] Pontal, I, LXI.

were not) wearing a 'capa clausa';[223] this is discussed at synods like those held at Albi

(1230; no. 10), Bordeaux (1234; no. 64), Rouen (1230–37; no. 22), and Angers (1269;

no. 4).[224] That such problems are raised at various synods, across a broad geographical

area, suggests that transgressions of the rule on appropriate clothing were not localised

but were, in fact, widespread issues.

One aspect of synodal statutes on clerical dress that is significant for this chapter

is how the statutes justify the rulings. The aforementioned statute from Bordeaux (1234)

prohibits priests from wearing copes that are not closed at the front and states that 'non

enim debet esse nec in actu nec in habitu populus ut sacerdos'.[225] It stresses that there

ought to be distinctions between priests and the populace and that these should be both

behavioural and visual. Many other statutes also reinforce the importance of visual

distinctions. One statute focussed on tonsure from Rouen (1230–37) underlines, by

using the adverb 'maxime' ('especially'), that visual differentiation was essential: 'Cum

in tonsura et habitu maxime differre debeant a laicis sacerdotes'.[226] A slightly later

statute from the Pentecostal synod 1265 at Angers outlines expected behaviour and

again prescribes certain aspects of appropriate clerical appearance.[227] This statute begins

by noting the difficulty of distinguishing between different social groups, using the

example of trying to recognise a freeman from a serf, and implies in the third clause that

there is value in having the clergy being visually differentiated from the laity: 'Cum

liber a servo difficile discernatur, sic et clericus a layco, nisi per statum et habitum

---

[223] A 'capa clausa' or a cope is 'a semi-circular, or D-shaped, outer garment. The straight side is draped round the neck and hangs open down the front where it is clasped by a short strip of embroidery or a metal brooch called a morse' (Gale Owen-Crocker, 'Cope', ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, 2012).

[224] *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle précédés de l'historique du synode diocésain depuis ses origines: Les statuts de 1230 à 1260*, ed. by Odette Pontal, 12 vols (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1983), II, 10; 72–74; 134; Avril, III, 100.

[225] Pontal, II, 74 (no. 64), 'ni dans son comportement ni dans son habillement, le prêtre ne doit être comme le peuple' (Pontal, p. 75).

[226] Pontal., II, 134 (no. 21), 'Alors que les prêtres doivent se distinguer des laïcs particulièrement pas la tonsure et par l'habillement' (Pontal, p. 135).

[227] Avril, III, 88, (no. 2).

distinguatur'.[228] These statutes show how the medieval Church recognised the difficulty of identifying social groups at the same time as it stressed the importance of making such distinctions. The statutes about clerical dress and behaviour admonish those who make such identifications even harder by not abiding by the rules and wearing secular clothing and hairstyles.

The Council of Vienne (1311–12) discusses in turn the dress and behaviour of the clergy, monks, and nuns. Canons eight and nine concern the clergy. Canon nine focusses on dress and specifies forbidden items, but also has two broader prescriptions: first, the clergy must be differentiated from the laity visually and, second, in public the clergy must wear only clerical dress.[229] Although the moral reasons for dressing appropriately are mentioned, that 'quos oportet per decentiam habitus extrinseci morum intrinsecam honestam ostendere', of particular concern is that the clergy are wearing prohibited dress in public.[230] It is stressed five times that prohibited garments should not be worn in public, which indicates that there was a concern that an individual's clerical identity must be evident for others. It was important that the clergy were easily recognisable in public so that they could be identified by the public when required to fulfil their duties, for example to administer the Last Rites, but the concern was more general that the clergy's dress should, at all times, reflect their status and inner disposition. Requiring the clergy to demonstrate their status through dress also had potentially significant disadvantages for the Church when it came to inappropriate behaviour and scandal. The question of scandal was debated by both theologians and canonists during the Middle Ages with Raymond of Peñafort (1175–1275) defining it in

---

[228] Avril., III, 88, (no. 2), 'De la vie et de l'honnêté des clercs. De même que l'homme libre ne distingue difficilement du serf, ainsi en est-il du clerc et du laïc, à moins que le clerc ne se sépare du laïc par l'état et par l'habit' (Avril, p. 89).

[229] This canon specifies various garments and styles that were forbidden and then allocates a specific punishment depending on whether the individual has a benefice: it forbids striped and variegated clothes, linen caps, short tunics edged with fur, and builds upon canon sixteen from Lateran IV by prohibiting red and green chequered boots (Tanner, I, 365).

[230] Tanner, I, 365, 'outward garb should reveal their inner integrity'.

his *Summa de Paenitentia* (1222–25) as something, be it a word, sign or action, that invites somebody to commit a mortal sin.[231] Although canonists sought to avoid public scandal, discussions of the subject were often focussed on managing the consequences, rather than the scandal itself.[232] However, canon eight and twenty-two from Vienne and fifteen and seventeen from Lateran IV have a different emphasis.[233] They pay more attention to stopping the clergy from behaving in an inappropriate, secular manner, than presenting the potential consequences for the social order.

Similar concerns about inappropriate clothing and behaviour are also found in canons that regulate those in religious orders, but only the Council of Vienne specifically addressed the clothing and actions of monks (decree fourteen), nuns (decree fifteen), and friars (decree thirty-eight). Decree thirty-eight regulates all aspects of the life of a friar, including outlining the type and number of garments that are appropriate for a friar to preserve the vow of poverty.[234] This is a lengthy and comprehensive decree, especially in comparison with decree fifteen (on nuns). This results from the longstanding debates between different factions of the Franciscan order regarding the behaviour and standard of living of certain members of the order.[235] The Spiritual faction campaigned for greater adherence to the rule and to their vow of poverty, particularly in relation to dress; however, their behaviour was often criticised by other members who stated that they used their 'vile' clothing as a way to condemn the behaviour of other members of the order or show off their poverty.[236] Clement V, in *Exivi de paradiso* on 6 May 1312, required friars to have no more than one tunic with a hood, and another without; not to wear shoes; not to ride unless necessary; and to dress

---

[231] Corinne Leveleux-Teixeira, 'Le droit canonique médiéval et l'horreur du scandale', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 25 (2013), 193–211 (p. 198).
[232] Leveleux-Teixeira, p. 196.
[233] Tanner, I, 242–43; 243; 364–65; 378.
[234] Tanner, I, 396.
[235] David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 26.
[236] Ibid., p. 120.

in cheap clothes.[237] These were not new regulations, but echoed the Franciscan Rule. They were reiterated again in decree thirty-eight from the Council of Vienne, which states that the friars are obliged to adhere to these rulings.[238] This decree expresses the importance of the vow of poverty in relation to dress, but notes that some aspects of dress, like the quality of fabrics, should be left to the discretion of leaders.[239]

Decree fifteen rules that convents of nuns should be visited once a year to ensure that all are adhering to dress and behaviour codes. As with the clergy, there was a worry that the nuns were participating in secular entertainments and dressing in lay fashions: for example, attending dances and banquets, and wearing silk and fur.[240] Decree fifteen stresses that such behaviour is incompatible with the religious life and nuns should dedicate themselves to God. Decree fourteen focusses on monks and covers a wide range of issues from confession to travel. It begins with a reference to the 'black monks' of the Benedictine order: 'Ne in agro dominico, sacra videlicit monachorum nigrorum religione, indecorum aliquid obrepat'.[241] Although there is no further discussion of the behaviour of the Benedictine order specifically in this decree, it is important to note that during the Council of Vienne the order was targeted by the Dominicans for their behaviour and for not acting according to their Rule.[242] This reveals widespread concerns about inappropriate behaviour. The first issue tackled in this decree is monastic dress, including regulations about colours, styles, and fabrics. As with the regulation of clerical dress in Lateran IV, decorated belts, saddles, and bridles are prohibited, and habits should not be slit or have sewn or buttoned sleeves, which would make the sleeves sit close to the arms.[243] In decree fourteen, dress is not solely

---

[237] Burr, p. 147.
[238] Tanner, I, 394.
[239] Ibid., I, 396.
[240] Ibid., I, 373.
[241] Ibid., I, 370, 'That nothing unbecoming or corrupt find its way into that field of the Lord, namely the sacred order of the black monks'.
[242] Julian M. Luxford, *The Art and Architecture of English Benedictine Monasteries, 1300–1540: A Patronage History* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), p. 140.
[243] Tanner, I, 370.

determined by the individual's status as a monk but also by the size of the monastery and his role within it. For example, in a monastery with at least twelve monks the superiors are permitted to wear a frock, a habit with long sleeves, inside the monastery, but in smaller communities this is replaced by a closed cowl.[244] This decree's discussion of monastic dress focusses more on prescribing exactly what types of garments should be worn, while the decrees on nuns and the clergy outline items that were prohibited. Despite this difference in emphasis, this decree shows a similar desire to limit excess and to ensure that social groups were dressing and behaving appropriately for their position in society.

From Lateran II to the Council of Constance, ecumenical councils regulated the clergy, their dress, and behaviour, with the aim of reconciling physical appearance, inner integrity, and religious devotion. The key issues that arise from an examination of these conciliar rulings are appearance in public, religious individuals adopting lay styles, and non-adherence to ecclesiastical rules. These rules also respond to contemporary debates; for example, the Council of Vienne's canon on friars explicitly addresses the ongoing issues in the Franciscan order and provides rules outlining expected behaviour and adherence to Franciscan values. Differentiation between social groups, particularly in public spaces, was clearly of importance to the Church during this period as wearing lay fashions could blur the visible boundaries between the religious and laity. However, the main area of concern appears to be that the clergy, monks, and nuns were appropriating dress unsuitable for their position and therefore were behaving in a way that did not properly demonstrate their religious devotion and legal status. Such anxiety about the potential disparity between appearance and

---

[244] Tanner, I, 370; The English sumptuary statute of 1363 (c. 13) indicates that monastic superiors were permitted better quality clothing (Martin Heale, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 152).

behaviour is not only expressed in Church regulations, but, as is shown in section III.2, is also frequently found in this literary corpus.

III.1.2: The Sumptuary Laws of 1279 and 1294

Whilst ecumenical councils concentrated on the dress and actions of the clergy and those in monastic orders, sumptuary laws dealt with a wider range of social groups. Sumptuary laws offer detailed descriptions of the permitted dress for certain social groups and professions, and an examination of sumptuary material can improve our understanding of the restrictions on secular dress and issues that were of particular interest to secular administration and monarchs. Certain towns and countries have a rich history of sumptuary legislation; for example, a large proportion of extant laws come from city-states and towns in Italy and Germany. There are significantly fewer sumptuary laws in this period from France; however, the French laws are very detailed and have precise guidelines for the dress of a large number of social groups.

This section will not consider in depth the English sumptuary laws, passed by King Edward III (1312–77) in 1336–37 and 1363, and King Edward IV (1442–83) in 1463, but the introductory statement of the 1463 statute gives several reasons for passing laws on dress. The prologue reads: men and women 'have worn and daily do wear excessive and inordinate Array and Apparel to the great displeasure of God, and impoverishing of this Realm' and that people should dress 'only according to their Degrees'.[245] This introduction reveals three functions of sumptuary laws: to protect the economy, to control excess, and to create a stable social hierarchy. Diane Owen Hughes argues, in relation to sumptuary legislation in mid-fifteenth-century Italy, that sumptuary laws were occasionally protectionist as governments attempted to control the import of cloth and garments from outside the area to protect local businesses, but

---

[245] Statutes of the Realm, 1463 c. 5.

generally this was not the case.[246] There is some evidence of protectionism in English laws as sumptuary laws are found in close proximity to regulations on the import and export of textiles: in the Acts of 1336–37, canon four decrees who can wear fur and the preceding three canons respectively forbid the export of wool, the use of foreign cloth, and the importing of cloth from elsewhere.[247] Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli argues that the political functions of sumptuary laws may be more significant, noting that legislators 'privilege the symbolic and social significance of clothing: its role in maintaining and reinforcing individual and collective identities as well as distinctions between social groups'.[248] The evidence from French sumptuary law would suggest that this was indeed the case as lawmakers appear to be particularly concerned with using clothing to differentiate between social groups.

The French laws date from 1279 and 1294 and were put in place by Kings Philippe III (1245–85) and Philippe IV (1268–1314).[249] These laws separate the population into distinct social groups and stipulate how many robes an individual could own according to their social status and income.[250] The 1279 laws split the populace into fourteen categories, but this was increased to thirty-two categories in 1294.[251] At first glance, the French laws are concerned with controlling individual excess as they limited an individual's spending power on dress according to set guidelines. Frédérique Lachaud argues that the 1279 laws were driven solely by economic concerns.[252]

---

[246] Diane Owens Hughes, 'Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. by John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 69–99 (pp. 77–78).

[247] Statutes of the Realm, 1336–37, c. 1–4.

[248] Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, 'Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 39.3 (2009), 597–617 (p. 599).

[249] Jourdain, Decrusy, and Isambert, *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises: depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la révolution de 1789* (Paris: L'imprimerie de Et Imbert), II; Henri Duplès-Agier, 'Ordonnance somptuaire inédite de Philippe le Hardi', *Bibliothèque de l'école des chartes*, 15 (1854), 176–81.

[250] Robe here means the collection of several garments that together create an outfit referred to as a robe.

[251] Heller, p. 329.

[252] Frédérique Lachaud, 'Dress and Social Status in England before the Sumptuary Laws', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 105–23 (p. 107).

Lachaud states that they were issued because of increased military activity and that the laws did not just regulate spending on dress but also on food and horses.[253] Lachaud does consider the 1294 law to be more focussed on social control because the ordinances state that inappropriate clothing should be discarded, thereby indicating that economic concerns were not at the forefront of these laws.[254] However, considering that the 1279 and 1294 laws are similar in their approach – both separate the population into ranks and allocate numbers of robes according to position and income – this would suggest that both sets of sumptuary laws reveal a desire for social control and a stable social hierarchy.

This hierarchy is secured by having a strict allocation of robes and fabrics according to social position, with individuals being punished if they attempted to imitate their social superiors. This restricts social mobility as one must have both the appropriate income and social rank in order to be afforded the right to particular fabrics. It would therefore be more difficult to appear of a higher social status without having the corresponding rank and wealth. This view is supported by Sarah Grace Heller who argues that sumptuary laws indicate desires and threats: the desire for social mobility or increased status which thereby threatens to disrupt the established social order.[255] Heller also notes that class identity is complex, as income and social rank did not necessarily coincide: being a member of the nobility did not automatically guarantee a large income.[256] The use of both income and status in the French laws does indicate an awareness of the potential disparity between position and income, and, as a result, these laws utilise both criteria to ensure a stable social hierarchy. There is, however, a hierarchy of importance: the wording of these laws places greater emphasis on social position. The stipulations tend to begin with the rank and income comes later in the

---

[253] Lachaud, p. 107.
[254] Ibid., p. 107.
[255] Heller, p. 312.
[256] Ibid., pp. 312–13.

statement: for example, 'Li duc, li comte, li baron de six mille livres de terre, ou de plus, pourront faire quatre robes par an, et non plus, et les femmes autant' (1294, 309.4).[257] It is also true that income requirements are not always included; for the 1294 laws only five of twenty-six social groups are associated with an income, which is a change from the 1279 law where all ranks had an annual income attached to them.[258] This indicates that for the 1294 ordinance rank was privileged over income in the clothing allocation.

Most sumptuary laws describe specific garments and materials that a certain social group could wear but French laws were more focussed on matching income and rank to appearance.[259] In this way, the French rulings do not provide much information about changes in styles and cuts of garment, yet they do reveal the prices of fabric. This is because the laws of 1279 and 1294 specify the amount an individual was permitted to spend per *aune* of fabric. An *aune* was a Parisian measurement that equates to approximately a yard.[260] The price per *aune* criterion reveals that, as one might expect, individuals of a higher social status could purchase more expensive, richer fabrics. Where the French legislation placed greater emphasis on cost, laws from other regions and countries regulated fabric; for example, English statutes provided detailed lists of fabrics permitted per group; a law from Montpellier in 1273 restricted the use of silk by ladies, and in early modern Siena, prostitutes were forbidden from wearing dresses made from gold cloth.[261]

---

[257] Jourdain, Decrusy, and Isambert, II, 698 (1294; 309.4).

[258] Ibid., II, 697–99. Only items 4 (dukes, counts, barons), 7 (knights), 12 (damoiselle), 25 (bourgois/e), and 26 (bourgois/e) mention an income; Duplès-Agier, pp. 179–80.

[259] There is some discussion of fabrics that are prohibited for certain ranks in both the 1279 and 1294 laws. For example, the 1279 and 1294 ordinances state that the bourgeois could not wear squirrel fur (ermine was also added to the list in the 1294 law). The 1294 law also prohibits the clergy from wearing those types of fur (Jourdain, Decrusy, and Isambert, II, 697–98; Duplès-Agier, p. 179).

[260] Heller, p. 317.

[261] Hughes, 'Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. by John Bossy, p. 92.

Sumptuary laws were not static as their emphases altered over time. The 1294 French laws were stricter than that of 1279 with fewer robes being permitted per social position, the minimum income increased by twenty percent, and the fines increased, as well as there being an increase of different types of social status from fourteen to thirty-two.[262] The large number of different social positions found in these sumptuary laws highlights the complexity of the social hierarchy, demonstrating that during the late Middle Ages French society was structured by status, which was created by a combination of rank and profession as well as income. These laws illustrate that issues of social mobility and the differentiation of social groups were important, revealing a desire to stabilise the social hierarchy through the restriction of garments and fabrics according to social position. What is evident is that sumptuary legislation continued to be passed, often becoming more comprehensive or stricter over the centuries. This suggests, therefore, that these rulings did not effectively change the clothing habits of the population and that law-makers remained concerned that individuals were continuing to dress outside their social group. As such, French sumptuary laws provide important context for considering medieval narratives that question the possibility of social mobility and its consequences.

III.1.3: Chronicling Changes in Dress

Medieval writers often discussed changing clothing styles, commenting on and condemning those that they deemed inappropriate. Material excess and pride were frequently criticised, and clothing was often used as a symbol of this. Although some wrote to defend the clothing of particular social groups, most criticised or satirised changes in fashion and the extravagant dress of the laity and the clergy. The writings of chroniclers can help to chart reaction to changes in dress, but, as with ecumenical council canons, it is important to remember that the chroniclers often had clerical

---

[262] Heller, p. 341.

backgrounds and so we need to take account of any bias that might result from this. This section will focus on writers of history who often combine reports of and commentaries on past events, as highlighted by William Malmesbury (c. 1095–c. 1143) who states that 'History (*historia*) adds flavor to moral instruction by imparting a pleasurable knowledge of past events, spurring the reader by the accumulation of examples to follow the good and shun the bad'.[263] Histories, therefore, offer information on how contemporary writers reacted to changes in fashion and style and viewed the potential moral impact of these changes.

Clerical response to lay dress did change over time. By examining chronicles from different periods, one can see that styles previously derided became the preferred modes of dress. For example, Orderic Vitalis (1075–c. 1142), writing in twelfth-century Normandy, discusses the popular styles of dress in the late eleventh century, wherein he describes men who wore their hair long and dressed in the long, flowing garments, as effeminate.[264] He made direct comparisons between the modest dress of the past and the new fashions, his criticism being that not only was the aim of such dress to attract women, but that such men were not interested in engaging in practical activities: 'they cover their hands with gloves too long and wide for doing anything useful, and (…) lose the free use of their limbs for active employment'.[265] After this long condemnation of long curled hair, clean-shaven men, and trailing clothes, he concludes: 'Their exterior appearance and dress thus exhibit what are their inward thoughts, and how little reverence they have for God'.[266] Orderic's comments on the suitability of fashionable men's clothing for 'doing anything useful' are about gendered behaviours as much as

---

[263] As quoted in Kirsten A. Fenton, 'Men and Masculinities in William of Malmesbury's Presentation of the Anglo-Norman Court', *Haskins Society Journal*, 23 (2014), 115–24 (pp. 118–19).
[264] Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, trans. by Thomas Forester, 3 vols (London: Bohn, 1854), II, 478.
[265] Ibid., II, 478.
[266] Ibid., II, 479.

they are about dress: Orderic condemns these men because they are not conforming to expectations of gendered activities or clothing.

Where Orderic Vitalis condemned long, flowing fashions, the chronicler John of Reading (d. 1368/69) and another anonymous monk from the same abbey presents them as appropriate and preferable to the tighter styles of clothing that became popular in the early fourteenth century.[267] This shows how responses to certain styles change: what was once condemned becomes over time normalised and respectable. In 1344, an anonymous monk, whose chronicle is then continued by John of Reading, criticises the new tighter, shorter and slashed garments and, like Orderic Vitalis, claims that they are 'impractical' and goes so far as to say these clothes 'make them look more like torturers, or even demons, than men'.[268] The tight dress of women and the fact that the clergy were adopting these secular fashions are also described with similar disdain; however, the criticisms are focussed on the lay man. John of Reading includes a similar passage in his entry for the year 1365, which also discusses male dress and the severe consequences for wearing such clothes. He draws the reader's attention to men who wear '*paltoks*, extremely short garments […] which failed to conceal their arses or their private parts', stating that such dress led them to neglect their responsibilities to their lords and their devotional practice: 'These misshapen and tight clothes did not allow them to kneel to God or to the saints, to their lords or to each other, to serve or do reverence without great discomfort'.[269]

Other writers made similar observations; for example, the writer of the *Eulogium*, a chronicle detailing the history of the world, notes in the entry for the year 1362 that men were wearing overly ornate accessories and clothing that the author

---

[267] John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading: et Anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346–67*, ed. by James Tait (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914), pp. 88–89.
[268] John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading*, pp. 88-89 as translated in *The Black Death*, ed. by Rosemary Horrox (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 131.
[269] John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading*, p. 167 as translated in Horrox, pp. 133–34.

viewed as feminine. William of Malmesbury made similar comments about men at the court of William Rufus (1056–1100).[270] The writer of the *Eulogium* also states that shoes with pointed toes were popular and that they made 'their wearers look more like minstrels and jesters than barons, like actors rather than knights, buffoons rather than esquires'.[271] These writers' criticisms were aimed at condemning clothing which was overly feminine in style and that which they believed made nobles appear foolish, revealing concerns about the nobility dressing appropriately and being guilty of the sins of pride and greed. The *Eulogium* entry for 1362, the anonymous entry for 1344 and John of Reading's entry for 1365 each link indecent dress with sinful behaviour and outbreaks of the plague, suggesting that these societies were being punished with disease by God for their sins. This highlights that dress and the variety of sinful behaviours that were connected with it were a significant concern for contemporary writers, showing that clothing was considered problematic in many circumstances as well as, but not limited to, the transgression of the social hierarchy.

Clerical discourses about dress reveal criticisms about changes in style and the following of fashions. The types of concerns indicated by writers range from issues of excess, desire, avarice, pride, vanity, and the imitation of others. These sources provide further evidence for the types of clothing worn by the laity, show the changes in styles, and how chroniclers responded to such changes. The common reaction amongst the chroniclers discussed here is one that privileges the traditions of the past whilst declaring contemporary behaviours as poor or indecent in comparison. It is also of note that chroniclers, like canonists, often draw connections between dress, behaviour, and morality, suggesting that adherence to new fashions leads to poor behaviour which reveals their lack of interest in committing virtuous deeds as well as a lack of

---

[270] Frank Scott Haydon, *Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis)*, 3 vols (London, 1858), III, 230–31; Horrox, p. 132; Fenton, pp. 115–16; 122.
[271] Haydon, III, 230–31 as translated in Horrox, p. 133.

appropriate religious devotion. Criticisms levelled by Orderic Vitalis, John of Reading, and the other writers discussed in this section are just some examples of the discourse surrounding dress in medieval chronicles and history writing. These indicate that clothing and morality were areas of concern addressed by writers, whether they are expressing their own or commonly held anxieties as well as by governing bodies like the Church.

III.2: Dress and Status in the Context of the Cross-Dressing Motif

The regulation and discussion of dress during the medieval period indicate that the Church and secular legislators had three main desires: for individuals to dress appropriately for their status; for a stable social hierarchy; and for social and legal status to be visually recognisable. These concerns are also found in contemporary literature containing the cross-dressing motif, many of which play with dress to explore notions of status and hierarchy. For many cross-dressing characters, their social status does not change as they adopt an identity of equal rank. However, the adoption of a higher-status identity is often portrayed negatively and as more transgressive than adopting a lower-status position, but both raise questions about social mobility, disrupting the hierarchy, and social status more generally. This section focusses on how texts from this corpus portray the act of cross-dressing itself before examining how narratives engage with questions of appearance and status. Given the important role clothing and identity play in this literary corpus, an exploration of the narratives shows how this motif was used to connect with the broader social and moral issues surrounding dress and status.

III.2.1: The Act of Cross-Dressing

Considering the importance of clothing to cross-dressing, it is surprising and of interest that the acts of dressing and undressing are rarely described or commented on by narrators. Few details tend to be provided about the garments that are adopted and descriptions of the moment of cross-dressing are generally brief. The reader learns that a

character, in this case Theodora/Theodore, 'print l'abit d'omme' (*Légende dorée*, p. 602), and occasionally the reader is told that a cross-dressing character, like Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, 'osta ses cheveulx' (p. 967). However, there are some examples of texts which place greater emphasis on the act of cross-dressing, or pay attention to the clothes worn by the cross-dressing character, such as *Meraugis de Portlesguez, La Saineresse*, and *Eufrosine*. These narratives are different in content and genre, and the longer descriptions of the act of cross-dressing have different emphases, showcasing the various functions that such descriptions can perform.

In *Meraugis de Portlesguez*, the eponymous Meraugis cross-dresses so as to escape from an island on which Meraugis and Gauvain have been imprisoned. Meraugis' cross-dressing is described by the narrator: 'Par foi, il prist / Trestote la robe a la dame, / E lors dou tot com une fame / Se vest e lace e empopine. / Plus acesmez q'une popine, / Descent aval de cel chastel / S'espee desoz son mantel' (*Meraugis de Portlesguez*, ll. 3299–3305). This level of detail is unusual; the narrator foregrounds specific actions, like lacing, that are rarely found in descriptions of cross-dressing. These additional details create a vivid mental picture of the act for the reader, but this description also serves to portray Meraugis' cross-dressing as exaggerated: Meraugis does not just look like a doll; they are 'plus acesmez q'une popine'. This is particularly stressed by the rhyme of 'empopine' and 'popine' on lines 3302 and 3303, which underlines the, potentially unnecessary, extent to which Meraugis has disguised themselves. Carine Giovénal offers a different interpretation of this description, suggesting that Meraugis appears androgynous as 'une *popine* encore asexuée'.[272] However, the vocabulary used in these lines seems to be emphasising Meraugis' typically feminine appearance, especially through the use of 'poupine' and 'empopine'. Keith Busby argues that Meraugis' cross-dressing is one of many comic devices used in

---

[272] Giovénal, p. 122.

this text that both function as entertainment and add new dimensions and elements to the characters.[273] The comic description of Meraugis' cross-dressing is taken further as the narrator foregrounds Meraugis' sword as a phallic symbol in the escape scene and interaction with the mariners, as discussed in chapter II.1.3. This scene functions not just to add comedy, but to reinforce Meraugis' maleness to the reader.[274] The description of Meraugis' dressing, coupled with the focus on the sword, underlines the exaggerated nature of Meraugis' cross-dressing. This approach means that the narrator does not give the reader the opportunity to question Meraugis' gender.

La Saineresse is another example of a text in which a character assigned male at birth cross-dresses; however, in this narrative, the cross-dressing is not described at all. Instead, the wife's lover enters the narrative already cross-dressed as a healer. This lack of description of the moment of cross-dressing does not mean that the cross-dressing itself has been overlooked; rather, the narrator provides detailed information about the character's dress:

> Mout cointe et noble, et sambloit plus
> Fame que homme la moitié,
> Vestu d'un chainsse deliié,
> D'une guimple bien safrenee;
> Et vint menant mout grant posnee:
> Ventouses porte a ventouser (*La Saineresse*, ll. 14–19).

The character's identity as a healer is indicated not by their dress but by the tools of the trade: the 'ventouses'. Their dress is typically feminine as the 'Saineresse' wears a delicate 'chainsse' – a long dress – and their noble appearance is emphasised through the association of rich, exotic saffron with the colour of the wimple.[275] The detailed

---

[273] Keith Busby, '"Plus acesmez qu'une popine": Male Cross-Dressing in Medieval French Narratives', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 45–59 (p. 48).

[274] Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, p. 290; Weisl, p. 116.

[275] For more on saffron's use as a dye for silk; see Sharon A. Farmer, *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris: Artisanal Migration, Technological Innovation, and Gendered Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), p. 64.

description of the dress draws the reader's attention to this aspect of the 'Saineresse's' appearance, reflecting the husband's unknowing gaze. Janet L. Solberg comments on how the combination of dress and medical instruments gives the 'Saineresse' authority.[276] The husband therefore reads this authority from the 'Saineresse's' appearance and does not question it, which leads to his being tricked. The narrator's interjection that the cross-dressing character 'sambloit plus / Fame que homme' is important as it reminds the reader of the importance of deception in this *fabliau*. The verb 'sambloit' stresses the difference between appearance and reality, a topic which is key to a number of texts that are discussed in section III.2.2 as well as in canon and sumptuary law on dress. This description focusses on the lover's clothing and other signifiers of identity so as to foreground that this is a double deception: not only is this figure cross-dressed, but they are also disguised as a healer in order to gain access to the household and have extra-marital intercourse with the wife.

The most detailed representation of the act of cross-dressing is found in *Eufrosine*.[277] Eufrosine/Esmarade changes clothing three times, first as a nun, then as a noble eunuch, and finally as a monk. This narrative spends a considerable length of time describing Esmarade's various identities as well as representing the saint's cross-dressing visually in the accompanying manuscript miniatures. The moment in which Esmarade dresses as a nun, with the help of a monk who also gives them the gender-neutral name Esmarade, is passed over quickly, 'A guise de nonain se fait tondre et vestir' (*Eufrosine,* l. 438).The narrator, however, spends significantly longer describing the move from nun to noble eunuch. Although Esmarade 'prent chevalerie' (l. 492) by

---

[276] Solberg, '"Who Was That Masked Man?"', in *The Stranger in Medieval* Society, ed. by F. R. P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden, p. 118.

[277] '*La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine*', ed. by Raymond T. Hill, *The Romanic Review*, 10.3 (1919), 191–223. Eufrosine/Esmarade does not want to marry the man chosen by their father and wants to enter the religious life. Esmarade considers becoming a nun but fears their father may find them. Consequently, Esmarade presents themselves as a eunuch to enter a monastery. The other monks are tempted by Esmarade's appearance. They spend the rest of their life separate from the other monks, and they also provide counsel to their father, who does not realise Esmarade is their child. After death, Esmarade's body is uncovered and the saint is celebrated as female.

adopting the dress of a noble, they wear lay courtly dress rather than armour, the latter

being common in other texts involving the cross-dressing motif. The text even

comments that they lack the key signifier of knightly identity: the narrator states that

Esmarade 'Bien senblaist chevalier, se çainte euïst espee.' (l. 505). As has been shown

in the example of *Meraugis de Portlesguez*, the sword is often used as a metonym for

maleness. The narrator's mention of the lack of sword may be a reminder of the saint's

assigned gender but it also could foreshadow the saint's declaration of the identity of a

eunuch (an individual assigned male at birth who has been castrated) that appears ten

lines later.

The description of Esmarade's dress is long and detailed, identifying the various

garments they exchange in order to appear as a noble:

> Osteit at la nonain la bele Eüfrosine:
> Chemise de cansil vestit por l'astamine;
> En liu de la cucule le peliçon d'ermine;
> Por le froc un mantel de purpre utremarine;
> Por le voilh une coiffe a ovre alixandrine;
> L'amite a or batue a color saphirine;
> Chaces d'un pale vert at chacié la mescine (*Eufrosine*, ll. 494–501).

The dress of a nun and of a knight are placed in opposition and the level of detail of

individual garments is unparalleled in any other text in this corpus. The description of

rich items of clothing, colours, and furs may seem out of place in a hagiographic

narrative, but saints' lives often describe such items in conversion narratives in order to

contrast the saint's life pre- and post-conversion. An excellent example of this is

Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch, whose wealth and luxurious life is described at length at

the start of the narrative and is then juxtaposed with their ascetic post-baptism life as a

hermit.[278] The long exchange of garments in *Eufrosine* stresses the difference between

---

[278] Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 963–66. Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch leads a life of riches and luxuries until they hear the Bishop Nonnus preaching after which they desire to be baptised. After baptism, Pelagien leaves Antioch to live as a hermit. Nonnus' deacon is travelling and Nonnus tells him to visit Pelagien. They meet but the deacon does not recognise them. The deacon returns later to find Pelagien dead. The saint's assigned sex is discovered whilst their body is prepared for burial and Pelagien is celebrated as female.

courtly, worldly society and the simplicity of the life, and dress, of a nun or monk. It also highlights that the renunciation of possessions and wealth was an important aspect of entering a religious order. Esmarade's appearance provides a contrast between the secular and the religious worlds; however, in this context their rich apparel serves less to condemn worldly concerns, as in the life of Pelagien of Antioch, instead stressing their nobility and social status. The description of this exchange of religious dress for luxurious, secular clothing helps to remind the reader of Esmarade's social status. Esmarade, who was born into the nobility, dresses as a nun before returning briefly to their previous secular social position, albeit dressed in clothing typically associated with men, before again renouncing this status for the religious life. This serves to stress Esmarade's innate nobility but also their religious devotion. From the lengthy description of Esmarade's move from nun to noble, one might expect that the change from knight to monk would be similarly treated; however, this is not given the same attention, being described simply as: 'L'abes li at livrez dras de religion' (l. 550) and 'L'abes l'at coroné et vestut de l'abit' (l. 554). This description reflects the norms of entry into the monastic life as Esmarade is dressed and tonsured, for a second time in the text, by the abbot. The saint remains in monastic dress for the rest of their life with little comment from the narrator, which suggests that Esmarade, and their religious devotion, befits monastic dress: their external appearance reflects their inner integrity, something which is repeatedly stressed in conciliar canons as essential for those of clerical and monastic status.

This text is unusual not only because it includes descriptions of dressing in the narrative itself but because there is an accompanying manuscript miniature that illustrates the act of cross-dressing. Of the four manuscripts containing this Life, three

manuscripts are illustrated.[279] KB, MS 71 A 24, which was bought in 1327 by King

Charles IV of France (1293–1328) from the Parisian *libraire* Thomas de Maubeuge,

depicts Esmarade being dressed by a monk (fig. twelve).[280] On the right side of the

frame there is a monastery with one monk stepping out of the building and another

standing in the doorway, wearing black/brown habits. The figure on the left represents

Esmarade who stands with their head inclined whilst the first monk dresses them in a

habit. In this image, the saint exchanges a pink robe with blue sleeves for the monastic

habit, reflecting their change of social status and move from secular to monastic life. It

is notable that the saint's secular robe is found elsewhere in the manuscript. The *Fauvel*

Master, who illustrated this codex, uses this robe in thirteen other miniatures to clothe

both married and unmarried women.[281] That the *Fauvel* Master uses this same robe in

their representation of Esmarade indicates that they wanted to portray the saint's change

in gender expression and their taking on of clothing appropriate to their identified

gender and religious identity. Amy V. Ogden suggests that the artist does not show

Esmarade's cross-dressing because the image does not present the saint wearing secular

men's clothing, as described in the text.[282] Although this miniature does not reflect the

text exactly and does not depict the saint as dressed as a noble eunuch, it does illustrate

a moment of cross-dressing. In doing so, the *Fauvel* Master draws the reader's attention

to the exchange of clothing, something that is so often obscured or brushed over in

narratives containing the motif.

 Meraugis de Portlesguez, *La Saineresse*, and *Eufrosine* are unusual for this

corpus of literary texts because they describe the act of cross-dressing but each text

---

[279] For an examination of these three images and how they represent Esmarade's gender, see; Wright, 'Illuminating Queer Gender Identity in the Manuscripts of the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt, forthcoming.

[280] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, I, 188–89.

[281] On fols 43v, 53r, 61v, 79r, 88v, 93v, 112v, 121r, 127r, 160r, 168r, 176r, and 180r.

[282] Ogden, p. 50.

highlights it differently. *La Saineresse* and *Eufrosine* focus more on the garments themselves, whereas the narrator of *Meraugis de Portlesguez* and the artist representing Esmarade in KB, MS 71 A 24 place significant emphasis on the process of dressing itself. Through these descriptions, the narrators show how clothing and other objects, such as swords or medical equipment, can be used in texts to suggest identity and designate social or professional status. Narratives like *Eufrosine* engage with the Church's desire for clothing to reflect identity and for religious devotion to be shown in external appearance as the text's protagonist repeatedly changes clothes until able to wear those that match their religious and gender identity. The three texts discussed in this section may be unusual in the details they provide on clothing, but other texts from this corpus draw attention to the connections between dress and status in other ways and thus raises issues surrounding the social hierarchy, and dress and morality.

III.2.3: Dress, Morality, and the Social Hierarchy

Discussions around dress often touch upon questions of morality. This occurs more explicitly in ecumenical councils and chronicles than in secular ordinances; however, sumptuary regulations occasionally consider the moral aspects of dress. Anxieties about lack of devotion, desire for worldly goods, activities, and luxuries, and appropriation of status are all related to the central issue of not behaving appropriately for one's status. Whether appropriate behaviour is defined according to societal expectation or by a specific authority, like a monastic order's rule, concerns about those who do not meet expected standards are found in regulations, chronicles, and certain texts from this corpus. Not all of these issues are present to the same extent in each text, as a narrative will often focus on one particular question. This section considers how the following issues are discussed and presented: the difference between appearance and reality; the question of social mobility; and, more generally, the disruption of the social hierarchy.

Law in Action

Before considering how these various moral and social issues are represented in cross-dressing texts, I will briefly present an example of a text that explicitly discusses the law on dress. Whilst most texts address questions of clothing and the law indirectly, the *CNN* does this explicitly by showing canon law in action. This reveals that medieval writers of fictional narratives were interested in and aware of canonical legislation on clothing, considering such regulation to be well enough known so as to merit being the focus of some of these comic tales.

The *CNN* is a fifteenth-century text that is a collection of tales purportedly told by Philippe le Bon (1396–1467), his household, and other members of the Burgundian court with many of the tales being attributed to specific individuals. Tale ninety-four from this collection engages with a number of the concerns outlined in section III.1.1 as it shows someone of clerical status adopting inappropriate secular clothing styles. This tale tells the story of a priest who is frequently punished for wearing inappropriate clothing, but who deliberately misinterprets the orders given on how he should dress.[283] He is fined three times: for wearing too short a robe and high boots 'a la fasson de court' (*CNN*, tale ninety-four, p. 530); for wearing a long, trailing robe and having long hair and a beard; and for wearing an outfit that is short on one side and long on the other (with a matching half-shaven face). The manuscript miniature that accompanies this tale, on fol. 179r of Glasgow, MS Hunter 252, depicts the second and third of the priest's outfits (fig. twenty-one). In the left-hand register he is shown with long hair and beard, and a trailing red robe. In the right hand-register he is portrayed with his head half shaved and his right leg entirely revealed by the shortness of the robe. In this right-

---

[283] Sweetser, pp. 530–33. This particular text does not include a cross-dressing character, but tales twenty-six, forty-five, and sixty all include the cross-dressing motif.

hand scene, he stands before the ecclesiastical official, who looks down from a dais, and three other figures whose gestures and downcast eyes signal disapproval.

In this text, the reader hears the official's reaction to the priest's appearance as he is concerned about the priest's wearing of secular dress, and the fact that he wears this dress during church services and when undertaking his duties. The official is not worried that the priest is not performing his responsibilities properly, but that he is doing so in lay dress thereby acting 'oultre le regle' (*CNN*, p. 531). That the priest undertakes his duties in lay clothing is reflected in the left-hand register, in which the priest is shown reading in a public space. This reminds one of prohibitions against inappropriate dress being worn by the clergy in public found in the conciliar canons from the Council of Vienne discussed earlier. The text also frequently draws attention to how canonical regulations on dress are being contravened, with the official asking the priest: 'il semble que vous vous mocques des status et ordonnances de l'eglise' (p. 531). The wording of the official's condemnation is also similar to that of canon sixteen from Lateran IV and decree fourteen from the Council of Vienne, which stipulates that 'Clausa deferant desuper indumenta, nimia brevitate vel longtiudine non notanda': '"Je veil," dist monseigneur l'official, "que portez robe et chevelux a demy longs, ne trop ne pou' (p. 531).[284] Despite the similarity in the phrasing, one should not assume that the writer was making a direct reference to the canon itself, but it is clear that they had an understanding of legal procedure. The Church's concerns regarding clerical transgressions with dress and the influence of lay fashion are directly addressed by this tale and its presentation of a priest who continually defies the rules and who mocks the official's requests by commissioning the third outfit – which manages to be simultaneously too long and too short – and shaving half of his beard as shown in the right-hand register of figure twenty-one. Like the *fabliaux,* the *CNN* are comic tales that

---

[284] Tanner, I, 243, 'Their outer garments should be closed and neither too short nor too long'.

are generally centred on the themes of trickery and humiliation, both sexual and otherwise, with at least one character being punished, often by violence. This tale adheres to this model: it ends with the priest being punished, with his head shaved and his dress modified to fit the clerical standard. It is, however, noteworthy that his behaviour is not presented negatively by the narrator and that the punishment is not illustrated by a manuscript miniature.

This tale reveals the continued concerns that the Church had over clerical dress and demonstrates that secular society had an awareness of the rules and restrictions in place. When evaluating the potential awareness of such subjects, it is important to consider the intended audience. The *CNN* are framed as being one hundred stories told by high-ranking members of the Burgundian nobility. It seems likely that the implied audience was of a similar social position. The nobility would have had a good understanding of certain types of legislation, such as canon law on marriage, a subject which is also discussed in the *CNN*.[285] For example, tale eighty-six shows a couple whose marriage is almost annulled because it has not been consummated.[286] However, it is important to note that knowledge of canon law was not limited to the nobility as individuals from other social groups would have also had an awareness of certain aspects of the law and process, especially in connection to contracting and dissolving marriages which were important issues for all social groups. The *CNN* contains various tales with a legal emphasis which not only demonstrate a clear understanding of relevant laws and procedure, but also shows that the issues related to laws on marriage and clerical dress were topical and interesting enough for inclusion in this collection.

---

[285] Examination of inventories of the Duke of Burgundy's library shows that manuscripts of decretal collections and other legal texts. For example, decretal collections in French (nos 1659, 1820, and 1862), regional legal collections (no. 1993), and synodal statutes (no. 2063) in Barrois, *Bibliothèque prototypique*.
[286] Sweetser, pp. 496–501.

Through these tales one can access contemporary responses to and understanding of these legal questions.

Appearance and Reality

Tale ninety-four of the *CNN* presented a character whose secular clothing did not reflect his clerical status and this disparity led to his punishment. The concern that appearance should match reality is found in canon and sumptuary law as well as in literary texts like the *CNN*. That one's outward appearance might not accurately reflect one's true self may be concerning because it means that one cannot rely on dress and appearance to determine another's social position. This goes further than simply identifying rank or role in society as wearing the dress of a certain social group might cause others to expect certain types of behaviour. This difference between expectations and reality, and the potential negative consequences that may arise from rely on appearance as an indicator of morality, is explored in *Frere Denise*.

This text, written by Rutebeuf in late 1262 or early 1263, opens with a statement regarding clothing and morality:

> Li abiz ne fait pas l'ermite:
> S'uns hom en hermitage habite,
> S'il est de povres draz vestuz,
> Je ne pris mie deus festuz
> Son habit ne sa vesteüre
> S'il ne mainne vie ausi pure
> Coume ces habiz nos demoustre.
> Mais mainte gens font bele moustre
> Et mervilleuz semblant qu'il vaillent;
> Il semblent les aubres qui faillent,
> Qui furent trop bel au florir:
> Bien dovroient teil gent morir
> Vilainnement et a grante honte! (*Frere Denise*, ll. 1–13).[287]

This statement focuses on the difference between appearance and reality, highlighting the issue that many people are not as they seem. This statement is strong in its

---

[287] Noomen, VI, 15–21; Rutebeuf, *Œuvres complètes de Rutebeuf.*, ed. by Michel Zink, 2 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1989), I, 16.

condemnation of those who do not act honourably and in accordance with their status, and those who present a false impression of themselves by means of their clothing. Lines four to seven reveal that one should be able to rely on clothing and outward appearance to identify others, but that it is appropriate behaviour which is most important. In this way, this text echoes the message of the ecumenical council canons on clerical and monastic dress: that one's outward appearance should reflect one's 'inner integrity'.[288] This opening statement also connects with contemporary anti-Franciscan thought, as Franciscans were often portrayed as hypocrites and as not acting appropriately for their role in society. The inclusion of anti-fraternal sentiments in this text will be discussed later in this sub-section.

That the narrative begins in this way is notable because the text explores questions of appearance and reality in its two protagonists: the friar Simon and Denise who, during the course of the text, cross-dresses as a friar. This *fabliau* includes a character assigned female at birth who cross-dresses so as to enter a religious order and, given this text's opening statement, one might expect that the narrator would criticise this behaviour; however, the text does not condemn Denise. It states that Denise already desires to remain a virgin and live a religious life on lines 24 to 27 before Simon suggests it and, after entering the Franciscan order, Denise demonstrates appropriate behaviour and devotion as seen on lines 149 to 156, showing the purity of spirit that the friar Simon lacks. Denise's behaviour is directly contrasted with Simon being associated with sin and lust where Denise is portrayed as devout and pure:

> Mout est lor pencee contraire,
> Car cele pence a li retraire
> Et osteir de l'orgueil dou monde,
> Et cil, qui en pechié soronde,
> Qui toz art dou feu de luxure,
> A mis sa pencee et sa cure
> En la pucele acompaignier
> Au baig' (*Frere Denise*, ll. 97–104).

---

[288] Tanner, I, 365.

It is individuals like Simon whom the opening statement of this *fabliau* condemns, as he uses his position as a friar to meet and influence Denise. After Simon suggests that Denise enters holy orders, the narrative states that Denise 'fu ja atainte / Et conquise et mate et vaincue' (ll. 46–47). The verbs of conquest in this context presents Simon as predatory and Denise as passive and as a victim of his influence. In this way, Simon embodies the qualities that this text condemns, and he is punished for his behaviour at the end of the narrative. Simon Gaunt posits an alternative interpretation of Denise in this *fabliau*, suggesting that how Denise could be read as being complicit in Simon's plan and therefore is not the innocent character that they first appear to be.[289] Gaunt argues that the sexualised vocabulary of 'conquise et mate et vaincue' and other sexually suggestive descriptions indicate that Denise is a fully aware and willing participant in the relationship; consequently, the opening statements and the comments about appearance versus reality could therefore be applied to both Denise and Simon.[290] Although it is possible to interpret the text in this way and Denise certainly becomes aware that their relationship with Simon is wrong, as revealed by Denise's desire to keep it a secret, the text's disapproval is focussed on Simon. This is shown by the emphasis on Simon as a Franciscan and the fact that the criticisms made of him are closely associated with anti-mendicant discourse. In addition, as will be discussed in V.2.2, less attention is paid to Denise and any inappropriate behaviour they committed and the narrative ends without Denise receiving any punishment or real recriminations for their actions.

Simon and Denise are explicitly identified as Franciscans: Simon is called 'Frere meneur' (*Frere Denise*, l. 49), he and Denise are called 'le cordelier' (l. 203), and Simon invokes St Francis as a role model for Denise. That Simon is a Franciscan and

---

[289] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, p. 244.
[290] Ibid., pp. 244–47.

that the order is frequently condemned in the narrative might suggest that this text is anti-fraternal. The lady who punishes Simon for his behaviour gives a long speech criticising Simon and the Franciscan order as a whole: she calls him 'Fauz papelars, fauz yprocrite' (l. 244) and states that the order 'n'est mie boens ne biaux ne genz!' (l. 257). Guy Geltner notes that during his career Rutebeuf developed anti-fraternal sentiments; these beliefs are reflected in his *oeuvre* as he had written a number of works condemning mendicant orders and their perceived hypocrisy.[291] Although specific sections of the text condemn Franciscans directly, the central issues discussed in *Frere Denise* are hypocrisy and deception. Hypocrites are negatively presented throughout this text and those who deceive others by their dress or actions are also heavily criticised: 'Teil gent font bien le siecle pestre / Qui par defors cemblent boen estre / Et par dedens sunt tuit porri' (ll. 249–51). These issues are also discussed in a number of Rutebeuf's other works: in *De Maistre Guillaume de Saint Amour* he names a friar Faus Semblant, a character also in the *Roman de la Rose*, and includes the figure Hypocrisy in *Du Pharisien*.[292]

Frere Denise shows how appearance and reality can differ by foregrounding the moral aspect of deceiving others through dress. By using a member of a mendicant order as a target of this criticism, this text not only participates in the contemporary debates on mendicant orders but also engages with the ongoing issues with controlling monastic and clerical dress and behaviour. Through the devotion of the cross-dressing Denise, the narrator contrasts appropriate and inappropriate behaviour and, by

---

[291] Jean Dufournet, 'Rutebeuf et les moines mendiants', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 85.2 (1984), 152–68 (pp. 152–53); Guy Geltner, 'Faux Semblant: Antifraternalism Reconsidered in Jean de Meun and Chaucer', *Studies in Philology*, 101.4 (2004), 357–80 (p. 363).

[292] Geltner, 'Faux Semblants', p. 363. Guillaume de Saint Amour was one of the prominent early critics of mendicant orders and was heavily involved in the secular-mendicant conflict at the University of Paris in the 1250s (Guy Geltner, *The Making of Medieval Antifraternalism: Polemic, Violence, Deviance, and Remembrance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 17–18).

presenting a devout cross-dressing character as a better friar than the hypocrite Simon, the narrative signals the importance of belief and behaviour over appearance.

Social Mobility

There are a number of ways in which a character can dress outside their status. They can dress up or down the social hierarchy as well as by crossing the boundary between secular and religious identities. Narratives containing the cross-dressing motif often draw particular attention to characters who move up or down the social ladder in their cross-dressed identity, which allows for a discussion of the potential for and the consequences of social mobility. Section III.1.2 argued that one of the functions of sumptuary laws was to control the social hierarchy by limiting the opportunity for social mobility. Narratives such as the *Comte d'Artois* and *Berengier* offer their own responses to the question of social mobility, and, being written two centuries apart, they demonstrate that such issues continued to be the subject of debate and discussion.

Most of the texts which explicitly discuss the links between status and appearance are comic texts, such as *fabliaux* or the *CNN*; however, texts from other genres also raise such questions. For example, the *Comte d'Artois* shows a countess who takes on a lower status role as a servant whilst cross-dressed.[293] Despite having taken on this new role and the name Phlipot, they continue to be identified as 'La Comtesse'. At no point does the reader learn the Countess/Phlipot's birth name; this character is known only by their title. Not only does this take the emphasis away from their cross-dressing, as this is a gendered title, but it privileges the social position of countess rather than the adopted identity of a servant. Although the cross-dressing episode places greater emphasis on Phlipot as being a member of the nobilty, the

---

[293] The cross-dressing episode in this romance occurs because the Count of Artois has been unable to engender an heir and wishes to leave his home and marriage. Before leaving, he sets a wager which, if completed, would require him to return home: his spouse must become pregnant by him, and obtain a particular diamond and horse from him. The Countess/Phlipot cross-dresses as a servant to successfully complete these tasks. The Count returns home and they promptly conceive a child.

illuminations that accompany the narrative in BnF, MS fr. 11610 depict the change in status. There are nine miniatures that portray the cross-dressed episode and, as Phlipot, they are depicted in four different ways: twice in travelling clothes (fols 72v and 77v), four times in servant's dress (fols 79r, 89r, 91r, and 94r), twice naked (fols 83v and 98v), and once in a more elaborate blue outfit (fol. 101r). BnF, MS fr. 11610 was commissioned in the mid-fifteenth century by Burgundian noble Jean de Wavrin (c. 1398–c. 1474) and the illuminations were completed in Lille by the Wavrin Master.[294] The Wavrin Master chose to reflect Phlipot's new role as a servant by representing them in the same outfits as other lower-status figures (fig. twenty-two). In figures twenty-two and twenty-three, the change of status is made particularly evident when one compares Phlipot's dress to that of their spouse, the Count. His outfit is trimmed with fur, whereas Phlipot's is plain, and the Count's is generally more elaborate in style and colour. The artist does not distinguish Phlipot from the other servants by dress, and the viewer relies on the placement of the figures in the frame (Phlipot tends to be shown in the centre), or the context to identify the characters. Consequently, the visual representation of the Phlipot foregrounds their successful assimilation into their new status and role.

Despite this successful change of social status, the text suggests that social mobility, be it up or down the social hierarchy, is not as simple as just changing one's appearance to reflect a new status. It suggests that one's conduct will reflect one's true rank. The court frequently discuss the Phlipot's behaviour and social background. The narrator informs the reader that 'tous disoient communement qu'il convenoit selon sez meurs et condicions qu'il fust extrait de bon lieu', the court also comments on 'son humilité et gracieux maintieng' (*Comte d'Artois*, p. 111) and that Phlipot acts 'comme celle qui duitte estoit de veïr le noblez et de parler a son tour, ainsi que raison le

---

[294] François Avril and Nicole Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France: 1440–1520* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), pp. 98–99; Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages*, p. 130.

desiroit' (p. 120). The court's comments on Phlipot's behaviour and conduct show them to be a person of nobility, honour, and high birth. Not only do they show the perceived importance attached to 'good' conduct and its association with social status, but they also suggest that Phlipot's social position cannot be hidden by appearing as a lower-status character as their nobility will inevitably shine through, which is a trope often found in medieval romances. Although this text shows a character who blurs gender boundaries, it does not portray the same fluidity in terms of social status. By suggesting that certain characteristics are inherent to the nobility, this narrative reinforces the idea of a stable social hierarchy and it draws strict boundaries between social groups with its suggestion that 'nature' will out.

Most narratives in which the cross-dressing character moves down the social hierarchy do not question or appear to be overly concerned by this change of status. There are two potential reasons for this response. First, most of the characters who move down the social hierarchy cross-dress temporarily and they do so in order to find another or at the request of another person.[295] This means their cross-dressing is connected to a specific goal and will not continue indefinitely; their cross-dressing allows them to have greater access to people and places in pursuit of their goal. For example, in *Ysaïe le Triste* the noble-born Marte cross-dresses as a minstrel to search for their lover Ysaïe; this is also the case in the *Comte d'Artois* and *Clarisse et Florent*.[296] Second, that the characters are moving down the social hierarchy rather than up seems to be less concerning. Although, as has been discussed, sumptuary laws desired a stable social hierarchy in which social status was clearly indicated by dress

---

[295] For a fuller discussion of the effect motivation has on representations of cross-dressing and gender, see; II.1. The exception to this general rule is Yde/Ydé from *Yde et Olive* who cross-dresses as a squire to escape an incestuous marriage and whose cross-dressing is permanent as, after their marriage to Olive, they undergo a gender transformation at the end of the text.

[296] Brewka, pp. 295–406. In *Clarisse et Florent*, Clarisse is convinced to cross-dress as a merchant by Brohart under the ruse that this will allow Clarisse to meet and have greater choice over their spouse. Brohart invents this ruse to seduce Clarisse and, after learning of his intentions, Clarisse is able to escape and is saved by a group of bandits.

and any move within the hierarchy would be problematic, it is evident from reading the laws that they were most concerned with people dressing above their rank than below it. For example, those lower down the hierarchy were prohibited from wearing high-status fabrics like ermine and they were restricted in the amount they could spend on fabrics compared to the nobility.[297] That these narratives do not place much emphasis on these changes of status suggests that those moving down the social hierarchy pose less of a problem or are seen to be less transgressive than the inverse.

The social hierarchy and the way in which dress may be able to facilitate social mobility is at the heart of the *fabliaux Berengier* and *Trubert*. Although these texts have a superficial emphasis on a character playing clever tricks on others, both also explore how characters who dress outside of their status disrupt the hierarchy in different ways. *Berengier* tells the story of the wife/Berengier who is forced to marry a man of lower status.[298] First, it is important to note that not all extant manuscripts contain the same version and that there are significant differences in their content. This thesis focusses on the version presented in Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, and BnF, MS fr. 19152.[299] Simon Gaunt discusses the differences between the manuscripts, noting that the version found in BnF, MS fr. 837 does not include the focus on social status contained in the Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 and BnF, MS fr. 19152 text.[300] The BnF, MS fr. 837 version is missing many of the lines that discuss the social hierarchy, but instead there is greater emphasis on the issue of boasting.[301] As discussed in section I.4, codicological evidence

---

[297] See III.1.2 for details.

[298] Noomen and Van Den Boogaard, IV, 270–77. This text focusses on a marriage between a noble-born wife and the husband of lower status. The wife/Berengier is frustrated by their husband's lack of chivalric interests. To prove he is a good knight, the husband goes into the forest and feigns combat to trick the wife. The wife realises the trick and decides to cross-dress as Berengier au lonc cul and challenge the husband to fight. After the husband refuses, the wife returns home and uses her knowledge of the husband's cowardice to humiliate him.

[299] Noomen and Van Den Boogaard, IV, 248. The critical edition uses Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 as its base.

[300] Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, pp. 278–80.

[301] Roy J. Pearcy, 'Relations between the *D* and *A* Versions of *"Bérenger au long cul"'*, *Romance Notes*, 14 (1972), 173–78 (p. 173); Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, p. 279.

suggest that these large anthologies were likely commissioned by members of the nobility, with BnF, MS fr. 19152 also including the signature of a fifteenth-century noble female owner, which may indicate this social group had an interest in material dealing with social mobility.[302]

In *Berengier*, the wife is disappointed by her husband's lack of interest in knightly activities, leading to the husband dressing in armour and pretending to have engaged in combat in order to prove his spouse wrong. From the start, this text condemns marrying outside one's rank: 'Ensi lo bon lignages aville, / Et dechiet tot et va a honte, / Que li chastelain et li conte / Se marient bas por avoir; / Si doievent grant honte avoir / Et grant domage, si ont il' (*Berengier*, ll. 24–29). It goes so far as to say that such marriages will lead to the death of honour. In this *fabliau*, both spouses adopt knightly dress to trick each other. However, it is only the husband's behaviour that is depicted as shameful: the wife is presented as superior to her husband in terms of intelligence, behaviour, and her quick wittedness. This superiority is further demonstrated by the text's conclusion, which shows the wife humiliating her husband by having extra-marital intercourse with a knight and invoking the name of Berengier. The wife's choice of lover is significant because he is explicitly described as being a 'chevalier' (l. 263), a status which the text has repeatedly emphasised that she believes, and the narrator suggests, that her husband does not deserve.

In this text, social status is determined in two ways: by lineage and action. The wife, recognising her husband's unwillingness to bear arms, 'set ele bien sanz dotance, / A ce qu'il ert mout parliers, / Qu'il n'est pas nez chevaliers / Ne estraiz de gentil

---

[302] Although the connection is speculative, it is noteworthy that the owner of this manuscript, Philippe Alamande dame de Sassenage (d. 1478), had a daughter who married on 12 April 1456 Georges Berenger, seigneur de Gua. Although one cannot know whether Philippe made this connection or even read *Berengier*, the association between the text and her family is of interest (Louis Moréri, 'François III de Sassenage', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IX, 167; *Annuaire historique et biographique des souverains, des chefs et membres des maisons princières* (Paris: Archives Historiques, 1844), I, 12).

lignaje' (*Berengier*, ll. 54–57). This indicates that one could move up the social ladder as long as one had the required qualities. Despite the fact that the husband was made a knight by his father-in-law and is identified as 'le chevalier', the narrative makes it clear that he does not behave like one. Although he arms himself and states his intention to fight his enemies, this is a ruse to trick his spouse: 'Si se porpanse qu'il fera, / Comment sa fame decevra / Q'el le tingne bon chevalier' (ll. 87–89). These lines emphasise that he only wants to *appear* to be a knight rather than actually become one; he is not interested in acting according to his new status. Such behaviour is redolent of legal discourse but also the discussions of clothing and morality found in chronicles which condemn those who do not behave appropriately for their social position. When the narrator describes how the husband arms himself, the reader learns that his armour and weapons are 'mout beles' but also that they are 'trestotes fresches et noveles' (ll. 83–84). By highlighting that his armour is unused and that his interests run more towards feasting and relaxing than chivalric endeavours, the narrative shows that he is not fulfilling his social responsibilities. The wife's criticisms of her husband's behaviour are similar to those that Orderic Vitalis levelled at secular society. Orderic Vitalis condemned those who 'wasted their time, spending it according to their own fancy, and without regard to the law of God, or the customs of their fathers'.[303] The husband is depicted as behaving inappropriately for his newly-attained status for which he is derided by both the wife and the narrator.

The husband's trick fails precisely because he is living and dressing outside his status: he is neither of the right lineage nor willing to adapt to his new status by acting appropriately. The husband pretends to enact knightly behaviours by adopting the dress and by breaking his armour to make it appear as though he has been in combat. However, his trick is turned on its head when the wife does something similar: they

---

[303] Orderic Vitalis, II, 478.

cross-dress as the knight Berengier and challenge the husband to a joust. In this way, Berengier is able to best their spouse and show their superiority. Berengier's appearance and behaviour are so convincing that the husband admits that he has never jousted and instead agrees to kiss Berengier's 'cul', something that the narrator presents as a shameful act: 'Li chevaliers, qui dote et crient, / Et qui plains est de coardie, / Dit que il n'i jostera mie' (*Berengier,* ll. 230–33). The husband and his actions are depicted negatively, whereas the Berengier is shown as intelligent and shrewd. Although the motif of wives besting their husbands is commonly found in *fabliaux*, this is more than that.[304] In this *fabliau*, both spouses are shown transgressing the boundaries of identity through dress; however, only the wife is successful in their trick because not only do they dress like a knight, but they exemplify the characteristics of one: they are of noble status, are brave, and willing to fight. Berengier's trick uncovers the husband's poor behaviour, allowing him to be punished for acting inappropriately for his status and establishing the wife in the position of power within the marriage. This narrative partially rejects the idea of social mobility. Although it implies that one can move up the social hierarchy through a combination of marriage and appropriate behaviour, the text's narrative contrives to maintain hierarchical distinctions by humiliating the husband and achieving freedom (and a more suitable sexual partner) for the wife. When the husband encounters Berengier in the forest, both are dressing as knights, and yet the husband's cowardice seems inevitable whereas Berengier harangues him with the voice of their class: their encounter as equals in dress exposes an imbalance in their embodiment of chivalric qualities.

The third type of status change found in this corpus concerns those characters who exchange a secular for a religious life. Characters who move from a lay to a

---

[304] Lesley Johnson, 'Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?', *The Modern Language Review*, 78.2 (1983), 298–307 (p. 299).

religious identity tended to elicit praise from the narrator as, in the cases of saints, they tend to do so in order to fulfil a desire enter the religious life and live their lives devoted to God. This change of status is generally portrayed positively, with the characters' obedience, humility, and dedication to their duties being stressed, and with both their clothing and behaviour befitting their religious identity. Like cross-dressing saints, Helcana/Helcanor's change from imperial ruler to hermit is similarly shown as unproblematic as they take on this new status on the advice of a religious authority, Ydoine, and use their time as a hermit in prayer and penance. The only example from this corpus that does not fit this trend is that of the three *bourgoises* from tale sixty from the *CNN* who are criticised for cross-dressing as friars in order to gain easier access to their Franciscan lovers.[305] This links back the importance placed, particularly in conciliar decrees, on ensuring that one's behaviour reflects one's status, and vice versa: the three *bourgoises* are criticised for adopting religious status and dress because, unlike Helcanor, they do not have a genuine desire for a life of contemplation and devotion.

Manuscript illuminations of characters who have entered the religious life are generally faithful to the text in that they, as outlined in section II.2, predominately portray these characters in clothing and with other signifiers appropriate to their new status. One notable exception to this general rule is in miniatures representing Helcana/Helcanor in BRB, MS 9245. In *Cassidorus*, Helcana agrees to the hermit Ydoine's suggestion that Helcana become a hermit and 'prendoit tel habit com Ydoine avoit' (*Cassidorus*, 260). Although the text makes it clear that, after being baptised as Helcanor, they wear only adopts hermit's dress, this is not depicted in all of the manuscripts. For example, in BRB, MS 9245, which is a copy of the full *Sept Sages* cycle that was completed in the 1320s, Helcanor is portrayed in imperial dress (fig.

---

[305] Sweetser, pp. 373–77. In tale sixty, three *bourgoises* cross-dress so that they can meet their Franciscan lovers. After being caught by their husband whilst cross-dressed, the first wife confesses all. The husband makes a plan to punish the lovers. At a dinner, the three *bourgoises*' tonsures are uncovered to prove the affair, and then the friars are violently beaten.

seven).[306] BRB, MS 9245 was likely commissioned by Guillaume I de Hainaut (1286–1337) from Thomas de Maubeuge and miniatures of Helcanor as hermit were illuminated by the Master of BnF fr. 160.[307] In the two images that illustrate this cross-dressing episode, Helcanor is shown wearing imperial dress of a long robe and a crown (figs seven and twenty-four). Helcanor's imperial identity is foregrounded over their change of social status and religious identity as a hermit. One could argue that this serves to obscure Helcanor's cross-dressing, but this is not the case. In both images, Helcanor wears lay dress but there are differences in the artist's portrayal of the character's gender expression. In figure seven, Helcanor is portrayed wearing a white headcovering over their hair which typically indicates a married laywoman, whereas in figure twenty-four, Helcanor is presented with shorter, uncovered hair and wearing a slightly shorter gown showing their feet and ankles which are usually signifiers of male identity. Although the use of different gendered signifiers in these images is significant in terms of how this artist chose to represent a cross-dressing character and whether the inconsistency in appearance is a comment on Helcanor's changing gender expression, this is not the focus here. The images present Helcanor undertaking their duties as a hermit of advising and healing those in need through prayer but obscure their move to a religious identity completely by depicting them in their imperial lay dress. This shows that, despite being explicitly stated, changes of status are not always reflected in manuscript illuminations. In the case of BRB, MS 9245, secular status is privileged over religious status, perhaps suggesting a discomfort or concern with changes of social position or reinforcing that Helcanor's cross-dressing is only temporary and that they would take up their imperial role again later in the narrative.

---

[306] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, II, 134; 185.

[307] Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, pp. 135–36.

Disruption of the Social Hierarchy

Where the *Comte d'Artois* suggests nobility as being innate and *Berengier* presents the importance of lineage and appropriate behaviour to defining one's social status, *Trubert* foregrounds the importance of dress to the formation of identity. In *Trubert*, the eponymous character is a peasant who takes on numerous disguises: Trubert/Couillebaude dresses as a knight, a carpenter, a doctor, and as the Duke as well as cross-dressing as his own sister.[308] Through these disguises, Trubert is able to trick various members of the local nobility for personal gain. In this way, the text is similar to *Witasse le Moine,* which follows the protagonist Witasse in his quest to seek revenge after the Count of Boulogne treated him poorly: Witasse adopts fourteen different identities, including one cross-dressed identity, in order to continually trick and best the Count.[309] Both Trubert and Witasse trick members of the nobility but the most significant difference between these two figures is that Trubert is a peasant whereas Witasse is a Benedictine monk of noble birth. Witasse adopts both secular and religious identities, and all of the secular identities are low-status; for example, Witasse dresses as a leper, charcoal seller, and a potter. Witasse is never caught, perhaps because Witasse tends to adopt low-status professions that allow them to move freely and evade capture. One of the significant differences between Trubert and Witasse is that there are no social consequences for Witasse's actions as they mainly serve to trick and fool the

---

[308] Willem Noomen, *Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux*, 10 vols (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1998), X ,188–262. Trubert/Couillebaude lives with his mother and sister in an isolated area. Trubert decides to sell a cow so travels to town and he buys a multicoloured goat with the proceeds. The duchess wishes to purchase Trubert's goat. This event leads to Trubert tricking the duke and his household many times either for personal gain or for revenge. Trubert often takes on different diguises, including as a carpenter, doctor, and knight. When cross-dressed, Couillebaude seduces the duke's daughter, tricks the king, and plots to make a servant queen.

[309] For more on *Witasse le moine*; see, Keith Busby, 'The Diabolic Hero in Medieval French Narrative: "Trubert" and "Witasse le Moine"', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, the Queen's University of Belfast, 26 July–1 August 1995*, ed. by Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 415–26; Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler, p. 294; Busby, '"Plus acesmez qu'une popine"', in Gender Transgressions, ed. by Karen J. Taylor, pp. 56–57.

149

Count, whereas in *Trubert* the consequences of Trubert's frequent changes of status and profession are the considerable changes to the duke's household and lineage resulting from non-marital sex, pregnancy, and marriage.

As has been previously discussed, the importance of dressing according to rank is central to sumptuary regulations. This is shown in *Trubert* when the protagonist adopts the third of his five disguises: Trubert becomes a knight in order to act as the Duke's champion. The Duke seeks a champion to fight King Golias over a broken truce. For this trick, Trubert swaps clothing with a knight, the Duke's nephew, who is returning from losing a tournament. Clothing is central to this exchange: Trubert has been wearing the clothes that they had previously been given by the Duke whereas the Duke's nephew is wearing 'povres dras', something which is repeated again on line 1545 (*Trubert*, l. 1537). Status and clothing are played with in this scene as the peasant Trubert goes from wearing low-status dress to high-status clothing, and back again during this short episode. Trubert offers to become the Duke's champion and the Duke decides to knight Trubert. However, before the knighting ceremony, the Duke tells his servants: 'Alez, sel faites revestir / Si comme noviau chevalier' (ll. 1743–44); Trubert is then given a *cote*, *surcote*, and a squirrel-fur mantel, which is a costly fur that was frequently restricted by French sumptuary law.[310] That Trubert is given a new outfit before he can be dubbed shows the importance placed upon the visual aspect of identity and status, and of wearing clothing that is appropriate for one's status; in order to become a knight, Trubert must first look like one. This is different to *Berengier*, which suggests that clothing is less important than adopting the behaviours appropriate to one's new status. After the ceremony, he is then given arms and a horse with the narrator stating that he 'mout resamble bien chevalier' (l. 1794). Although the Duke

---

[310] The 1279 laws restricted the number of robes trimmed with squirrel fur permitted for a number of social groups as well as forbidding the bourgois from wearing *vair* at all (Duplès-Agier, p. 179); The 1294 laws also forbade clerics and the bourgois for wearing *vair* (Jourdain, Decrusy, and Isambert, II, 697–98).

mentions appropriate behaviour – '"Amis", dit il, "chevalier soies / Et preudom: seur touz autres soies / Preuz et hardiz et coragous!"' – the focus is on Trubert's appearance (ll. 1752–54). It is Trubert's clothing and arms that indicate their identity as a knight to others. As in *La Saineresse*, the use of the verb 'resambler' is also important as it draws attention to the disparity between appearance and reality, highlighting to the reader that, whilst Trubert may look like a knight, this is a matter of appearance alone.

As well as changing clothing, Trubert also adopts other items associated with a specific identity. When dressing as a carpenter and a doctor, Trubert brings along tools of the trade to ensure that the disguise is successful. For the first disguise as a carpenter, Trubert packs a variety of tools and the narrator comments that 'il est mout bien desguisez' (*Trubert*, l. 469) and, of course, the Duke is none the wiser. Trubert takes a similar approach when dressing as a doctor:

> Il prent un sac lonc et estroit:
> Aucune foiz veü avoit
> Mires qui iteus les portoient,
> Que leur boites dedanz metoient.
> Boites i metra il s'il puet:
> Com mires atorner se velt (ll. 1067–72).

Such items are an essential part of Trubert's disguise, more so than their clothes, which are not described in either of these scenes. Individuals could therefore be identified by others not solely by dress but also by other visual signifiers of identity or profession, as discussed earlier in relation to Meraugis' sword and the 'Saineresse's' medical instruments. This is one of the many instances in *Trubert* where clothing and other identifiers are chosen to present a different social status or profession. However, this connection between identity, clothing and other signifiers is not reflected in the manuscript miniatures that accompany the text in BnF, MS fr. 2188. This single-text manuscript, dating from c. 1250–75, includes five historiated initials that portray scenes

from the narrative.[311] These initials are all found early on in the text, on folios 1r, 3r, 4r, 5v, and 14r, and only one represents a moment in which Trubert has adopted a different identity: the initial on folio 14r shows Trubert as the carpenter tying the duke to a tree and beating him (fig. twenty-five). In each of the images, Trubert is portrayed in the same way, with uncovered hair curling back from their forehead and long clothing as are all of the other characters who were assigned male at birth, such as the duke and his knights in the image on folio 5v (fig. twenty-six). Social status or profession are not indicated in these images either through clothing or other signifiers of position. Consequently, it is only by comparing the text to the image that the reader can identify each of the figures. These images therefore act as a point of contrast to the text as they distinguish little between characters and social positions. Whether or not this was an intentional decision made by the artist, these historiated initials offer a contrasting view to that of the narrative, suggesting that one cannot always rely on appearance to signal social group and status.

By adopting different kinds of dress, Trubert is able to gain access to new social positions and new wealth, and to enter high society. Although these are not the reasons why Trubert takes on these new identities, Trubert's behaviour does reflect the concerns found in sumptuary laws that individuals could, by dressing inappropriately for their status, move up the social hierarchy. Trubert's disguises also call into question the signifiers themselves, suggesting that those who accept appearances without question are at risk of being deceived. An example of this is when Trubert dresses as a doctor in order to give the Duke a painful 'treatment'. After adopting the dress of a doctor, Trubert fills a medicine bottle with dog faeces and proceeds to claim that it is a medical ointment before rubbing it over the Duke's entire body and violently beating him.[312]

---

[311] Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, 457.

[312] Corinne Füg-Pierreville argues that *Trubert* satirizes the figure of the doctor by showing Trubert as a false doctor and notes that this part of a thirteenth-century tradition of criticising doctors through satire

This trick highlights the way in which items can be manipulated: faeces becomes medicine just as the peasant becomes a doctor. This emphasises the potential disparity between appearance and reality.

Most of Trubert's tricks involve pretending to be somebody else, but Trubert also deceives others by pretending that certain items or body parts are not what they seem, often exploiting another's lack of knowledge for personal gain and entertainment. There are two instances of this that take place whilst Trubert/Couillebaude is cross-dressed. First, Couillebaude, after being brought to the Duke's court, shares a bed with the Duke's daughter and tricks her into performing sex acts by pretending that their penis is a rabbit. Second, Couillebaude fakes having sexual intercourse with King Golias by using a purse as a substitute vagina, in which Couillebaude traps the King's penis, causing him great pain.[313] Couillebaude uses these characters' lack of understanding against them. This not only foregrounds the idea of the nobility as naïve, something which is frequently suggested in this narrative, but also the negative consequences of not questioning what others tell you. These tricks show the danger of taking an individual's appearance, speech, and actions at face value and present how easy it can be to manipulate others for personal gain.

Corinne Füg-Pierreville, when discussing how and why a *fabliau* protagonist might use disguise, argues 'Le déguisement lui permet de braver les interdits et d'entrer dans un monde de liberté où il peut, à sa guise, s'amuser des conventions et des usages'.[314] This is certainly the case with Trubert/Couillebaude who challenges the social hierarchy and who, by crossing them again and again, reveals boundaries of status to be artificial and easily manipulated. Through repeated trickery of the Duke and

---

(Corinne Füg-Pierreville, 'Le déguisement dans *Trubert*: l'identité en question', *Le Moyen Age*, 114.2 (2008), 315–34 (p. 319)).

[313] For a discussion of the use of wordplay in this scene, see; Gaunt, *Gender and Genre*, pp. 250–51.

[314] Corinne Füg-Pierreville, 'Jeux de masques et fabliaux', *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 113.2 (2009), 371–86 (p. 373).

his family, Trubert portrays the nobility as naïve but, as Füg-Pierreville notes, it is as Couillebaude, a peasant woman, that they cause the most chaos.[315] Although they enact many tricks on the Duke and his family whilst in other disguises, this trickery is taken to a new level when they cross-dress. In this role, Couillebaude irrevocably changes aristocratic society and disrupts the strict social hierarchy. First, Couillebaude, a peasant by birth and appearance, impregnates the Duke's daughter before duping King Golias into marrying a servant and making her queen. These tricks bring individuals of low social status into high-status positions of power. This not only disrupts the social hierarchy but also shows extreme examples of social mobility. Unlike *Berengier*, Trubert's narrator does not condemn dressing outside one's status or provide any commentary on Trubert/Couillebaude's actions as being right or wrong. Instead, *Trubert* highlights how easy it is to deceive others by manipulating appearances to gain access to specific situations and so to gain authority and status. In addition, showing characters who are repeatedly tricked because they do not question those they meet invites the reader to query visual signifiers of status or profession.

III.3: Conclusion

This chapter has shown that texts containing the cross-dressing motif often focus on dress and status as part of wider discussions about social mobility, the social hierarchy, and the question of appearance versus reality. Such topics were not only of interest to medieval writers, but also to medieval law-makers, as is demonstrated in section III.1. As most of the texts included in literary corpus are anonymous, it is difficult to know the extent to which authors would have known about the regulations of dress found in sumptuary and canon law. However, any writer who had received a clerical education, such as Rutebeuf, would have known about the laws on clerical and monastic dress and the specific concerns reflected in them, but an awareness of these issues was not limited

---

[315] Füg-Pierreville, 'Le déguisement', pp. 317–21.

to those from a clerical background.[316] It is notable that questions regarding social mobility, appropriate clothing, and behaviour are not limited to texts from a particular period. The fact that such issues continue to be central themes in literary texts written over the course of three hundred years suggests that debates on dress and status were ongoing and spoke to pervasive anxieties in Western Christendom. The inclusion of the cross-dressing motif brings to the fore questions about identity by allowing characters to move between different identities and social positions and groups, as well as drawing attention to how other characters read status and identity through dress. These narratives explore the concerns that result from this, drawing on contemporary debates regarding appearance and reality. It is noteworthy that many of the texts discussed in this chapter are comic, but this does not preclude them from discussing serious issues: *Trubert*, *Frere Denise*, and *Berengier* all engage with concerns related to the social hierarchy and appearance versus reality in greater depth than in the other narratives. Each of the texts examined in this chapter engages with concepts of identity and status, from presenting how individuals read another's identity – be it through clothing, actions, or other signifiers – to questioning how such items and behaviours can be manipulated or changed. The idea that is central to each of these texts is the potential difference between appearance and reality, whether they show, as in *Frere Denise*, characters whose actions do not match their religious status or, as in *Eufrosine*, an individual changing clothing and status until they can take on position that fits their gender and religious identities. Most texts are generally conservative and maintain the social hierarchy at their conclusion, for example by showing characters returning to previous social positions, but some actively reaffirm the social hierarchy. They do this by offering negative portrayals of and punishments for individuals taking on a different rank or behaving inappropriately for their social status. This chapter has highlighted that

---

[316] Rutebeuf, I, 4.

by including the cross-dressing motif and characters who raise questions regarding viewing, understanding, and expressing gender and identity visually, authors are able to bring forward questions concerning dress and status for discussion.

Chapter IV: Marriage

'What makes a valid marriage?' was an important question in medieval canon law.

Popes, theologians, and canonists debated this subject, discussing ideas of consent,

impediments, and procedure. The medieval canonists' interest in laws surrounding

marriage has been shared in modern scholarship, with a significant amount of research

examining the changes in law and how these laws were applied in ecclesiastical courts.

Some studies, such as those by James Brundage, have considered general developments

in canon law on marriage.[317] Others have looked at specific courts: Sharon McSheffrey,

for example, works on medieval London; while Michael M. Sheehan researches Ely;

and Frederik Pederson the court in York.[318] Others have compared findings across

multiple geographic locations to reveal similarities and differences in procedure as well

as in marriage practices; for example, Charles Donahue discusses Ely, York, Paris,

Brussels, and Cambrai; Ruth Mazo Karras examines records from London and Paris,

and Monique Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek explores practice in the Southern

Burgundian Netherlands in comparison to England.[319] Historians and literary scholars

alike have also been interested in how laws and customs on marriage are represented in

---

[317] James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[318] Michael M. Sheehan, 'The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register', *Mediaeval Studies*, 30 (1971), 228–63; Frederik Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000); Shannon McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[319] Monique Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, 'Incestuous Marriage: Formal Rules and Social Practice in the Southern Burgundian Netherlands', in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003); Charles Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages: Arguments about Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Ruth Mazon Karras, 'The Regulation of Sexuality in the Late Middle Ages: England and France', *Speculum*, 86 (2011), 1010–39; Monique Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, 'Separation and Marital Property in Late Medieval England and the Franco-Belgian Region', in *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. by Mia Korpiola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 78–97.

medieval literature, as, for example, in the monographs by Neil Cartlidge and Conor McCarthy.[320]

Marriage is central to many of the texts in this literary corpus and is often the catalyst for cross-dressing. An individual might wish to escape from an unwanted marriage or to save an existing marriage, and cross-dressing could offer a way to do this. In addition to cross-dressing to deal with issues in existing marriages, characters frequently enter into new relationships whilst cross-dressed and often become betrothed. Although most of the texts do not make explicit links to canon law on marriage, their portrayal of a variety of circumstances and possible marriages, both valid and invalid, allows for positive or critical responses to potential unions to be shown. This chapter examines how the cross-dressing motif brings to the fore issues related to marriage, its formation, and dissolution.

This chapter focusses on the depiction of marriage in ten narratives: three *chansons de geste* (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, *Clarisse et Florent*, and *Yde et Olive*), four romances (*Comte d'Artois*, *Cassidorus*, *Floris et Lyriopé*, and *Ysaïe le Triste*), two hagiographic narratives from the *Légende dorée* (the lives of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien and Theodora/Theodore), and tale eighty-six from the *CNN*. Romances and *chansons de geste* share an interest in questions of succession and dynasty, hence they frequently discuss and show marriages and alliances being formed. Such subjects would have likely been important to their readers who, as members of the nobility, would share this interest in lineage and securing succession. As discussed in section I.4, although analysis of the ownership of the manuscript witnesses of these texts confirms that they were generally owned by members of the nobility, one should recognise that public reading practices may have made them accessible to broader audiences who may also

---

[320] Neil Cartlidge, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997); Conor McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England: Law, Literature, and Practice* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004).

have interest in such matters, for example in the context of inheritance. The nobility also read and owned devotional literature, including hagiographies. Hagiography has different priorities to *chansons de geste* and romances, as the genre uses saints as models of Christian behaviours and devotion. Marriage is not as central to this genre, as it arguably is to romance, but there are examples of saints who reject marriage in order to dedicate their lives to God. As a result, marriage has a different significance, which affects its representation. Meanwhile, the *CNN* treats serious, as well as more light-hearted topics, through comedy. Although the tales often praise behaviours, such as adultery, that defy legal and moral guidelines, this offers another perspective from which medieval literature approaches issues related to marriage.

This chapter is in three sections. The first discusses the development of the consensual model of marriage and how wedding ceremonies are represented in text and image. The second section considers the diriment impediments to contracting a valid marriage in order to reveal a range of literary responses to these impediments and to questions of choice and consent. The final section explores representations of divorce and separation. This chapter is not an exhaustive list of particular types of marriage or impediment in these narratives; rather, it looks more widely at how and why they raise marriage-related issues. This chapter does not consider representations of sex in marriage, which is discussed in chapter V, except in the examination of sexual incapacity in section IV.2.3 because sexual incapacity, as an impediment, is important to the discussion of canon law on marriage.

IV.1: Making and Representing Medieval Marriage

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, canonists and theologians were particularly interested in what constituted a valid marriage. Both consent and consummation were necessary to make a valid marriage, but there were considerable discussions about the relative importance of these two elements. A marriage that held a prominent place in

debates about consummation was that of the Virgin Mary and Joseph, because canonists had to consider whether the rules would have rendered their unconsummated marriage invalid. Consequently, there was considerable debate over the nature and role of consent and consummation. This section charts the development of the consensual model of marriage to show how medieval marriageswere formed, from the thirteenth century onwards, before discussing how medieval literature portrayed wedding ceremonies and the contracting of marriage.

Writing in the early twelfth century, Ivo, bishop of Chartres (1090–1115), stated that marriage was made valid by consent alone and supported his argument with Pope Nicholas I's (858–867) letter to the Bulgarians, which reads: 'Yet if this consent alone is perchance lacking in the wedding, all the rest, even if it is consummated with intercourse itself, is in vain, as the great teacher John Chrysostom attests, who says: *Not intercourse but will makes marriage*'.[321] This letter makes consummation secondary to consent. It will become clear that such questions have been the subject of much consideration and discussion within the medieval Church. One of the most important developments in canon law was Gratian's *Concordia discordantium canonum*, more commonly called the *Decretum,* which was completed around 1140. The *Decretum* brings together previous law collections and other legal texts, highlighting, and attempting to resolve, the contradictions found therein.[322] The *Decretum* included a large number of laws regarding marriage: on contraction, dissolution, and remarriage as well as rulings on behaviours during marriage. Although Gratian referred to earlier canonists and theologians, such as Ivo of Chartres, his comments on previous laws and decrees showed that his views did differ significantly from them with regard to the

---

[321] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 187. *MGH Epistolae 6, Epistolae Karolini aevi 4*, ed. by Ernest Perels, trans. by W. L. North (Berlin: Weidmann, 1925), pp. 568–600 <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/866nicholas-bulgar.asp>. Italics are from source.
[322] R. H. Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, ed. by John H. Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 76.

perceived importance of consummation in marriage. He argued that: 'Sed sciendum est, quod coniugium desponsatione initiatur, conmixtione perficitur. Unde inter sponsum et sponsum coniugium est, sed initiatum, inter copulas est coniugium ratum'.[323] He considered marriage to be a two-stage process in which consummation ratifies the exchange of consent.[324] This means that, whilst consent had an essential role in marriage, a marriage was only considered indissoluble after consummation.[325] He stresses the primacy of consummation at other points in the *Decretum*, citing both Ambrose, bishop of Milan (374–97), and Pope Leo I (440–61) to support his argument.[326]

Gratian's foregrounding of consummation in marriage was not approved of by later commentators. One can see that there is a clear shift in focus from the mid-twelfth century onwards when present consent is increasingly considered as that which validates a marriage. However, this does not mean that consummation was seen as unimportant or not necessary in consensual models of marriage. In book four of his *Sententiae*, Peter Lombard (1096–1160), although a theologian rather than a canonist, discusses canon law on marriage and presents a consensual theory, which built upon Hugh of St. Victor's theory of marriage formation.[327] In distinction twenty-seven, Lombard states that 'the efficient cause of marriage is consent, not any kind but that

---

[323] C. 27 q. 2 c. 34. All translations of the *Decretum*, the *Liber Extra*, and the *Clementines* come from *Marriage Canons from the Decretum of Gratian and the Decretals, Sext, Clementines, and Extravagantes*, trans. by John T. Noonan, Jr, ed. by Augustine Thompson (1993). Available at <http://legalhistorysources.com/Canon%20Law/MARRIAGELAW.htm>. 'It must be understood that marriage is begun by betrothal and consummated by intercourse. Hence between the betrothed there is marriage, but only as to its beginning; between the joined, there is a ratified marriage'.

[324] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 235.

[325] Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England*, p. 3; Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 236. C. 27 q. 2.

[326] C. 27 q. 2 c. 35; C. 27 q. 2 c. 16; C. 27 q. 2 c. 17.

[327] *Love, Marriage, and Family in the Middle Ages: A Reader*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2001); André Gouron, 'A la source de la distinction entre *verba de presenti* et *verba de futuro*: théologiens ou canonistes?', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law*, 28 (2008), 97–118 (p. 103); Anthony Musson, 'Images of Marriage: A Comparison of Law, Custom and Practice in Medieval Europe', in *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. by Mia Korpiola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 118–46 (p. 58).

expressed by words, not in the future tense but in the present tense'.[328] Lombard concludes that a verbal exchange of present consent is all that is needed to make a valid marriage and that those who exchange future consent are not yet married, only betrothed.[329] This became the primary basis of the consensual model of marriage. However, the consensual model also built upon Lombard's idea of future consent: an exchange of future consent followed by a further act of consent, such as consummation, also made an indissoluble marriage.[330]

The consensual model of marriage was adopted by many including Pope Alexander III (1159–81), one of the most influential figures in the development of law on marriage, who synthesised existing legislation and championed consensual theory.[331] The dual nature of consensual theory reveals a hierarchy of consent: future consent was deemed to be less binding than present consent which is why it must be combined with consummation, or another act of consent, in order to form a valid marriage. James Brundage comments that Alexander III desired to make marriages easier to contract but more difficult to dissolve.[332] His interest in enforcing marriage contracts is shown in his ruling about conditional consent. He foregrounds validating a marriage over any pre-agreed conditions: in a letter to the Archbishop of Palermo, he states: 'Qui iuravit aliquam id uxorem accipere, si centum sibi donaverit, centum non datis, recipere non tenetur, nisi postea pure consenserit, vel eam cognoverit'.[333] The structure of the letter does not indicate a preference about how a marriage should be validated, as his use of 'vel' ('or') presents the two options as equal alternatives, but the letter does demonstrate consensual theory.

---

[328] Murray, *Love, Marriage, and Family*, p. 172.
[329] Ibid., pp. 172–73.
[330] Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England*, p. 4.
[331] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, pp. 333–34.
[332] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, p. 333.
[333] X 4.5.3, 'One who swears to take a woman as a wife if she gives him a hundred, is not bound to take her if she does not give the hundred, unless later he consented absolutely or had relations with her'.

The discussion of consent and consummation continued in the early thirteenth century with the completion of the *Liber Extra*, a compilation of canon law, in 1234. This was commissioned by Pope Gregory IX (1227–41) and completed by Raymond of Peñafort (1175–1275). Raymond collated previous collections, removing ambiguities and contradictions as well as reorganising this material according to subject.[334] Not all previous decrees and rulings were included, as Gregory IX requested that contradictory laws be omitted from the text.[335] By this date, consensual theory had become established, as is reflected in Book IV, *titulus* I 'De Sponsalibus et Matrimoniis', of the *Liber Extra*: 'Matrimonium solo consensu contrabitur'. [336] The *Liber Extra* places greater emphasis on consummation in marriage than one might expect. If one compares two rulings from *titulus* I it is clear that present consent is not always privileged: Alexander III stated 'Sponsalia de futuro, si secuta est copula, non solvuntur per sponsalia de praesenti; alias tenent sponsalia de praesenti, nisi per metum, qui potuisset cadere in conflantem virum, contracta sint'[337] and a ruling by Innocent III (1198–1216) in February 1198 argued that 'Sponsalia de futuro, etiam iurata, solvuntur per secunda sponsalia de praesenti, non autem per secundo de futuro'.[338] This suggests that consummation is what ratifies a marriage and that it overrules any exchange of consent, be it present or future. A similar decision is made in the case of a man who had exchanged future consent and wished to enter a monastery: he was required to contract the marriage, in order to fulfil his vow, but to enter the monastery before consummation.[339] Such rulings show that sexual intercourse was considered to have an

---

[334] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 94.

[335] Catherine Rider, 'Between Theology and Popular Practice: Medieval Canonists on Magic and Impotence', in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 53–66 (p. 57).

[336] X 4.1.1, 'Matrimony is contracted by consent alone'.

[337] X 4.1.15, 'Betrothal for a future date followed by intercourse may not be dissolved by a betrothal in the present'.

[338] X 4.1.22, 'A betrothal for a future date, even under oath, is dissolved by a later betrothal in the present, but not by a second betrothal for a future date'.

[339] X 4.1.16.

influence on the status of a marriage. Consummation is therefore presented as a fundamental part of marriage, without which the union would not be valid in the eyes of the Church. Present consent makes a marriage but most of the rulings discussed here either subtly or openly stress the importance of consummation. This is echoed in legal discourse around sexual incapacity, which will be discussed in section IV.2.3, as having a consummated marriage would affect a couple's ability to separate.

Although the consensual model only required present consent to be exchanged for a marriage to be considered as valid, the Church encouraged the laity to exchange consent within a framework of ceremonies and procedures. Marriages that were contracted outside of the prescribed process were judged *clandestina*, and, despite being valid, were presented negatively, with the *Decretum* citing Pope Evaristus (c. 99–c. 103) that such marriages would be considered 'adulteria, uel conturbernia, uel stupra, aut fornicationes'.[340] Synodal statutes echoed the prohibitions of clandestine marriages found in decretal collections but also outlined punishments. The statutes of Eudes de Sully, bishop of Paris (1196–1208), stated that priests who blessed a clandestine marriage should be excommunicated, and at the synod of Albi (1230) it was decided that a fine of ten *sous* was to be paid as punishment by any couple who married clandestinely.[341] Despite rulings at Lateran IV (c. 51) and at diocesan level, clandestine marriages continued to take place, as can be seen in court records.[342] In the Ely consistory court, 89 out of the 122 marriage cases presented between March 1374 and March 1382 were clandestine.[343] Michael M. Sheehan notes that a considerable number of these cases (sixty-one) related to bigamy and suggests that the consensual model of

---

[340] C. 30 q.5 c.1, 'considered adultery, concubinage, debauchery, or fornication'.
[341] C. 30 q.5 c.1. Pontal, I, 88 (no. 97); Pontal, II, 28 (no. 56).
[342] Tanner, I, 258.
[343] Sheehan, pp. 228; 249.

marriage allowed marriages to be contracted in private thereby making it easier to contract a bigamous marriage.[344]

The minimum requirements for a formal marriage, meaning one that was not clandestine, were that the upcoming marriage be announced and that consent must be exchanged in front of a priest.[345] However, there were traditions that commonly took place as part of a marriage ceremony but which did not affect the marriage's validity. These ranged from how one should approach the exchange of consent to its location and the ceremony that should surround it. The statutes of Eudes de Sully comment that 'Matrimonium cum honore et reverentia celebratur et in facie Ecclesiae, nec cum risu et jocose', stressing that marriage ceremonies must be taken seriously and with appropriate respect.[346] From the twelfth century, betrothals and wedding ceremonies were often held outside the church door, before a mass was heard inside. The start of the century also saw the development of marriage liturgy.[347] Peter Lombard stated in book four, distinction XXVIII, that there were certain actions that were appropriate for weddings, although he did not provide an exhaustive list. Two of Lombard's suggestions were that the bride's parents should hand her over to her husband and the marriage should be blessed by a priest.[348] The section condemning clandestine marriage in the *Decretum* makes other suggestions, recommending that families provide a dowry, and that the bride be accompanied by bridesmaids at the wedding ceremony. Like Lombard, it advises that the couple receive the blessing of a priest.[349] The wording of this *capitulum* places considerable emphasis on these actions being customary. There

---

[344] Sheehan, pp. 251–52.

[345] Pontal, I, 178–80 (no. 63); Sheehan, p. 236; Norman P. Tanner and Sethina Watson, 'Least of the Laity: The Minimum Requirements for a Medieval Christian', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32.4 (2006), 395–423 (p. 411).

[346] Pontal, I, 66 (no. 40), 'le marriage doit être célébré avec honneur et respect devant l'Église et non pas avec des ris et des jeux' (Pontal, 67).

[347] Cartlidge, p. 13. The importance of exchanging consent by the door of a church is frequently made in French synodal statutes. Such statutes often state other elements, like the presence of witnesses.

[348] Murray, *Love, Marriage, and Family*, p. 173.

[349] C. 30 q. 5 c.1.

were clearly variations in advice offered on appropriate ceremony and there may have equally been such different practices across period, region, status, or wealth; however, this remains speculation without examining evidence of contemporary weddings.

Customs and practices in wedding ceremonies had legal and/or symbolic significance. Explorations of how such events are described in literary texts can show how writers were depicting contemporary practices and using them to explore certain ideas about the unions being described. Despite the importance placed on the setting, blessing, witnesses, and customs of a wedding, literary texts do not often describe ceremonies in great detail. Texts in this corpus often move quickly over the ceremony itself, drawing the reader's attention to other events, tournaments, and banquets that accompany weddings of the nobility. However, medieval manuscript illuminations provide a second portrayal of wedding ceremonies that can either match or depart from the accompanying text. Examining text and image together allows for a comparative reading of representations of medieval marriage and weddings so as to reveal the priorities of narrator and artist. The discussion demonstrates the importance artists placed on the blessing and the exchange of consent, representing visually by the joining of hands, which signalled to the viewer that these were valid marriages made between consenting individuals.

Narratives such as the *Comte d'Artois* have a particular interest in describing the elaborate festivities, such as dances, dinners, and jousts, and the luxurious dress of the wedding party. Similar descriptions are also found in other texts, such as on lines 7135 to 7155 of *Yde et Olive*. In *Yde et Olive*, the narrator describes the entertainments: 'Li jongleour ont grant joie mené: / Harpes, vïeles i oïst on sonner, / Dames, pucelles treskier et caroller / Et ces dansiax noblement demener' (*Yde et Olive*, ll. 7150–53). In this case, the focus on the celebrations is more than a simple display of wealth. The celebratory scene is contrasted with the fear and sadness of Yde/Ydé. Ydé is unsure

how to proceed with the wedding night without their cross-dressing being discovered, and reveals in their prayers, before agreeing to marry Olive, how they feel they cannot escape and that they may be killed if they reveal their assigned gender (ll. 7102–30). Ydé's emotional response to their upcoming marriage is also shown when, at the church, Ydé is described as 'Ydes est devant, grans souspirs a jetés' (ll. 7141). Ydé's prayers raise the question of force and fear, leading one to consider whether they are giving real and meaningful consent to the marriage. This concern about consent, force, and fear is echoed elsewhere in this text with the discussion of Ydé's potential incestuous marriage as well as with Ydé's mother, Clarisse's experience of force in *Clarisse et Florent.*[350] It is notable that in addition to the long descriptions of festivities quoted earlier, the scenes of Ydé's deliberations through prayer and the moment of wedding itself are also separated by descriptions of wedding celebrations. This functions to highlight the concerns of the protagonist in contrast to the jubilation of others as well as building up suspense for the following scene between the newly married Ydé and Olive.

The narrator of the *Comte d'Artois* also emphasises the rich and beautiful clothing of the wedding party, noting that everyone 's'en para et vesty pour plus embellir la feste' (p.19). The only details provided about the wedding ceremony itself are that it was to be held at 'l'eglise de Saint Vaast' and that the future Countess was 'mignotement atournee' (p. 19). Although little information about the exchange of consent is given in the text, more importance is placed on this in the manuscript miniature that illustrates the scene. The miniature in BnF, MS fr. 11610 is preceded by the rubric 'Cy devise comment le conte d'Artois espousa la fille du conte de Boulongne en sa ville d'Arraz' (fol. 13r). This image depicts the bishop at the centre of the frame, with his left hand holding the hands of the couple and his right hand blessing the

---

[350] As discussed in sections IV.2.1 and IV.2.2.

marriage. The Count stands to the left of the bishop and the Countess/Phlipot to the right surrounded by witnesses. This bears similarities to the illustrated legal manuscripts discussed by Anthony Musson, who notes that such scenes are often set up in this way with a priest linking the hands of the couple and providing a blessing, surrounded by witnesses.[351] The Wavrin Master depicts the luxurious clothing mentioned in the narration by dressing the spouses and the wedding party in fur-trimmed outfits. The Countess' mantel is held open by an attendant, allowing the viewer to see the robe in more detail. While the narrator foregrounds the events surrounding the marriage of the Count and Countess, the artist of BnF, MS fr. 11610, the Wavrin Master, chooses to depict the ceremony itself (fig. twenty-seven).

The Wavrin Master portrays another wedding ceremony in a manuscript of *Olivier de Castille* in a very similar way to that from figure twenty-seven. Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 470 contains two miniatures that depict the betrothal and marriage of Olivier of Castille to Elaine, the daughter of the king of England.[352] Unlike in the *Comte d'Artois*, the betrothal scene is depicted visually on fol. 116v. This miniature shows the King seated on a throne in the centre holding hands with Olivier to his left and Elaine to his right (fig. twenty-eight). The positioning of the figures in the

---

[351] Musson, 'Images of Marriage', pp. 132–33; Research has addressed images of law and justice both within legal and literary manuscripts; for example, see Barbara Morel, *Une iconographie de la répression judiciaire: le châtiment dans l'enluminure en France du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris: Édition du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2007); Anthony Musson, 'The Power of Image: Allusion and Intertextuality in Illuminated English Law Books', in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Yolanda Plumley, Giuliano Di Bacco, and Stefano Jossa (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), pp. 113–26; Madeline Caviness, 'Giving "the Middle Ages" a Bad Name: Blood Punishments in the "Sachsenspiegel" and Town Law Books', *Studies in Iconography*, 34 (2013), 175–235; Brown-Grant, Hedeman, and Ribémont, eds., *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France*. However, more research specifically centred on comparing representations legal ceremonies and procedures across legal and literary contexts could be very fruitful.
[352] These images and the artistic interpretation of the Wavrin Master and Loyset Liédet are compared in Rosalind Brown-Grant, 'Personal Drama or Chivalric Spectacle? The Reception of the "Roman d'Olivier de Castille et d'Artus d'Algarbe" in the Illuminations of the Wavrin Master and Loyset Liédet', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 123–39 (pp. 131–37).

register foregrounds the king's role in the match.[353] The crown and throne emphasise the king as lord, reminding the viewer of his position as father and regent. The rubric that accompanies this image uses the terminology of gifting: he 'don(n)a sa fille la bele elaine a olivier de castille en guerredon' (fols 116r–16v).[354] The rubric, like the image, draws one's attention to the king's active role as giver, compared to Olivier and Elaine's passive roles as recipient and gift. The miniature that depicts the wedding bears a striking resemblance to that in BnF, MS fr. 11610 (fig. twenty-nine). The way in which the figures are presented in these miniatures places greater emphasis on the spouses and the bishop rather than a third party (as in fig. twenty-eight). Figure twenty-nine shows the bishop holding the joined hands of Olivier and Elaine and blessing them; his clothing and orientation are also similar to that in figure twenty-seven. The bride and groom wear similar clothing and crowns in figures twenty-seven and twenty-nine, with the bride's mantle being held open in both. The similarities between these figures demonstrate that the Wavrin Master had a distinctive way of depicting marriage ceremonies, one that foregrounded the nuptial blessing and the joining of the spouses' hands. That the bride and groom are placed in the foreground of the image underlines that the marriage is between two individuals, but by including the priest as a central figure these images also signal the Church's important role in the making of a marriage.

Representing the exchange of consent and the bishop's blessing is important for the *Comte d'Artois*. This is because the marriage plays a central role in the plot and the text's didactic purpose. The marriage between the Count and Countess is the catalyst for much of the action as the narrative shows the Count leaving his wife, and the Countess then attempting to make him return to her; this separation will be discussed further in IV.3. The narrative only concludes once marital harmony has been restored. The

---

[353] Rosalind Brown-Grant, 'Personal Drama or Chivalric Spectacle?', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon, p. 136.
[354] The term 'guerredon' is also used in the context of betrothal in *Yde et Olive*, as is discussed in section IV.2.2.

positive presentation of the Countess/Phlipot's behaviour and the heavy criticism of the Count's desertion of his spouse serves to encourage a model of marriage that celebrates fidelity, companionship, and devotion.[355] It is therefore important for the moral of the romance that the validity of the marriage cannot be questioned, which means that details regarding the betrothal, marriage, and consummation become more significant. The text describes the couple's betrothal: 'La belle fu acordee au noble conte qui tant en fu parassouvy de leesse que nul ne sçavroit dire le disme de la joye qu'il fist' (*Comte d'Artois*, p. 16). The discussion of the marriage's consummation is more ambiguous, but the meaning is still clear: 'celuy (…) se coucha avecq s'amye ou il eult son desirie et a meismez du bien que lez amoureux souhaident' (p. 21). This romance places greater emphasis on these different stages of marriage than most of the other texts in this corpus in order to present a model of marriage that promotes companionship and spousal devotion.

The lives of cross-dressing saints often feature betrothals, weddings, or contracted marriages at their beginnings. These marriages are generally undesirable for the saints, who often wish to remain unmarried and maintain their virginities, but familial obligation is often at play in these narratives. Some saints, like Eufrosine/Esmarade, forgo marriage altogether; others, such as Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, leave a wedding without consummating the marriage, or, as in the case of Theodora/Theodore, leave a consummated marriage in order to enter a monastery. Despite the role that marriage has in the lives of Sts Pelagien, Theodore, Eugenia/Eugene, and Esmarade, it is rarely reflected in the illuminations that accompany them. Pelagien is the most commonly depicted cross-dressing saint, but most of these illuminations focus solely on their death. The exception to this rule is the miniature found on folio 136r of Morgan, MS 672–75 (675) (fig. thirty). Like many of

---

[355] Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages*, p. 154.

the cross-dressing saints represented visually in this codex, the register is divided into two scenes: on the left is the situation that was the catalyst for cross-dressing and on the right the saint is portrayed in their monastic identity. In the case of figure thirty, the artist shows the Pelagien contracting a marriage, which is then compared to Pelagien as monk. In this way, the miniature reminds the reader that Pelagien gave up a worldly life, represented by the wedding, for a religious life. These two lives are contrasted visually through the bright colours and rich clothing of the wedding party compared to the monochrome and unembellished monastic habits of the nuns. The saint is shown contracting a marriage at the church door, with a priest blessing the union and witnesses surrounding the couple. This is similar to how the wedding ceremonies from the *Comte d'Artois* and *Olivier de Castille* were represented in BnF, MS fr. 11610 and Ghent, MS 470. Each of these three manuscripts was completed in the Burgundian Netherlands in the last half of the fifteenth century. Consequently, this may represent a typical wedding scene from this period – or perhaps its idealised realisation. These three scenes meet most of the recommendations made by canonists about wedding ceremonies: the inclusion of the priest for the nuptial blessing; the witnesses; the ceremonies' taking place in front of the church door; and the joining of hands, which, as Musson states, symbolised the union of one flesh.[356] By portraying marriage ceremonies that meet the Church's recommendations in figures twenty-seven, twenty-nine, and thirty, the artists illustrate that the marriages contracted are legitimate and legally valid.

From an analysis of these images, it is evident that the symbolic acts of the joining of hands and giving of rings physically represent the exchange of consent. This symbolism is not limited to illustrations of literary texts or manuscript miniatures. Rings and, more commonly, the joining of hands are also frequently used in images of

---

[356] Musson, 'Images of Marriage', p. 127.

marriage ceremonies in legal manuscripts.[357] They are also found in other representations of saints getting married, such as in paintings showing the mystical marriage of St Catherine of Alexandria.[358] This was the most commonly depicted mystical marriage by medieval and early modern artists, such as Michaelino da Besozzo (1370–1456), Correggio (1489–1534), and Pinturicchio (1454–1513).[359] In such paintings of the mystical marriage, St Catherine and Christ are generally shown joining hands, often with Christ, as a child, either holding a ring or placing one onto the saint's finger (figs thirty-three, thirty-four, and thirty-five). Catherine and Christ are frequently accompanied by the Virgin Mary as well as by other saints. Catherine's mystical marriage is not shown in the *Légende dorée* manuscripts, but this is not to be expected because her mystical marriage is not included in the *Legenda aurea* version of her Life.[360]

Whilst ceremonial acts were not a legal requirement for a marriage to be valid, they were encouraged by the Church and were often represented in literary texts, manuscript illuminations, and artworks. The extravagant celebrations of feasting and dancing described in the *Comte d'Artois* and *Yde et Olive*, and the luxurious dress of the wedding party in the image of Pelagien's wedding are not representative of all late medieval weddings. Such spending was likely to have been limited to the nobility and there are many historical examples of such weddings; for example, the wedding of Charles le Téméraire and Margaret of York in 1468 had nine days of ceremonies and events including feasting and jousting.[361] However, inclusion of such details in

---

[357] Musson, 'Images of Marriage', p. 128.

[358] For discussion on versions of Catherine of Alexandria's Life in which she is described as a Bride of Christ; see, Katherine J. Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), pp. 107–10.

[359] Carolyn Diskant Muir, *Saintly Brides and Bridegrooms: The Mystic Marriage in Northern Renaissance Art* (London: Harvey Miller, 2013), p. 17.

[360] Fourteen out of nineteen miniatures include Catherine with the wheel or with the wheel and other attributes. For more details, see; Maddocks; Christine Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), p. 4.

[361] Murielle Gaude-Ferragu, *Queenship in Medieval France, 1300–1500*, trans. by Angela Krieger (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 29.

narratives and manuscript miniatures is more than simply a reflection of wealth and social status. The descriptions of festivities in these texts draw attention to the marriage, which is often important for the development of the storyline and the presentation of a particular message to the reader, such as the validity of the Count and Countess of Artois' marriage in *Comte d'Artois*. The visual depictions of wedding ceremonies complement the textual representation, but often emphasise the bride and groom by placing them at the centre of the frame thereby highlighting the role of individual consent in contracting marriage. The placement of the couple, combined with the artists' use of the joining of hands as a visual signifier of consent, focusses the viewer's gaze on them and their actions, reminding the viewer that consent is what makes a marriage.

IV.2: Diriment Impediments: Force, Incest, and Sexual Incapacity

Although medieval marriages required only an exchange of present consent to make them valid, a number of conditions, if present, could render the marriage contract invalid or illegal. These conditions fall into two categories, termed diriment or impedient impediments; only diriment impediments – like force or incest – made a marriage invalid, whereas impedient impediments made a marriage illegal but did not allow it to be dissolved.[362] The validity of marriages and the potential for annulment is important for many of the texts in this corpus as they show individuals trying to remove themselves from unwanted marriages or, conversely, trying to reconcile marriages that one spouse is trying to dissolve. Diriment impediments were often related to issues of consent, such as nonage (contracting a marriage under the age of consent) and fear.[363] It is important to note that diriment impediments had to have existed when the marriage was contracted, since any later occurrence would not be taken into consideration.[364] Three impediments are frequently found in narratives involving the cross-dressing

---

[362] Donahue, p. 18. For a full list and discussion of all diriment and impedient impediments see pp. 18–33.
[363] Ibid., p. 19.
[364] Ibid., p. 18.

motif: force, incest, and sexual incapacity, with texts often including more than one.

These impediments are not always presented as such; sometimes they are explicitly

discussed as being problematic, but often they are part of a larger issue about consent.

<u>IV.2.1: Force</u>

A forced marriage is when an individual is coerced into exchanging present consent.

Although there was a certain amount of pressure from family or third parties that

canonists thought individuals should be able to withstand, instances or threats of

physical violence were considered as force.[365] This section discusses what could be

considered an act of consent and the role these acts had in cases of forced marriage in

this literary corpus.

Gratian includes a number of different cases concerned with forced marriage and

cites Pope Hormisdas (514–23), Pope Urban II (1088–99), and Ambrose, Bishop of

Milan (374–97), as authorities on the topic. Hormisdas' argument is that married

couples should be of both one body and one mind: 'Quorum unum futurum est corpus,

unus debet esse et animus: atque ideo nulla invita est copulanda alicui'.[366] Gratian

quotes Ambrose, stating 'id est quem sibi aptum putaverit, illi nubat; quia inuitae

nuptiae solent malus prouentus habere'.[367] These authorities focus on the importance of

consent for a happy married life. Gratian includes the specific circumstances of the

cases that Urban II and Hormisdas were discussing; both are cases of family members

forcing a child to marry a partner of the family's choosing. For many, marriages would

be negotiated by family members but, through an increased emphasis on individual

consent, the Church endeavoured to reduce the family's power over marriage and

---

[365] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 545.
[366] C. 35 q. 2, c.3, 'Those who will be of one body should be of one mind; thus, none should be joined to another against her will'.
[367] C. 31 q. 2, 'Let her marry the man she thinks fit for her, because forced nuptials usually turn out badly'.

increase its own control.[368] Alexander III's synthesis of marriage laws stressed the

importance of free consent and the individual in marriage negotiations in order to

minimise the ability of third parties to force or influence the choice of partner.[369]

Although the consensual model may have reduced third parties' ability to force

marriage on someone, Brundage states that families would often use different methods

to influence their children's choice of spouse, such as adding conditions to

inheritance.[370] For example, in the forced marriage case *Haryngton c Sayvell* in York

(1443), Christine Haryngton was forced to marry the brother of her deceased husband to

avoid seizure of her dower lands.[371] Witnesses testified that Haryngton was crying

during the wedding service and the marriage was unconsummated, and consequently

declared invalid.[372] In its focus on consent, the consensual model of marriage privileges

the consenting individuals and their will over that of others. In this way, this model, at

least theoretically, stopped forced or coerced marriages, with force being a stated

diriment impediment to marriage.[373]

The *Liber Extra* includes four decisions by Alexander III that reveal what he

understood as force. Coercion is clearly depicted as a diriment impediment to marriage,

for example 'Quum locum non habeat consensus, ubi metus vel coactio intercedit,

necesse est, ut, ubi assensus cuiusquam requiritur, coactionis materia repellatur'.[374]

However, he argues that 'Non omnis violentia impedit contractum matrimonii' because

'quum inter vim et vim sit differentia'.[375] He does not clarify the different types of force

nor spell out at what point it might affect an individual's ability to consent to a

---

[368] John T. Noonan, 'Marriage in the Middle Ages: 1. Power to Choose', *Viator*, 4 (1973), 419–34 (p. 429).
[369] Donahue, pp. 271; 277.
[370] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, p. 276.
[371] Donahue, pp. 166–67.
[372] Ibid., p. 167.
[373] Ibid., pp. 166–67.
[374] X 4.1.14, 'Since fear and compulsion void consent, all sources of compulsion must be removed when someone's assent is required'.
[375] X 4.1.6, 'Not all force impedes a contract of matrimony'; X 4.1.6, 'there are different levels of force'.

marriage. Alexander III also states that courts should provide a safe place for a woman if she may be at risk of violent attack.[376] It is clear that he understands violence to be force; yet, it is not clear what else can be defined as such. This theory is supported by Donahue's findings that, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the majority of successfully dissolved forced marriages included the threat of violence.[377] A clear example of this is the *Kaerauroez c Sartouville* (1385) case, in which the plaintiff and defendant were accosted in Argenteuil, a town north-west of Paris, by a group of men with swords who forced Jeanne Sartouville to consent to marrying Kaerauroaz. This marriage was successfully annulled.[378] The lack of clarity on what constitutes force makes it difficult to develop a clear picture of how coercion was understood during this period.[379] Despite this, these laws do indicate that free consent was considered important.

Incidences of forced consent did occur, however, and canonists considered that subsequent acts of consent rendered a marriage valid. For example, if one party was forced to marry but then proceeded to cohabit with their spouse or consummate the marriage, then such behaviours were considered acts of consent despite the possibility that they may have also been forced.[380] Alexander III's letter regarding a forced marriage is clear on this point: 'quamvis undecim annos *adhuc* habens, ab initio invita fuisset ei tradita et renitens, tamen, quia postmodum per annum et dimidium sibi cohaitans consensisse videtur, ad ipsum est cogenda redire'.[381] The use of the verb *videre*, meaning to appear or to seem, again highlights that consent is assumed based upon actions, even though several *capitula* later the *Liber Extra* states: 'Solo consensu

---

[376] X 4.1.14.
[377] Donahue, p. 167.
[378] Ibid., p. 316.
[379] Ibid., p. 22.
[380] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 545; Peter Lombard shared this idea in Book 4, distinction XXIX (Murray, *Love, Marriage, and Family*, p. 175).
[381] X 4.1.21, 'Although she was still eleven years old and was given to him unwilling and objecting, she did live with him afterwards for a year and a half. So she appears to have consented and should be compelled to return to him'.

legitimo contrahitur matrimonium, sed verba requiruntur quoad probationem, et intellige: vel alia signa aequipollentia'.[382] That courts considered certain behaviours as indicators of consent was not solely in relation to forced marriage cases. In the rules around future and conditional consent, sexual relations were considered acts of consent, meaning that if one had sexual intercourse with one's future spouse the marriage would be valid.[383]

The condemnation of forced marriage, and its potentially negative consequences, that is found in canon law is similarly present in medieval literature. In this corpus, marriage is often forced upon characters assigned female at birth. The examples of forced consent in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, *Clarisse et Florent*, and *Yde et Olive* are never actualised because consent is not exchanged, and no wedding ceremonies take place. Therefore, these relationships might be better identified as forced betrothals. In each case, an individual has no choice in their partner and often expressions of dissent are ignored by those around them. In *Tristan de Nanteuil*, Aye/Gaudïon is given the hand of Aiglentine.[384] This is in recognition of Gaudïon's martial prowess. The sultan Galaffre approaches Aiglentine, who also happens to be Gaudïon's daughter-in-law, about the marriage, stating: '"Belle," dist le soudant, "foy que je doy Mahon, / Ottroyee vous ay ung chevalier de non' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 1823–24). His choice of the verb *octroyer* presents Aiglentine as an object to be given, revealing her lack of agency. This is reinforced when Aiglentine refuses the match, declaring: 'Ains me lairoye ardoir en ung feu de charbon, / Que je prengne nul home, s'il ne croit en Jhesum' (ll. 1836–37), but the sultan responds immediately with '"Sy ferés," dist soudant, "ou vous veullés ou non"' (l. 1838). Despite this evident lack of consent, they proceed with the betrothal.

---

[382] X 4.1.25, 'Lawful consent alone will contract matrimony, but verbal expression is required as proof''; the other signs mentioned here appear to relate to Alexander III's response regarding how people who are deaf and mute can contract marriage.

[383] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 533.

[384] Aiglentine is married to Gui, who is the son of Aye/Gaudïon and Ganor. Aiglentine is the mother of Tristan de Nanteuil.

Before Aiglentine learns of Gaudïon's cross-dressing and Gaudïon's plan to return her to her husband Tristan, Aiglentine reiterates again that she does not consent to the marriage.[385] Aiglentine tells Gaudïon 'Et se vous m'espousés, sur sains vous suis jurans, / Ja bien ne vous feray, ne ne seray couchans / Avec vous nu a nu' (ll. 1949–51). The wording of her statement is revealing as, by formulating it as 'if you marry me', Aiglentine places herself in the passive, object position, showing that she knows she may not have a choice. However, Aiglentine retains some of her agency by declaring that she will not consummate the marriage. Although, as discussed earlier, consummation was not necessary for a marriage to be declared valid, it was nonetheless much easier to declare a marriage invalid if consummation, which could be viewed as retroactive consent, had not taken place. Therefore, theoretically, if the forced marriage between Gaudïon and Aiglentine took place but was not consummated, it was possible for the union to be annulled by an ecclesiastical court.

Clarisse et Florent and *Yde et Olive* are both sequels to *Huon de Bordeaux*, with the characters Clarisse and Florent being Yde/Ydé's parents. An instance of forced consent is found at the start of both of these texts and in each case is the catalyst for the action, but *Yde et Olive* is examined in the section on incest because the force used is in relation to a consanguineous marriage. In *Clarisse et Florent*, Clarisse is a member of the nobility, assigned female at birth, who has received many offers of marriage. Consequently, the reader is told that there is going to be a gathering of all of her suitors. A traitor, Brohart, tricks Clarisse into leaving with him by offering her an opportunity to choose her husband. He persuades Clarisse by saying:

> "Gentix pucelle, bien serés marïee.
> Mout a grant joie dedens Blaives menee
> Pour vostre amour
> (…)
> Quant vous venrés en la sale pave

---

[385] Any marriage between Gaudïon and Aiglentine bigamous because both have spouses who are alive. This aspect of the potential union is not commented upon by the narrator.

U cil .iij. roi ont fait lor assamblee,
Au quel des .iij. qui le mix vous agree,
Cis vous ara a moullier espouse" (*Clarisse et Florent*, ll. 3593–605).

Brohart promises Clarisse the chance to make her own choice of husband, but rather than ensuring that the marriage is consensual, he does the opposite by kidnapping Clarisse thereby taking away Clarisse's ability to choose. It is never made entirely clear if Brohart means to marry or seduce Clarisse. When describing Brohart's intentions, the narrator uses the verb *vergonder*, to dishonour; whereas Clarisse states that he wants to kill them 'me veut detrencier' (l. 3716); however, the bandits, who save Clarisse, do raise the question of marriage. When the bandits address Brohart, they say 'Or vous convient sentir de no mestier, / Cel marriage convient desparillier' (ll. 3724–52).

Although the purpose of Brohart's abduction of Clarisse is not obvious, the existence of force is. Brohart beats, threatens, and refuses to feed Clarisse unless they consent to him. As discussed earlier, violence, threatened or realised, was an indicator of forced consent, and Brohart's threats also include verbs related to consent: 'Vous avéz tout alé, / Se vous ne faites toute ma volenté' (ll. 3653-55) and 'J'ai du pain aporté. / Jou t'en donrai, consent ma volenté' (ll. 3668–69). This episode explores consent in various forms as Clarisse is offered greater choice in her future and marriage but this is just a ploy to force consent through fear. This text promotes the idea of an individual's greater involvement in choosing their spouse, which is reflected through Clarisse's excitement on hearing Brohart's plan – she is described as feeling 'grant joie' (l. 3606) – but also the negative representation of Brohart and his use of fear to force consent. He is frequently referred to as a traitor or a felon whereas those whom he hurts, Clarisse and Bernart, are described in positive terms, serving as points of contrast. This desire for greater personal choice is reflected in the text's conclusion as Clarisse is married in a love match to Florent.

The examples of force discussed here do not lead to an exchange of forced present consent. Although neither Aiglentine nor Clarisse is forced into marriage, it is clear from the texts that without the intervention of others the marriages would have gone ahead. The real possibility of coerced marriages and the threat of attack, or other forms of force, is shown here. Although both these characters' agency is constrained, Aiglentine retains some power in this situation by refusing to consummate a forced marriage. There is no discussion of canon law on marriage or the validity of forced marriages in either text. Rather than exploring the laws on marriage, these texts' representation of forced marriage illustrates one way in which consent and freedom of choice can be impeded. In these examples, forced betrothal is presented negatively by the characters and narrators, and by showing individuals being able to escape from an unwanted marriage these narratives stress the importance of personal choice. Those at risk of a forced marriage in *Tristan de Nanteuil* and *Clarisse et Florent* require the assistance of others to stop their marriages: from Gaudïon in the former and from the bandits in the latter. Although this reveals a lack of agency, Aiglentine and Clarisse are not passive figures, rather they resist or protest the marriages despite great personal risk. In this way, these texts advocate choice and consent.

IV.2.2: Incest

The condemnation of forced marriages and consent being coerced through fear is similarly found in narratives that involve incestuous relationships or marriages. Canon law was concerned with incest in all its forms, as it was a diriment impediment that covered a variety of types of affinity that recognised familial, marital, and spiritual bonds, but this literary corpus has a significant interest in consanguinity. A major change in the law on consanguinity occurred in 1215. Prior to this, the foundational rule on consanguinity was 'Usque ad septimam generationem nullus de sua cognatione ducat

uxorem.[386] This ruling was changed at Lateran IV when the number of prohibited

degrees of kinship was reduced from seven to four.[387] This change would have had a

large impact on the contemporary society as a wider group of potential spouses would

have become available for those seeking marriages.

Constance Bouchard argues that, during the tenth and eleventh centuries,

individuals were trying to avoid making consanguineous marriages and genealogical

tables were frequently drawn up by the nobility to ensure that potential marriages were

not within the forbidden degrees.[388] However, there are a number of well-known

conscious consanguineous marriages that took place in the twelfth century, with the

most famous example being that of Louis VII of France (1120–80) and Eleanor of

Aquitaine (1122–1204), and consanguinity also provided a convenient way to annul

marriages.[389] Bouchard therefore suggests that the change in prohibited degrees at

Lateran IV occurred in order to minimise the number of married couples who were

using canon law to invalidate marriages that were no longer desirable. However,

Richard Helmholz notes that court records do not show a large number of annulments

on the grounds of consanguinity, which suggests that it was not an easy process to

achieve nor were annulments guaranteed.[390]

Issues central to legislation regarding consanguineous marriages were the

spouses' awareness of any affinity between them as well as the condition of the

marriage. Elizabeth Archibald notes that marriages in which the couple were unaware

that their marriage was incestuous and where they were more distantly related tended

not to be dissolved.[391] The length of time married was also taken into consideration; for

[386] C.35 q. 2, c. 1, 'No one may take a wife related to him within the seventh degree'.
[387] Tanner, I, pp. 257–58.
[388] Constance B. Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Speculum*, 56.2 (1981), 268–87 (p. 272).
[389] Constance B. Bouchard, pp. 268–69; Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*, pp. 42–45.
[390] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 542.
[391] Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*, p. 43.

example, Pope Gregory I (590–604) decreed that long-term marriages should be maintained even if the individuals are related in the fifth, sixth, or seventh degrees, which were, at the time, prohibited degrees of kinship.[392] Awareness of affinity was reflected in the punishment of incestuous unions. In the *Decretum*, it is ruled that individuals should be excommunicated for as long as the consanguineous relationship was maintained, and almost two centuries later a similar judgement is made in the *Clementines* (1317). A ruling from book four of the *Clementines* deals with consanguinity, stating that 'Scienter contrahens matrimonium in gradu consanguinitatis vel affinitatis prohibit (…) excommunicatus est ipso iure'.[393] The placement of *scienter* at the beginning of the ruling foregrounds knowledge, stressing that conscious consanguinity was considered sinful. Despite the rulings regarding automatic excommunication, cases from England, France, and the Burgundian Netherlands illustrate that other punishments were applied. In the case of *Officie c Heymens et Nath* (1445) from the court in Cambrai, the couple married despite rumours of consanguinity and, although the impediment was not proven, the couple were fined because they were 'deliberately ignorant'.[394] Punishments for consanguineous marriages also include dissolution of the union, such as in *Officie c Gheerts en Bertels* (Brussels, 1451), and fines, as in *Officie c Sceppere et Clercs* (Cambrai, 1439).[395] The abundance of rulings in the *Decretum* and the *Liber Extra* reveals that the Church was greatly concerned about consanguinity and affinity. However, the number of cases brought to court was low.[396] Sheehan, in his discussion of the consistory court in Ely, noted that there could have been more potentially consanguineous marriages than the records show, but that the

---

[392] C. 35 q. 8 c.1.

[393] Clem. 4.1.1, 'One knowingly contracting marriage within the prohibited degree of consanguinity or affinity (…) is automatically excommunicated'.

[394] Donahue, p. 585.

[395] Ibid., pp. 556–57; 579.

[396] Ibid., pp. 570–77. Incest cases were as follows: 16/178 at York, 14/88 at Ely, 1 in Paris, 15/157 in Brussels, and 19/207 in Cambrai.

discovery of an impediment after the banns were read might have led to the marriages being abandoned.[397] Court records reveal that despite the reduction of the prohibited degrees from seven to four, incestuous marriages continued to be contracted from 1215 onwards ; however, the low number suggests that the laity understood that marriages should not be contracted between those with bonds of consanguinity or affinity.[398]

The examples of consanguinity presented in this corpus of literary texts show different reactions to incestuous relationships, potential or actualised, often showing disapproval of or at least an awareness of the issues with such unions. However, there is one mention of incest between siblings that is not portrayed as problematic but rather is stated plainly by one of the characters with no indication of the act's illegality. In *Floris et Lyriopé*, Floris, whilst cross-dressed as their twin Florie, enters into a romantic relationship with Lyriopé. After the couple's first kiss, Lyriopé asks where Floris learnt to kiss, to which Floris responds '"Dame," fait il, "que je l'apris / Quant je delez mon frere fui, / Et por garder jus delez lui!' (*Floris et Lyriopé*, ll. 1025–27) before going on to praise love between men and women over queer love.[399] As Jane Gilbert argues, it is only queer love that is described as a 'fole amor' (l. 1030) in this text, whilst all other relationships between men and women, including incestuous ones, are celebrated as being superior to it.[400] This mention of an incestuous relationship is passed over without comment about the transgressive nature of sexual activity between siblings by either the narrator, or Floris and Lyriopé. There is no further reference to a sexual relationship between Floris and Florie elsewhere in the text; the only details provided are found in these three lines. Floris' use of 'frere' rather than a forename in these lines foregrounds

---

[397] Sheehan, p. 236.

[398] For a discussion on a fourteenth-century consciously consanguinous marriage from York and the couples' knowledge of the law; see, Frederik Pedersen, 'Did the Medieval Laity Know the Canon Law Rules on Marriage? Some Evidence from Fourteenth-Century York Cause Papers', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994), 111–52 (pp. 138–40).

[399] See section V.4 for more on this text's discussion of sex and desire.

[400] Gilbert, pp. 54–55.

the incest for the reader, meaning that there is no way one could misunderstand Floris'

explanation. These lines also indicate that the incestuous relationship was consensual,

which makes this relationship different from many of the other instances of

consanguinity in this corpus.[401] Most are either non-consensual or the familial

relationship was unknown at the time and any sexual activity is later regretted.

There are five other cases of incest in *Tristan de Nanteuil* and *Yde et Olive* that

are discussed in this section: each presents an incestuous relationship of different

degrees of kinship. All the consanguineous relationships presented are of four degrees

or less and therefore, if they became marriages, would be deemed invalid on grounds of

consanguinity both before and after 1215. In *Tristan de Nanteuil*, one consanguineous

relationship is between the eponymous Tristan and his cousin Clarisse. This sexual

relationship leads to the conception of a son, Garcion. Neither party is aware of their

kinship until later, at which point they are both saddened by their behaviour. When

Clarisse learns of Tristan's identity, the text comments 'quant la dame l'entent, c'est

cheüe pasmee' (*Tristan de Nanteuil,* l. 10323) and then she directly addresses their

familial relationship by stating to Tristan: 'Vo cousine germaine avéz huy vïolee' (l.

10326). Tristan's response shows a greater understanding of canon law on incest, as he

comments: 'Le peché y est grans huy en ceste journee, / Mais sachés que la chose doit

estre pardonnee, / Car ly ung ne ly aultre sy n'en savoit rien nee' (ll. 10329–31). He

indicates here that their consanguineous union, their 'meffait' (l. 10336), could be

'pardonnee' because they committed the offence unknowingly. As discussed in relation

to ruling 4.1.1 from the *Clementines*, the individuals' awareness of incest is important,

but this does not mean that there were no repercussions in such cases. For example,

canon fifty-one from Lateran IV states that the children of consanguineous or

---

[401] There are examples of consensual incestuous relationships in other medieval literature. For more details, see; Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*.

clandestine marriages, which were contracted either in ignorance or with full awareness, should be considered illegitimate.[402] It is notable that when the text explains that Clarisse and Tristan have conceived a son, Garcion's future exploits are foreshadowed, and he is introduced as the 'plus hardi bastart' (l. 10294).[403] Although it is not clarified whether this illegitimacy is a result of his parents' consanguineous union, because the union was extra-marital, or both, he is often referred to as a 'bastart', thus reminding the reader of the circumstances of his conception.

The way in which this scene is presented does place greater emphasis on consanguinity than on adultery; neither character raises the issue that Tristan is already married to Aiglentine, nor does the narrator. In this narrative, no characters assigned male at birth are portrayed negatively by the narrator when they commit adultery. There is therefore a hierarchy present in *Tristan de Nanteuil* by which incest is considered as significantly more problematic than adultery. In this scene, consanguinity is portrayed negatively and there is no suggestion that this sexual relationship will continue. Their familial relationship is reiterated by the repeated use of 'cousin' and 'cousine' in both direct discourse and the narration, and the scene ends with Tristan promising to save Clarisse from her unwanted marriage. In the space of sixty lines, the relationship has moved from one of desire to one of family as the narrative foregrounds their kinship.

The second and third instances of an incestuous marriage in *Tristan de Nanteuil* are not discussed in the same way as that of Tristan and Clarisse. The first is the potential marriage between Gaudïon and Aiglentine discussed earlier. This marriage would be invalid for several reasons: the marriage was a case of forced consent; both were already married; the couple are within the prohibited degrees of kinship because Aiglentine is Gaudïon's daughter-in-law; and they were both assigned female at birth.

---

[402] Tanner, I, 258.
[403] It is also foreshadowed that Garcion would convert to Christianity, taking the name Greveçon, at the end of the narrative (ll. 10414–15).

The impediment of affinity is used to develop the relationship in a positive manner as Gaudïon, after informing Aiglentine of their cross-dressing and their familial connection, proposes a future consent marriage in order to keep Aiglentine safe from other forced marriages. The threat of incest is thereby minimised, with focus instead being on the impediment of force. Similarly, in the third example consanguinity is not presented as a hindrance to the relationship. This relationship is the most developed and is between first cousins Blanchandine/Blanchandin and Clarinde. The narrator announces that they are relations when describing Clarinde's reaction to seeing the cross-dressed Blanchandin for the first time:

> La fille du soudant que Clarinde on nommoit
> Sur tous les chevaliers tengrement regardoit
> Blanchandine la belle qui sa cousine estoit
> Germaine au roy son père, mais ne la congnoissoit,
> Ainçois pour chevalier moult bien el le tenoit (ll. 12939–43).

This is the only time that their blood relationship is mentioned, even though later they become betrothed and then married. Like with Tristan and Clarisse, Clarinde is presented as unknowing. She is not aware of Blanchandin's identity and therefore does not realise that they are related. However, this point is not raised by the narrator nor Clarinde herself here or later in the text. Consequently, the question of awareness is not discussed further. Despite there being many similarities between their relationships, Tristan's consanguineous sexual encounter with Clarisse is presented in a much more negative way than the marriage between Blachandin and Clarinde. In both cases, the unions were between first cousins, one of the parties was married, and both result in the birth of a child. The problem of incest receives less attention in the discussion and presentation of Blanchandin and Clarinde's relationship because of the questions of transgender identity and queer desire raised through Blanchandin's cross-dressing.[404]

---

[404] These are discussed in section I.1.4 and V.4 respectively.

These issues are depicted as more significant than Blanchandine's marital status or their familial connection.

These three examples show how the impediment of incest was treated and used in various ways in *Tristan de Nanteuil*. That this impediment is depicted with such frequency in this text, and in such different ways perhaps indicates that there was no single response to this issue. Although canon law had clear rules on degrees of kinship, this text offers positive, negative, and neutral representations of consanguineous relationships and only in a single instance was incest considered an impediment to a future relationship. By no means does this text advocate incest, but it reflects how incestuous relationships can occur through a lack of awareness of kinship or affinity.

Knowledge of incest is one of the most significant differences between the consanguineous relationships and marriages found in *Tristan de Nanteuil* and that in *Yde et Olive*. In *Yde et Olive*, Florent is shown actively seeking a marriage that he knows is incestuous whereas *Tristan de Nanteuil* presents individuals entering into consanguineous relationships in ignorance.[405] Unlike Tristan and Clarisse, who lament their incestuous union, King Florent chooses to marry his child because Yde/Ydé reminds him of his late wife (also named) Clarisse. The father/child incest motif was common in medieval French literature, and there has been much critical discussion of texts that include the 'flight from incest' motif.[406] The 'flight from incest' motif begins to appear more frequently in twelfth- and thirteenth-century literature, with some early examples being Beaumanoir's *Le Manekine* and Matthew Paris's *Vitae duorum Offarum*

---

[405] Brewka, pp. 406–48. After the death of Clarisse, King Florent decides to marry their child Yde/Ydé.Ydé cross-dresses in order to escape and becomes a squire to an unnamed knight. Ydé decides to travel to King Oton's court to tell him of a Spanish plot. On arriving at King Oton's court, the King takes them into his employment. After Ydé discovers a planned attack, Ydé leads the army to victory. Oton promises Ydé his daughter Olive's hand in marriage. The couple marry and after Ydé tells Olive their assigned gender. They are overheard, leading Oton to command Ydé to bathe. Suddenly, divine intervention transforms Ydé's gender.

[406] Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*, pp. 147–83; See Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 179–214 for a discussion of previous scholarship and analysis of three versions of this motif.

which were both completed around 1250.[407] On the function of 'flight from incest'

motif, Archibald argues that as the daughter 'cannot play an active role, and must

remain virtuous; flight from incest keeps her at centre stage without requiring her to do

anything but suffer and endure'.[408] Whilst this may be true in other examples of the

motif, this is only partly the case in *Yde et Olive*. Ydé does lament the situation at points

during the narrative, but they are generally presented in active roles, finding

employment as a squire and showing repeated instances of considerable marital

prowess. Only at King Oton's court at the moment when Ydé is offered Olive's hand in

marriage is Ydé shown as feeling trapped and unable to take control of the situation.

Considering the more general issues raised by 'flight from incest' motif, it is often

found in romances and brings to the fore questions about marriage, lineage, and identity

and in this way these texts can connect with debates on marriage.[409] *Chansons de geste*

have a similar interest in dynasty and succession, therefore, we can also find discussion

of issues related to marriage, such as incest and consent, in epics like *Yde et Olive* and

Tristan de Nanteuil.

A large proportion of *Yde et Olive* is dedicated to the discussion of Florent's

desire to marry Yde and this includes the reaction of Florent's councillors. Both the

councillors' and Yde's responses emphasise Florent's sin and point out that the

marriage would be against Christian doctrine. The councillors state: 'Tous crestïens

Jhesucris commanda / C'a son parage ne se mariast pas: / Tu ne le pues avoir dusques

en quart, / U autrement bougrenie sera' (*Yde et Olive*, ll. 6486–89). This response

explicitly refers to the change in canon law at Lateran IV, yet it does not attribute it to

ecclesiastical legislation but rather to Jesus himself. There are other references to law,

---

[407] Archibald, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination*, pp. 147–49.

[408] Ibid., p. 180.

[409] Ibid., p. 159; Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 180–81, Brown-Grant argues that texts used the motif for a variety of didactic reasons and consequently, present the motif, power, and desire in different ways.

such as when a councillor comments 'Gardons la loi que il (God) nous commanda: / Cis iert honnis qui le trespassera.' (ll. 6783–84) and 'A ceste loi que Dix nous a donnee, / Dedens infer sera t'ame dampnee' (ll. 6401–402). These references stress the consequences of breaking God's laws using the vocabulary of sin and penance: it would be 'bougrenie' and 'honnis'. The use of the term 'bougrenie' is significant because of its associations with sodomy. The term *bougre*, from which *bougrenie* originates, came from *Bulgarian* and referred to Paulician and Manichean heresy that had grown popular in Bulgaria before moving west into Italy and southern France.[410] By the thirteenth century, *bougre* was used to refer to both heretics and sodomites, with John Boswell noting that accusations of sodomy were often made in trials for heresy.[411] It is important to stress that sodomy encompassed a wide range of behaviours and acts, with William E. Burgwinkle defining it as that which 'disrupts established law, systems of classification, religious, ethnic, and gender boundaries'; consequently, Florent's incestuous desire for Ydé would come under the broad category of sodomy.[412]

Ydé's response to the news of their upcoming marriage to Florent echoes the reaction of the councillors': 'trop est grans peciés!' (*Yde et Olive*, l. 6536). The councillors and Ydé's strong negative reaction to Florent's desire reflects not only that the marriage would be in the first degree and was therefore considered the most problematic, but also that Florent knowingly wanted to enter into such a marriage. As discussed earlier, awareness of affinity or not investigating rumours of incest was punishable by excommunication and fines. Despite Florent's councillors making him aware of canon law on consanguineous marriage, he ignores their protests and the Church rulings and proceeds with the marriage. This makes his offence even greater.

---

[410] Derrick Sherwin Bailey, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longman, 1955), p. 127.

[411] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 283–84; Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, p. 71.

[412] Burgwinkle, p. 1.

Ydé's response also indicates a lack of consent: Ydé does not wish to marry their father

and is betrothed against their will. Ydé considers themselves a prisoner and decides to

flee: 'La fille au roi est forment esmarie; / Toute nuit pleure, si s'apelle caitive' (ll.

6547–48). Like their mother Clarisse, Ydé is almost forced into a union that they do not

desire, but this is not simply a repetition of events from *Clarisse et Florent*. Instead, the

impediment of force is combined with the impediment of consanguinity to create a

much more problematic union. By showing a family member attempting to force

another's consent, this instance of forced betrothal underscores the unequal power

dynamic in this relationship and the possibility for this dynamic to be manipulated.

Making the potential marriage consanguineous reemphasises to the reader the negative

consequences of privileging one person's consent over another's.

Ydé is not given the opportunity to refuse the marriage to their father. The text,

therefore, raises a concern about lack of choice, particularly for women, in marriage

negotiations. This concern is reflected again later in the narrative when Ydé is

contracting a marriage with Olive. Sarah Kay states that women in *chansons de geste*

are often used as gifts and they '(personify) social transactions'.[413] This is true of

Olive's initial role in *Yde et Olive* as King Oton originally offered Olive to Ydé as a

reward: she would be Ydé's 'guerredon' (l. 7060). However, Ydé requests that Olive

explicitly consent to the marriage, meaning that Olive is given a voice and a choice in

her marriage that she would not otherwise have had. This narrative therefore uses

generic tropes before subverting them for its own aims: it uses the 'woman as gift' motif

to emphasise the importance of consent. Ydé's interest in consent is notable because

Ydé is forced or coerced into two marriages. Ydé is unable to refuse this marriage to

Olive, without risking their standing in Oton's court, just as they could not refuse the

---

[413] Sarah Kay, *The* Chansons de Geste *in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) p. 235.

earlier forced betrothal to Florent. When Oton offers his daughter's hand, Ydé initially declines stating that they are too poor to marry. However, after Oton responds, disbelievingly, 'Avéz vos dont mon enfant refusé / Et le païs que vous ai presenté?' (ll. 7071–72), Ydé immediately changes their response and makes Olive's consent a condition for the marriage: 'Ains le prendrai volentier et de gré / Se il li plaist et il li vient en gré. / Faites errant la pucelle mander' (ll. 7074–76). The use of the future 'prendrai' indicates that Ydé is declaring future consent and 'Se' on the following line illustrates the condition. This leads to a scene of contract negotiation that shows King Oton formally requesting Olive's consent, which she happily provides. The way in which consent is foregrounded in *Yde et Olive* is similar to the presentation of forced consent in *Clarisse et Florent*, discussed in section IV.2.1, which highlights the importance of consent and freedom of choice. It is not surprising that similar issues are tackled in both narratives given their textual associations: both are sequels to *Huon de Bordeaux* and are found in the same manuscript, and there is a familial connection between the characters. Ydé and Clarisse's cross-dressing echoes each other, making the reader consider the similarities between the characters' circumstances and their reasons for cross-dressing. Although consanguinity does not appear in both, each raises concerns about force, consent, and agency in marriage negotiations.

These texts show an understanding of canon law on incest, on numbers of prohibited degrees, and the question of knowledge, but they also engage closely with issues of central importance to the consensual model of marriage. Although many of these relationships present consanguinity negatively, and such relationships are often described using a vocabulary of sin, their function in these narratives is not solely to discourage such unions. Instead, concerns related to consent and individual choice are emphasised through these unwanted incestuous relationships. This is particularly the case with Gaudïon and Aiglentine, and Ydé and Florent, in which relationships are

forced by older men upon individuals assigned female at birth, thus revealing issues of agency and power.

IV.2.3: Sexual incapacity

Where literary representations of the diriment impediments of force and incest raised issues of consent and power, the discussion of sexual incapacity reveals contemporary responses to sexual dysfunction. Although the consensual model of marriage declared that the exchange of present consent resulted in a valid marriage contract, as discussed in section IV.1, consummation still held an important role. The importance of consummation is also demonstrated by the impediment of sexual incapacity, because of which couples could request that their marriages be annulled.[414] Three different types of incapacity were considered to exist: temporary, permanent, and magical (the latter referring to any incapacity that was believed to have been caused by an individual being bewitched).[415] The legal response to sexual incapacity depended on the type and when it occurred. For example, if sexual incapacity occurred after the marriage had been consummated then the marriage remained valid, but it could be annulled if the incapacity was proven to be inborn or if the partner was unable to consummate the marriage.[416] However, there are some exceptions to this rule. The *Liber Extra* states that if one contracted marriage with a woman knowing that she was unable to consummate the marriage, the marriage should be upheld.[417] This *capitulum* cites Pope Lucius III (1181–85) who declares that, in such cases, husbands should treat their wives as sisters,

---

[414] David D'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 187–88.

[415] For more on magical sexual incapacity; see, Catherine Rider, 'Between Theology and Popular Practice: Medieval Canonists on Magic and Impotence', in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Musson, pp. 53–66; Catherine Rider, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[416] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 291; Constance M. Rousseau, 'The Spousal Relationship: Marital Society and Sexuality in the Letters of Pope Innocent III', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994), 89–109 (pp. 103–4).

[417] X 4.5.4.

indicating that without the chance of procreation the couple should not undertake any sexual activity together.

If a couple wished to annul their marriage, they would need to go to court. Tests to prove sexual incapacity have received significant critical attention and studies have shown that physical tests varied depending on the region.[418] Yet, tests were not the only method of proof that was used in ecclesiastical courts. The *Liber Extra* states that a couple was required to cohabit for three years and both swear, with seven oath-helpers, that consummation was not possible before an annulment could be granted.[419] However, Constance M. Rousseau states that there were inconsistencies in how courts dealt with cases of sexual incapacity and applied the law to real situations.[420] Nonetheless, marriages could be, and were, annulled because of sexual incapacity and texts in this literary corpus present different understandings of and reactions to such incapacities.

There are several relationships in this corpus of texts that consider the issue of consummation, exploring the consequences of when one partner does not wish to or cannot consummate the relationship. Although tale eighty-six from the *CNN* does not include the cross-dressing motif, it brings to the fore the legal ramifications of not consummating a marriage. This tale, purportedly told by Philippe Vignier, the duke of Burgundy's 'escuier de la chambre', tells the story of a young woman who refuses to consummate her marriage because she fears that sexual intercourse would kill her.[421] Her mother, not knowing the reason why the marriage was not consummated, assumes it is because the husband is impotent and decides the marriage should be annulled. The

---

[418] Jacqueline Murray, 'On the Origins and Role of "Wise Women" in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence', *Journal of Medieval History*, 16.3 (1990), 235–49 (p. 240); Jeremy Goldberg, 'John Skathelok's Dick: Voyeurism and "Pornography" in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), pp. 105–23; Bronach Christina Kane, *Impotence and Virginity in the Late Medieval Ecclesiastical Court of York* (York: University of York, 2008), pp. 13–17.
[419] X 4.15.5.
[420] Constance M. Rousseau, 'Neither Bewitched nor Beguiled: Philip Augustus's Alleged Impotence and Innocent III's Response', *Speculum*, 89.2 (2014), 410–36 (pp. 419–20).
[421] Sweetser, pp. 496–501.

couple go to court where the husband refutes the accusation and the girl confesses the truth, after which the judge orders the couple to consummate the marriage.

The mother is the first to raise the question of sexual incapacity, asking her daughter: 'Est il homme pour accomplir le deu a quoy il est oblige par marriage et dont je vous ay baillé la leczon?' (*CNN*, tale eighty-six, p. 498). The daughter replies that they have not consummated the marriage but does not tell her mother why. Consequently, the mother assumes the husband is impotent and her initial response is to seek the judgement of a court on the matter, with the text noting that she was a friend of the judge who was likely to rule in her favour: she 'avoit de bonne accointance de Monseigneur l'official de Roen qu'il luy seroit amy et qu'il favoriseroit a son bon droit' (*CNN*, tale eighty-six, p. 499). This implies that judges and officials could be corrupt, but the official hears the testimony of both spouses before making a ruling. The mother's response suggests that legal intervention was considered the first recourse for marriages in which the couple experienced sexual incapacity. The narrative uses legal vocabulary to show that the characters are well versed in court procedure, but use is inconsistent. For example, the text uses the verb *desmarier*, meaning to separate from a spouse, to describe an annulment. Although the text does not mention certain steps required for an annulment, like an extended period of cohabitation or oath-helpers, it demonstrates a clear understanding that sexual incapacity was grounds for an annulment. The narrator even comments on the extent of the mother's legal knowledge: '(elle) commença a compter la cause de sa fille, et Dieu scet comment elle allegoit les loix que l'on doit maintenir en mariage' (p. 500). The use of the verb 'allegoit' in these lines portrays the mother as an authority. The manuscript miniature that illustrates this tale is found on fol. 177v of Hunter, MS 252 and focusses on the mother's testimony to the official (fig. thirty-one). The miniature is divided into two registers: the one on the left shows the married couple in conversation and the one on the right is larger, showing

the mother and judge conversing in the foreground, with the couple standing behind. The mother, wearing a pink gown and black headdress, is the most prominent figure in this register, and this emphasises her active role in bringing the case to court. It is notable that the left-hand register showing the couple illustrates a conversation, rather than an attempted sexual encounter, but the wife's body language could indicate refusal or rejection. She is shown with her left hand raised with the palm facing her husband and this gesture is often used to visually signal rejection, which can also be seen in figure thirty-two showing Theodora/Theodore rejecting a suitor's advances.[422]

As will also be shown with *Tristan de Nanteuil* and *Ysaïe le Triste,* male sexual incapacity is presented negatively in this tale. The mother is saddened when she hears her daughter's 'doloreuses nouvelles' (CNN, tale eighty-six, p. 499) and the husband is asked to prove 'qu'il estoit homme comme les aultres' (p. 499). This wording indicates that a sexual dysfunction rendered one as different and perhaps had an impact on a man's masculinity as virility and ability to procreate were seen as important to the concept of lay masculinity.[423] These responses portray sexual incapacity as a significant problem and intimate that a marriage should not stand if one partner was unable to consummate the marriage. Bronach Kane notes that, in many court cases, the female partner's desire to have children was often presented in court as a reason why she was seeking annulment.[424] Kane provides the example of a case from York in 1382 in which the plaintiff explicitly states that she married in order to have children.[425] However, in tale eighty-six the mother's reason for wanting a new husband for her daughter was not to allow her to start a family, but rather to ensure that she had a husband who could render the marital debt: 'soiez seure que vous le serez ainçois qu'il soit deux jours de

[422] François Garnier, *Le langage de l'image au Moyen Age* (Paris: Léopard d'or, 1982), p. 175. The image of Theodora/Theodore is discussed in more detail in section V.2.3.
[423] Jennifer Evans, '"They Are Called Imperfect Men": Male Infertility and Sexual Health in Early Modern England', *Social History of Medicine*, 29.2 (2016), 311–22 (p. 312).
[424] Kane, p. 9.
[425] Ibid., p. 9.

ceste heure, et vous feray avoir aultre homme qui si paisible ne vous lairra' (p. 499).

The *CNN* are a collection of tales which often focus on sex which may explain why this

tale places greater emphasis on the role of sex and desire in marriage than on

procreation. Despite this, the tale ends with the successful consummation of the

marriage, but the narrator indicates that the couple's sexual problems may not be

entirely solved. As well as including the jousting metaphors that are used throughout

this tale to describe sex acts, this text concludes with misogynistic comments about the

sexual voracity of women: 'Et par ce moyen nostre gendre vint a chef de sa jousterie,

dont il fut plus tost tanné que celle qui n'y avoit voulu entendre' (p. 501) This tale, and

tale ninety-four from the *CNN*, presents contemporary issues within a legal setting,

showing characters engaging, either voluntarily or not, in legal proceedings to resolve

problems.

    Where tale eighty-six directly discusses sexual dysfunction and the law, *Tristan*

de Nanteuil and *Ysaie le Triste* both present sexual incapacity through a cross-dressing

character's interactions with potential love interests. The behaviour of the four

characters within these narratives shows reactions to sexual dysfunction and therefore

reveals attitudes towards sexual incapacity. In *Tristan de Nanteuil*,

Blanchandine/Blanchandin and Clarinde's relationship includes much discussion of

sexual desire. Blanchandin attempts to delay consummating her relationship

with Clarinde, who repeatedly makes sexual advances towards her. Clarinde is depicted

as highly sexual and the narrative includes several long speeches by her in which she

attempts to seduce Blanchandin:

> Beaus sire chevalier, vous me fetes languir
> Et par vostre beaulté vivre en ardant desir,
> Car oncques de mes yeulx je ne peus mes veïr
> Nul sy bel chevalier qui mieulx me puist souffrir
> Fors vous, mais vo beauté me fait plaindre et gemir (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll.
> 13004–13008).

Blanchandin's reaction to Clarinde's desires is one of concern: Blanchandin is often described as being worried about these advances and is frequently depicted confiding in their about how to manage Clarinde's expectations.

This text raises the question of queer desire through Clarinde's explicitly stated attraction for Blanchandin and her frequent comments on Blanchandin's beauty and the effect that Blanchandin's appearance has on her. Yet, the narrative does not focus on this aspect of their relationship; instead, there is greater emphasis on anxieties regarding consummation. Blanchandin's reaction to Clarinde's desire is not to comment on the potentially transgressive nature of such an attraction. Rather, Blanchandin stresses that they cannot provide the type of sex that Clarinde expects. One scene which demonstrates this is when Clarinde invites Blanchandin to spend the night with her and Blanchandin prays to the Virgin Mary for her help:

> Je vous prie et require sans nulle villenye
> Que je puisse gesir sans estre ravisee
> Delez ceste roÿne qui est sy eschauffee
> Et sur la convoitise d'estre depucellee,
> [...] Car je suis maintenant maisement aprestee
> De fere son vouloir (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 15425–31).

Clarinde's desire to lose her virginity is contrasted with Blanchandin's sexual anxiety through the use of 'maisement aprestee': Blanchandin states that they are poorly prepared to perform this act. The Virgin Mary intervenes and causes Clarinde to remain asleep for the entire night, but Blanchandin also attempts to conceal their body by sleeping on their stomach thereby avoiding Clarinde's gaze. Blanchandin's concerns about Clarinde's expectations are confirmed when Clarinde awakens the next morning and realises that Blanchandin made no attempt to engage in any sexual activity. She launches into a long speech condemning Blanchandin's behaviour, but it is the end of her speech which is of most interest here: 'Oncques dame, je croy, n'ot sy meschant seignour' (l. 15470). Clarinde's description of Blanchandin as a 'meschant seignour' is important as 'meschant' translates as 'defective', 'low quality' or 'mediocre', as well as

'wicked', but it is not clear what this means in the context. It could suggest that

Blanchandin is of low status or has poor chivalric skill but as this is found after

Clarinde's sexual expectations have not been met, it seems more likely that Clarinde is

implying that Blanchandin is impotent. These comments hold additional significance in

this context because of Blanchandin's cross-dressing. These comments could have been

added to indicate Blanchandin is a 'meschant seignour' because they have the clothes

and appearance of a man, but not the genitalia expected. This is reinforced by the scene

after Blanchandin's gender transformation when they bathe publicly, that focusses on

Blanchandin's penis:

> Blanchandins se devest, ne s'y est arrestés,
> Et quant il fut tout nuz, vers la cuve est allés,
> Devant mainte pucelle est nuz dedens entrés.
> La lui paroit le membre qu'estoit gros et quarrés;
> Que bien le vit Clarinda – bien estoit figurés (ll. 16354–58).

Blanchandin's prayer to the Virgin Mary uses vocabulary of heat, which was important

in the medieval understanding of sexual incapacity. Blanchandin describes Clarinde as

being 'eschauffee' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, l. 15427), literally translated as 'heated' or

'inflamed'. This idea of hot and cold relates to contemporary understandings of the

possible cause of sexual incapacity: the theory of the four humours was applied to

sexual incapacity as it was believed that a lack of heat could lead to impotence.[426] There

is evidence that the general public had some understanding of this theory. In a divorce

case from 1410 in York, a William Marton claimed that his wife's (Agnes Selby)

coldness was the cause of her sexual incapacity whereas he claims that he was 'calidus'

– hot – and therefore able to have sexual intercourse.[427] Blanchandin identifies Clarinde

---

[426] Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 236.

[427] David M Smith, *The Court of York 1400–1499: A Handlist of the Cause Papers and an Index to the Archiepiscopal Court Books* (York: University of York, 2003), p. 12; Kane, pp. 8–9. I have not had the opportunity to consult the files on this case, but it is likely that the case was not held in Latin. Consequently 'calidus' may or may not have been a direct translation of the terms used by William Marton in his testimony.

with heat and desire and this use of hot and cold is similarly found some lines later when Blanchandin refuses another seduction attempt. In this episode Blanchandin links the male body with heat and sexual desire: 'Dame, dist Blanchandin, tout ce devés lesser, / Car char d'omme eschauffee ne se peut reffroidier' (ll. 15489–90). This association reinforces the argument that this relationship reveals issues of desire and sexual incapacity.

Sexual incapacity is portrayed differently in *Ysaïe le Triste*; it is invoked in a more comic manner as the cross-dressed Marte introduces the question of incapacity in order to avoid a sexual encounter. Whilst travelling as a minstrel, Marte spends time with an unnamed Dame who reveals her desire for Marte, who then claims to be impotent in order to explain their lack of a beard and to rebuff the Dame's advances. This text allows the reader to see the Dame's reaction to Marte's declaration and this perhaps reveals contemporary reactions to issues of sexual incapacity. As in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, queer desire is hinted at in the narrative. The Dame is portrayed in a similar way to Clarinde as both are depicted as active initiators of sex and being physically affected by the cross-dressing character's appearance. The Dame is described as being unable to eat or drink because she is so distracted by Marte and her desire to gaze upon Marte. This leads to the Dame making a declaration of love: 'Sachiés que je vous aime par amours' (*Ysaïe le Triste*, 277). The addition of 'par amours' emphasises that her love is romantic, rather than friendly or familial, which is further highlighted by the narrator who states that 'tous jours se tenoit la dame pres de Marte et le baisoit et accoloit' (277). As in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, the Dame is presented as playing an active role in their relationship and the cross-dressing Marte has a more passive role. It is important to note the use of gendered language in this scene. The grammatically masculine 'le' is used in reference to Marte reminding the reader of Marte's adopted male role, yet grammatical gender is not used consistently here, and this illustrates

Marte's ambiguous gender.[428] Grammatical inconsistency presents Marte's gender

expression as queer and as not fitting into binary expectations. This, in the context of

the Dame's attraction to Marte's physical appearance, suggests the Dame desires Marte

because of their queer gender expression.

Marte's emotional response to the Dame's attention is of interest: 'Marte en

estoit toute esmarie et abaubie et ne savoit que faire, mais lors s'appense qu'elle dira tel

chose dont elle sera hayë, se elle peut' (*Ysaïe le Triste*, 277). The use of 'esmarie' and

'abaubie' signal Marte's discomfort regarding the Dame's affection and this line reveals

Marte's intention to purposefully make themselves the object of hatred in order to leave.

This not only foreshadows the Dame's reaction to the declaration of sexual incapacity

but also indicates that sexual incapacity may negatively affect people's responses to an

individual. After the Dame questions Marte's age because of their lack of a beard, Marte

claims that: 'je ne me sui mie condicionés comme hons, ainchois ay deffaly a toutez

naturelles œuvres' (277). The irony of Marte describing themselves as not having the

nature of a man is clear but these lines do more than merely provide a convenient

excuse with comic value. In a similar way to how the husband in tale eighty-six from

the *CNN* is presented as not being 'like' other men, Marte brings their own masculinity

into question in a way that emphasises sex and sexual incapacity. Marte presents sexual

intercourse as 'toute naturelles' and then places themselves outside of nature through

the use of the verb 'défaillir', which stresses imperfection or fault. It is not clear

whether Marte is suggesting that they feel no sexual desire or that they are unable to

have sexual intercourse; yet it is evident that, whatever the issue is, it is permanent.

Unlike other cross-dressing characters, such as Eufrosine/Esmarade, who cross-dresses

as a monk, Marte is not identified as a eunuch either by the narrator or by self-

---

[428] This inconsistency of grammatical gender is also commonly found in the Picard dialect and typically Picard forms are found throughout this text (*Ysaÿe le Triste*, ed. by André Giacchetti (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1989), p. 14).

identification, which suggests that their inability to have sexual intercourse is due to an unidentified, permanent incapacity. This is emphasised when Marte hints that their sexual incapacity is congenital: after stating 'je ne me sui mie condicioniés comme hons', Marte claims, when they say 'mez freres (sont) que moy' (277), that Marte's brothers share this incapacity. This distinction was important in canon law as married couples were required to prove that impotence was permanent before an annulment could be granted.[429]

The Dame's reaction to Marte's declaration is important. The lines 'sy se trest en sus et se teut, et gaires ne demoura que le chevalier revint' (*Ysaïe le Triste*, 277) indicate an element of disgust or discomfort because the Dame no longer wishes to speak with or be near Marte. The Dame's actions suggest a man's inability to consummate a relationship renders him unwanted or perhaps redundant and this may provide some indication of contemporary attitudes towards sexual incapacity. At the very least, these lines reveal anxieties about reactions to permanent sexual incapacity and how this might negatively affect an individual's sense of masculinity and ability to marry. Permanent sexual incapacity was grounds to annul a marriage and it also precluded remarriage. Ivo, bishop of Chartres (1090–1115), and Burchard, bishop of Worms (1000–25), stated that in such cases the non-impotent partner could remarry but the impotent partner could not.[430] These ideas were shared by later canonists such as the Parisian Decretists who considered that only inborn impotence, discovered after the exchange of present consent, could only dissolve a marriage.[431] It is then not surprising, given medieval literature's frequent interest in marriage and succession, that examples of permanent sexual incapacity would be introduced and the responses of various characters to sexual incapacity highlighted.

---

[429] X.4.15.1; X.4.15.5; X.4.15.7.
[430] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 202.
[431] Ibid., p. 291.

Tale eighty-six from the *CNN*, as shown above, depicts an annulment request brought to court on the grounds of sexual incapacity. Although the court case does not include all prerequisites for such a case, nor are any oaths or proof presented, the tale does demonstrate an awareness of the law and how it might be applied in the case of incapacity. This text presents sex as an important part of a marriage and shows that the ability to consummate a relationship was an essential requirement for a spouse, which is the reason why the court case was initiated by the mother. *Ysaïe le Triste* and *Tristan de Nanteuil* take a different approach to discussing sexual incapacity. These narratives use cross-dressing to explore anxieties around sex and the consequences of revealing dysfunctions. The sexually forward Clarinde and Dame serve as catalysts for the discussion of sex and sexual incapacity, and the reaction of both of these women to their lovers' inability to consummate a relationship offers a potential insight into contemporary attitudes towards male sexual incapacity. Although this inability stems from the cross-dressing character's assigned sex rather than from any incapacity, this lack is used to raise questions regarding dysfunction, masculinity, and desire.

IV.3: Divorce and Separation

The previous section examined diriment impediments, how they could affect the formation of marriages, and how they were used in literature to discuss concerns about consent and desire. There are other texts in this corpus that, instead, centre the narrative around the dissolution of marriages. This section introduces the types of divorce available during the late Middle Ages and the situations in which divorce was permitted before considering the instances and treatment of divorce and self-divorce found in this literary corpus.

Divorce *a vinculo* was the medieval term used to describe an annulment; such a divorce stated that a marriage was invalid and had been since its contraction.[432] This

---

[432] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 540.

type of divorce could be sought in the case of a diriment impediment, such as the

impediments of incest, force, and sexual incapacity discussed earlier, but Helmholz

states that the most frequently stated reason for seeking a divorce *a vinculo* was pre-

contract, meaning at least one party had contracted an earlier marriage.[433] An example

of a divorce *a vinculo* is seen in tale eighty-six from the *CNN*, discussed above, where

the mother of the wife seeks an annulment of the marriage on grounds of the diriment

impediment of sexual incapacity.

Another type of separation was divorce *a mensa et a thoro*; in such cases, the

couple were no longer required to live together or pay the marital debt, but neither

spouse could remarry.[434] These different types of divorce show that it was possible,

within a narrow set of permitted circumstances, for married couples to legally separate.

Helmholz and Pedersen note that the number of divorce cases was low in English courts

and Donahue explains that divorces *a mensa et a thoro* were generally only granted in

cases of adultery, domestic violence or cruelty, and the success rate was poor.[435]

However, the situation is different in Paris and the Burgundian Netherlands, where

separation cases were much more common. Donahue cites the statistics from the

consistory court in Paris: from November 1384 and September 1387, a quarter of the

marriage cases brought to court were for separation (102 cases) and in at least fifty-five

of these cases separation was granted.[436] Monique Vleeshouwers-Van Melkebeek finds

in the courts of Brussels, Cambrai, and Tournai, between 1430 and 1481, three hundred

cases of divorces *a mensa et a thoro*, again highlighting that separations were frequently

sought.[437] Over seventy percent of the cases sought in the Paris court were for

---

[433] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 551.
[434] Ibid. p. 540; McCarthy, *Marriage in Medieval England*, p. 140; Sara M. Butler, *Divorce in Medieval England: From One to Two Persons in Law* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 33.
[435] Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England*, pp. 134–35; Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, pp. 540–41; Donahue, p. 60; Butler, pp. 15–16.
[436] Donahue, pp. 534–35.
[437] Musson, 'Images of Marriage', pp. 86–87.

separation of goods.[438] This differed from divorce *a mensa et a thoro* in that one's spouse could still demand the conjugal debt, but the couple were not required to cohabit; the statistics suggest that this type of separation was more commonly granted and therefore may explain why it was sought over divorce *a mensa et a thoro*.[439]

It is important to note that not all couples may have decided to get legally separated but instead engaged in consensual self-divorce, which Helmholz argues might go some way to explaining the low number of divorce cases in England.[440] He suggests that couples may decide to end a marriage because it was invalid or no longer desired without seeking legal intervention.[441] Records from Cambrai show that such practices occurred in the Burgundian Netherlands: there are fourteen *ex officio* cases for unauthorised separation, of which twelve couples were fined but granted a separation.[442] The extent to which couples engaged in unauthorised separation or self-divorce cannot be known as, unless they were brought to the attention of ecclesiastical courts, such behaviour would not be recorded.[443]

Another issue that was frequently debated in canon law was whether a marriage was dissolved if one spouse entered a religious order, as seen in the Lives of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien and Theodora/Theodore.[444] James Brundage states that separation of married couples in order for one to enter a religious life was recognised by canonists in the reform era. The consent of both spouses was essential in such circumstances, and the spouse who did not enter an order was not able to remarry.[445] In the *Decretum*,

---

[438] Donahue, p. 534.
[439] Such separations were requested in cases on cruelty, mismanagement of property, and inability to cohabit (Donahue, pp. 535–37).
[440] R. H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Holmes Beach, Fla: Gaunt, 1986), p. 59; Butler, pp. 4–5.
[441] Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, p. 541.
[442] Donahue, p. 542.
[443] Butler, p. 35.
[444] For a detailed discussion of this issue; see, Patrick Nold, *Marriage advice for a Pope: John XXII and the power to dissolve* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
[445] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 202. Brundage places the reform era between c. 1000– c. 1140, and discusses this era in chapter five of *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*.

Gratian includes thirteen *capitula* on this matter and, like the canonists and authorities who came before him, Gratian considered consent as an essential requirement. He states that mutual consent is required for one spouse to enter an order and, once vows of continence are made, they would not be required to render the conjugal debt.[446] Many of the authorities who discuss this issue, such as Pope Gregory I (590–604), Augustine (354–430), and Pope Nicholas I (858–67), state that consent is required in order to ensure that the other spouse does not commit fornication by remarrying or having sexual intercourse.[447] Although Gratian cites these views, he does not mention avoiding fornication, and instead stresses the importance of mutual consent.[448] However, there are instances which Gratian suggests would not require the mutual consent of both parties: he states that only unilateral consent is needed for betrothed couples.[449] The term he uses for betrothed is *sponsi* and this requires some clarification as it could refer to a couple who had exchanged future consent or to those who had exchanged present consent but who had not consummated the marriage. Gratian's meaning can be understood as the latter because he cites the example of the hermit Macarius who leaves his wedding celebrations before consummation in order to live a life of solitude.[450] The debates around whether unconsummated marriages could be dissolved in order to enter a monastic community continued throughout the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, with a consultation, involving fifteen members, taking place at the papal court in 1322 to discuss the issue.[451] The ongoing discussion of the issue underscores that canonists continued to grapple with the role of consummation in marriage.

---

[446] C. 33 q. 5 d. p. c. 11.
[447] C. 27 q. 2 c. 21, C. 27 q. 2 c. 22; C. 27 q. 2 c. 24; C. 27 q. 2. c. 25; and C. 27 q. 2 c. 26. Although there were generally no constraints on remarriage after a divorce *a vinculo*; however, in cases of permanent sexual incapacity the spouse with the dysfunction may not be able to remarry.
[448] C. 27 q. 2 d. p. c. 26.
[449] C. 27 q. 2. d. p. c. 26.
[450] C. 27 q. 2. d. p. c. 26.
[451] Rousseau, 'The Spousal Relationship', pp. 99–102; For a discussion of the papal consultation; see, Nold, xx–lxxxix.

The life of the hermit Macarius is similar to the plot of the life of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien. The saint is introduced as a young noble who refuses to be seen by men in order to keep their chastity and honour; despite this, the text states that 'elle fust requise de marriage d'un noble jeune homme' (*Légende dorée*, p. 967). Pelagien's desire to remain chaste, coupled with the use of the verb 'requise', stresses that they do not want to marry. This is reinforced when, on the wedding day, Pelagien cries over the impending loss of virginity. The narrative goes on to explain that, after the wedding ceremony, 'elle se garda de son mari' (p. 967) before cutting their hair, cross-dressing, and adopting the name Pelagien. This is important for the narrative's presentation of the saint's behaviour. Stressing that the marriage was unconsummated not only celebrates the saint's dedication and pledging of their virginity to God but also acknowledges that Pelagien's entry into the religious life is not problematic because, as the marriage was unconsummated, the saint did not require their husband's consent to separate. That neither the husband, nor the marriage, are mentioned again after this point illustrates that the separation was successful and that Pelagien was able to devote their life to God.

A variation on Pelagien's experience is found in the Life of St Theodora/Theodore. Theodore is the only cross-dressing saint who consummates a marriage before becoming a monk.[452] The Life begins by noting that Theodore is married to a rich man, living in Alexandria. A man in the town is attracted to Theodore and, after Theodore rejects his advances, he sends an 'enchanteresse' to deceive the saint by telling Theodore that God was not aware of any sins that took place at night. In this way, the saint was tricked into extra-marital sex, but Thedore is immediately regretful and becomes a monk in order to repent for this sin. Unlike in the Life of

---

[452] Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 601–605. Theodora/Theodore is married but, despite repeated refusals, is courted by a man. The man sends an 'enchanteresse' to trick Theodore into agreeing to sleep with him. After having had non-marital sex with the suitor, Theodore feels guilty and cross-dresses to enter a monastery. The Devil tries to tempt the saint, and Theodore is falsely accused of impregnating someone. Theodore is exiled with the child but eventually returns to the monastery. Theodore's assigned sex is discovered after death.

Pelagien, the husband has a much larger role in Theodore's Life. The reader learns that he misses his spouse, believing that they may have left him for another man, which highlights that he has not consented to the separation. An angel advises him to go to a particular place to see Theodore. In this scene, their marital relationship is stressed for the reader: their internal monologues refer to each other as 'mari' and 'femme', and Theodore, on seeing their husband, says 'Las, mon bon mari, que je me travaille si que je soye hors du péché que je fis contre toy' (*Légende dorée*, p. 602). This comment emphasises that Theodore's husband still plays an important part in their life because Theodore is living as a monk in order to repent for committing adultery. Theodore does not reject marriage or husband altogether, but rather renounces their adulterous behaviour during marriage. The words used in the angel's message are also significant. The angel tells the husband 'Lieve le matin sus et te tiens en la voie des martirs Pierre et Pol; et celle que tu encontreras sera ta femme' (p. 602). That the angel, who represents God, refers to Theodore as 'ta femme' indicates that the couple are still married in the eyes of the Lord, and consequently, that Theodore's entry into an order has not dissolved the marriage.

The understanding that the couple's marriage contract remains in place is emphasised throughout the narrative. For example, the Devil uses the vocabulary of adultery to condemn Theodore for joining a monastery: 'Putain sur toutes et adultere, tu as laissé ton mari pour venir ça et pour moy despriser' (*Légende dorée*, p. 603). The Devil's condemnation stresses Theodore's relationship with their spouse and the voluntary separation. The Devil tries to tempt Theodore by appearing in the guise of the husband, as can be seen in images from three fifteenth-century manuscripts BnF, MS fr. 242, BSB, MS gall. 3, and BnF, MS fr. 6448 (figures thirty-six, thirty-seven, and thirty-eight), which each show the Devil in human clothing and with his diabolic nature only being signalled to the reader by the inclusion of horns. The Devil, as husband, implores

the saint to return to him. Theodore's response again foregrounds their desire to repent and the fact that they had sinned against their husband: 'Je ne seray plus avecques toy, car le filz de Jehan le chevalier a couche avecques moy et j'en vueil faire ma penitence pource que j'ay peché en toy' (p. 603). Although Theodore maintains their monastic identity until death, the saint is still presented by the narrator as a married woman. After Theodore dies, the angel tells the abbot to find the husband and bring him to the monastery. The husband is repeatedly referred to as Theodore's 'mari' and the narrator explains that he decides to reside in the saint's cell for the rest of his life, which again highlights their ongoing relationship to the reader.[453] Despite Theodore's cross-dressing and monastic life, they are consistently presented as a wife; however, it is notable that their marital status in no way prevents them from dedicating their life to God or performing miracles. In this way, Theodore may serve as an exemplar for the laity. This Life offers an example of a layperson repenting for past sins, performing good deeds, and devoting themselves to God, and its foregrounding of Theodore as wife may have allowed for lay readers to see the saint as a model for their lives.

The depiction of a person cross-dressing whilst they serve penance for past sins can also be found outside the genre of hagiography. The character Helcana/Helcanor from *Cassidorus* has a similar experience to Theodore. After losing their son in the forest, Helcana agrees to live as a hermit for seven years in penance. During this time, having devoted their life to God, Helcanor develops strong healing skills and completes miraculous cures. Like Theodore and Pelagien, Helcanor is also accused of impregnating a young woman and is sent into exile. However, the end of Helcanor's cross-dressing episode is more appropriate for the romance genre as their spouse Cassidorus learns about the betrayal, they are reunited, and Helcana returns to her role

---

[453] This idea that a grieving family member decides to live in the cross-dressing saint's monastic cell is also found in *Eufrosine*. In this text, Eufrosine/Esmarade's father Pasnutius, after learning of Esmarade's identity moments before Esmarade's death, decides to remain in their child's cell until death.

as Empress.[454] One of the most significant differences between Theodore and Helcanor is that the former left their husband without seeking his consent whereas Helcanor, because of a forged letter purportedly from Cassidorus that asks her to leave, believes that they are acting according to their husband's wishes. Helcanor is depicted as both a devout hermit and a dutiful spouse, but Theodore is portrayed as being more concerned with their own soul and repentance for adultery than for their husband. There are considerable similarities between this episode and the lives of cross-dressing monks like Theodore: they show someone taking on a religious cross-dressing identity and demonstrating their religious devotion, and they include the false accusation motif in which the cross-dressed characters are accused of impregnating a young woman, but are eventually proven innocent. Given the links between this cross-dressing episode and those of the cross-dressing saints one might suggest that the saints served as inspiration or source material for the character of Helcana/Helcanor.[455] This example demonstrates how writers incorporated material and motifs found in texts from different genres into their own narratives. The writer of *Cassidorus* may have intended the reader to make connection between Helcana/Helcanor and cross-dressing saints. Whether the readers did or did not associate these characters cannot be known, but, given the large number of copies and translations of the *Legenda* aurea and other versions of the Lives that were produced as well as their inclusion in other medieval works like Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames*, one can speculate that a reader would have known about one or more cross-dressing saints.[456]

---

[454] Cassidorus and Helcana's return to Constantinople is illustrated in five of the six manuscripts containing *Cassidorus* that I have been able to consult. All are very similar, showing their arrival on horseback to Constantinople and those who greet them. Four of the five show both Cassidorus and Helcana on horseback, see figures thirty-nine and forty from BRB 9401 and BnF fr. 22548–50 as examples, but BnF fr. 93 only shows Cassidorus.

[455] For a discussion of the false accusation motif, see section V.3.

[456] Christine de Pizan includes three cross-dressing saints: Marine/Marin, Eufrosine/Esmarade, and Nathalie (Christine de Pizan, *La città delle dame*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (Milan: Luni, 1997), pp. 474–82; 488–90).

In the examples discussed thus far, the characters have decided to leave marriages either for their own personal reasons or, in the case of Helcana, in order to follow their husband's wishes. However, the *Comte d'Artois* provides an example of a husband, the Count of Artois, attempting unilateral divorce, but his spouse, the Countess/Phlipot, cross-dresses to ensure a reconciliation. In this romance, Philippe, the Count of Artois, is saddened that after several years of marriage the Countess has not conceived a child. He decides to leave and sets the Countess three tasks that must be completed in order for him to return: the Countess must, without his knowledge, become pregnant by him and receive both his horse and his diamond. This wager motif is not unique to this text and it is also found in two of the romance's sources, *Flore et Jehane* and Boccaccio's *Decameron* (III, 9).[457] The format of this wager creates a conditional separation which allows the Count to leave his marriage and places the onus on the Countess to ensure his return. Although the wager allows for a temporary separation, the Count's intentions in formulating it could be read as desiring a more long-term solution. When presenting the tasks to the Countess, he states that they are 'impossiblez' (*Comte d'Artois*, p. 24); therefore, one could argue that he considers this conditional separation as likely to be permanent.

It is important to note that the Church did not class infertility as grounds for the annulment of a marriage nor as a reason to commit adultery. This is clearly stated in Gratian's *Decretum* which presents Augustine's (354–430) view that 'Satius est absque liberis defungi, quam ex illicito concubitu stirpem querere'.[458] This is reflected in the narrative's presentation of the Count's actions. He uses his potential infertility as a reason to leave his marriage and he also attempts to have an extra-marital love affair with the daughter of the king of Castile. Such behaviours are portrayed negatively,

---

[457] Brown-Grant, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 143–44. *Flore et Jehane* also includes the cross-dressing motif as Jehane/Jehan cross-dresses to reconcile with their husband Robin.

[458] C. 32 q. 4 c. 8, 'It is better to die without children than to seek offspring from an unlawful bed'.

especially in contrast to the actions of Phlipot. This negative representation may also result from the issues of consent raised by this conditional separation. Not only does this kind of separation contravene canon law on the indissolubility of a valid marriage, but it was put into place without the mutual consent of both parties. The Count does not provide the Countess with an opportunity to discuss his plan; instead he leaves a challenge that he does not expect to be achieved. In this way, the Countess/Phlipot holds a similar position to that of Theodore's husband: both are left by their spouses without their consent and both continue to show spousal devotion.

The narrative's understanding of marriage and its view of the Count's conditional separation is emphasised at the text's conclusion. After Phlipot has completed all three parts of the wager, they send the Count's councillors to inform him of their success. The wording of the announcement signals the councillors' disapproval of the Count's actions. The councillors explicitly refer to the 'termez' of the separation in order to make the announcement difficult to ignore: 'Vous sçavez bien, monseigneur, sur quelz termez vous avez laissié vostre paiis et bien vous souvient, comme je croy, de ce que promeistez a la contesse, vostre leal espousee (…)' (p. 146). Referring to the Countess/Phlipot as a 'leal espousee' not only foregrounds their loyalty but also their legal status as the Count's spouse. The Countess/Phlipot is continuously described positively as being 'leal' and the councillors state that the Countess/Phlipot completed the tasks by 'son sens, subtillité et parfaitte lealté' (p. 147). The repetition of terms related to loyalty underscore the importance of this quality in a spouse and is used to imply that the Count's behaviours reveal him to be disloyal. This text condemns not only the Count's actions, but separation more generally. The Count's final speech demonstrates this to the reader: 'l'omme qui est marié ne puet bonnement ne lecitement laisser sa femme sans grant essoine qui nulle rigle ne observe, tant pour luy tenir compagnie et payer le droit de marriage' (p. 149). These lines explicitly promote marital

affection and state the importance of rendering the marital debt and maintaining companionship in marriage. In this way, *Comte d'Artois* does not recognise divorce or separation as legitimate choices in a present consent marriage.

Separation and divorce take many forms and many of these are represented in this corpus of literary texts. Marriages are left because of adultery, infertility or in order to join a religious order. Cross-dressing, in these cases, is inextricably linked to marital separation, but the reason it occurs is not consistent across texts. For Pelagien, Theodore, and Helcanor, cross-dressing allows them to dedicate their lives to God, but for Theodore and Helcanor this does not mean that they are no longer considered by the narrator as married. Cross-dressing provides them with an opportunity to repent for past sins and show their spiritual devotion. The separation in the *Comte d'Artois* is not presented positively, but it similarly provides the Countess with a chance to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and teach the Count about the actions and qualities he should display as a husband. These texts show that separation is not always permissible or appropriate but is only acceptable if a spouse wishes to enter the religious life.

IV.4: Conclusion

The question of consent arises in various forms in this corpus of literary texts, with narratives showing consent being discussed, requested, privileged, and forced. In this way, the narratives are engaging with and commenting on legal discourse and the consensual model of marriage, which established the importance of consent and foregrounded the individual over third parties. The narratives examine the role of third parties in marriage negotiations, most often fathers or men in positions of power, and they stress the importance of personal choice. This is most evident in *Yde et Olive* in the marriage negotiations between Yde/Ydé, Olive, and Oton as well as Ydé's own (almost) forced marriage to their father Florent. It is not only in narratives that consent is privileged but this chapter has also argued that the visual representations of marriage in

illustrated manuscripts also promote the choice of the couple as well as the role of the Church in making a marriage.

Discussions of consent in marriage and divorce are central to many of these narratives but are shown most clearly in cases of forced consent. It is significant that the narratives examined in this chapter do not show force being applied, but rather the threat of force. The reactions of the characters in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, *Clarisse et Florent*, and *Yde et Olive* reflect different responses to such threats, often revealing issues of agency and power. The representation of impediments in this corpus not only demonstrates the authors' understanding of canon law on marriage and legal procedure, but also highlights the potential moral issues caused by impediments like incest and force, and the depiction of (feigned or assumed) sexual incapacity offers an insight into anxieties about sexual performance and masculinity. Although the cross-dressing motif is not always linked to issues of marriage and consent, this chapter has demonstrated that cross-dressing often allows for characters to negotitate undesirable situations or relationships to gain greater freedom and choice.

It is important to note that the texts discussed in this chapter present marriage and impediments differently depending on their didactic purpose, which, in the texts discussed in this chapter, is often closely connected with genre. For example, the representations of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien and of the Count of Artois' decisions to leave a marriage are strikingly different. Pelagien's choice to enter a religious order is shown positively: first, because the desire to dedicate one's life to God was considered an acceptable reason to end a (non-consummated) marriage, and second, because the text is from a genre (hagiography) that served to provide positive examples of spiritual devotion, Pelagien's behaviour demonstrates a dedication to God. However, the Count's personal crisis over infertility is not deemed an appropriate reason for separation because the text aims to promote a model of marriage that is based on commitment and

companionship. Consequently, there is no single response to sets of circumstances or actions, as each text is influenced by its genre or overall message. Nevertheless, despite differences in emphasis, personal choice and consent in marriage are presented as both important for the validity of a union and as fervently desired by the spouses.

Chapter V: Sex and Desire

From penitentials to decretal collections, the medieval Church had much to contribute to discussions on sex and its laws reveal what the Church deemed acceptable behaviour. This chapter uses medieval canon law pronouncements on sexual behaviour to inform the discussion of how sex and desire are represented in the literary corpus containing the cross-dressing motif. This chapter discusses, in turn, the three sexual and/or romantic situations in which one finds cross-dressing characters: they are shown engaging in non-marital sex; they are falsely accused of fathering children or attempting sexual assault; or they are in relationships that feature queer desire. These three categories are not mutually exclusive; for example, many of the relationships in the third category are non-marital and instances of seduction attempts in the second category sometimes involve queer desire and attraction. That cross-dressing characters are so frequently the object of sexual desire in medieval literature shows that writers were interested in sexuality and exploring attraction in different ways; however, this does not mean that all representations of non-normative preferences and behaviours were positive, as some treatments invoke queer, non-marital, or monastic desire in order to condemn it.

V.1: Sex and the Law

 The Church regulated sexual activity within and outside marriage, as well as specific sexual acts. Sexual crimes such as fornication and adultery were commonly dealt with by ecclesiastical courts as both *ex officio* and instance cases. The difference between these two types of cases is who brings the accusation to the court. *Ex officio* cases were brought in by a court promoter, who was responsible for initiating court proceedings, whereas instance cases were brought by one of the parties involved, for example a husband who was accusing his wife of adultery.

        Although there were different criteria to determine if a sexual act was permissible or not, significant emphasis was placed upon personal status: whether an

individual was married or single. The category of unmarried people not only applied to

the laity but also to those with clerical status who had taken a vow of celibacy.

Canonists generally expected that sexual activity would only take place between

individuals who had contracted a valid marriage with each other. As a consequence,

discussions of sexual activity are often closely connected with canon law on marriage,

divorce, and adultery. However, this does not mean that all canonists and theologians

considered marital sex to be free of sin. Although it was generally understood that it

was acceptable for married couples to have sex in order to procreate or to pay the

marital debt (a spouse's obligation to engage in sexual intercourse if requested by their

partner), some, like the decretist Huguccio (d. 1210), still considered these acts as

always sinful because of their inherent potential for sexual pleasure.[459] At the other end

of the spectrum, writers like Rufinus (d. before 1192) and Rolandus (active in the mid-

twelfth century) had a more positive view of marital sex, believing that sex with a

spouse was not generally immoral or sinful.[460] However, the beliefs of most canonists,

such as Johannes Teutonicus (ca. 1170–1245), fell somewhere between these two

conflicting views, considering marital sex as never sinful if the couple intended to

conceive children or were paying the marital debt.[461]

     A significant proportion of statutes and canons regarding sexual relations

forbade certain sexual acts and behaviours. Gratian cites Jerome's views on marital sex

numerous times to condemn immoderate and lustful sexual intercourse between

spouses.[462] This view was shared by decretists like Huguccio and Rolandus.[463] James A.

Brundage summarises what authors such as these considered to be immoderate sexual

activity: any that was not for procreation or to pay the marital debt; sexual activity that

---

[459] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, pp. 281–82.
[460] Ibid., p. 280.
[461] Ibid., pp. 364–65.
[462] C. 32 q. 4 c. 5, c. 12, and c. 14.
[463] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 285.

was impulsive; any sexual positions or acts considered inappropriate or 'unnatural', including anal and oral sex.[464] Later canonists held similar opinions on sexual relations; Raymond of Peñafort (1175–1275) provides a concise definition of 'unnatural' sex as any 'save for that between man and woman using the appropriate organs'.[465] This definition makes illicit a large variety of marital and non-marital sexual practices and positions.

These prohibitions against non-procreative sex and inappropriate sexual acts or positions are also significant for discussions on sex between individuals of the same gender. The circumstances in which sexual activity was typically considered as licit and appropriate did not apply to sexual relations between two men or two women. This is because such acts could not be procreative, and they existed outside the bounds of marriage and therefore did not pay the marital debt. The Old Testament book of Leviticus condemns same-gender sexual practices among prohibitions of other sexual acts, such as incest and bestiality: 'cum masculo non commisceberis coitu femineo quia abominatio est'.[466] Although this forbids only male-male sexual relations, this does not mean that sexual activity between women was acceptable; many of the Leviticus verses address only men about behaviour any gender could commit. References to women engaging in 'unnatural' sexual behaviours is not omitted from the Bible: Paul's Letter to the Romans notes that women exchanged 'natural' for 'unnatural' behaviours and were followed in this by men.[467]

---

[464] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 286.

[465] Ibid., p. 398.

[466] Leviticus 18: 22, 'Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind, because it is an abomination'. A similar prohibition, which also includes a punishment, is Leviticus 20:13.

[467] Romans 1: 26–27. Jacqueline Murray notes that this is the only reference to women engaging in same-gender desire in Jewish and Christian Scripture (Murray, Jacqueline, 'Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Bullough, Vern L. and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 191–222 (p. 194)); Robert Mills, 'Homosexuality', in *A Cultural History of Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ruth Evans (Oxford: Berg, 2011), pp. 57–80 (p. 61).

As we have seen, when discussing illicit sexual behaviours, it is rare for Church fathers, canonists, and other writers to describe specific sex acts; instead, they adopt a binary vocabulary of natural versus unnatural.[468] Only a limited range of acts were considered natural. Consequently, given the wide variety of sexual acts that the term 'unnatural', it is difficult to establish which acts are specifically being discussed when 'unnatural acts' are condemned. In one of his discussions on marriage and fornication, Gratian cites Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome on the hierarchy of sexual offences.[469] All use the expressions 'contra naturam' or 'aduersus naturam' in their condemnation of sexual acts, with Augustine arguing that acts 'Contra naturum' are 'uero semper illicitus' and, whether committed by men or women, are more serious than fornication or adultery.[470] However, none clarify exactly what they define as an act against nature, but from the context and the comparison with other sexual offences deemed less serious, it seems likely that they refer to same-gender sexual relations.[471]

Similar condemnations of 'unnatural acts' are found in conciliar canons from Lateran III (1179) and Lateran IV (1215). These canons use ambiguous phrasing to discuss inappropriate sexual relations and are less explicit about the exact nature of these behaviours than the Leviticus verse or the works cited by Gratian, but both contain punishments for and warnings against 'unnatural acts'. Canon eleven from Lateran III states 'Quicumque incontinentia illa, quae contra naturam est, propter quam *venit ira Dei in filios diffidentiae* et quinque civitates igne consumpsit'.[472] Although the canon

---

[468] There were exceptions to this general rule; for example, Thomas Aquinas considered that there were four types of unnatural behaviour: bestiality, masturbation, homosexuality, and sexual intercourse in inappropriate positions (Murray, Jacqueline, p. 200.). For more different definitions of 'unnatural' sexual behaviours, see Pierre J. Payer, *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150–1300* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), pp. 126–28.

[469] C. 32 q. 7, c. 12–14.

[470] C. 32 q. 7, c. 14.

[471] William Burgwinkle suggests that Gratian's discussion of 'unnatural' acts is related solely to inappropriate sexual behaviours between men and women (Burgwinkle, p. 31). However, I will argue the ambiguity of these statements could refer to sexual relations between individuals of the same gender as well as other illicit acts engaged in by men and women.

[472] Tanner, I, 217, c. 11 (Editor's emphasis), 'That unnatural vice for which *the wrath of God came down upon the sons of disobedience* and destroyed the five cities with fire'.

does not explicitly refer to same-gender sex here, it is implied through the association of 'unnatural vice' with the biblical story of the destruction of Sodom, which had come to be associated with same-gender sex and 'unnatural' sex.[473] The punishments for this 'unnatural vice' are severe: clerics would be 'expelled' from the clergy or placed in monasteries, whereas laymen would be excommunicated. The severity of these punishments is greater than that for other sexual crimes, indicating that such behaviour was considered a grave sin. Canon fourteen from Lateran IV has similar phrasing: 'ab omni libidinis vitio praecaventes, maxime illo propter quod *ira Dei venit* de coelo *in filios diffidentiae*'.[474] Neither canon specifies the vice that caused 'the wrath of God', but the severity of the punishments, combined with the association of the five cities of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoara, would suggest that it was sodomy, the term used to describe 'unnatural' sex acts engaged in between people of the same and different genders. The ambiguous phrasing of these canons suggests a level of discomfort with, or perhaps unwillingness to discuss explicitly, same-gender sexual desire and acts deemed as sodomy.

The potential for 'unnatural' sexual relations between individuals of the same gender was a concern for the Church. As well as condemnation of enacted behaviours, many institutions set rules in place to avoid situations that might encourage or allow sexual activity to occur; for example, the Benedictine Rule specified how monasteries should arrange their sleeping quarters and what lighting was necessary.[475] William Burgwinkle discusses a range of monastic writings, from both the Eastern and Western Church, that include warnings and advice about inappropriate behaviour within the

---

[473] For a discussion on the association of this biblical story with same-gender sexual activity, see; Irina Metzler, 'Sex, Religion, and the Law', in *A Cultural History of Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ruth Evans (Oxford: Berg, 2011), pp. 101–18 (p. 60).

[474] Tanner, I, 242, c. 14, 'Let them (the clergy) beware of every vice involving lust, especially that on account of which the wrath of God came down from heaven upon the sons of disobedience (…).'

[475] Burgwinkle, p. 35; Jacqueline Murray also describes other similar discussions on arrangements of dormitories in monastic communities, see Murray, 'Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, pp. 196–97.

community, suggesting that same-gender desire, although not approved of by the Church, was common.[476] The range of contexts in which discussions, and condemnations, of same-gender desire and sexual activity are found reveal the Church's concern with preventing and punishing such behaviours. Literary texts share a similar interest in non-normative sexual relations and queer relationships but, as is discussed in section V.4, their response does not always match that of the Church and there are some positively depictions as well as some criticisms of non-normative sexual attraction and love.

V.2: Non-Marital Sex

V.2.1: Legal issues

Cases of non-marital sex are commonplace in the records of ecclesiastical courts as cases were brought against individuals on charges of fornication and adultery, among other offences.[477] One difficulty concerning the legal understanding of these sexual offences is that not all canonists used the same terminology to define a specific act. One can define fornication as sexual activity between two unmarried people and adultery as sexual activity in which at least one party is married. However, various definitions were used by religious authorities and canonists to describe these acts and one finds a range of more specific terminology for acts that might come under these broader headings. The application of these various terms in court was not consistent across regions or dioceses; for example, the records from the archdeacon's court of Paris for May 1483 to December 1505 include alternative terms like 'knowing carnally' ('carnaliter cognovisse') in place of the label of 'fornication' ('fornicatio') that was more commonly used elsewhere.[478]

---

[476] Burgwinkle, pp. 33–36; 39.

[477] For example, non-marital sexual offences made up one quarter of the cases at the archdeacon's court in Paris from 1483 to 1505 (Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Regulation of Sexuality', p. 1017).

[478] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 104; Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Regulation of Sexuality', pp. 1015; 1022.

When discussing adultery, canonists focussed much of their attention on adulterous wives, outlining suitable punishments for wives engaging in non-marital sex, with less space given to the issue of male adultery.[479] One might expect, therefore, that the results of adultery court cases would reflect this emphasis and adulterous wives would be punished more often and more severely than adulterous husbands. However, as Sara McDougall has shown, using fifteenth-century secular and ecclesiastical court records from the Paris Parlement and the church court at Troyes, married men were more commonly punished than women for adultery.[480] Canonists recorded a range of punishments for adultery. For example, Johannes Teutonicus (d. 1252) commented that, amongst other punishments, whipping and the shaving of women's heads were common practices in the thirteenth century; however, McDougall argues that there is little to no evidence that these punishments were actually applied to men or women.[481] In the south of France, the public humiliation of 'running', in which guilty parties were required to run, often naked, through the streets, did take place, but public humiliations became less common towards the end of the Middle Ages and fines became the most frequently applied punishment.[482] Leah Otis-Cour notes that public punishments became less desirable as families sought to avoid the dishonour of a public revelation of a spouse's sexual crime.[483] The potential for shame and dishonour may have stopped partners from bringing their adulterous spouses to court in the first place, instead preferring to deal with the issue of non-marital sex privately, but when such cases did come before ecclesiastical court, fines were the most common punishment.[484]

---

[479] Sara McDougall, 'The Transformation of Adultery in France at the End of the Middle Ages', *Law and History Review*, 32.3 (2014), 491–524 (pp. 498–99).

[480] Sara McDougall, 'The Opposite of the Double Standard: Gender, Marriage, and Adultery Prosecution in Late Medieval France', *Journal of History of Sexuality*, 23.2 (2014), 206–25 (pp. 215–16); McDougall, 'The Transformation of Adultery', p. 507.

[481] McDougall, 'The Transformation of Adultery', pp. 499–501.

[482] Leah Otis-Cour, '*De Jure Novo*: Dealing with Adultery in the Fifteenth-Century Toulousain', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 347–92 (pp. 352–53); Metzler, p. 107.

[483] Otis-Cour, p. 355.

[484] Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Regulation of Sexuality', p. 1018.

As noted above, Church law was concerned with regulating clerical as well as lay sexuality.[485] Although the clergy and those in monastic orders were not permitted to marry, some broke their vows of continence. That conciliar and synodal statutes frequently and repeatedly tried to control clerical sexual behaviour suggests that the regulations were not always very effective. The importance of clerical celibacy and the ongoing issue of clerical concubinage was discussed at Lateran I (1123; c. 7), Lateran II (1139; c. 6–8), Lateran III (1179; c. 11), Lateran IV (1215; c. 14), and the Council of Basel (1431–45; 22 January 1435, session twenty).[486] These councils criticise members of the clergy for living in concubinage, noting that they should only share accommodation with women with whom they are closely related.[487] Some statutes restrict further who can live alongside a priest; for example, a statute from the Council of Mayence (1225), states: 'Inhibendum est ut nullus sacerdos feminas, de quibus suspicio potest esse, retineat, sed nec illas quas canones concedunt, matrem, amitam sororemque'.[488] Statute twelve from the Synod of Albi (1231) also included grandmothers and nieces as well as 'aliquam vetulam que ullo modo sit suspecta'.[489] This inclusion of older women may connect with the Galenic idea, also espoused by the Church Fathers, that as an individual aged, their heat, which was associated with sexuality and lust, diminished, meaning they became colder and therefore less likely to feel sexual temptation.[490] Consequently, this would suggest that living with an older woman might mean a lesser risk of clerical temptation and concubinage.

---

[485] Metzler, p. 102.

[486] Tanner, I, 191;198; 217–18; 242; 485–86. Canons seven and eight from Lateran II also condemn monks and nuns who engage in sexual activity.

[487] For example, Lateran I, c. 7 (Tanner, I, 191).

[488] John Mcclintock and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 vols (New York: Harper, 1883), V, 925; Avril, III, 226, 'Il est interdit à tout prêtre de garder des femmes qui puissent donner lieu à des soupçons, pas même celles qu'autorisent les lois de l'Église, à savoir la mère, la tante et la sœur' (Avril, p. 227).

[489] Pontal, II, 12 (no. 12), 'une femme âgée qui ne puisse être suspectée en aucune façon' (Pontal, p. 13).

[490] Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London: Verso, 1991), pp. 19–20.

Various punishments existed for individuals who defied the rules of clerical celibacy. Canons six and seven from Lateran II (1139) explain that if sub-deacons and those in holy orders are found cohabiting with a woman they will be removed from their position and separated from their partners.[491] The Council of Basel (1431–45) also discusses in detail the consequences of resuming concubinage and the escalation of the punishment for a member of the clergy who continually returns to a partner. The most serious punishment was that 'Qui si post dispensationem recidivo vomitu ad huiusmodi publicum concubinatum redierint, sine spe alicuius dispensationis ad praedicta prorusus inhabiles existant', which would mean they would not be able to hold certain roles or appointments within the Church and receive the benefits of those positions.[492]

Conciliar canons and synodal statutes frequently discussed the importance of clerical celibacy, but the sexual behaviours of other religious figures were also regulated because all those entering religious orders were obliged to take vows of continence. Canons seven and eight from Lateran II (1139) forbade monks and nuns from marrying. Canon seven declares that any marriages contracted by those in minor orders, and those in male monastic communities are against ecclesiastical law, and anyone who attempts to marry or to keep a concubine should be separated from his partner and punished.[493] Canon eight, which deals with nuns, is much shorter and less detailed than the previous canon; it sets the same punishment for attempted marriage as that discussed in canon seven.[494] A later statute from 1265 from Nicholas Gellent, Bishop of Angers (1260–81), concerns the behaviour of monastic figures who hold positions of responsibility.[495] It states that priors who use buildings owned by the monastery to engage in sexual activity

---

[491] Tanner, I, 198, 'For since they ought to be in fact and in name temples of God, vessels of the Lord and sanctuaries of the holy Spirit, it is unbecoming that they give themselves up to marriage and impurity'.

[492] Ibid., I, 486, 'those who receive a dispensation and then return to public concubinage, as to their vomit, shall be totally debarred from [receiving any goods, dignities, benefices or offices] […] without any hope of another dispensation'.

[493] Ibid., I, 198.

[494] Ibid., I, 198.

[495] Avril, III, 93–95.

with concubines or prostitutes will be excommunicated.[496] The statute also condemns more generally illicit sexual behaviour, as it ends by stating that excommunication would be the punishment for anyone committing similar or comparable acts to that outlined earlier in the statute.[497] There appear to be fewer statutes concerning the sexual behaviour of members of monastic orders than the clergy. This may be because mandated clerical celibacy was a more recent, twelfth-century, development, and one which had met with significant opposition from priests, in comparison to monastic communities in which celibacy and sexual abstinence had long been an essential element of religious identity.[498]

Non-marital sex, especially that committed by the clergy, was a significant, and frequently discussed, issue for the medieval Church. There was a hierarchy of non-marital sexual offences; for example, fornication was a minor crime whereas adultery was a major offence, and any sexual offences committed by those under a vow of continence were considered more serious still because they violated oaths sworn before God.[499] Ecclesiastical court records for crimes of fornication, adultery, and concubinage reveal that individuals were having sexual intercourse and long-term relationships outside of the bounds of marriage, and instance cases show that such behaviours were not always accepted by their communities or existing spouses. Whilst canon law collections prescribe expected sexual behaviours and legal cases show how transgressions of these laws were approached, medieval literature offers a different perspective. This is partly because literary texts can engage with desires that were felt but may or may not have been acted upon whereas canon law and court records mostly

---

[496] Avril, III, 93–95. The statute focusses on the priors misuse of 'granges' for sexual activity. For more information on what 'granges' meant in this context; see p. 93.

[497] Avril, III, 95.

[498] Parish, pp. 104–5; Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), pp. 118–19.

[499] James A. Brundage, 'Carnal Delight: Canonistic Theories of Sexuality', in *Sex, Law, and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), pp. 362–85 (pp. 372–73).

focus only on acts that have taken place. The following two sections of this chapter examine how different instances of non-marital sexual activity involving cross-dressing characters were portrayed; the first section focusses on representations of religious characters and the second on laypeople.

V.2.2: Religious literary characters

Religious figures were often portrayed engaging in non-marital sexual relationships in medieval literature. Friars and priests frequently received criticism from writers, who often represented them as lusty, promiscuous, and ignoring the expectation that they should remain celibate and abstinent.[500] Such representations are commonly found in, but not limited to, *fabliaux* and other comic narratives. Two texts from this corpus represent religious figures engaging in non-marital sex: *Frere Denise* and tale sixty from the *CNN*. The sexual activity described in both of these narratives is between a Franciscan and a layperson. These two tales portray Franciscan friars who have non-marital sexual relationships with members of the laity and whose sexual partners cross-dress in order to facilitate the relationships.

Although Vern L. Bullough argues that the motive for cross-dressing could be drawn along binary gender lines, with women cross-dressing to afford them opportunities not open to women, and men cross-dressing to access women-only spaces, these examples contradict his argument.[501] In these narratives, cross-dressing enables non-marital sex to take place, as it allows the characters assigned female at birth to enter male-only spaces so that they can meet their lovers. It is important to note one key distinction between these two texts: not all of the characters are fully aware of the reasons why they need to cross-dress. For the three, unnamed, 'bourgoises' in the *CNN* (*CNN*, tale sixty, p. 374) cross-dressing gives them sexual agency and allows them to

---

[500] Daron Burrows, *The Stereotype of the Priest in the Old French Fabliaux: Anticlerical Satire and Lay Identity* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 77–78.
[501] Bullough, p. 225.

engage in illicit intercourse with three friars. These characters do so knowingly whereas, in *Frere Denise*, Denise is tricked by Friar Simon into cross-dressing, believing that it will allow them to enter the religious life but, in reality, it gives Simon the opportunity to seduce Denise. This difference in knowledge affects the narrators' criticisms of the characters' actions. As discussed in chapter III.2.2, the narrator does not condemn Denise's behaviour, cross-dressing, or sexual relationship with Simon; instead Denise is presented as naïve and as a victim of Simon's negative influence. This goes part way to explaining why Denise and the three *bourgoises* are treated differently by the narrators.

The narrator of *Frere Denise* focusses on the behaviour of the friar, portraying Simon as driven by the 'feu de luxure' (*Frere Denise*, l. 101). Despite there being no explicit descriptions of sex, the narrator alludes to Simon introducing Denise to sexual activity through a series of suggestive comments and *double entendres*, such as: 'Frere Symons fist vers li tant / Qu'il fist de li touz ses aviaux, / Et li aprist ces geux noviaux' (ll. 162–64) and 'cele aprist sa (Simon's) pater nostre, / Que volentiers la recevoit' (ll. 178–79). The repeated use of verbs like 'apprendre' creates a teacher/student dynamic between the pair: Denise is shown as an eager, but naïve, student as Simon guides Denise through new religious and sexual experiences.

Most of the narrator's condemnation falls onto Simon, as a seducer and a friar who has broken his vow of continence, rather than on the couple's sexual relationship. However, the unnamed Lady's reaction to Denise's confession later in the *fabliau* brings the reader's attention to the relationship and to Denise's loss of virginity. The word 'honte' is frequently used to describe the consequences of Simon's behaviour. After confessing, Denise begs the lady 'Qu'el ne li fasse faire honte' (*Frere Denise*, l. 235). This suggests that, for Denise, it is the public revelation of their cross-dressing and sexual relationship that would bring them shame, rather than the acts themselves. After this point, the word 'honte' is used twice more in quick succession. When the

Lady condemns Simon's behaviour and the Franciscan order more generally, she criticises Simon for having brought 'si grant honte' upon the 'tres bele creature' (ll. 254–55). The Lady's speech echoes the narrator's view that Simon is solely responsible for these sexual crimes and any consequent dishonour. The Lady goes on to state that Simon deserves great 'honte' because he was proven to be a 'faulz traïtre' (ll. 264–65), which highlights not only his falseness, shown through his continued deception of Denise and his pretence at being a good friar, but also that he is a traitor to his vows and to his order. This is stressed by the rhetorical question she asks immediately before this: 'Or me dites, sire haut reiz, / Menoit sainz Fransois teile vie?' (ll. 262–63). By raising the figure of St Francis, the Lady reflects on how far Simon has strayed from the Franciscan ideal.

Simon's behaviour does not go unpunished, but the Lady does not go through the ecclesiastical courts. It is instead dealt with privately by herself and her husband and they inform him 'Et vos aveiz mout bien trovei / Qui vos rendra votre deserte!' (*Frere Denise*, ll. 266–67). Although the Lady planned to imprison Simon, her husband, who feels sorry for him, decides to punish him financially instead. Simon agrees to pay a fine of four hundred *livres* that would go towards Denise's dowry. This punishment illustrates the responses of contemporary canonists to fornication and defloration. Although canonists recommended that couples guilty of non-marital sex should marry, in cases where marriage is not possible, such as in *Frere Denise* where the couple cannot marry because Simon has taken a vow of celibacy, the man could be required to pay the woman's dowry.[502] By providing a dowry, the man were therefore held as partially responsible, as least financially, for the woman's future. A dowry would not only improve a woman's chances of marrying, but also perhaps serve as financial

---

[502] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, p. 461. Fines were also a common punishment for fornication.

compensation to the family for the potential dishonour caused by the sexual relationship and the ensuing court case.

The decision to settle the issue out of court in *Frere Denise* is also closely connected to the Lady's ideas of honour. As discussed, the word 'honte' is frequently used in this text by both Denise and the Lady, often in relation to the consequences of this relationship becoming known. The Lady's main aim is to ensure that Denise marries without the loss of virginity becoming public knowledge. This is shown when the wife comforts Denise by stating that only they would know the 'secreiz' – that 'ele ait a home geü' – and that Denise 'sera molt bien mariee' (*Frere Denise*, ll. 293–95). The Lady's private punishment of Simon, her dressing of Denise in her clothes, and the lies she tells Denise's mother, all conceal Denise's non-marital sexual relationship and time spent with the Franciscans. The Lady's success is revealed at the end of the *fabliau* as Denise consents to marry a knight and the narrator raises the issue of honour one final time: 'Or ot non ma dame Denize / Et fu a mout plus grant honeur / Qu'en abit de frere meneur!' (ll. 334–36). In these lines, the text uses the vocabulary of honour to contrast the two aspects of Denise's life and to praise their marriage. It is notable that the figure of Simon does not feature explicitly in the text's conclusion, but this is because the narrative has moved away from condemning sexual transgression. Instead, it focusses on Denise's reintegration into secular society through the adoption of lay clothing and marriage to a worthy suitor. The threat of sexual transgression is minimised by Denise's marriage as Denise is restored to what the narrator considers to be their rightful place.

In *Frere Denise*, the narrator's attention is focussed on the friar and his behaviour, whereas in tale sixty from the *CNN* the adulterous spouses are placed at the centre of the narrative. The text describes their actions and the reasons why they decide to cross-dress, which is to continue non-marital relationships with three Franciscans in

secret, thus highlighting their independence and sexual agency. This is shown partly through language choice and sentence structure: for example, the narrator frequently uses the active voice when describing the *bourgoises*' actions and, by making them the active subject, their agency is emphasised. In this way, the tale foregrounds their experience over that of the friars, who are not mentioned in great detail or, when they are included, are secondary. For example, more stress is placed on the *bourgoises*' pleasure than that of the friars when the narrator states: 'Et par le grand plaisir qu'elles y prenoient, et les religieux aussi, souvent advenoit que le jour les sourprenoit' (*CNN*, tale sixty, p. 373). However, the *bourgoises* do not remain in this primary position for the entire tale because, once the first husband learns the truth of his spouse's affair with the friar, the narrator focusses on the husband's actions and perspective.

It is notable that the way in which the first wife portrays her sexual relationship with the friar to her husband, after the affair has been discovered, is different to how it is presented by the narrator. The blame is placed on the friars when the first wife states 'j'ai esté seduicte par mauvaise compaignie' (*CNN*, tale sixty, p. 374); the use of the verb 'seduire' emphasises the sexual nature of the relationship and the passive construction reinforces the idea that she was the recipient of the friars' negative influence. Like in *Frere Denise*, the friars are described as being deceitful and as having manipulated others into sexual activity: 'Mais je ne suis pas seule deceue en celle maniere' (p. 375). Yet, earlier in the tale, these relationships are described in the vocabulary of love and courtship: the *bourgoises* are 'amoureuses' and the friars their 'amoureux' and 'amys' (p. 373). Courtly language is used elsewhere to reframe their transgressive behaviour, such as when the first wife describes to her husband the friar's entreaties as being 'humbles et doulces requestes qu'elle ne s'en estoit sceu excuser' (p. 375). The first wife not only blames the friars for her adultery, but also the two friends who, as stated in lines sixty-eight to seventy-one, had begun their affairs earlier and

persuaded the first wife to do the same. The differences between the narrator's account and the first wife's confession may present this character as untrustworthy to the reader; however, as this confession is forced by the husband's threat of murder, the wife's condemnation of the friars and the other two *bourgoises* may be presented as a pragmatic decision to avoid her husband's wrath and any subsequent violence. This is supported by the narrator's ironic use of the terms 'pouvrette' and 'femmelette' (p. 375) in the description of the first wife. These terms, which present the first wife as weak and pitiful, are included by the narrator when the first wife seeks to show herself as deserving of their spouse's mercy. 'Pouvrette' is used just before she falls to their knees to beg forgiveness and 'femmelette' is found when the husband is considering how to respond to the 'doloreuses ammiracions et piteux regretz de sa femmelette' (p. 375). The first wife is able to manipulate her husband into feeling pity and thereby redirects the husband's anger away from herself and towards to the friars.

After the confession, the narrative changes its focus as the husband decides to punish the friars for their behaviour. Like the punishment portrayed in *Frere Denise*, it is enacted in private, rather than in the courts, and only the friars are reprimanded for their behaviour. The friars are not required to pay a fine like Simon but are instead subjected to a surprise violent attack. The husband arranges a dinner in which the three husbands, their spouses, the friars, and barber are present. During the dinner he reveals the *bourgoises*'s tonsures, which had been adopted as part of their friar disguises, as part of a scheme to punish the friars. The husband requires confirmation from the other husbands 'qu'ils le pardonneroient a leurs femmes pour ceste foiz' (*CNN*, tale sixty, p. 376) before revealing the entire story. This is important as it shows that their spouses' non-marital relationships do not go unrecognised, but they are shown to be less problematic than the behaviour of their lovers: the *bourgoises* are pardoned whereas the friars are disciplined. This demonstrates the tendency for medieval courts to punish

men, as lovers but more commonly as husbands, for non-marital sex rather than adulterous wives.[503] Unlike the Lady's outright condemnation of the Franciscans in *Frere Denise*, the husband in tale sixty seems less concerned with the friars breaking their vows of celibacy than with punishing them for having sexual relations with the married *bourgoises*. His only reference to the friars' religious status in direct speech is shown through the use of the terminology of penance when describing the upcoming punishment of the 'bons religieux' as 'la penitence' (p. 376). Here, the Christian practice of confession and penance is appropriated for a private act of vengeance and physical violence. No further reference is made to why the friars' behaviour might be inappropriate and what rules, oaths, and expectations were broken when they began these non-marital relationships. The characters of the friars are not very developed, especially in comparison to Simon from *Frere Denise*, which suggests that this tale does not have a strong specifically anti-fraternal message.

The manuscript miniature that accompanies tale sixty focusses on the friars' punishment with the largest of its two registers portraying three men beating the friars with rods (fig. forty-one). This image does not follow the text directly as, in the tale, the husband summons four or five young men to attack the friars on his behalf whereas in this miniature the three figures are more likely to represent the three husbands. That the husbands punish the friars directly suggests that the artist wanted to foreground the punishment as private and personal by showing it being enacted by the individuals who had been wronged. The identity of the figures is indicated through their dress. The layman portrayed in the left-hand register, which shows the moment at which the husband comes across his cross-dressed spouse, is also shown as an attacker in the foreground of the right-hand register: both figures wear a red pleated robe over blue hose and have a blue hat covering shoulder-length brown hair. In addition, the clothing

---

[503] McDougall, 'The Opposite of the Double Standard', pp. 216–17.

worn by the three laymen and the three *bourgoises* in the right-hand register is colour-coordinated, with couples shown wearing either red, blue, or grey to indicate a marital relationship. This image therefore emphasises the private vengeance aspect of this punishment further by presenting the husbands punishing their wives' lovers directly instead of relying on intermediaries. The narrative, in showing, the husbands beating the lovers, invites the reader to view the husbands not as cuckolds to be laughed at but as avenging their honour.

The miniature also highlights the tale's inclusion of the cross-dressing motif: the first wife is shown dressed as a friar in the left-hand register, wearing dark robes and the hood down to reveal the tonsure, and the three *bourgoises* are presented in the right-hand register in long brightly-coloured gowns, each displaying a tonsure. In the context of the right-hand register, the tonsure symbolises their transgression of sexual and gender norms: it reminds the reader of their appropriation of Franciscan dress and clerical status in order to facilitate non-marital relationships. However, the visual depiction of the *bourgoises* in this register aligns them with their spouses rather than their lovers. The *bourgoises* hold a prominent position in the foreground as they observe the punishment of the friars. Despite the fact that the *bourgoises* were active participants in their non-marital relationships and made the choice to cross-dress to facilitate these relationships, this image shows them condemning the friars. This hypocrisy is highlighted through their placement in the register, combined with their serious facial expressions and arms crossed over their chests, which imply that they are not just bystanders but are overseeing this punishment. It is notable that this tale and the accompanying image presents the *bourgoises* as hypocrites rather than the friars, a group that, as discussed in section III.2.2, were often condemned in anti-fraternal discourse for hypocritical behaviour.

It is notable that the artist chose to represent the punishment rather than the sexual crime. Sex and sexual relationships are two of the key subjects covered in the *CNN* and the artist of Hunter, MS 252 frequently represents these aspects of the tales in manuscript miniatures.[504] The artist depicts figures engaged in sexual activity both in public and private spaces and often portrays naked figures sharing beds, although there are no images of penetration in Hunter, MS 252.[505] Two examples of portrayals of sexual activity are found in the images on folios 3r and 26r, which illustrate tales one and twelve (figs forty-two and forty-three). It is unlikely that the artist's decision not to present the sexual relationships of tale sixty was due to an unwillingness to represent religious figures in this manner. In fact, sexual activity involving nuns and monks is shown elsewhere in the codex, as in the images accompanying tales fifteen and forty-six on folios 33r and 109r (figs forty-four and forty-five). These miniatures offer examples of transgressive monastic sexuality. They show monastic figures engaging in sex acts and displaying their genitalia to other characters as well as to the reader, placing the latter, as Elise Boneau suggests, in the role of voyeur.[506] Instead of showing similar scenes for tale sixty, the artist chose to focus on the tale's conclusion and portray the husbands' retaliation and punishment of the friars. It does not appear that the decision to represent the punishment of the friars was in an effort to obscure the non-marital sexual activity, but rather the artist was more interested in showing the husbands succeeding in getting revenge on those who cuckolded them and taking the court's business into their own hands. If one compares the illuminations of tales thirty, thirty-two, and thirty-eight, which also include Franciscans having non-marital relations with married women, it

---

[504] As noted by Lagorgette, many images in this manuscript focus on sex with thirty-three of ninety-nine images showing nudity or sexual activity; see Dominique Lagorgette, 'Staging Transgression through Text and Image', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 93.

[505] Elise Boneau, 'Obscenity out of the Margins: Mysterious Imagery with the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles", *MS Hunter 252*', *ESharp*, 6.2 (2006), 1–18 (pp. 10–11).

[506] Ibid., p. 9.

becomes evident that the artist followed each tale closely rather than illustrating generic scenes. The miniatures that accompany these other tales all emphasise different parts of the narrative: the image illustrating tale thirty focusses on the friars' sexual trickery (fol. 70r); the image of tale thirty-two shows the friars' punishment (fol. 75v); and tale thirty-eight, in which the friar is not punished, has an illustration that foregrounds the wife's successful trickery of her husband (fol. 93r). Not all of these images represent the tales' conclusions, but rather, like the tales they illustrate, focus on presenting the *trompeur trompé* motif by foregrounding the actions of character(s) whose cunning triumphs over others' attempted deceptions.

Frere Denise and tale sixty from the *CNN* share many similarities. Both texts explore sexual relationships between Franciscan friars and lay characters assigned female at birth and conclude with a third party exacting private punishment rather than going through the official channels of the ecclesiastical court system. Although each text includes the friar figure as a lover, only *Frere Denise* uses this as an opportunity to condemn the Franciscan order and portray them as false manipulators; Simon is always presented in a negative light and the narrator spends a considerable amount of time criticising his behaviours whereas Denise is portrayed as innocent and deceived. This is not the case in tale sixty of the *CNN* as here the focus is on the *bourgoises*' adultery, their use of cross-dressing to enable their trysts to go undiscovered, and the first wife's use of language to trick her husband: they are shown to be deceitful but astute characters, especially in the case of the first wife. Although the tale ends with the friars being beaten in punishment, the fact that they are members of a religious order holds less significance than it does in *Frere Denise* and the tale does not have include any strong anti-fraternal sentiments. The author's choice to make the lovers Franciscans in this tale is part of wider literary tropes of lusty and deceitful priests, monks, and friars which are found elsewhere in the *CNN*, and in literature and anti-fraternal writing more

generally.[507] It also adds an extra level of sin to the illicit sex: not only are the *bourgoises* committing adultery but the friars are breaking their vow of celibacy. The sexual activity is not described in detail in these two narratives: in *Frere Denise*, sexual intercourse is implied, but not explicitly stated, and in tale sixty, the narrator uses the language of love and romance, albeit with a heavy dose of irony, rather than of sex and physical desire. These texts are less interested in the illicit sex itself than in considering the consequences that such activity might have on existing or future marital relationships.

V.2.3: Lay Figures

Although examples exist, in this literary corpus, of illicit sex taking place between religious and lay people, it is more common for sexual relations to occur between members of the laity. Most of the illicit sexual encounters that occur in these narratives are shorter or one-time affairs rather than long-term non-marital relationships. These encounters fit into two broad categories: those in which sexual relationships are entered into with both partners fully aware of the situation and those in which one partner is tricked into sexual intercourse or the sexual activity is explicitly non-consensual. This distinction is important when considering how different characters and their sexual activities are presented in the narratives. It is notable that, for many of the characters mentioned in this section, sexual desire is not the primary reason for engaging in illicit sex. Instead, individuals often aim to trick others which commonly leads to another character's humiliation. This section discusses the two categories of illicit sex outlined above in a number of comic texts and hagiographies with an emphasis on the encounters found in the Life of St Theodora/Theodore and *Trubert*. The responses of characters participating in non-marital sex are varied: whilst some characters express regret for

---

[507] Guy Geltner, 'Brethren Behaving Badly: A Deviant Approach to Medieval Antifraternalism', *Speculum*, 85.1 (2010), 47–64 (pp. 48–49). As discussed earlier, in the *CNN* there are three other tales that include a Franciscan as either a lover or a deceiver (tales thirty, thirty-two, and thirty-eight) and many others that include other religious figures engaging in illicit behaviour.

their behaviour, others celebrate their sexual activity or simply continue to engage in such behaviour until stopped by a third party. The type of response tends to align with the text's genre. For example, in the Life of Theodore, the saint does penance for their adultery, therefore endorsing the Church's views on non-marital sex, whereas in *fabliaux* non-marital sex is either praised or condemned depending on the circumstances in which it occurs and the way it was attained.

Theodore's Life shows an individual struggling with competing desires and moral beliefs. Throughout the text, the devil tries to tempt Theodore into sin but only succeeds once when Theodore has illicit sex at the beginning of the narrative; after this point, the devil's repeated attempts fail as Theodore refuses to renounce their monastic identity and return to their marriage. The narrator begins by noting Theodore's holiness, nobility, and that they are married, before introducing the unnamed suitor. The reader is told that the suitor 'l'en hastoit souvent par messages et par dons' and that he 'requeroit que elle se consentist a lui' (*Légende dorée*, p. 601). He even sends an 'enchanteresse' to convince Theodore to accept his advances: this female figure 'lui pria qu'elle eust pitié de tel homme et se consentist a lui' (p. 601). The phrase 'se consentist a lui' is repeated twice in reported speech. The repetition of 'se consentir', which means to accept or agree to something or someone, forces Theodore to decide whether or not to give in to the lover's proposition. Theodore's response to the 'enchantresse' shows the saint's moral standpoint on adultery as Theodore states that they would not commit a 'si grant peché en la veue de Dieu' (p. 601). Theodore does not lack sexual interest in the suitor, but wants to avoid sin: once the saint has been tricked into believing that God will not know about any sins that occur after sunset, Theodore goes to see 'cel homme' to fulfil 'sa voulenté' (p. 601). The use of 'sa voulenté' is significant because of its ambiguity; it is not clear whether the 'voulenté' referred to is Theodore's or the lover's. Considering the context of the suitor's repeated advances, it seems more likely that the

narrator intends the reader to understand it as the lover's 'voulenté', but the ambiguity does make the reader consider Theodore's desires and capacity for sinful thoughts and behaviours.

The saint's positive response to 'sin-free' adultery swiftly changes to one of regret and sorrow: on waking the next day, Theodore 'ploroit tresamerement et batoit sa face' and, after learning the truth, enters a monastery to atone for the adultery (*Légende dorée*, p. 602). This desire to undertake penance is not explicitly stated on entering the monastic life, but later Theodore explains to their husband that 'j'en vueil faire ma penitence pource que j'ay peché en toy' (p. 603). Theodore practises self-punishment as they voluntarily leave their worldly life and marriage to enter a monastery. In this way the saint imposes monastic enclosure on themselves, which was a punishment for adultery and other similar crimes instituted by the emperor Justinian (527–65).[508] Although the Life of Theodore is set during the rule of the Emperor Zeno (474–75; 476–91), before the institution of monastic enclosure for adulterous women, it is likely that Jacobus de Voragine, the author of the *Legenda aurea*, was unaware of this or did not think the anachronism was an important concern. Although McDougall states that enclosure was not a common mode of punishment in the later Middle Ages, she notes that medieval canonists, such as Johannes Teutonicus, frequently discuss it as an appropriate punishment for adultery.[509] That such canonical discussions continued to take place throughout the Middle Ages means that readers may have been aware of monastic enclosure and its use as a punishment in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Although it is difficult to gauge how much those who either had no access to, no knowledge of, or interest in legal commentaries would understand the details of this practice, it would have seemed like a response appropriate for a hagiography. The fact

---

[508] McDougall, 'The Transformation of Adultery, p. 500.
[509] Ibid., pp. 500–501.

that the saint's enclosure is self-imposed and that, despite the entreaties of their

'husband' who is in reality the devil, Theodore refuses to return to their previous

identity as a wife underlines Theodore's regret and commitment to penance.[510]

The Life of Theodore is also the only text in this section that uses the term

'adultere' to describe a person who has engaged in extra-marital sex. This term is only

used by the devil and it appears just once, when the devil declares: 'Putain sur toutes et

adultere, tu a laissé ton mari pour venir ça et pour moy despriser' (*Légende dorée*, p.

603). The devil's hyperbolic description of Theodore as the 'putain sur toutes' contrasts

with the presentation of the saint's monastic dedication and enacting of miracles

described by the narrator both before and after the devil's speech. The association of

'adultere' with 'putain' is significant. Although both of these terms describe an

individual's sexual conduct, the pejorative 'putain' is solely used as an insult whereas

'adultere' is also a legal term. By coupling 'adultere' with 'putain', the legal term

'adultere' is used to insult and condemn rather than being used in a context of law and

justice.

The Life of Theodore is illustrated in nine manuscripts of the *Légende dorée* and

these illustrations tend to fall into two main categories: miniatures that present the saint

conversing with their lover[511] and those that depict Theodore, with the child they were

accused of fathering, speaking with the devil.[512] The miniatures in Morgan, MS 672–75

(674) and BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244) include two registers representing different aspects

of the saint's life, which makes eleven representations in total. This discussion focusses

---

[510] In the Justinian application of monastic enclosure, husbands would have two years to decide whether to reconcile with their wives. If they chose not to reconcile, the women would take vows and remain in a monastic community for life (McDougall, 'The Transformation of Adultery', p. 500).

[511] The miniatures that fit into the first category are: Rennes, MS 266, fol. 166r; Morgan, MS 672–75 (674), fol. 310r; BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244), fol. 137r.

[512] Those that fit into the second category are: Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242, fol. 137r; BnF, MS fr. 241, fol. 158r; BnF, MS fr. 6448, fol. 177r; Munich, MS Gall. 3, fol. 191v. There are four representations that do not fit into these categories: two images of the saint standing alone in Arras, Médiathèque municipale, MS 630 (fol. 147v) and BRB, MS 9228 (fol. 159v) and the second registers of Morgan, MS 672–75 (674), which shows the saint entering the monastery, and BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244), which presents the saint receiving the baby.

on the three miniatures that portray the non-marital sexual relationship from Rennes,

MS 266, Morgan, MS 672–75 (674), and BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244) (figs forty-six,

forty-seven, and thirty-two). These three manuscripts all date from the fifteenth century;

Rennes, MS 266 and BnF, MS fr. 244–45 were completed in Paris whereas Morgan,

MS 672–75 was produced in the southern Burgundian Netherlands.[513]

Figures forty-six, forty-seven, and thirty-two all portray Theodore in

conversation with their lover, but a different scene is depicted in each. The miniature in

Rennes, MS 266, which dates to circa 1400, shows Theodore wearing a light pink gown

and black headcovering gesturing towards a blonde male figure who wears a blue knee-

length gown with orange lining (fig. forty-six). There is little to indicate the nature of

their relationship in this image: the figures stand apart and are painted on a neutral

background that is not specific to a scene from the Life. This miniature of Theodore is

the least detailed of the five other cross-dressing saints depicted in this manuscript and

less specific to the Life; however, small details aid the reader's interpretation of the

scene. For example, Theodore's headcovering symbolises their marital status and this

renders the relationship between the two figures, shown by Theodore's smile and

gestures, illicit.[514]

The miniatures in Morgan, MS 672–75 (674) and BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244) are

similar in composition: both contain two registers in order to represent different

episodes from the saint's Life, and the artists share a similar style with each making use

of architecture in the foreground and naturalistic backdrops of landscapes and distant

buildings.[515] In these miniatures, the relationship between the saint and the suitor is

---

[513] Maddocks, pp. 109; 147; 214.

[514] Catherine Emerson notes that in the *CNN* that a black head covering is often used to signify adulterous women. It is significant that the artist of Glasgow, Hunter 252 used this garment in this way, but the black head covering does not appear to be used in this way in other manuscripts (Catherine Emerson, 'Setting a Place in the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles": The Illustrations of Glasgow, Hunter 252', *RELIEF*, 11 (2017), 82–95 (pp. 92–93)).

[515] In this section, the analysis will be limited to the representations of Theodore and the lover. The depictions of Theodore and the child will be discussed later in section V.3.

much more evident than in Rennes, MS 266. In BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244), Theodore is shown on the left-hand side of the foreground, wearing a garment similar to that in Rennes, MS 266 of a long pink gown with a black head covering.[516] They look away from the approaching figure and holds their hands with palm facing out in a gesture of rejection. This male figure wears light pink hose and an orange *pourpoint* and offers a necklace to the saint. This depicts the initial relationship between the two individuals: he is described in the text as pressuring Theodore 'par messages et par dons' but the saint 'reffusoit les messagiers et desprisoit les dons' (*Légende dorée*, p. 601). There is another figure to the right of Theodora and the suitor who likely represents the saint's husband, thereby reminding the reader of Theodore's marital status. Another possibility is that the right-hand figure is the lover and the central figure is the person sent to trick Theodore, but this seems unlikely, as the former is described using the grammatically feminine term 'enchanteresse' and a male figure is portrayed here. An alternative interpretation of figure thirty-two by Martha Easton suggests that:

> Theodora is imaged in two incidents which connect her most explicitly to her feminine body as opposed to her masculine performance; first she is depicted as the gullible, easily seduced adulteress, and then as a woman who cannot escape her maternal instincts.[517]

Easton misinterprets the scene in the foreground in arguing that it is a moment of seduction rather than rejection which, as suggested here, presents Theodore as determined to avoid sin. That the artist chose to represent Theodore's rejection of the suitor's advances, rather than the subsequent acceptance, is noteworthy. In doing this,

---

[516] Maddocks states that this manuscript was illuminated by three artists: Maître François, the Master of Jacques de Besançon, and the Master of Jean Rolin II, and states that the cross-dressing saints were completed by the assistants of the Master of Jacques de Besançon (active c. 1480–98). This is because they have a similar style but do not produce miniatures of the same quality (Maddocks, pp. 113–15); However, the Master of Jean Rolin II was active between 1445 and 1460 therefore it seems unlikely that they were involved in the illumination of this manuscript that was completed c. 1480. It seems more likely, as argued by Margaret M. Manion, that this manuscript was a collaboration between Maître François and the Master of Jacques de Besançon (Hans M. Schmidt, et al., 'Masters, Anonymous, and Monogrammists', *Grove Art Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) <www.oxfordartonline.com> (accessed 8 August 2017).

[517] Easton, p. 343.

the artist partially obscures the saint's motivation for entering the monastery and instead privileges Theodore's rejection of sexual sin. Given the text's genre this artistic decision may be expected, as hagiography serves to provide positive *exempla* for its readers and therefore the artist chose images to reflect the saint's more positive qualities.

Similarly, the miniature in Morgan, MS 672–75 (674) is split into two sections, depicting the saint with their lover in the left-hand register (fig. forty-seven).[518] In this register, two richly dressed figures are portrayed in conversation. The male figure stands on the left and gazes downwards towards the skirt of the saint's red gown, which Theodore has lifted to reveal a blue underskirt. This act, coupled with the saint's direct gaze towards the male figure, portrays Theodore as the person doing the tempting rather than as the person who is tricked and seduced. By swapping the roles in this way, figure seven does not accurately reflect the narrative but the raising of the skirt illustrates the sexual nature of Theodore's illicit relationship. The right-hand register depicts the saint's entry into monastic life and therefore the two registers combined present both the saint's sin and penance.

Although it is much more common to represent Theodore as an exiled monk, that there are three images which represent Theodore's sexual crime is significant because one can learn how non-marital sex is represented in hagiographic manuscripts. In these manuscripts, naked bodies are presented, but only in scenes of martyrdom; there are no scenes of explicitly sexual activity. The reader does not see Theodore engaging in non-marital sex but rather in conversation with the lover. Figures forty-six and forty-seven show the saint as receptive to the lover's advances whereas figure thirty-two depicts Theodore's rejection of the lover. These different reactions are demonstrated by Theodore's gestures and facial expressions. By showing this aspect of

---

[518] This manuscript was commissioned by Jean IV d'Auxy (1422–74) who was a counsellor and chamberlain for Philippe le Bon and a chamberlain for Charles le Téméraire (Maddocks, p. 214).

the saint's life, these artists do not obscure this aspect of the narrative. Theodore's sexual sin is an important part of their Life as it is the catalyst for their entry into a monastic community and is one of the many times in which Theodore is presented with temptation. In foregrounding the saint's adultery, the artists show the saint dealing with sexual temptation, a subject that was important for both clerical, monastic, and lay readers.

Other examples of individuals knowingly engaging in illicit sexual relations in this corpus are found in comic texts: *Berengier*, *La Saineresse*, and *Trubert*. In comparison to the Life of Theodore, these narratives focus less on sin and penance and more on sexual pleasure and using sex for personal or financial gain. Another significant difference between these texts and the *Légende dorée* is that these shorter comic texts are often extant in manuscripts that have little to no illustration.[519] As a consequence, there is less evidence of artistic interpretation of these narratives and the sexual relationships they contain.

Berengier and *La Saineresse* both feature wives who successfully trick their husbands and have non-marital sex with another either as part of or as the result of a trick. *La Saineresse* provides a detailed description of the sexual act and the husband's lack of awareness of what is taking place; in *Berengier* the non-marital sex occurs at the end of the narrative and is connected with the wife/Berengier's humiliation of the husband. In this particular tale, Berengier challenges their husband and, rather than face a fight, he agrees to kiss Berengier's 'cul'. In this context, this act is sexually submissive. In doing this, the husband is presented as a coward and, when he is unable to recognise genitals, as lacking sexual knowledge and therefore, he is both sexually and socially humiliated. The importance of shame and dishonour is highlighted when

---

[519] BnF, MS fr. 837 (includes *La Saineresse* and *Berengier*) has one illuminated historical initial on fol. 1r, but no further illustrations. *Berengier* is also extant in Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 and BnF, MS fr. 19152 but neither are illustrated. The text with the most illustrations is *Trubert* (BnF, MS fr. 2188 includes five miniatures).

Berengier states 'J'é non Berangiers au lonc cul, / Qui a toz les coarz fait honte'
(*Berengier*, ll. 258–59) and the wife humiliates him further by taking a lover.

On leaving the husband in the forest and after removing their armour, the wife 'a
mandé un chevalier / Que ele amoit et tenoit chier: / Dedanz sa chanbre tot a aise / L'an
moine, si l'acole et baise' (*Berengier*, ll. 263–66). The immediacy of this action,
coupled with the fact the wife does not attempt to hide her lover when their husband
returns home, shows that this is the next stage of her humiliation of him. The narrator
does not make it clear whether the wife is in a longer-term relationship with the lover or
if this sexual encounter is a direct result of the husband's behaviour, but such a
clarification is not significant here as the narrative is not concerned with the exact
nature of the wife's non-marital relationship. The description of their sexual activity is
limited, and much more space is given to the subsequent conversation between the
spouses and the possible consequences of the wife's adultery. The husband raises the
issue of deceit and recompense: 'Vos me servez vilainement / Qui home amenez ceianz:
/ Vos lo conparroiz' (ll. 276–78). However, his desire for justice, whether it be private
or public justice, stops when the wife tells him that she knows about Berengier and the
husband's shame. This *fabliau* shows that, as both a spouse and as a knight, the wife is
able to shame her husband. In this text, cross-dressing and adultery are not presented as
negative, nor are they criticised by the narrator; instead, they allow the Wife to assert
her social and intellectual superiority over their husband. The moral of the tale – 'Et
cele fait sa volanté / Qui ne fu sote ne vilaine: / A mol pastor chie los laine!' (ll. 294–
96) – offers a misogynistic view that husbands should be in charge and, if they fail, their
wives, as wolves, will take full advantage of the situation. Nevertheless, it highlights the
wife's social superiority over her husband in saying that she 'ne fu sote ne vilaine' and
that as he is a 'mol pastor' she is able to take on a position of power.

La Saineresse follows a simpler plot line than *Berengier*: a wife wishes to prove her husband wrong in his belief that no one would be able to trick him. In order to complete the trick, she invites the cross-dressing 'Saineresse' to her home and engages in sexual intercourse with them under the guise of medical treatment. It is notable that the wife engages in non-marital sex purely for the sake of the trick: there is no indication of prior sexual attraction, intercourse, or affection between them whereas in *Berengier* the lover is described as someone whom the Wife 'amoit et tenoit chier' (*Berengier*, l. 264). Much of the comedy in this text comes from the suggestive conversation held between the wife and lover, and the wife's description of her 'treatment' to her unknowing husband. For example, the 'Saineresse' uses the word 'plesir' suggestively when stating 'Dame, vous m'avez ci mandee / Et m'avez ci fete venir: / Or me dites vostre plesir!' (*La Saineresse*, ll. 28–30) to hint at the imminent sexual encounter between the pair. The description of their sexual activity focusses on the 'Saineresse' as the active partner: 'Le pautonier la prent esrant: / En un lit l'avoit estendue / Tant que il l'a trois foiz foutue' (ll. 42–44) and, in doing so, shifts the emphasis from the wife's 'plesir' to that of the 'Saineresse'. Unlike in *Frere Denise* and *Berengier au lonc cul*, their sexual behaviour is described plainly and without room for alternative interpretations: the combination of the verbs 'foutre', 'baiser', and 'accoler' reveals the undoubtedly sexual nature of their actions. By calling the Saineresse a 'pautonier' here and elsewhere in the narrative, the narrator indicates that this sexual activity is not appropriate behaviour, but there is no outright condemnation of non-marital sex. This *fabliau*, through the use of sexual rather than romantic vocabulary, places greater emphasis on sexual pleasure. However, pleasure is a secondary consequence rather than the intended result: the wife engages in sexual activity not for pleasure alone but to trick her spouse. This trickery is twofold: the adulterous sex

disguised as medical treatment and the cross-dressed lover acting as the 'Saineresse',
showing how little her husband understands despite his claim to be untrickable.

There are texts in which multiple acts of non-marital sex occur, with some of
these acts being consensual and taking place in full knowledge of what was happening;
however, many instances of sexual activity are also described in which one partner is
tricked, assaulted, or does not fully understand the situation. In *Trubert*, there is only
one example of consensual sex that does not include any trickery or deception: this
occurs when Trubert/Couillebaude exchanges the goat with the duchess for 'un foutre et
cinc sous de derniers' (*Trubert*, l. 156). Although the duchess is initially appalled at
Trubert's suggestion, she eventually agrees and Trubert is led to her bed. The
description of the following sexual encounter is short and focusses on Trubert's
perspective and pleasure. The manuscript illumination that accompanies this scene on
folio 4r of BnF, MS fr. 2188, a thirteenth-century single-item manuscript (fig. forty-
eight). This image shows Trubert, the right-hand figure, embracing the duchess, with
the goat standing in the foreground. Unlike the images of sexual activity in the *CNN*,
which often show naked or partially naked bodies or figures embracing in bed, this
miniature shows a scene that is not explicitly sexual. However, the image's placement
in text block is noteworthy and helps the reader to interpret this image. The lines which
are included to the right of the image are those that describe Trubert and the duchess'
sexual encounter, indicating that the manuscript's producer planned the positioning of
the images carefully.

Partial nakedness is portrayed visually in this manuscript, but rather than in a
scene of consensual sexual activity it is found when Trubert extracts payment from the
duke for the goat (fig. twenty-six). This initial shows the duke's exposed rear and
Trubert holding a sharp instrument to his buttocks. What this image does not depict is
the moment in the text when Trubert inserts the instrument into the duke's anus, which

Michael Camille interprets as 'a humiliating gesture that mimics (for the recipient duke) passive homosexual submission'.[520] This moment, which is described several lines below the historiated initial, is not presented visually, but the placement of the figures does more than hint at anal penetration: Trubert is shown standing behind the duke holding a phallic shaped object to the duke's buttocks. It is clear that the artist was willing to present nakedness and sexualised scenes which leads one to question why the artist chose to present in this way only a scene of sexual violence and humiliation enacted by Trubert on a character assigned male at birth. Regardless of whether it was in order to highlight the duke's humiliation at the hands of Trubert or an interest in highlighting the act of anal penetration, this initial presents for the reader an image of a sex act deemed by medieval religious discourse as non-normative and, therefore, 'unnatural'.

Although the narrative encounter is centred on Trubert's experience, later on in the text the reader is given access to the duchess' reaction to this act of non-marital sex and its consequences. The duke, who is angry at having submitted to the painful payment of four hairs plucked from his 'cul' plus five *sous* for Trubert's goat as depicted in figure twenty-six, declares that 'Penduz soit il (Trubert), que honi m'a!' (l. 348). This leads the duchess to think that her husband is aware of her earlier sexual encounter with Trubert and she is described as trembling with fear. She reveals all about her adultery and repeats twice that she understands the possible punishment for her actions: 'Gentis hom, j'ai bien deservi / Que tu m'ocies, se toi plest!' (ll. 372–73) and 'Bien sai que j'en perdrai la vie, / Car j'ai bien la mort deservi' (ll. 385–86). On this occasion, the duke forgives his wife as he believes they were both tricked. It is notable that this is the first and only time in which Trubert engages in sexual activity in his own

---

[520] Michael Camille, 'Dr Witkowski's Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), pp. 17–38 (p. 31).

identity and dress. All other examples occur when Trubert is disguised as the duke, as Trubert's sister, or as King Golias. Trubert's sexual deceptions involve claiming an alternative identity in order to initiate intercourse or exploit a character's lack of knowledge of sex and sexual organs.

Trubert deceives two women – the duchess and an unnamed servant – into having sexual intercourse by claiming to be someone else. Trubert gains entry to the duchess' bedroom by identifying themselves as the duke and proceeds to engage repeatedly in sexual intercourse. The duke learns of this from the duchess, who was unaware that her lover was not her husband, but he does not believe her protestations. Unlike the earlier example, here the duke reacts to his wife's explanation in anger: 'Taisiez, je ne vos en croi pas' (*Trubert*, l. 724) and is described as being both furious and sad at being tricked. The verbs 'escharnir' and 'gaber' are used repeatedly in this episode as the husband accuses his wife of adultery, showing the husband is more concerned about his honour and being the subject of a joke than his wife's adultery, regardless of whether it was intentional or not. The narrator does not comment on Trubert's trickery of the duchess, but rather focusses on how the non-marital sex with the duchess enables Trubert to seek revenge and humiliate the duke.[521] That this is a non-consensual sexual encounter, because the wife is tricked into having intercourse and never learns the true identity of her lover, is not portrayed as significant: the focus is on the duke's anger rather than the duchess' reaction.

Trubert deceives a servant into sexual intercourse in a similar way elsewhere in the text by pretending to be King Golias. In this case, Trubert informs the woman afterwards of this deception and she responds with 'Ausi sui com toute enchantee!' (l. 2910) and 'Tolu m'avez mon pucelage!' (l. 2915). These exclamations are notable

---

[521] In this example, Trubert seeks revenge for the duke having given him a mattress that is too comfortable, and he is unable to sleep because of it. Trubert's declaration of revenge is found on lines 587–93.

because they show a character responding directly and immediately to Trubert's sexual trickery, rather than realising they have been deceived at a later time or not realising at all that they have been tricked. The servant's response is one of outrage and dismay, especially at her loss of virginity, which is revealed by the verb 'tolir'. This verb, meaning to seize or remove, is often used in the context of force or injustice and, therefore, the servant presents Trubert's behaviour as force because she, believing her lover was King Golias, did not consent to Trubert. Trubert dismisses her outrage and goes on to involve the servant in a scheme which would see her married to the king. Both the narrator and Trubert are less concerned with the responses of those whom he deceives into sexual acts with more attention being placed on how these acts contribute to Trubert's larger plan of deception and social disruption.

As mentioned earlier, Trubert often uses other characters' lack of understanding of genitals to trick them. There are three instances of this type of behaviour, only one of which does not involve sexual trickery: the first example is when Trubert cuts a woman's genitals off and convinces the duke that they are King Golias' facial features. My discussion focusses on the episodes in which the cross-dressing Couillebaude tricks the duke's daughter into sexual intercourse. It is of interest that the women of the household reject the sexually suggestive name of Couillebaude as being inappropriate for use in public and therefore rename Couillebaude as Florie. This change of name is discussed by Kathryn Gravdal in the context of the use of 'obscene' language in *Trubert*, arguing that in order for Couillebaude to enter into the *courtois* world of the household, 'the obscene "Couillebaude" must be transformed into a flowery euphemism, "Florie"'.[522]

---

[522] Kathryn Gravdal, *Vilain and Courtois: Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), p. 133.

Couillebaude develops relationships with the young women and they argue about with whom Couillebaude will share a bed. The verb 'gesir' is used by the women when they declare that the newcomer Couillebaude should stay with them. 'Gesir' has multiple meanings; although it means 'to sleep', it can also have sexual connotations and this serves to foreshadow the sexual relationship between Couillebaude and the winner of the argument, the duke's daughter Roseite. After this argument, the women prepare for bed and Couillebaude's gaze is voyeuristic as they watch the women undress until the women are 'toutes nues' (*Trubert*, l. 2447) and the narrator comments that Couillebaude 'Voit les connez busiez, sanz barbe' (l. 2448). Couillebaude takes the opportunity of the shared bed to initiate Roseite into sexual intercourse; however, as with the servant and the second episode with the duchess, this is non-consensual as Roseite is not fully aware of what they are doing. Couillebaude tricks Roseite into sexual activity by pretending that their penis is a rabbit that lives inside Couillebaude's vagina.[523] This is not a deception unique to this text, for example a similar plot is found in the *fabliau L'Esquiriel*. This trick results in Roseite touching Couillebaude's penis. The reader is reminded of Roseite's lack of understanding when the narrator comments on her stimulation of Couillebaude's penis that 'Nule mauvestié n'i entent' (l. 2493): it is made clear that she does not understand the nature of her actions. Her lack of knowledge is emphasised further through Roseite's repeated exclamations of surprise and questions during intercourse. Running from line 2491 to 2559, this is the longest description of a sexual encounter in the text and detail is given of both Couillebaude and Roseite's sexual pleasure. However, because Roseite is not fully aware of what is taking place, this focus on her reaction and pleasure appears to celebrate Couillebaude taking advantage of someone with limited sexual experience and knowledge.

---

[523] For more discussion of this scene, see; Gravdal, pp. 130–31.

It is notable that none of the texts discussed in this section shows the protagonists engaged in non-marital sex purely for sexual pleasure or as part of an ongoing sexual relationship. Instead, sexual activity appears to always be part of a larger scheme or done with an ulterior motive. For example, sexual pleasure is secondary to trickery in *La Saineresse* and *Trubert*, and in *Berengier*, the wife/Berengier uses adultery to punish their husband and to gain power in the relationship. The exception to this general rule is in the Life of Theodora/Theodore, where the protagonist is the tricked, rather than the trickster, as is shown in the above examples. This emphasis on single acts of non-marital sex means that these texts do not provide reactions to longer-term non-marital relationships or concubinage; however, there are examples of responses to one's own or another's non-marital sexual encounters. Very few individuals reflect on their non-marital sex, but there are two instances of characters seeking punishment. The Life of Theodore depicts self-punishment, in which the saint takes to monastic enclosure, and in *Trubert* the duchess believes she deserves an even more severe punishment for committing adultery as she repeatedly states that she should be put to death. The strength of the duchess' reaction is meant to have a comic effect but it also shows that she believes adultery to be a serious offence. In most cases discussed here, adultery and other types of non-marital sex are not punished. One reason is that individuals are seldom caught because *fabliaux* are often more interested in deception and trickery than in criticising illicit sexual activity. Characters generally succeed in their sexual exploits and often evade discovery or punishment, and this allows a character like Trubert/Couillbaude to continue to commit sexual and other offences. The *fabliaux*'s treatment of extra-marital sex is of course not echoed in all other texts, and attitudes towards illicit sexual relations is different in genres like hagiography. The Life of Theodore explores different issues around temptation and repentance. The cross-dressing motif plays a significant role in these

examples as it allows these central themes to come to the fore: in the *fabliaux* it enables sexual deception to take place and in the hagiographic narrative it permits the saint to reject worldly temptations.

V.3: False Accusation of Paternity or Assault

The rejection of sexual and worldly temptation can also take different forms to that shown in the Life of Theodora/Theodore discussed in the previous section. Rejecting temptation is commonly associated in texts involving the cross-dressing motif with a false accusation of paternity or assault. The false accusation trope is generally associated with religious figures, either hermits or monks, and is found in the Lives of Marine/Marin, Eugenia/Eugene, Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, Theodora/Theodore, and *Cassidorus*.[524] In each of these examples, bar that of Eugene, the individual is accused of fathering a child and is imprisoned or exiled, and they are often shown raising the child, regardless of the lack of biological connection. Through this trope, the narratives cover, to different extents, issues such as temptation, lascivious women, and potentially queer desire. This narrative trope originates in the Old Testament with the story of Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in which Potiphar's Wife attempts to seduce Joseph and, when he refuses, accuses him of attempted sexual assault, and he is imprisoned.[525] This motif is frequently used in medieval literature across a variety of genres; for example, it features in Marie de France's *lai Lanval* as well as *Silence*, and it is also commonly found, in altered or abbreviated forms, in hagiography.[526] One should also note that there are some important differences between the Potiphar's Wife and the false

---

[524] In tale forty-five from the *CNN*, the cross-dressing character is accused of rape. However, unlike the above examples, it is not made explicitly clear whether this accusation is false. Consequently, this narrative will not be discussed in this section.

[525] Genesis 39.

[526] Faverty offers a list of versions of the Potiphar's Wife tale from different cultures and time periods, see; Frederic E. Faverty, 'The Story of Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in Mediæval Literature', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 13 (1931), 81–128 (pp. 82–99); Heldris de Cornauälle, *Le Roman de Silence: A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse-Romance by Heldris de Cornauälle*, ed. by Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge: Heffer, 1972); Marie de France, *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. by Jean Rychner (Paris: Champion, 1966); Davis, p. 26.

accusation motifs found in the texts discussed here, namely the inclusion of cross-dressing, and accusations of pregnancy often being made instead of assault. Nevertheless, the overwhelming similarities between these narratives and the biblical story make it likely that the writers wished for the readers to make the connection between the accused and Joseph. This would serve to foreshadow later events in the narratives as well as signal disapproval of trying to tempt others into sexual sin.

Stephen J. Davis argues, in an article focussed solely on cross-dressing saints, that one of the reasons why the false accusation motif might appear in this context is to show a saint assigned female at birth overcoming the weaknesses associated with their assigned gender by rejecting sexual temptation; at the same time, the association with Joseph emphasises their ambiguous gender identity and expression.[527] Davis notes that Joseph and his gender presentation were discussed in medieval Christian, Jewish, and Islamic commentaries. Some discussed his 'androgynous' appearance as well as Biblical individuals' and commentators' responses to him. For example, Jerome, in his commentary on Genesis 37, notes that Joseph was desired by men and women alike.[528] This connection between Joseph as a potentially genderqueer character and the religious figures discussed in this section is significant. It is important to note that the scene in which Potiphar's Wife desires and attempts to seduce Joseph does not focus greatly on his physical appearance, but he is described as an 'adulescens' and 'pulchra facie et decorus aspectu'.[529] The noun *adulescens* can be applied to both men and women and emphasises Joseph's youth, which implies a youthful rather than fully mature masculine physical appearance. This, in turn, might affect how one interprets Potiphar's Wife's desire. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's Wife is modified somewhat in each of the

---

[527] Davis, p. 27.
[528] Ibid., p. 27.
[529] Genesis 39: 6–10.

lives, with some focussed more on the seduction attempt and others on the accusation and punishment aspect of the narrative.

Accusation and resulting exile are central to the Lives of Marin, Theodore, and Pelagien as they serve to highlight the saints' obedience, patience, and humility. Considering the significance of the accusation, it is surprising that only a few lines are dedicated to describing the events leading up to it. Only in the Life of Theodore is the saint approached by a young woman; in this scene, the 'pucele' invites Theodore: 'Dors avec moy ceste nuyt', and after being refused 'ceele s'en ala coucher avecques ung qui gisoit en l'ostel' (*Légende dorée*, p. 603). There is no description of any attraction or desire for the saint or the other resident who fathers the child. In the Lives of Marin and Pelagien, there is no attempt at seduction, but the saint is still accused of impregnating someone. In both Old French versions of Marin's Life, the reader is informed that the baby's father is a knight, and although little detail is provided about the accusation in the *Légende dorée*, in the *Vie de sainte Marine* version the woman states that the saint had tricked her into intercourse.[530] In the cases of Pelagien, the accusation comes from the monastic community rather than the pregnant woman herself. In this Life, the devil leads a nun to sin and impregnates her, but the other monks accuse Pelagien of being the father because the saint was the prior of the nun's convent.

Although each of these lives contains various aspects of the false accusation motif, the situation recounted in the Life of Theodore most closely resembles the Potiphar's Wife story as it portrays a scene, albeit short, of attempted seduction. By not including or by minimising the seduction aspect of this motif, the Life's hagiographer avoids the suggestion of queer desire. There is limited interaction between the pregnant woman and the saint, none of which suggests temptation on the saint's part or attraction

---

[530] Léon Clugnet, 'Vie de Sainte Marine', *Revue de L'Orient Chrétien*, 8 (1903), 288–300 (pp. 292, column 2, ll. 24–30).

on the woman's part. Instead, more of the Life is spent discussing the saint's exile. This is similarly reflected in the illuminations; artists did portray the scenes of a sexual nature from Theodore's Life and, as discussed in section V.2.3, three of the miniatures show the saint's non-marital sexual relationship with a nobleman. None, however, illustrates the attempted seduction scene.[531] Both scenes are important to the plot as the first leads Theodore to join the monastery and the second to the saint's exile.

The emphasis on exile in the lives that include the false accusation motif is also echoed in the accompanying manuscript miniatures. Seven of twelve miniatures of Pelagien focus on the saint's exile with six showing them in prison,[532] and four of seven miniatures portray Marin in exile accompanied by the child.[533] A smaller proportion of miniatures focus on Theodore's exile, only four of nine, and these generally also include the devil, often in disguise, to represent the saint's continuing rejection of the devil's temptations.[534] The artists of BnF, MS fr. 242, BnF, MS fr. 6448, and BSB, MS Gall. 3 all foreground the three saints' exiles from their monastic communities: Marin and Theodore are generally depicted seated, with the child, outside of a monastic-style building (for example, figures thirty-six, thirty-seven, thirty-eight, forty-nine, and fifty), whereas Pelagien is often shown in a prison-like structure made from rock (such as in figures fifty-one and fifty-two). These three manuscripts were completed over the

---

[531] There are nine manuscripts that illustrate St Theodora/Theodore and two include multiple scenes within. Out of the eleven portrayals of the saint: three represent the adultery (Rennes, MS 266, BnF, MS fr. 244–45, and Morgan, MS 672–75). Four show exile (BnF, MS fr. 242, BnF, MS fr. 6448, BSB, MS Gall. 3, and BnF, MS fr. 244–45). One shows them in conversation with the devil (BnF fr. 241). Another shows Theodore's entry into the monastery (Morgan 672–75). There are also two generic images of the saint holding a book (Arras, MS 630 and BRB, MS 9228).

[532] There are twelve miniatures of Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, but the artist of Arras, MS 630 illustrated this Life with an image of St Margaret of Antioch. The miniatures showing the saint in exile are in Rennes, MS 266 (fol. 285r), BnF, MS fr. 242 (fol. 231r), BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (245) (fol. 132r), BnF fr. 414 (fol. 332v), BnF fr. 6448 (fol. 315v), London, Royal 19 b xvii (fol. 283v), and BSB Gall. 3 (fol. 198v). The images showing the saint in exile within a prison are Rennes 266, BnF fr. 242, Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 414, BnF, MS fr. 244–45, BnF, MS fr. 6448, and BSB, MS Gall. 3.

[533] These miniatures of Marine/Marin are in Rennes, MS 266 (fol. 149v), BnF, MS fr. 242 (fol. 120v), BnF, MS fr. 6448 (fol. 156v), and BSB, MS Gall. 3 (fol. 100v).

[534] This equates to eleven representations of the saint as two manuscripts illustrate two episodes from the Life in one miniature. The miniatures that show the saint in exile with the child are in BnF, MS fr. 242 (fol. 137r), BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244) (fol. 137r), BnF, MS fr. 6448 (fol. 177r), and BSB, MS Gall. 3 (fol. 191v).

course of 80 years – BnF, MS fr. 242 in 1402, BSB, MS Gall. 3 in c. 1430, and BnF, MS fr. 6448 in c. 1480 – and the similarities in representation show that artistic responses to these saints and the false accusation motif remained fairly consistent.[535] Like the texts, the emphasis is placed on the saint in exile, rather than the reason for this punishment.

In fact, only three miniatures, one of each saint, include the woman who accuses them. The miniature of Marin in BSB, MS Gall. 3, shows the saint in exile but also the mother of the child. She, who was described as being 'ravie du diable' (*Légende dorée*, p. 544), is depicted, after learning of the saint's assigned sex, lying down with her eyes closed and the devil leaving her mouth (fig. fifty). The woman's hands appear to be bound, but there is no textual evidence for this. In the images of Theodore and Pelagien in BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (figs thirty-two and fifty-three), the woman is shown dressed in pink, which contrasts with the black habits of the monks. In figure thirty-two, she does not interact with the monks, but rather stands to one side of the group and looks away from the scene of Theodore receiving the child.[536] However, in the image representing the Life of Pelagien, the woman is central to the image (fig. fifty-three). She occupies a large portion on the right side of the frame and is painted slightly larger than the monks in the background and the imprisoned saint in the foreground. Her pregnancy is shown by the fit of her gown, which flows over a rounded stomach, and her hands gesture towards the saint, thereby indicating her accusation. Although this miniature does not accurately reflect the narrative, as the woman in the Life is a nun and in this image she

---

[535] Maddocks, pp. 128; 176; 200. The images from BnF, MS fr. 242 were completed by the second of three unidentified artists (p. 182); BnF, MS fr. 6448 was the work of a single artist, Evrard d'Espinques, and was commissioned by Jean du Mas (p. 132); and BSB, MS Gall. 3 was completed by the Master of the Munich *Golden Legend* (p. 203).

[536] As mentioned earlier, Martha Easton argues that the scene, in the background of the miniature, that shows the saint accepting the child emphasises the saint's female gender role; Easton suggests that Theodora's decision to care for the child reveals that she 'cannot escape her maternal instincts' (Easton, p. 343); However, in the text Theodore's caring of the child is not described using any maternal or nurturing vocabulary, and Theodore is in fact praised more for their humility and patience during exile (Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 603–4). The assumption that Sts Theodore and Marin care for their children because of their assigned gender is one that is not reflected in the texts, nor in the miniatures.

wears lay clothing, it offers a transgressive image because, on first glance and without reading the text, a monastic figure appears to have broken their vow of celibacy.

There are two examples of the false accusation motif that present a laywoman's attraction to, and attempted seduction of, a religious figure, either a monk or a hermit, in the Life of Eugenia/Eugene and *Cassidorus*. These episodes share similarities with the Lives of Margaret-Pelagien, Theodore, and Marin, but considerably more time is spent describing the seduction scene. In both *Cassidorus* and the Life of Eugene, there is significant emphasis on the scenes of temptation and rejection, highlighting the saint's chastity but this is not the only focus of these scenes. Instead, the narrators draw close attention to the seduction attempts, revealing an interest in discussing desire and transgression more generally.

In the Life of Eugene and *Cassidorus*, the women originally meet the monk or hermit when they, or in the case of *Cassidorus* her mother, seek aid for the treatment of an illness.[537] The women recognise the religious figure's beauty: for Melancie, Eugene's beauty is purely physical whereas for the unnamed 'pucele' in *Cassidorus*, Helcana/Helcanor's beauty is both physical and spiritual. This is shown by the context in which 'biauté' describes both Eugene and Helcanor. The narrator in the Life of Eugene employs 'beaulté' solely in connection with the physical body; for example, Melancie 'regardoit souvent la grandeur et la beaulté de son corps' (*Légende dorée*, p. 867). However, it is Helcanor's spiritual beauty that the 'pucele' responds to first: when she and her mother, the duchess, see the hermit for the first time, they 'cuiderent que ce fust uns saint angeles, de la biauté qui en lui estoit' (*Cassidorus*, 288). The religious figures' spiritual and/or physical beauty makes the women desire them. Melancie's

---

[537] Jacobus de Voragine, pp. 865–69. Instead of getting married, Eugenia/Eugene suggests to Protus and Hyacinth that they join the Christian faith and Eugene cross-dresses to escape. They enter the monastery and Eugene becomes an abbot. A noblewoman, Melancie, desires and attempts to seduce Eugene but is refused. Melancie accuses Eugene of rape. In order to prove their innocence, Eugene bears their breasts in front of a crowd. The emperor repeatedly tries to kill Eugene but is unable to.

attraction to the saint is described in romantic and sexual terms, and when her feelings

are recounted, the narrator frequently refers to Eugene as 'ce frere' to remind the reader

of Eugenia's monastic status (*Légende dorée*, p. 867). The moment of attempted

seduction is given significant space and emphasis in this Life:

> Et quant il fut venu la, elle lui dist par quelle maniere elle estoit esprise de son amour, et comment elle ardoit en la couvoitise de luy et luy pria qu'il couchast avec elle charnellement. Et tantost le print, et l'accolla et besa et admonnestoit de pecher (p. 867).

The alliteration of /c/ in the first sentence draws attention to her admission of a desire

that is explicitly sexual, and the intensity of this desire is stressed by the use of the verb

'ardre'. There is no way to misconstrue Melancie's intentions as she tries to tempt the

monk through her words, by asking Eugene to sleep 'charnellement' with her, and by

her actions, hugging and kissing the saint. In these lines, the narrator presents Melancie

as a temptress and as libidinous. These were stereotypical characteristics often ascribed

to women in the Middle Ages; for example, the Church Fathers considered women to be

associated with the carnal, and men with the spiritual, with Isidore of Seville arguing

that 'the word *femina* comes from the Greek derived from the force of fire because her

concupiscence is very passionate: women are more libidinous than men'.[538]

Eugene vehemently rejects the advances and in doing so condemns Melancie in

four different ways, including declaring her to be the 'seur de luxure' (*Légende dorée*,

p. 867), but neither the saint nor the narrator clarifies why her behaviour was so terrible.

It could be because Melancie was attempting to seduce a religious figure who had taken

a vow of celibacy, because she wanted to engage in non-marital sex, or because she is

attracted to someone of the same assigned gender. However, the narrator explicitly

comments, when describing her first meeting with the saint, that Melancie believed that

Eugenia 'fust ung homme' (p. 867). The use of the imperfect subjunctive of *être*, which

can be used to show doubt or misplaced belief, here could indicate an element of

---

[538] Isodore of Seville as quoted in Salisbury, pp. 22–23; Metzler, p. 44.

uncertainty to Melancie's reading of Eugenia's gender and therefore, this scene could show the possibility of queer desire. The saint remains inconsistently gendered by the narrator, who applies both she/her and he/him pronouns to Eugene, and consequently, the reader is repeatedly reminded of both the saint's assigned and identified genders. The reader is presented with Melancie's desire for someone whose gender does not fit in a binary model and therefore could be interpreted as queer desire. Regardless of whether the reader understands Melancie's interest in Eugenia as either a man, woman, or a genderqueer person, this desire is immediately rejected by the saint.

As mentioned earlier, in *Cassidorus* the 'pucele' is greatly affected by Helcanor's beauty, both spiritual and physical. Helcanor's attractive physical appearance is emphasised; for example, after adopting the hermit's dress, they are repeatedly described as a 'bele creature' (*Cassidorus*, 260; 294) by the 'pucele', the hermit Ydoine, whose desire is discussed later in this chapter, as well as by bystanders who watch the interactions between the 'pucele' and Helcanor during dinner. The 'pucele' tries many times to seduce Helcanor but she phrases her attempted seduction of the hermit in a way that is not as explicitly sexual as that expressed by Melancie to Eugene. First, she states 'je voudroie que je peüsse estre en lieu ou je deïsse mon corage, (…) moult volentiers le deïsse, quar la grant biauté qui en vous est me fait dire ce que vous poez oïr' (290). 'Corage' can have multiple meanings, such as 'desire', 'heart', and 'mind', but all of these possibilities suggest that the 'pucele' is trying to confess an attraction to the hermit. Although Helcanor rejects this suggestion, stating that such attraction is caused by the devil and that the 'pucele' should give her heart to God, the 'pucele' makes a second attempt.[539] The 'pucele' frames the first part of this attempt in such a way that it could be viewed as a proposal of marriage; however, the

---

[539] Helcana in her long speech comments 'N'est pas biauté que vous en moi veez, ainçois est li deables, qui la veüe vous fait mentir (…)' (*Cassidorus*, 291).

second half of her proposition clearly shows her sexual intent: 'Se vous voliés, je feroie

tant que vous m'avriez a femme, et vous a seigneur, quar je voi bien que vous estes

gentilz homs. Et se vous anuit me voliez avoir, vous m'avriez tout a vostre volenté'

(295). Although the 'pucele' is being sexually forward, she does not attempt to embrace

Helcanor, as Melcanie does Eugene, but rather presents herself as passive and Helcanor

in a position of control. This is achieved through the repetition of 'se' meaning 'if' at

the start of each sentence and in her positioning of Helcanor as the active subject of the

verbs.

It is notable that the 'pucele' declares that she wants Helcanor: 'quar je voi bien

que vous estes gentilz homs'. The use of the verb 'voir' brings the reader's attention to

how the 'pucele' views and responds to Helcanor's gender presentation, assuming that

expression correlates with identified gender. The dramatic irony of this statement is

emphasised through the combination of the verb and adverb 'voi bien', which suggests

that she should not be so certain about her perception of the hermit and their gender

identity. Here, the narrator reminds the reader of Helcanor's assigned female gender

despite having used the hermit's preferred name and grammatically masculine pronouns

and signifiers from the moment of their baptism as Helcanor. This implies that although

their desire is expressed using the vocabulary of a male-female binary, shown through

the opposition of 'femme' and 'seigneur', there is a queer element to this desire because

Helcanor does not fit into this understanding of gender.

The verb 'voir' is used elsewhere when individuals observe and interpret

Helcanor and their appearance. For example, there is a conversation between members

of the Duchess' household who are present for the public conversations between the

hermits and the women in which one bystander comments that:

> ainz mais jour de ma vie ne vi plus bele creature, et moult se doit merveillier qui
> il est qui si faitement est venuz ci pour estre en tel habit' (to which another
> responds) 'si il n'est gentils et de haut lignage, quar il me samble que je ne vi

oncques mais si bel homme ne de si biau contenement a table comme il est (*Cassidorus*, 294).

Their reactions to Helcanor suggest that markers of status and lineage cannot be concealed, an idea which was also discussed in relation to the *Comte d'Artois* in chapter III and is commonly found in medieval literature more generally, but it is notable that they do not question the hermit's gender presentation: they read Helcanor as an attractive well-born man.

Despite the hermit's rejection of these advances, the 'pucele's' sexual interest in Helcanor continues as the text comments that she 'ne ne voult metre, la grant biauté qui fu en Helcanor en oubli' (*Cassidorus*, 296) and, after being impregnated by Licorus, she accuses Helcanor of fathering her child. This accusation, like that of the saints discussed earlier, leads to Helcanor's exile. However, this punishment is not accepted without comment on the morality of the behaviour of which Helcanor stands accused: 'Sire, se c'est voir que je a vo fille ai fait tel chose que vous me metez sus, c'est contre droit et contre nature' (297). It is important to note that 'droit' can mean 'true' and 'lawful', but also can have moral connotations; that it is 'contre droit' could therefore be a proclamation of innocence or a comment on the appropriateness of the behaviour, in this case sexual relations with the 'pucele', itself. Helcanor does not specify why sexual intercourse with the 'pucele' would be 'contre droit et contre nature': it could relate to the fact Helcanor is married to Cassidorus, and therefore it would be adultery; that they are a hermit who is not meant to engage in sexual activity; or that any sexual relations would be immoral because of the assigned genders of the individuals involved. As discussed earlier, the expression 'contre nature' is heavily associated in legal and moral discourse with sexual acts that were non-procreative, which of course include sexual

activity between individuals of the same gender.[540] Given the textual context, Helcanor is likely issuing a condemnation of queer sexual desire.

Although the episodes of attempted seduction in the Life of Eugene and *Cassidorus* offer considerably more discussion on the implications of such desire than is found in the other examples of false accusations, a similar focus is not found in accompanying manuscript miniatures. The episode is not shown in any of the illuminations of Eugene's Life in the *Légende dorée*. One reason for this is that Eugene is included in the Life of Protus and Hyacinth: even though Eugene is the protagonist of this Life, they are not the titular saint. Consequently, the miniatures generally show Eugene, Protus, and Hyacinth together in punishment or martyrdom, and Eugene is always portrayed in female dress and presentation (for example, fig. fifty-four). However, there are portrayals of Eugene's response to Melancie's accusation of rape in other media. Robert Mills, Kirk Ambrose, and Saisha Grayson amongst others have examined representations of Eugene baring their naked body as proof of their innocence, on a twelfth-century capital from a church in Vézelay and in a thirteenth-century Spanish retable tapestry.[541] These portrayals are unusual as they foreground the unveiling of the saint's 'true' gender identity; they do not present the seduction attempt, but the capital at Vézelay does include Melancie to the saint's left with her finger pointing in accusation. Despite the uncovering of the cross-dressed saint's body being a common feature in all these lives, there are few examples of this in visual culture: the two representations of Eugenia mentioned and one manuscript miniature of Pelagien on folio 254v of BRB, MS 9282–85.[542] In all of these examples, the saint reveals their

---

[540] For example, it is used by Gratian in C. 32 q. 7 d.p.c 10. This passage discusses the hierarchy of fornication, stating that those who sin against nature commit the highest sin, above that of fornication, adultery, and incest: 'Sed hos omnes incestuosi transcendent, quos vincunt contra naturam delinquentes'.

[541] Kirk Ambrose, 8–10; Saisha Grayson, 155–66; Robert Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, pp. 202–204.

[542] It is much more common to find a character's nakedness being displayed either voluntarily to prove identity or without their consent in the narratives. As discussed, it is a feature of all the cross-dressing saints' lives but is also found in *Comte d'Artois*, when the Countess/Phlipot shows their breasts to the governess (p. 123); in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, when Blanchandine reveals their transformed body to Clarinde (ll. 16354–58), and in *Ysaïe le Triste*, when Marte is undressed by the sailors (271).

assigned sex to others either by undressing or through a declaration. Eugene decides to show their body to prove their innocence whereas Pelagien discloses their gender identity in a letter in which they specify that they would prefer their body to be prepared for burial by nuns. The miniature from BRB 9282–85 of Pelagien (fig. thirteen) reflects the narrative's conclusion and shows the saint being prepared for burial by three nuns, who have uncovered the saint's naked body and gesture towards Pelagien's breasts and groin.

The manuscripts of *Cassidorus* likewise do not visually depict either the act of seduction, the accusation, or the exile. In fact, only two manuscripts, BnF, MS fr. 93 and BRB, MS 9245, show the 'pucele' and Helcanor together: BRB, MS 9245 shows the initial meeting and BnF, MS fr. 93 portrays the interaction between the hermits and the women. In BnF, MS fr. 93, the focus of the image is the two hermits in conversation with the mother and daughter (fig. fifty-five). They sit in front of a tent with Ydoine speaking to the mother whilst Helcanor is in conversation with the 'pucele' behind them. It is curious, considering that most of this scene focusses on the daughter's desire, that Ydoine and the Duchess are presented in the foreground whilst Helcanor and the daughter are partially obscured.[543] The seduction attempt is not shown but the viewer begins to wonder what is being hidden from view. The second version of this scene is in BRB, MS 9245, which shows Helcanor greeting the Duchess and the 'pucele' (fig. twenty-four). This miniature reflects the rubric exactly and does not portray the interactions between the women and the hermits or the seduction attempt. To the left of the frame, two women ride on horseback towards Helcanor, who is the most prominent figure in the miniature and is considerably taller than those on horseback. It is notable that Helcanor's cross-dressing is presented but not their adopted identity as a hermit as

---

[543] It is possible to identify which hermit is Ydoine and which is Helcanor from a comparison of the other miniatures in this manuscript showing these figures (fols 239v, 242r). Ydoine is always shown with long hair and a beard whereas Helcanor always has a robe covering their hair.

Helcanor wears lay clothing and the imperial crown, while their hair is both short and uncovered. In representing Helcana as a layman, the transgressive potential of the 'pucele's' seduction attempt is minimised as the reader is not reminded of Helcanor's assigned gender or identity as a hermit.

The false accusation motif comes in many different forms in the examples discussed in this section. In many instances, the motif is not developed, such as in cases where there is no seduction attempt, and generally it does not add much to the plot other than giving a reason for a cross-dressing character to be exiled. This is also reflected in the manuscript miniatures that place much more attention on the saint's exile. The inclusion of more detailed seduction attempts and more lengthy rejections, like those found in the Life of Eugene, *Cassidorus*, and, to a lesser extent, the Life of Theodore, has two consequences. First, the women who attempt to seduce Eugene, Helcanor, and Theodore are shown as temptresses whose sexual object choice is potentially problematic because of the saints'/hermit's religious and gender identities. Their desire could be viewed as same-gender desire because both Helcanor and Eugene were assigned female at birth; however, Melancie and the 'pucele' appear to be attracted to Helcanor and Eugene's queer gender expression as their desire is often focussed on the hermit/monk's seemingly masculine physicality. Second, the women's sexual advances are contrasted with the religious figures' immediate rejection not only of the seduction but of such behaviours more generally. These texts therefore promote chastity and modesty whilst condemning licentious behaviour. Other than Helcanor's indication that the behaviour for which they were accused was 'contre nature', there is no outright condemnation of queer desire, but rather more emphasis is placed on the importance of chastity. In all these texts, Eugene, Helcanor, Theodore, Marin, and Pelagien are praised for their chastity and humility, qualities which lead them to gain recognition and admiration in their communities and from the narrator.

V.4: Queer Desire

One aspect of the cross-dressing motif that has received significant critical attention is the protagonist's sexual and romantic relationships.[544] Many have focussed on whether the cross-dressing motif allows for exploration of same-gender attraction but studies have also examined how desire for those whose gender does not fit into a binary model can be represented in medieval literature.[545] These relationships may be the catalyst for or are entered into after cross-dressing, but their non-normative gender practices often affect how these relationships are portrayed by the narrator. A number of studies have discussed different approaches that can be taken to analyse characters with non-normative gender expressions in medieval culture. Blake Gutt, arguing that non-normative gender identities and expressions are often interpreted in ways which focus on what they can reveal about sexuality, applies transgender theory to medieval literature.[546] Robert Mills discusses the potential consequences of interpreting and applying the modern-day categories of 'transgender' or 'same-sex desire/same-gender desire/lesbian/gay' to cross-dressing characters, and their relationships. Mills notes:

> both modes of recognition (which we can only apply in retrospect) contain perspectival blind spots. Lesbian potentially renders invisible the priority of transgender in medieval depictions of sodomy by overwriting the cross-identifying women's masculinity with a specifically female category of desire, one foregrounding its same-sex structure; transgender potentially relegates the masculine-performing woman's partner to the sidelines - and also, lest we forget, the anus-penetrating males (…).[547]

One should consider all possible ways in which the narrators of medieval texts were trying to represent the cross-dressing character's gender, their sexuality as well as the

---

[544] For example, see Kathleen M. Blumreich, 'Lesbian Desire in the Old French *Roman De Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 47–62; Jane Gilbert, 39–61; Ad Putter, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 279–302; Diane Watt, 265–85; Robert L. A. Clark, 'A Heroine's Sexual Itinerary', in *Gender Transgressions*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor, pp. 89–105; Williams Robins, 43–62.

[545] For example, see Simon Gaunt, 'Straight Minds/"Queer" Wishes' 439–57; Francesca C. Sautman, 'What Can They Possibly Do Together', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, pp. 199–232; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations*, (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[546] Gutt, pp. 129–30.

[547] Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, p. 97.

desire felt by any potential partners. It is important to ensure that one interpretation does not obscure other alternatives and experiences from view because 'What appears from one angle to be transgender might, with a subtle shift of perspective, come into view as a form of homosexuality'.[548] This section will therefore examine examples of potentially queer desire, be that towards someone of one's own gender or because of another's queer gender, in *chansons de geste*, romances, and hagiography.

One of the most notable elements of romantic and sexual relationships which involve a cross-dressing character is that cross-dressing individuals rarely actively pursue said relationship as they are usually the recipient of unwanted desire. As a consequence, the reader learns more about how others react to the cross-dressing character and the elements of their personality, appearance, or character that draw attention and attraction to them; this focusses on the opinions of others looking at the cross-dressing character rather than on the latter as desiring subjects. This can have several consequences. First, it avoids showing a gender non-conforming character seeking sexual or romantic relationships and the questions that this may raise about their sexual preferences. Second, in making the desire for the character and a relationship with them come from another character, some of the transgressive potential of this desire is minimised as the suitor is generally portrayed as unaware of the cross-dressing character's gender non-conformity. Nevertheless, one can still examine the nature of this attraction and how such relationships are portrayed by narrators, which can give insights into how queer desire was conceptualised, approached, and represented in medieval literature.

Cassidorus includes a second example of attraction towards a queer character: that of Ydoine, the hermit, for Helcana/Helcanor. Once they agree that Helcana should remain with Ydoine in the hermitage, Ydoine asks Helcana to cross-dress: 'il couvient

---

[548] Mills, *Seeing Sodomy*, p. 132.

que en autre habit soiez, quar ci viennent souvent li un et li autre, et je ne vouroie pas que nul mal y pensast' (*Cassidorus*, 260). Ydoine's reasoning reveals his wish to avoid any presumption of inappropriate behaviour, but it is this act that leads him to desire Helcanor. Some have argued that because Ydoine is aware of Helcanor's assigned gender and cross-dressing, his desire could not be considered as queer.[549] There are other examples of texts in which this could be the case, such as in *Frere Denise* and *La Saineresse*. In these texts, the cross-dressing character's non-normative gender practices are undertaken solely to facilitate their entry into a sexual relationship. These characters do play with gender expression and boundaries, and cross-dressing adds an additional level of transgression to the non-marital sexual relationships taking place; however, the desire between these characters is not a reaction to their gender expression. This is not the case with Ydoine's attraction to Helcanor, which grows only after he asks them to cross-dress and he baptises them as Helcanor. This choice of name is of interest as Ydoine chooses the masculinised version of Helcanor's birth name rather than a gender-neutral name like he himself holds, which leads one to question how Ydoine views Helcanor and his motives for asking them to adopt a new dress and identity.

Helcanor is given a similar robe to Ydoine and, on adopting this garment, is described as a young man: 'Quant elle se fu ainsi atiree, poi fussent de gent qu'il ne cuidassent que ce fust un jouvencel de l'aage de .XIIIJ. anz' (*Cassidorus*, 260). The narrator's use of the imperfect subjunctive 'fust', in a similar way as discussed in the case of Melancie's perception of Eugene's gender discussed earlier, brings out an element of doubt and uncertainty to how the 'gent' would read Helcanor's appearance. It is also significant that instead of a gendered pronoun, the gender-neutral 'ce' is chosen. This indicates that Helcanor's gender is queer or at the very least ambiguous,

---

[549] For a discussion on this issue, see Szkilnik, 'The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance', in *Gender Transgressions*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor, p. 68; Similar arguments are made in relation to other texts including a cross-dressed character desired by others, an approach which is rejected by Gaunt, 'Straight Minds/"Queer" Wishes', p. 447.

especially as it is used in conjunction with the imperfect subjunctive 'fust'. Before this point, the narrator made no mention of Ydoine's reaction to Helcanor's physical appearance when dressed as a laywoman; but the lines that come immediately after these show his new response. Ydoine 'la regarde. Moult fu destourbez quant il la vit si bele creature, quar paour ot qu'il n'en entrast en mauvaise temptation, par quoi il pechast en li couvoitier' (260). His reaction is a visual one, shown through the use of 'voir', and his desire is immediately associated with the vocabulary of fear, sin, and temptation. Although grammatically feminine pronouns and markers are used in these lines for Helcanor, this does not entirely obscure the fact that he is attracted to the sight of the 'jouvencel' before him. In fact, the combination of the masculine appearance with feminine grammatical markers suggests that his desire stems from Helcana's genderqueer presentation. His concern that this desire may lead to sin is revealed through the use of the imperfect subjunctive in 'entrast en mauvaise temptation' and 'pechast en li convoitier'. Ydoine's attraction to the hermit's beauty is emphasised further when he comments that God had done good work in creating Helcanor but, when asked, refuses to explain his meaning, and the narrator simply states 'Il ne li voult pas dire' (260), suggesting that he does not want to reveal his desire to Helcanor.

Ydoine tries to purge his attraction through self-punishment: 'il boutoit ses dois ou feu pour oster sa temptation de l'anemi' (*Cassidorus*, 261). Helcanor discovers that he has lost his fingers but is able to restore them through prayer. The devil's attempts to lead both Ydoine and Helcanor into temptation fail, but in discussing these attempts, Ydoine confesses his desire. He explicitly states that he confesses this to ensure that Helcanor understands the devil's powers and wish to lead them to sin, rather than to enter into a sexual or romantic relationship. When describing his temptation, his focus is again on Helcanor's 'grant biauté' (265). Unlike Helcanor's reactions to the accusation of impregnating the 'pucele', as discussed in section V.3, there is no discussion of the

temptations and desires felt by Ydoine as being 'contre nature'. Although his desires are shown as sinful and inappropriate, it seems as if they are so because of his religious status as a hermit and his dedication to celibacy, rather than because of Helcanor's gender expression. The reason for this double standard is difficult to determine but it is possible that this difference in the portrayal of Ydoine and the 'pucele' is related to their reaction to their desire: Ydoine tries to curb his sexual attraction whereas the 'pucele' endeavours to seduce Helcanor and, when rejected, seeks an alternative lover in a revenge plot.

The scene in which Ydoine confesses his attraction to Helcanor is represented in a manuscript miniature in BnF, MS fr. 22548–50 (22549) (fig. fifty-six). This manuscript, produced in Paris between 1325 and 1350, includes 252 miniatures including four which represent Helcanor's time as a hermit.[550] Figure fifty-six shows Ydoine and Helcanor sitting in the hermitage; Ydoine sits to the right, holding his left hand up and his right hand across his chest up, which both appear without fingers. Helcanor, on the left, looks at Ydoine's raised left hand whilst pointing the index finger on their right hand towards Ydoine to draw the reader's attention to Ydoine's hands. Although this is the only manuscript of *Cassidorus* to depict this scene, no visual hint is given to explain why and/or how Ydoine lost his fingers. Despite this, the inclusion of this unusual scene at the start of this section of the narrative is intriguing. This is because Ydoine lost his fingers in the previous section of the text, yet this miniature is found at the start of the section in which Helcanor restores his fingers and Polus, the man who betrayed Helcanor earlier in the story, visits the hermits. This suggests that the artist wanted to highlight the scenes of desire and disfigurement to the reader in the place of events that were more relevant to this part of the narrative.[551] In this

---

[550] Rouse and Rouse, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller, p. 133; Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, II, 185.
[551] For example, in BnF, MS fr. 93, this section of text is illustrated with the scene of Polus' arrival. The other manuscripts do not include illustrations at this point.

manuscript, it is notable that in all the miniatures showing Helcanor in their identity as a hermit, Helcanor is shown with no traditionally feminine markers of gender; however, if one compares the representations of Helcanor and Ydoine in this image, one could suggest that Helcanor's assigned gender is shown as they are presented without a beard where Ydoine has long grey hair and beard. On the other hand, this lack of a beard could be used to signify a youthful masculine appearance – that of a fourteen-year-old 'jouvencel' – in contrast to Ydoine. Helcanor's identity as a hermit is foregrounded in these images as is Helcanor's ambiguous gender expression. The combination of the text, which shows Ydoine's desire growing only once Helcanor has cross-dressed, and this visual depiction of Helcanor reinforces the queer nature of Ydoine's attraction to Helcanor.

Another example of an individual being attracted to another's queer gender expression can be found in *Eufrosine*. Unlike other cross-dressing saints discussed elsewhere in this chapter, Eufrosine/Esmarade is not subject to a false accusation of paternity or assault, but, once Esmarade enters the monastery, they are the object of unwanted desire. As with Ydoine, the monks who desire Esmarade consider their attraction to be inappropriate and do not wish to be drawn into temptation, leading to the saint being placed into seclusion by the abbot. It is important to note that Esmarade is desired explicitly by the other monks as a eunuch, the identity the saint declared on arrival at the monastery: 'Portier, fai moi parler vias a dant abé! / Dis li que a la porte as laissiét un castré' (*Eufrosine*, ll. 514–15). A eunuch can be understood as being a genderqueer identity because eunuchs, who were assigned male at birth but castrated later in life, did not fit into a binary model of gender.[552]

---

[552] Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt, 'Trans & Genderqueer Studies Terminology, Language, and Usage Guide', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); For more information on eunuchs and questions of gender identity, see Shaun Tougher, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

The saint introduces themselves as Esmarade, which in Old French is a gender-neutral name meaning 'Emerald', and as a 'castré' (*Eufrosine*, l. 515). The description of the saint's physical appearance, to which the other monks react, is focussed on Esmarade's facial features, such as 'Li olh vair et riant et la boche molee' (l. 568) and 'Bien gart n'en isse fors: trop est sa face bele' (l. 588). Such features were commonly associated with beautiful young women, but these features are not explicitly gendered and could equally describe young men before the onset of puberty. As a consequence, this reveals the place of the eunuch simultaneously both within and outside of traditional markers of masculinity and femininity. It is Esmarade's queer gender expression that attracts the other monks, and this desire is described in vocabulary of madness and temptation: 'La congregations por pou ne fut dervee. / Cogitasion male lor est el cuer montee' (ll. 569–70). The depth of their temptation and the great risk for sin is highlighted when the monks request Esmarade's removal; the repetition of 'castré/castrez' explicitly connects their desire with the saint's queer gender:

> Fai oster cest castré d'entre nous.
> Ce n'est mie castrez, mais Sathan l'envïous
> Qui nos vuet trebuchier en ses laz a entrous.
> S'entre ces jouvenciaz estat un jor u dous,
> Ja en orons tal chose dont tot serons gragnous (ll. 574–78).

Amy V. Ogden argues that in these passages the pronouns and gendered vocabulary that describe the saint are used inconsistently and that this grammatical indeterminacy foregrounds the saint's gender as being ambiguous.[553] This use of inconsistent grammatical gender in the monks' request therefore reinforces the idea that the monks are drawn towards the saint because figure because of Esmarade's queer gender expression.

As in *Cassidorus*, the genderqueer Esmarade is required to be separated from those who desire them, not because the saint seeks to enter into a romantic or sexual

---

[553] Ogden, p. 87.

relationship but because the other monks, acknowledging the strength of their desire, wish to avoid temptation. In this way, sexual attraction to a genderqueer individual is presented negatively and as to be avoided at all costs, but it is also shown to be inevitably one that all the monks are at risk of feeling.[554] In this way, this Life connects with the manuals and monastic rules, discussed in section V.1, which provided guidance for preventing similar desires being realised in religious communities. Although the overwhelmingly negative response to the desire felt by the monks could reflect a more general rejection of queer desire, like that found in the theological and legal discourse around 'unnatural' acts, it is important to remember the context in which the desire for Esmarade, and similarly for Helcanor, is located. Those who desire them are bound by vows of celibacy and consequently any and all sexual desire is problematic. There are other examples of queer desire in this corpus, such as in *Yde et Olive*, in which the relationships are represented in a positive manner by the narrator and as being entered into willingly by the couple.

The romantic relationship portrayed in *Floris et Lyriopé* is unique in this corpus as the cross-dressing motif allows one character to spend more time with a potential lover. There are other examples, such as the *Comte d'Artois*, *Ysaïe le Triste*, and tale twenty-six from the *CNN*, in which a character assigned female at birth cross-dresses in order to find/regain a lover/spouse but, in these instances, the relationship predates the cross-dressing. However, in *Floris et Lyriopé*, Floris convinces their twin Florie to swap clothing and identities so that Floris can spend time with Lyriopé, for whom Florie serves as lady in waiting.[555] *Floris et Lyriopé* is not the only text in which a character assigned male at birth cross-dresses as his sibling, for example, it is also found in *Trubert* and *Baudouin de Sebource*. In *Trubert*, Trubert/Couillebaude disguises

---

[554] Gaunt, 'Straight Minds/"Queer" Wishes', pp. 448–49.
[555] This relationship has been analysed in detail in Gilbert, pp. 50–59 This text involves two characters exchanging identities and names. To avoid confusion, I identify them using their birth names.

themselves as their sister to avoid capture but is then taken to the Duke's court where Couillebaude impregnates Roseite and marries King Golias; however, a key difference is that Trubert does not take on the sister's identity but invents the figure of Couillebaude. In *Baudouin de Sebourc*, the Count of Flanders cross-dresses as their sister to trick her lover, Baudouin, into trying to seduce the Count and also to prove that Baudouin is part of a murder plot. In both *Trubert* and *Baudouin de Sebourc* the cross-dressing character either attempts to engage in, or actually engages in, sexual activity as part of a trick and the descriptions of these tricks raise the question of queer desire. The intended comedy in the scenes does not take away from their introduction of the theme of queer sex and attraction, but these scenes are less well developed than others discussed in this section and, consequently, do not focus on or address these issues in the same amount of detail. In *Floris et Lyriopé,* Floris, as Florie, and Lyriopé enter into a romantic relationship and the descriptions of their embraces and emotions bring questions of queer desire to the fore. That their desire is reciprocal is significant as many of the other representations of desire discussed in this section are unwanted and framed in such a way that suggests such attraction is wrong whereas this text offers an example of a loving relationship. However, this does not mean that this text offers an entirely positive view of their relationship, as Floris promotes relationships between men and women, suggesting that they have greater value than those between people of the same gender.

Once Floris has arrived at court the narrator provides a great deal of detail about their changing relationship with Lyriopé. The narrator's description focusses heavily on the physical contact between the pair and, although there is no genital contact at this point, the types of embrace indicate the development of a romantic relationship:

> Sovant mout doucement li rit.
> Sovant en son giron se couche,
> Sovant a sa char nue toche
> Et sovant la prant per la main,

Si la met sovant en son sain (*Floris et Lyriopé*, ll. 909–13).

A shared affection is shown through the holding of hands and the close physical embraces. It is notable that Floris is presented as the active participant – Floris touches her skin, Floris takes her hand – and although Lyriopé's reaction to these behaviours is not recorded, it is clear that she accepts them. The next nine hundred lines record the progress of their relationship and the narrator frequently comments on their growing closeness; for example: 'Tant li plaist ja sa compaignie / Que sanz lui n'a pas bone vie. / Toz ses deduit est avec lui' (ll. 944–46). There are several different ways that one could interpret the word 'deduit' which in its broadest sense means pleasure: 'deduit' can mean sexual pleasure, amusement, and a game, amongst other meanings. The multivalent meanings of this noun allow the narrator to hint at sexual activity, perhaps foreshadowing the confession of love and sexual encounter between Floris and Lyriopé that occurs later in the narrative.

Most of the emphasis in this section is on describing Floris' feelings for Lyriopé, which are often portrayed using the lovesickness trope common in medieval romances. However, this does not mean that the attraction is one-sided: not only, as discussed, are many of their interactions physical embraces that are accepted by both, but there is also an example of Lyriopé initiating an embrace: 'Or n'ai pas cil joie petite / Quant la bele de gré l'embrace / Et baise souvent en la face' (*Floris et Lyriopé*, ll. 937–39). An important aspect of these lines is the inclusion of the descriptor 'de gré', which reveals that Lyriopé, 'la bele', willingly embraces and kisses her lady-in-waiting. This is important as otherwise, up until this point in the narrative, one could argue that the desire shown is not queer because the emphasis has been on Floris' actions and feelings, and their motivation for cross-dressing was to be close to the woman Floris loved. However, Floris' love, which may be normative in itself, raises the question of queer

desire through Lyriopé's reaction to Floris' advances. [556] Floris' embraces are accepted by Lyriopé, who believes Floris is Florie, her female lady-in-waiting, and she is therefore demonstrating an affection for someone of her own gender. In this way Lyriopé's desire is different from that of other women who are attracted to a cross-dressing character. First, Lyriopé had a previous long-term platonic relationship with Florie, the person whose identity Floris had adopted, whereas the other women tended not to have any previous connection with the cross-dressing character. Second, the women, for example the Dame in *Ysaïe le Triste*, Clarinde in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, and Melancie in the Life of St Eugene, are ostensibly sexually attracted to a person presenting as male. This means that on the surface their desire could be viewed as normative, although it is rendered queer by their potential lover's cross-dressing, whereas Lyriopé's attraction is explicitly queer from the beginning.

The same-gender love portrayed in *Floris and Lyriopé* is not confined solely to actions, but there are verbal confessions of love as well as debates about love between individuals of the same or a different gender. A scene that begins with the pair sitting 'main a main' (*Floris et Lyriopé*, l. 963) in a garden shows Floris initiating an embrace:

> Sovant vers la bele s'encline,
> Doucement l'estoint a dous braz,
> En mi la boiche par solaz
> La baise .vii. foiz per lesir.
> La grant douçor la fait fremir;
> S'an sont andui tuit esbahi
> De la douçor qu'il ont senti (ll. 971–77).

These lines again emphasise the couple's shared affection as well as their emotional and physical response to the kiss. Although 'ébahir' can be used to describe negative reactions of fear and worry, it can also be used in the context of surprise and amazement, which seems a more likely use given the context and the description of the 'grant douçor'. After this, Floris declares, whilst reading the story of Pyramus and

---

[556] Gilbert, p. 52.

Thisbe from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 'Dame, certes, se je estoie / Piramus, je vos ameroie' (ll. 992–93). This is significant because this first verbal confession of love is expressed using a conditional sentence that suggests, to Lyriopé and the reader, that love between women is not possible but can only be felt between a man and woman. This is the first of several examples of Floris making statements that privilege and praise love between men and women over queer love. Floris responds to Lyriopé's declaration by directly comparing desire and affection found between men and women to what he calls 'nostre fole amor' (l. 1030), stating that their 'fole amour' is inferior. Floris argues that 'Quant nos en nostre fole amor / Sentons andui si grant douçor. / Mout est cele douçor pluz granz, / Plus saverouse et plus plaisanz / Que cil ont qui ainment a droit' (ll. 1030–34). The use of 'droit' in this context shows that Floris is making a value statement on queer desire. Jane Gilbert argues that 'Floris presents lesbianism as an inferior sexual mode, rather than an immoral one'; however, it is possible that 'droit' could have both meanings here.[557] As discussed earlier in the case of *Cassidorus*, 'droit' can be interpreted in several ways and Floris' usage could suggest that the only morally acceptable sexual preference is that between a man and a woman or that it is superior in terms of experience and pleasure. By identifying love between men and women as 'right' or 'true', Floris automatically and categorically classifies queer desire as wrong.

A contrasting view is posited by Lyriopé, who also makes a direct comparison between sexual preferences. She does this by contrasting her feelings for Floris to those for a hypothetical male suitor. First, she comments that although she was previously unaware of the possibility of same-gender love, she would prefer the embrace of a woman over a man:

> Oncques mais n'an oï novales
> Que s'entramassent dous puceles.

---

[557] Gilbert, p. 54.

> Mais n'ameroie pas, ce croi,
> Nul home tant con je fais toi,
> Ne tant, ce cuit, ne me plairoit
> Li baisiers, s'uns hons me baisoit (*Floris et Lyriopé*, ll. 1010–15).

The love that Lyriopé describes here is both romantic and sexual as she describes her feelings of love as well as the pleasure she feels in Floris' kisses. There is, of course, dramatic irony in Lyriopé's comparison as both the reader and Floris are aware that the love she feels is not, as she believes, for a woman but rather a cross-dressing character. The use of the verbs *cuider* and *croire* in these lines bring the reader's attention to Lyriopé's unshakeable belief that her lover is a woman and, as Gilbert argues, that the reader is invited to see comedy in this conviction.[558] Although the narrative sets up a hierarchy of love, with that between men and women declared superior to queer love, this text does bring the possibility of same-gender love to the fore and offers an example of a woman who actively confesses an attraction to another woman. The moment Floris confesses their gender to Lyriopé on lines 1048 to 1055, which is not shown through direct speech but is described in quite ambiguous terms, is also when the couple consummate their relationship for the first time and conceive their child. There is no description of either person undressing, which is significant because it brings another queer element to this sexual activity since, despite Floris having confessed their gender identity, Floris remains dressed as Florie. Here the queer and normative desire are intertwined, unable to be entirely separated from each other.

The most complex examples of potentially queer desire explored in this thesis are found in two texts including a gender transformation. In these texts, a character assigned female at birth cross-dresses before divine intervention changes their body to match their gender expression. Blanchandine/Blanchandin, in *Tristan de Nanteuil*, and Yde/Ydé, in *Yde et Olive*, who undergo these gender transformations, are also the object of another's desire. Ydé, as discussed in section IV.2.2, cross-dresses to escape their

---

[558] Gilbert, p. 53.

father's incestuous desire and eventually marries Olive, the daughter of the King of Rome, whereas Blanchandin, who is already married to Tristan, is desired by and becomes engaged to Clarinde, a sultan's daughter. The love and sexual desire expressed by Clarinde and Olive and the responses of Blanchandin and Ydé have been discussed by many scholars interested in representations of gender and desire.[559] Due to the element of gender transformation in these texts, one should return to the question posed by Robert Mills and examined earlier in this section. Do these narratives explore same-gender desire that is perhaps rendered less transgressive by a gender transformation of one of the partners, or do they present a potentially transgender character whose gender practices do not fit within a binary model and another's love and attraction to them? It is important to state that this thesis does not equate the gender transformations described in these narratives with a gender transition as the term is used today.[560] One reason for this is that in medieval texts transformations are often initiated by divine intervention and not all are given the opportunity to accept or reject the transformation process. For example, Ydé's body is transformed without a stated desire for such a transformation and the narrative ends without any comment on it from Ydé.[561]

Olive and Clarinde have different responses on first meeting the person who will become their future spouse. Olive's initial reaction to Ydé, when her father asks her to serve Yde during their stay, is one of politeness but, as the narrative continues, more moments are described of Olive gazing upon Ydé. For example, when Olive's service is described, the narrator states that 'Olive l'a volentiers esgardee. / Et Yde proie a la Vierge honoree / Qu'ele le gart que ne soit acusee / U se ce non, ele iert a mort livree'

[559] Watt, pp. 265–85; Clark, 'A Heroine's Sexual Itinerary', in *Gender Transgressions*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor, pp. 89–105; Sautman, 'What can they possibly do together?', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, pp.199–232; Kłosowska, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages*; Campbell, 'Performing Gender in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Cultural Performances in Medieval* France, ed. by Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger, E. Jane Burns, and Nancy F. Regalado, pp. 79–89; Amer, pp. 50–87; Robins, pp. 43–62.
[560] The use of this terminology is also discussed by Gutt, p. 139.
[561] Gutt, p. 128.

(*Yde et Olive*, ll. 6910–13). Olive's reaction to Yde is not described at this point, but the inclusion of these brief mentions of Olive's gaze hints towards a developing attraction. Ydé's response to Olive's attention is one of concern, but the reason for this concern is not made explicit. Ydé could be worried that their cross-dressing would be revealed through continued interaction with Olive, but another possibility is that Ydé is concerned that they may be accused of sexual impropriety in a similar way to that found in the false accusation motif. Olive has a physical response, which Diane Watt states is 'unambiguously sexual', when she sees Ydé return after battle, 'Trestous li cors de joie li formie' (l. 7026). Her response is also linked with a verbal self-confession of love: 'Mes amis iert. Ains demain li voel dire. / Ains mais ne fui d'omme si entreprise, / S'est bien raisons et drois que je li die' (ll. 7028–30).[562]

In *Tristan de Nanteuil*, Clarinde's interest in Blanchandin is evident from the start; the narrator states that she, not recognising her cousin, 'Sur tous les chevaliers tengrement regardoit / Blanchandine la belle (…), / Ainçois pour chevalier moult bien el le tenoit' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 12940–43). Using Blanchandin's birth name, along with the gendered signifier of 'la belle' when describing Clarinde's initial attraction, immediately associates it with queer desire, even though the narrator goes on to specify that Clarinde believes Blanchandin is a man, using the term 'chevalier'. In qualifying Clarinde's desire as being for someone she views as male, the transgressive potential of this attraction is minimised, but these lines also emphasise that Blanchandin no longer fits within the gender binary. Blanchandin is described using both he/him and she/her pronouns as both 'la belle' and a 'chevalier', revealing both Blanchandin's gender presentation, and Clarinde's desire, as queer.

Clarinde's attraction to Blanchandin is repeatedly tied to Blanchandin's physical appearance through both reported speech and the narrator's description. In one example,

---

[562] Watt, p. 273.

Clarinde is described contemplating, and becoming more enamoured with, Blanchandin and their 'grande beauté': 'Dont y pensse et repense, et con plus y pençoit, / Tant estoit plus ardans, car amours l'eschauffoit / Et la grande beauté ou elle se miroit' (*Tristian de Nanteuil*, ll. 12961–63).[563] In a moment when Clarinde compares Blanchandin to other knights, believing that there are none who are as 'doulz' as Blanchandin, it is commented: 'il estoit moult jeunes, point de barbe n'avoit' (l. 12972). That Clarinde prefers a more youthful-looking, beardless Blanchandin to other knights could be interpreted as an attraction towards women, as she desires more traditionally feminine appearances, or as an attraction to a queer masculine appearance.[564] The use of the pronoun 'il' when discussing these aspects of Blanchandin's appearance would suggest the latter. Blanchandin's beardlessness is mentioned again later in the narration in relation to gender. When Blanchandin has left the court and is in the forest before their gender transformation, Clarinde comments to another that 'Ce qu'i n'a point de barbe me fait souvent penser / Qu'i n'est mye vrais homs' (ll. 15836–37). These lines show that Clarinde has reflected upon Blanchandin's appearance and what this might mean for Blanchandin's identity, but do not clarify how, if she did not consider them to be a 'vrai homs', she has read Blanchandin's gender. The phrase 'vrai homs' in this text associates 'truth' with the body; for example, the phrase is used after the transformation to suggest that Blanchandin could now be understood as a 'true man': 'Nouvelle char lui vint, en aultre se mua / Et devvint ung vrais homs' (ll. 16196–97). Clarinde's consideration of Blanchandin's beardlessness and the earlier statement that Clarinde is attracted to Blanchandin because of this lack suggest that Clarinde's desire is for an

---

[563] The use of vocabulary of heat is significant as, discussed in sections IV.2.3 and V.2.1, heat was associated with lust and sexual desire.

[564] Francesca Canadé Sautman considers whether women are attracted specifically to the cross-dressed woman's 'androgyny' and the use of gender ambiguity in the representation of Blanchandin (Sautman, 'What can they possibly do together?', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn, pp. 214–16).

individual who does not fit into the category of a 'vrai homs' and who expresses a queer masculine presentation.

The response of Ydé and Blanchandin to Olive and Clarinde evolves over time as they go from being unwillingly betrothed to consenting spouses and sexual partners. Chapter IV on marriage discussed how Ydé and Blanchandin negotiated being required to marry, each attempting to avoid matrimony, with Ydé protesting that their poverty made them an unsuitable spouse and Blanchandin requiring Clarinde's baptism into the Christian faith before marriage. Their motives were depicted not as lack of interest or as rejection of queer desire, but as self-protection. Blanchandin, more so than Ydé who has few conversations with Olive prior to marriage, goes along with Clarinde's desires and expresses similar feelings, whilst ensuring that any sexual contact is delayed for as long as possible. Although Blanchandin does this to placate Clarinde, rather than because of their own attraction, the sexually charged conversations held again bring the reader's attention to these expressions of queer desire. During their relationships, both Ydé and Blanchandin fear and are threatened with execution. They often call upon the Virgin Mary and God for help; for example, after hearing Clarinde's confession of love, Blanchandin prays 'Hé ! doulce mere Dieu, veullés moy guarantir / Que ceste demoiselle ne me face mourir' (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 13022–23). In an internal monologue, Ydé compares the proposed incestuous marriage to Florent with their impending marriage to Olive to help Ydé decide how to proceed. Ydé father's incestuous desire is referred to as a 'pecié mortel' (*Yde et Olive*, l.7114) but there is no similar condemnation or negative representation of a marriage between two people of the same assigned gender. Ydé decides a marriage to Olive would be far preferable to an incestuous marriage or the execution that might result from disclosing their assigned gender. An important difference between the marriages in *Yde et Olive* and *Tristan de Nanteuil* is when the moment of gender transformation takes place. In *Yde et Olive*, the

gender transformation occurs after the couple are married and after Ydé has revealed their assigned gender to Olive whereas in *Tristan de Nanteuil* the gender transformation, about which Clarinde is unaware, takes place before the marriage. This difference is important as it reveals Clarinde and Olive's differing responses to gender non-conformity in their partners.

Both before and after the wedding ceremony, Ydé is concerned about consummating the marriage because Ydé 'n'a membre nul qu'a li puist abiter' (*Yde et Olive*, l. 7104) and, once married, delays intercourse for fifteen days, but this does not mean that sexual contact did not occur. William Robins suggests that 'signs of erotic attraction are minimal' between Ydé and Olive, but it is clear from Olive's earlier reactions to Ydé and the description of the wedding night that this is not the case.[565] After agreeing to the delay, they spend the night together: 'Dont ont l'un l'autre baisie et accolee; / En cele nuit n'i ot cri ne mellee' (*Yde et Olive*, ll. 7090–91). Using vocabulary of battle to describe sexuality activity is not unusual in medieval literature; for example, tale eighty-six from the *CNN* uses jousting metaphors throughout the tale when discussing the husband and wife's sexual relationship.[566] The narrator of *Yde et Olive* explicitly states the couple kiss and embrace and elsewhere in this scene both Olive and Ydé are shown either desiring or participating in physical contact with each other, which shows the narrator's willingness to portray queer sexual relations. Love and affection are shown by both Ydé and Olive. Their affection is revealed through the use of terms of endearment, such as Ydé calling Olive their 'douce amie et loiaus marïee'(l. 7167), and in conversations with others, such as when Olive responds to her father's question 'comment iés marïee?' with 'ensi com moi agree' (ll. 7198–99). Olive's commitment to and love for Ydé continues once Ydé reveals the details of their

---

[565] Robins, p. 53.
[566] See section IV.2.3 for the discussion of this tale.

past and their assigned gender as Olive comforts and ensures Ydé that she, 'pour loiauté' (l. 7222), will keep the secret.[567]

Anna Kłosowska argues that this text represents love between women; it is possible that Ydé and Olive's relationship was meant to be understood as a same-gender love.[568] After Ydé's revelation, the narrator continually presents Ydé as female through the use of grammatically feminine pronouns and signifiers, which could indicate that this is a marriage between women. However, this gendering of Ydé by the narrator is not reflected by the characters themselves; neither Ydé nor Olive refer to Ydé's gender in speech or through the language they use. One could therefore suggest that Olive views Ydé's gender as queer rather than as female. It is difficult to interpret Ydé's gender identity from the text as they are not given the opportunity to claim an identified gender at all. Ydé's confession is not given in direct speech and after the confession Ydé speaks only one more time and, in these lines, there is no expression or marking of gender identity. One could argue that by quickly transforming Ydé physically into a man the transgressive potential of queer love is minimised; however, the transformation does not wipe from the reader's memory the affection and desire shared by Ydé and Olive repeatedly expressed by the narrator. As the gender transformation occurred so close to the narrative's conclusion without any comment from the couple, it is difficult to determine definitively how the reader was meant to view Ydé and Olive's relationship and the gender transformation itself, but the love and attraction portrayed arguably offer a positive example of queer love.

In *Tristan de Nanteuil,* Blanchandin's transformation happens mid-narrative when Clarinde, after being informed by a messenger that Blanchandin is cross-dressing,

---

[567] Weisl, p. 127.

[568] Kłosowska, p. 84. The manuscript miniature that depicts the wedding ceremony and wedding night has been analysed by Anna Kłosowska. She describes that the image is split into two registers and the four main figures are portrayed identically, which she argues 'emphasize the same-sex theme, making it an insistent, inescapable part of the representation' (Kłosowska, p. 83). I have been unable to access this manuscript and cannot comment on this analysis.

confronts Blanchandin and orders them to bathe.[569] Blanchandin leaves court and is

offered a gender transformation by an angel; after the transformation, Blanchandin is

thereafter shown living as a man, a ruler, and a husband. Clarinde's reaction to the

messenger's information is one of anger and she threatens Blanchandin with execution:

> Se je puis esploiter ains que soit l'avespree, / Je saveray comman vous estes figuree, / Ne se vous estes homs ne danzelle loee. / Mais se vous estes femme que vous aie trouvee, / Vous serés, par Mahon, dedans ung feu getee (*Tristan de Nanteuil*, ll. 15692–98).

Unlike Olive's more compassionate reaction to the discovery of her lover's cross-

dressing, Clarinde vehemently condemns Blanchandin. Despite Clarinde's earlier

attraction to Blanchandin's queer gender expression, Clarinde presents Blanchandin's

gender in purely binary terms as Blanchandin's queer gender expression is required to

fit within the binary of man/woman. Clarinde gives no option for a continued love affair

and their marriage only takes place because Clarinde sees proof of Blanchandin's post-

transformation body. Clarinde's initial rejection of Blanchandin's cross-dressing

therefore suggests that only a binary identity is acceptable to her but this rejection

cannot erase completely the aspects of queer desire in Clarinde's earlier attraction to

Blanchandin.

A variety of sexual preferences and reactions are presented in the texts discussed

in this section and each explores an aspect of queer desire through the cross-dressing

motif. Although many of these representations offer negative comments or

condemnations of queer desire, the frequency with which cross-dressing characters

become objects of sexual attraction or love is significant in revealing that such desires

may not be unusual and that queer gender presentation could be, and was often,

desirable. Although there is a tendency for love or attraction to be one-sided in these

narratives, *Floris et Lyriopé* and *Yde et Olive* offer instances of consensual love in

which queer desire can be openly expressed in both words and actions. Even in

---

[569] The forced bathing motif is found in both *Tristan de Nanteuil* and *Yde et Olive*.

moments of condemnation, the existence of queer sex, love, attraction, and affection are brought to the fore and made visible in courtly, romantic, and monastic contexts.

V.5: Conclusion

This chapter has presented the various ways in which sex and desire were portrayed in texts that employ the cross-dressing motif to introduce discussions of queer desire and love, sexual temptation, and illicit sexual activity. The wide range of plots involving the cross-dressing character and the various sexualities and relationships depicted in these scenes highlight that, in secular medieval literature, cross-dressing was not associated with a particular sexual preference or desire. When considering how the cross-dressing character is presented by the narrator as well as those who desire them, it is important to keep in mind a text's genre, which may go some way to explain the manner in which certain desires and behaviours are portrayed. As shown above, examples of religious figures who desire a cross-dressing character, such as Ydoine, Melancie, and the monks who desire Esmarade, are not confined to one genre but feature in both hagiography and romance. Hagiographies tend to focus on temptation and the threat of desire to one's spiritual well-being, but these issues are tackled in texts outside of hagiography. For example, the romance *Cassidorus* does not fit neatly into generic expectations as it responds to the threat of sexual desire and temptation in a way similar to hagiographic narratives. Analysis of the texts discussed above demonstrates that they all more commonly present sexual desire as something to be punished or chastised rather than celebrated or praised. Their desires are critised not because there are for a cross-dressed character, but because they feel or have lapsed into temptation.

Queer desire, non-marital sexual activity, or the threat of temptation are continually raised, and punishments are enacted, as in *Frere Denise* and tale sixty from the *CNN* or threatened, as in *Yde et Olive*. However, this does not mean that these condemnations are always serious – punishments in *fabliaux* or the *CNN* are often

intended to be humorous – or that the narratives do not allow for the exploration of certain non-normative behaviours, desires, and relationships. It is frequently the case that narrators invoke the cross-dressing character's non-normative gender practices to facilitate discussions about sex and attraction as well as to offer portrayals of queer gender and desire. The attitudes presented by narrators and literary characters do not always echo the canon law discourse on different sexual acts and relationships, and texts often show characters undertaking personal punishments without recourse to the law courts. Nevertheless, this literary corpus interacts with canon law on sex as it shows characters responding to, debating, and/or enacting non-normative desires and illicit sexual acts as it contemplates how and why certain aspects of sex and attraction are, or are not, permissible.

Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to demonstrate how the motif of cross-dressing features in medieval French literature and how it illuminates different contemporary concerns through its text and associated images. These concerns have not been limited to individual writers or contexts but rather linked to wider debates, conversations, interest, and anxieties about status, marriage, and sex. Through analysis of medieval canon law, this thesis has highlighted the importance of tracing connections between literary and legal sources, revealing that medieval literature often considered and actively engaged with legal issues and took part in wider legal discourse. This study's combination of literary, legal, and visual analysis illustrates how medieval writers and artists portrayed such issues and the characters who raise them.

This study has addressed a number of key research questions, which focussed on three main areas: portrayals of cross-dressing; presentation of contemporary concerns about dress, marriage, and sexual desire and activity; and the literary corpus' medieval owners and readership. It asked, first, what can we learn from extant manuscript witnesses about the literary texts and those who owned or read them? This study has shown, from analysis of physical and documentary evidence, that most of the surviving corpus of manuscripts were owned by the nobility. Any codices that were found in different contexts, such as in the collections of religious institutions, appear to have been commissioned by a member of the nobility for personal use or as gifts. In addition, this evidence highlights that the sharing of texts through lending or gifting was a common practice, allowing one to trace, at least partially, the circulation of narratives and manuscripts. Further research into individual codices and signs of use or records of exchange could allow us to gain a more complete understanding of how, and in what social circles, these narratives circulated.

With regard to portrayals of cross-dressing characters, this study has asked how cross-dressing characters are depicted and what this can tell us about medieval attitudes towards non-normative gender identities and expressions. First, in doing so, it outlined four main categories in which one can group uses of the cross-dressing motif, thereby presenting a new way of approaching and classifying examples of the motif. The four categories are: permanent cross-dressing with a personal motivation; permanent cross-dressing for/because of another; temporary cross-dressing with a personal motivation; temporary cross-dressing for/because of another. Examination of the texts and their respective categories of cross-dressing identified a correlation between a character's motive for cross-dressing, and the length of time spent cross-dressed, and how a narrative treats gender. This analysis demonstrated that how a literary text presents gender is more closely connected to the character's intention and time spent cross-dressing than to other variables, such as the genre of the text, the assigned gender of the character, or whether a character plays a large or small role in the narrative. This thesis has offered evidence for how the cross-dressing motif allows gender identities and/or articulations of gender that do not fit dominant expectations to be brought to the fore, showing characters taking on roles not typically associated with their assigned gender to illustrate that qualities and skills are not limited to one gender. This corpus also features characters whose experiences, unspoken intentions, and declared identities could be understood as indicating transgender or genderqueer identity. Whilst some of these texts show an acceptance of non-normative gender identities, it is frequently the case that other characters in the narratives consider the physical body to be the marker of gender, leading to characters being viewed according to their assigned, rather than identified, gender. This demonstrates that there was no hegemonic response to non-normative gender in medieval society and that even texts that present negative responses to or

rejections of queer gender indicate, through their inclusion of this motif, that gender expressions do not always fit a binary model.

This study has also explored the visual depictions of the cross-dressing motif. Its comparative analysis of visual representations and how artists represented cross-dressing characters in manuscript illustrations determined that cross-dressing characters are most commonly portrayed in their cross-dressed identity. However, there are examples, most frequently with images of saints, where an artist presents the character in their cross-dressed identity but includes signifiers associated with their assigned gender, such as hairstyles, head coverings and veils, thus indicating a desire to signal a figure's assigned gender to the viewer. Images that play more with representation tend to be found in manuscripts containing multiple miniatures of the cross-dressing character, as the artists used these opportunities to explore ambiguity and gender expression. Given the scope of this doctoral project, it was not feasible to provide detailed examinations of the seventy-plus images of cross-dressing characters found in this corpus. However, this study has illustrated that the variety of artistic responses to the motif can provide significant information on how medieval artists signalled gender visually, and that these images merit further investigation.

The third area of research, focussing on contemporary concerns, has discussed what issues and topics, other than those related to gender, are raised by the cross-dressing motif. It was argued that the cross-dressing motif is associated with a range of social concerns: dress and how it can or should depict social status; marriage, its formation and dissolution; and non-marital sex, temptation, especially within the context of monastic orders, and queer desire. This study also asked how legal debates and knowledge of contemporary legal practices were portrayed in literary texts. Although some narratives refer to specific laws or include court cases in their plots, most texts in this corpus do not make such explicit connections to legal practice.

Instead, legal issues tend to be incorporated into the plot, and often contribute to a character's reason for cross-dressing. This allows the narratives to reveal different responses to legal concerns through the narrators' descriptions of acts that contravene canon law and through their exposition of how characters consider the (legal) implications of their actions and experiences as well as those of others. These literary texts do not simply reflect the law or its changes; rather, legal questions are embedded in the narratives to be engaged with, to be interrogated, and to offer other perspectives on cultural questions and anxieties.

Previous studies have offered in-depth analyses of gender and the cross-dressing motif, exploring how literature presents non-conformity to gendered expectations and examining how such texts can uncover medieval attitudes towards gender and identity. This study contributes significantly to this body of scholarship. It demonstrates how the motif relates to a larger range of social issues and reveals that it is often the cross-dressing characters who highlight these issues. By showing how frequently and prominently legal and social concerns related to dress, marriage, and desire featured in narratives containing cross-dressing characters, this thesis stresses that the motif is not used solely to trouble expectations of gender.

This project brings new perspectives to the study of the cross-dressing motif through its interdisciplinary analysis of manuscript illuminations and canon law. Studying the visual representations of the motif, which have been underexplored in previous scholarship, not only provides information on how artists portrayed non-normative gender expressions but also draws attention to how images may correspond to or depart from the narrative. Such changes of emphasis can foreground other aspects of a text, revealing that miniatures can offer alternative perspectives on the narrative's plot and characters. A key example of this is the illumination of tale sixty from the

CNN, which changes certain aspects of the tale so as to foreground the husbands' role in punishing their wives' lovers (fig. forty-one).

With its focus on canon law, this thesis offers significant insights into the motif and contributes new readings of the literary corpus. Although discussion of legal discourse has featured in previous scholarship on medieval literature in general, it has only had limited application to texts containing the cross-dressing motif. This thesis considers that contemporary legal debates not only provide important historical context for the society in which the literary corpus was produced, but also offer alternative perspectives on events taking place in literary texts. In so doing, it has uncovered areas of interest and concern shared by canonists and medieval society more generally as well as highlighted their responses and attitudes towards specific issues.

The interdisciplinary approach adopted here, which brings together literature, art, and canon law, could be productively applied to other combinations of texts containing the motif, and to premodern literature more generally. Such analysis may reveal similar concerns to those identified in this corpus of literary texts or it could uncover other areas of anxiety, both of which would advance our understanding of how the motif was used in medieval literature. This approach would not only benefit those working in medieval literary studies, but those in other fields too. For example, combining legal and literary analysis offers those researching canon law new ways of considering how legal knowledge was disseminated and how medieval society understood and responded to legal issues.

Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide a comprehensive analysis of all textual and visual uses of the cross-dressing motif in medieval French literature, it has illustrated how cross-dressing characters raise contemporary social and legal concerns. This study thus opens up new avenues of research by offering a methodology that can be productively applied to other texts containing the motif, as

well as to different corpuses of medieval literature, in order to uncover connections between literary and legal material. One example of a topic that could build on this analysis and approach is the representation of sexual incapacity and infertility in medieval literature. These subjects are discussed in texts both within and outside of this corpus, such as *Ysaïe le Triste*, *Comte d'Artois*, and the *Conte de Graal* amongst others, and were of considerable importance for canon law. Applying this thesis' methodology to the issues of sexual incapacity and infertility would offer new insights into areas that have, for the most part, been discussed in their medical and legal contexts. One could also productively explore this motif in different bodies of literature, seeing how the use of the motif changed in different periods, geographical locations, and other vernacular languages; or one could consider in greater detail, some of the lesser-studied texts included in this corpus. Here I have sought to draw attention to narratives underappreciated by scholars, such as *Comte d'Artois*, *Cassidorus*, *Floris et Lyriopé*, and *Clarisse et Florent*, and their discussion has revealed that these narratives are rich in detail and offer much to those interested in questions around gender and agency, relationships and temptation, or deception and reconciliation. Shining a more intense spotlight on these lesser-known texts has ensured that our understanding of different motifs is taking into consideration the widest and most comprehensive selection of source material possible, and is not focussed solely on more well-known examples, like *Silence*, that may or may not be illustrative of wider usage. More generally, further research on lesser-studied material would allow us to deepen our knowledge of medieval literature and its motifs and themes.

Given this statement regarding the usefulness of applying the methodology to other instances of the cross-dressing motif, it is worth considering how this study and its approach could be applied to *Silence*. *Silence* did not form part of this study's corpus but, given its centrality to studies on the cross-dressing motif, it is important to question

how our understanding of the text could be informed by this thesis. The classification system of the motif into four categories could alter our interpretation of how cross-dressing and gender is explored in *Silence*. Of the four categories, Silence fits into the category of permanent cross-dressing with a personal motivation. After debating with themselves about changing to female dress and identifiers, Silence decides that they want to continue cross-dressing permanently.[570] Although Silence is originally cross-dressed by their family, they become personally motivated to remain cross-dressed in order to secure their inheritance; however, the text also implies that this is not Silence's only reason. Silence does not show a sustained desire to change their life or gender presentation but rather the reverse could be argued; for example, it is commented that 'Silences ne se repent rien / De son usage, ains l'ainme bien' (*Silence*, ll. 5177–78). I would argue that *Silence* demonstrates the trend for texts that show permanent cross-dressing with a personal motivation to explore the gender binary and present *transgender* characters. Through the debates between Nature and Noreture, Silence considers their gender identity and presentation and openly questions binary gender, the distinction between typically male and female activities, skills, and qualities. Silence describes how they do not fit into these categories, presenting themselves as an individual for whom a binary gender identity does not apply. A new interpretation of Silence is revealed through this analysis, leading one to argue that Silence expresses a genderqueer identity. As argued in this study, gender is not the only topic engaged with in narratives with cross-dressing at their centre. Silence introduces other areas of concern and legal debate, namely surrounding marriage and the law more generally. The narrator gives considerable space to the negotiating of different marriages and the choosing of partners, suggesting that the decision of others often outweighs the choice

---

[570] Although Silence's female presentation at the text's conclusion could indicate that their cross-dressing was temporary, it is evident that Silence was not given the opportunity to verbally consent to either their marriage or the change of gender presentation.

of individuals.[571] This is not the only way that *Silence* deals with the law, as many rulers are shown implementing new laws that condemn or negatively affect certain groups, like the inheritance ruling and the law on minstrels, and individuals are shown questioning or commenting on the impact of these laws. It would therefore be fruitful to further examine *Silence*'s representation of the law and its political and social consequences as well as compare the representation of Silence and their gender to other *transgender* or *genderqueer* characters in medieval literature. This is but one example of how this study's methodology can be applied to other literary texts in order to present new interpretations and reveal new areas of potential study.

The circumstances in which the cross-dressing motif appears in medieval French literature are diverse. The motif has no one function, but there are common threads that weave between the varying plots, characters, and texts in which it is found. These commonalities are not just limited to character types, motivations, or features such as choosing a different name, but the cross-dressing characters, their behaviours, and experiences often raise similar concerns across the corpus. These areas of anxiety are not solely connected to gender and identity, but it is the cross-dressing character's non-normative gender practices that highlight concerns about status and expected behaviours, marriage and consent, temptation and sexual desire. Cross-dressing offers characters possibilities, freedom, or power: the possibility to find romantic love, religious devotion, or perhaps just sexual pleasure; to reveal weakness and claim superiority; to explore or escape obligation or gendered expectations. It is during these moments of possibility that cross-dressing characters express through their actions, experiences, and relationships concerns that troubled medieval writers, artists, lawmakers, and readers alike.

---

[571] The three relationships are between Cador and Eufemie, Evan and Eufeme, and Evan and Silence.

Figures
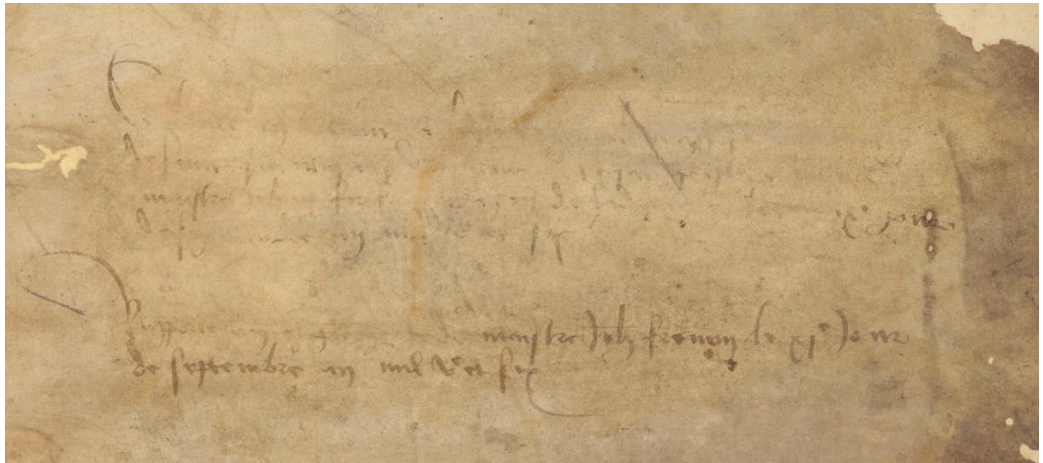
Fig. 1: Arsenal, MS 5204, fol. 216r. *Marginal note recording loan.*

Fig. 2: BnF, MS fr. 244–45 (244), fol. 24r. *Full page miniature showing owners entwined initials and coat of arms.*

Fig. 3: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 1r. *Jean de Wavrin's coat of arms within initial*.

Fig. 4: Morgan Library, MS 672–75 (673), fol. 270r. *Biographies of the Chabannes family*.

Fig. 5: BRB, MS 9282–85, fol. 324r. *Decorations showing the owners' initials and coat of arms.*
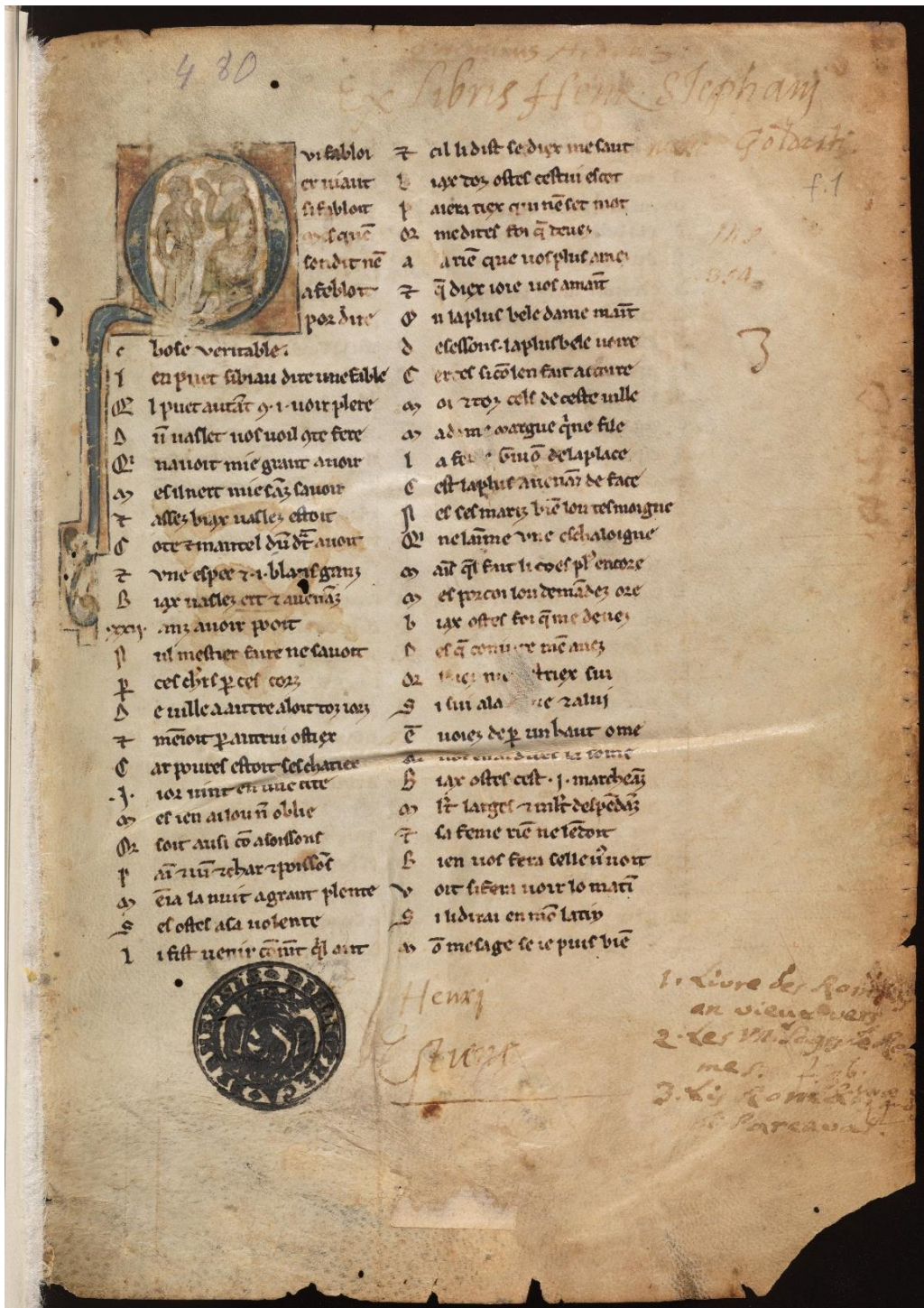
Fig. 6: Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 354, fol. 1r. *Owners' signatures and ex libris*.

Fig. 7: BRB, MS 9245, fol. 243v. *Helcana/Helcanor counselling Polus about his betrayal.*

Fig. 8: BSB, MS gall. 3, fol. 198r. *Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch is being baptised by bishop Nonnus.*

Fig. 9: Rennes, MS 266, fol. 149v. *Marine/Marin, in exile, looks after the child*.

Fig. 10: Rennes, MS 266, fol. 285r. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien, in prison, sends a letter declaring their identity to the monastery.*

Fig. 13: BRB, MS 9282–85, fol. 254v. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien's body is being prepared for burial by three nuns.*

Fig. 14: MS Hunter 252, fol. 108r. *Margarite is being punished by having their genitals displayed in public.*

Fig. 15: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 83v. *The Countess/Phlipot (left) listens to the Count's (right) lovesick lamentations at night.*
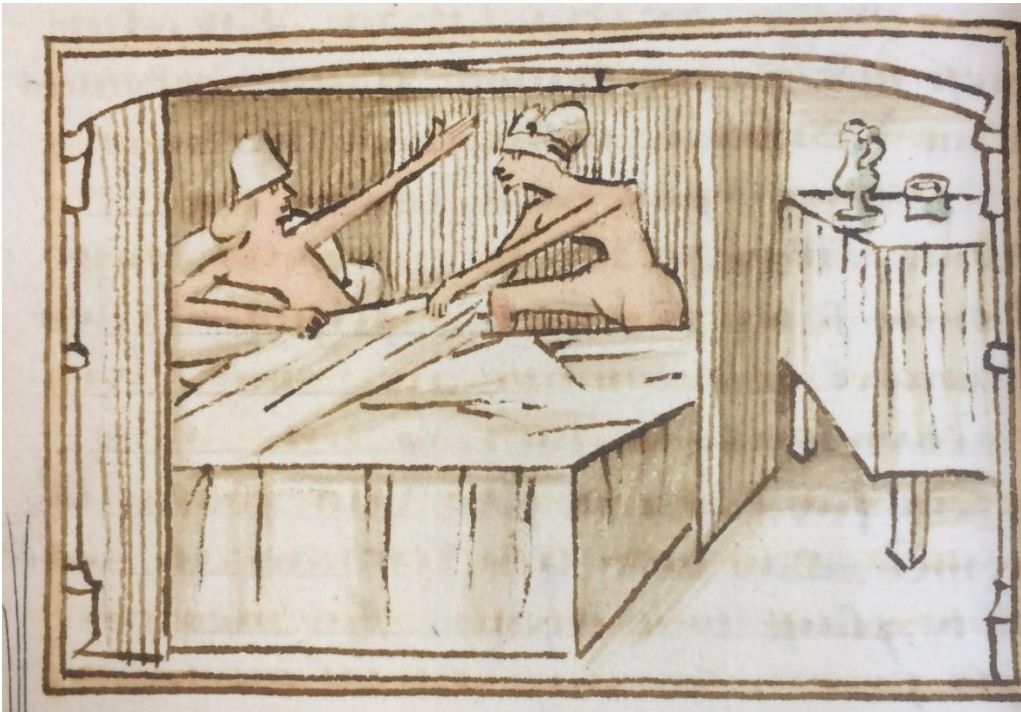

Fig. 16: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 98v. The *Countess/Phlipot arranges a tryst with the Count.*

Fig. 17: HLH, MS 2524, fol. 114r. *Marte arrives at a friend's home to hide.*

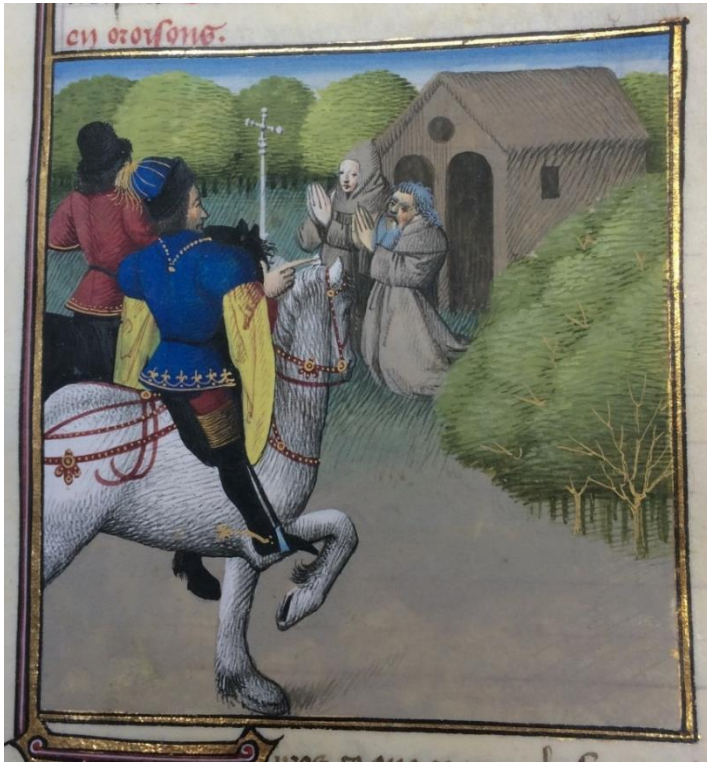Fig. 18: HLH, MS 2524, fol. 121r. *Marte sings to an ill Ysaïe.*

Fig. 19: BnF, MS fr. 93, fol. 242r. *Helcana/Helcanor and Ydoine greet
Polus outside of the hermitage.*

Fig. 20: MS Hunter 252, fol. 54r. *Katherine/Conrard embraces
Gerard; Conrard leaves a letter to Gerard; Conrard returns home with
their uncle*.

Fig. 21: MS Hunter 252, fol. 179r. *A priest stands in public holding a book; the priest is criticised for his appearance by a court.*

Fig. 22: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 79r. *The Countess/Phlipot introduces themselves to the Count.*

Fig. 23: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 94r. *The Countess/Phlipot gives the Count a ring belonging to the daughter of the king of Castile.*

.

Fig. 24: BRB, MS 9245, fol. 245r. *Helcana/Helcanor greets the duchess and the 'pucele'.*

Fig. 25: BnF, MS fr. 2188, fol. 14r. *Trubert ties the duke to a tree and beats him.*

Fig. 26: BnF, MS fr. 2188, fol. 5v. *Trubert prepares to pluck hairs from the duke's buttocks in payment.*

Fig. 27: BnF, MS fr. 11610, fol. 13r. *The Countess/Phlipot and the Count marry.*

Fig. 28: Ghent, MS 470, fol. 116v. *The king betroths Olivier to Elaine.*

Fig. 29: Ghent, MS 470, fol. 121r. *Olivier and Elaine marry.*

Fig. 30: Morgan Library, MS 672–75 (675), fol. 136r. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien marries; Pelagien's body is being prepared for burial by nuns.*

Fig. 31: MS Hunter 252, fol. 177v. *A husband and wife converse; the mother petitions a court for the annulment of her daughter's marriage.*

Fig. 32: MS fr. 244–45 (244), fol. 137r. *In the foreground, Theodora/Theodore rejects a suitor's advances. In the background. Theodore accepts exile and the child they are accused of fathering.*

Fig. 33: Michelino da Besozzo, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, c. 1420, tempura on panel, 78cm × 58cm, Pinoteca Nationale di Siena.

312

Fig. 34: Pinturicchio, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, c. 1480–1500, tempura on wood, 45 cm × 34 cm, Pinacoteca Vaticana.

Fig. 35: Correggio, *The Mystical Marriage of St Catherine*, 1526–27, 105cm × 102cm, Musée du Louvre.

Fig. 36: BnF, MS fr. 242, fol. 137r. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

Fig 37: BSB, MS gall. 3, fol. 191v. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

314

Fig 38: BnF, MS fr. 6448, fol. 177r. *Theodore/Theodore rejects the Devil's temptations whilst exiled.*

Fig. 39: BRB, MS 9401, 167r. *Helcana/Helcanor and Cassidorus return to Constantinople.*

Fig. 40: BnF, MS fr. 22548–50 (22549), fol. 47v. *Helcana/Helcanor and Cassidorus return to Constantinople.*

Fig. 41: MS Hunter 252, fol. 132v. *The husband meets his spouse cross-dressed as a Franciscan friar; three husbands beat three friars whilst the wives watch.*

Fig. 42: MS Hunter 252, fol. 3r. *A husband sees a naked woman in his neighbour's bed but does not realise it is his wife*.

Fig. 43: MS Hunter 252, fol. 26r. *A husband and wife have sexual relations whilst a man watches from a tree*.

317

Fig. 44: MS Hunter 252, fol. 33r. *A monk tries to pass off another monk's penis as his own to a nun he desires*.

Fig. 45: MS Hunter 252, fol. 109r. *Two lovers, a monk and nun, show their genitals to each other whilst someone watches from a tree*.

Fig. 46: Rennes, MS 266, fol. 166r. *Theodora/Theodore converses with a suitor*.

Fig 47: Morgan Library, MS 672–75 (674), fol. 310r. *Theodora/Theodore converses with a suitor; Theodore joins a monastery*.

Fig. 48: BnF, MS fr. 2188, fol. 4r. *Trubert embraces the duchess*.

Fig. 49: BnF, MS fr. 242, fol. 120v. *Marine/Marin cares for the child in exile*.

Fig. 50: BSB, MS gall. 3, fol. 100v. *Marine/Marin cares for the child in exile; the mother of the child is freed of the Devil's temptation.*

Fig. 51: BSB, MS gall. 3, fol. 198v. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison and another monk brings them bread and water.*

Fig 52: BnF, MS fr.6448, fol. 315v. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison and a monk visits them.*

Fig. 53: BnF, MS fr.244–45 (245), fol. 132r. *Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien is in prison after being accused of impregnating a woman.*

322

Fig. 54: BnF, MS fr. 242, fol. 205v. *Eugenia/Eugene is miraculously saved from drowning; Protus and Hyacinth are beheaded.*

Fig. 55: BnF, MS fr. 93, fol. 245v. *Helcanor/Helcana, Ydoine, the duchess, and the 'pucele' dine togethe*r.

Fig. 56: BnF, MS fr. 22548–50 (22549), fol. 21v. *Ydoine burns his fingers in punishment for desiring Helcanor/Helcana*.

Appendix A: Corpus of Literary Texts and Cross-Dressing Characters

Text	Character	T	P	S	O[572]
Berengier au lonc cul	The wife/Berengier	x		x	
Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles	Tale 26: Katherine/Conrard	x			x
	Tale 45: Margarite		x	x	
	Tale 60: Three *bourgoises*	x			x
Clarisse et Florent	Clarisse	x			x
Floris et Lyriopé	Floris	x			x
	Florie	x			x
Frere Denise	Denise		x		x
Légende dorée	Eugenia/Eugene		x	x	
	Margaret-Pelagia/Pelagien		x	x	
	Marine/Marin		x	x	
	Pelagia/Pelagien of Antioch		x	x	
	Theodora/Theodore		x	x	
Meraugis de Portlesguez	Meraugis	x		x	
Roman de Cassidorus	Helcana/Helcanor	x			x
	Licorus	x			x
Roman du Comte d'Artois	The Countess/Phlipot	x			x
La Saineresse	Saineresse[573]	*			*
Tristan de Nanteuil	Aye/Gaudïon	x		x	
	Blanchandine/Blanchandin		x	x	
Trubert	Trubert/Couillebaude	*		x	
Vie de sainte Eufrosine	Eufrosine/Esmarade		x	x	
Yde et Olive	Yde/Ydé		x	x	
Ysaïe le Triste	Marte	x			x
	Tronc	x			x

---

[572] Categories are Temporary, Permanent, (for) Self, and (for) Others
[573] *La Saineresse* and *Trubert* do not give full details of the length of their cross-dressing. They have been assigned to the category of temporary cross-dressing because it seemed to be most likely appropriate group for these characters. *La Saineresse* also does not tell the reader about the 'Saineresse's' motivation for cross-dressing so, again, they have been assigned to the most likely category.

Appendix B: Manuscript List[574]

Berengier au lonc cul	• Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 354 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 837 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 19152
Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles	• Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252
Clarisse et Florent	• Turin, BNU, MS L. II. 14
Floris et Lyriopé	• Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5201 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 24301
Frere Denise	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 837 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1635
Légende dorée	• Arras, Médiathèque municipale, MS 630 • Brussels, BRB, MS 9226 • Brussels, BRB, MS 9227 • Brussels, BRB, MS 9228 • Brussels, BRB, MS 9282–85 • Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 22 • Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS McClean 124 • Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 735 • Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS français 57 • Jena, Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena, MS El. fr. 86 • London, BL, MS Additional 16907 • London, BL, MS Egerton, MS 645 • London, BL, MS Phillips (loan), MS 36 • London, BL, MS Royal 19. B. XVII • London, BL, MS Stowe 50–51 • Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3 • New York, Morgan Library, MS 672–75/ Mâcon, Bibliothèque municipal, MS 3 • Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3682–83 • Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 3705 • Paris, Bibliothèque de Mazarine, MS 1729 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 184 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 241 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 243 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 244–45

---

[574] All extant manuscripts completed pre-1500 that include full versions of each text.

	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 414 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 415–16 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1535 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 6448 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 17232 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 23113 • Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 266
Meraugis de Portlesguez	• Berlin, SBB, MS gall. qu. 48 • Turin, BNU, MS L IV 33 • Vatican City, BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725 • Vienna, ON, MS 2599
Roman de Cassidorus	• Brussels, BRB, MS 9245 • Brussels, BRB, MS 9401 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 93 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 17000 • Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50 • Turin, BNU, MS 1650
Roman du Comte d'Artois	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610
La Saineresse	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 837
Tristan de Nanteuil	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1478
Trubert	• Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2188
Vie de sainte Eufrosine	• Brussels, BRB, MS 9229–30 • Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Misc. 74 • Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5204 • The Hague, KB, MS 71 A 24
Yde et Olive	• Turin, BNU, MS L. II. 14
Ysaïe le Triste	• Darmstadt, HLH, MS 2524

Appendix C: Case-Studies

Burgerbibliothek, MS 354
Text: *Berengier au lonc cul*

Other texts: 76 other items from various genres.

Date and location of production: 1275–1300, eastern France.

Other comments: Owned by Henri Estienne and Henricus Stephanus

BRB, MS 9229–30
Text: *Vie de Sainte Eufrosine*

Other texts: *La Vie des saints, Miracles de Nostre Dame, La Vie des pères, Le Dit de l'unicorne, La Vie de sainte Thais, Les Quinze signes du jugement dernier, and Li regres Nostre Dame*

Date and Location of Production: 1328, Paris.

Other comments: *Libraire:* Thomas de Maubeuge. Commissioned by Gérard de Diest and Jeanne de Flandre for a Carthusian charterhouse in Diest. Artist: the *Fauvel* Master, with one folio by the Master of the BnF fr. 160.

BnF, MS fr. 93
Text: *Roman de Cassidorus*

Other texts: The full *Sept Sages* cycle (*Sept Sages de Rome*, *Marques de Rome*, *Laurin*, *Helcanus*, *Peliarmenus*, *Kanor*)

Date and Location of Production: 1466. Copied in Crozant, central France.

Other comments: Commissioned by Jacques d'Armagnac, is a copy of Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50. Scribe was a priest, Micheau Gonnot as indicated in a colophon.

BnF, MS fr. 837
Texts: *La Saineresse, Berengier au lonc cul, Frere Denise*

Other texts: 246 other items from a variety of genres.

Date and Location of Production: 1275–80, north-eastern France.

BnF, MS fr. 244–45
Text: *Légende dorée*

Date and Location of Production: c.1470, Paris

Other comments: Commissioned by Anthoine de Chourses and Catherine de Coëtivy between 1477–85/6.

BnF, MS fr. 11610
Text: *Roman du Comte d'Artois*

Date and Location of Production: 1453–67, Lille.

Other comments: Commissioned by Jean de Wavrin. Artist: the Wavrin Master.

KB, MS 71 A 24
Text: *Vie de Sainte Eufrosine*

Other texts: *La Vie des saints, Miracles de Nostre Dame, La Vie des pères, Le Dit de l'unicorne, La Vie de sainte Thais, Les Quinze signes du jugement dernier, and Li regres Nostre Dame*

Date and Location of Production: 1327, Paris.

Other comments: *Libraire*: Thomas de Maubeuge. Commissioned by King Charles V of France. Artist: the *Fauvel Master.*

BNU, MS L. II. 14
Texts: *Yde et Olive, Clarisse et Florent*

Other texts: *Bible*, *Roman de St Fanuel*, *Vengeance nostre seigneur*, *Garin le Loherain*, *Gerbert de Metz*, *Hervis de Metz*, *Roman d'Auberon*, *Huon de Bordeaux*, *Esclarmonde*, *Croissant*, *Yde et Olive II*, *Huon et les Géants*, *Chanson de Godin*, *Vie de Ponce Pylate*, *Vie de Judas*, *Dit de l'unicorne*, *Housse partie*, *Bueve de Hantone*.

Date of Production: 1311

BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725
Text: *Meraugis de Portulesguez*

Other contents: Chrétien de Troyes' *Chevalier de la Charette*, *Chevalier au Lion*, and Jean Renart's *Guillaume de Dole*.

Date and Location of Production: c. 1300, north-eastern France

Other comments: No marks of medieval ownership

Bibliography

Manuscripts

Arras, Médiathèque municipale, MS 630

Berlin, SBB, MS gall. qu. 48

Bern, Burgerbibliothek, MS 354

Brussels, BRB, MS 9225

Brussels, BRB, MS 9228

Brussels, BRB, MS 9229–30

Brussels, BRB, MS 9243

Brussels, BRB, MS 9245

Brussels, BRB, MS 9282–85

Brussels, BRB, MS 9401

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 22

Darmstadt, HLH, MS 2524

Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, MS français 57

Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, MS 470

Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 252

London, BL, MS Harley 4093

London, BL, MS Royal 19. B. XVII

London, BL, MS Stowe 50–51

Munich, BSB, MS codices gallici 3

New York, Morgan Library, MS 672–75

Nottingham, Wollaton Library Collection, MS WLC/LM/6

Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 2682–83

Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 5204

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 93

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 241

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 242

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 244–45

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 414

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 837

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1451

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1478

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1535

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1553

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 1635

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2188

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 2700

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 5201

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 6448

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 11610

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 17000

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 19152

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 22548–50

Paris, BnF, MS fonds français 25293

Rennes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 266

The Hague, KB, MS 71 A 24

Turin, BNU, MS 1650

Turin, BNU, MS L. II. 14

Vatican City, BAV, MS reg. lat. 1725

Vienna, ON, MS 2599

Primary Sources

Avril, Joseph, ed., *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle: Les statuts synodaux angevins de la seconde moitié du XIIIe siècle*, 12 vols (Paris: Éd. du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques, 1988), III

Brewka, Barbara Anne, '*Esclarmonde*, *Clarisse et Florent*, *Yde et Olive I*, *Croissant*, *Yde et Olive II*, *Huon et Les Geants*, Sequels to *Huon de Bordeaux*, as Contained in Turin MS. L.II.14: An Edition' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1977)

Les cent nouvelles nouvelles, ed. by Franklin P. Sweetser (Geneva: Droz, 1966)

Christine de Pizan, *La città delle dame*, ed. by Earl Jeffrey Richards (Milan: Luni, 1997)

Chronicles of London, ed. by Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905)

Chroniques d'Enguerrand de Monstrelet, ed. by J. A. Bouchon (Paris: Verdière, 1826), V

Claris et Laris, ed. by Corinne Pierreville (Paris: Champion, 2008)

Clugnet, Léon, 'Vie de Sainte Marine', *Revue de L'Orient Chrétien*, 8 (1903), 288–300

Corpus Iuris Canonici, ed. by Emil Friedberg and Aemilius Ludwig Richter, 2 vols (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1879)

Duplès-Agier, Henri, 'Ordonnance somptuaire inédite de Philippe le Hardi.', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartres*, 3ʳᵈ ser., 5 (1854), 176–81

Eulogium (Historiarum Sive Temporis), ed. by Frank Scott Haydon, 3 vols (London, 1858), III

Heldris de Cornauälle, *Le Roman de Silence: A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse-Romance by Heldris de Cornauälle*, ed. by Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge: Heffer, 1972)

Hill, Raymond T., '*La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine*', *The Romanic Review*, 10.3 (1919), 191–223

Jacobus de Voragine, *La Légende dorée*, ed. by Jean Batallier and Brenda Dunn-Lardeau, trans. by Jean de Vignay (Paris: Champion, 1997)

Jean de Wavrin, *A Collection of the Chronicles and Ancient Histories of Great Britain, Now Called England*, trans. by Edward L. C. P. Hardy, 3 vols (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1891), III

John of Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading: et Anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346–67*, ed. by James Tait (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914)

Jourdain, Decrusy, and Isambert, *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises: depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la révolution de 1789* (Paris: L'imprimerie de Et Imbert, 1821), II

Marie de France, *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. by Jean Rychner (Paris: Champion, 1966)

Marriage Canons from the Decretum of Gratian and the Decretals, Sext, Clementines, and Extravagantes, trans. by John T. Noonan, Jr, ed. by Augustine Thompson (1993). <http://legalhistorysources.com/Canon%20Law/MARRIAGELAW.htm>

Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux, ed. by Willem Noomen and Nico Van Den Boogaard, 10 vols (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1988), IV

Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux, ed. by Willem Noomen, 10 vols (Assen: van Gorcum, 1991), VI

Nouveau recueil complet des fabliaux, ed. by Willem Noomen, 10 vols (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1998), X

Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*, trans. by Thomas Forester, 3 vols (London: Bohn, 1854), II

Peter Lombard, *The Sentences*, trans. by Giulio Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2007)

Pontal, Odette, ed., *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle: Les statuts de Paris et le Synodal de l'Ouest: XIIIe siècle*, 12 vols (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1971), I

——, ed., *Les statuts synodaux français du XIIIe siècle précédés de l'historique du synode diocésain depuis ses origines: Les statuts de 1230 à 1260*, 12 vols (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1983), II

Raoul de Houdenc, *Meraugis de Portlesguez: roman arthurien du XIIIe siécle, publié d'après le manuscrit de la Bibliothèque du Vatican*, ed. by Michelle Szkilnik (Paris: Champion, 2004)

Robert de Blois's Floris et Lyriopé, ed. by Paul Barrette (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968)

Le Roman de Cassidorus, ed. by Joseph Palermo (Paris: Picard, 1963)

Le Roman du Comte d'Artois, ed. by Jean Charles Seigneuret (Geneva: Droz, 1966)

Li Romans de Baudouin de Sebourc. IIIe roy de Jhérusalem, 2 vols (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1972), I

Li romans de Witasse le Moine roman du treizième siècle: édité d'après le manuscrit, fonds français 1553, de la Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, ed. by Denis Joseph Conlon (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972)

The Rule of St Benedict, trans. by David Parry (Leominster: Gracewing, 2003)

Tristan de Nanteuil; chanson de geste inédite, ed. by Keith Val Sinclair (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1971)

Tanner, Norman P., ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), I

Ysaÿe le Triste: roman arthurien du Moyen Âge tardif, ed. by André Giacchetti (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 1989)

Secondary Sources

Akehurst, F. R. P., 'Customary Law in Old French Fabliau', in *The Old French Fabliaux: Essays on Comedy and Context*, ed. by Kirsten L. Burr, John F. Moran, and Norris J. Lacy (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008), pp. 42–54

Ambrose, Kirk, 'Two Cases of Female Cross-Undressing in Medieval Art and Literature', *Source: Notes in the History of Art*, 23.3 (2004), 7–14

Amer, Sahar, *Crossing Borders: Love Between Women in Medieval French and Arabic Literatures* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

Annuaire historique et biographique des souverains, des chefs et membres des maisons princières, des familles nobles ou distinguées, et principalement des homme d'état, de guerre, de science et de ceux dont se compose l'élite des diverses nations (Paris: Archives Historiques, 1844), I

Archibald, Elizabeth, *Incest and the Medieval Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001)

———, 'Incest between Adults and Children in the Medieval World', in *Children and Sexuality*, ed. by George Rousseau (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 85–107

Avril, François, and Nicole Reynaud, *Les manuscrits à peintures en France: 1440–1520* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993)

Azzam, Wagih, Olivier Collet, and Yasmina Foehr-Janssens, 'Les manuscrits littéraires français: Pour une sémiotique du recueil médiéval', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 83.3 (2005), 639–69

Bailey, Derrick Sherwin, *Homosexuality and the Western Christian Tradition* (London: Longman, 1955)

Baluze, Étienne, *Histoire genealogique de la maison d'Auvergne* (Paris: Antoine Dezallier, 1708)

Barrois, Joseph, *Bibliothèque protypographique: ou Librairies des fils du roi Jean, Charles V, Jean de Berri, Philippe de Bourgogne et les siens* (Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1830)

Barrow, Julia, 'Clergy and IV Lateran', in *The Fourth Lateran Council: Institutional Reform and Spiritual Renewal: Proceedings of the Conference Marking the Eight Hundredth Anniversary of the Council, Organized by the Pontificio Comitato Di Scienze Storiche (Rome, 15–17 October 2015)*, ed. by Gert Melville and Johannes Helmrath (Affalterbach: Didymos-Verlag, 2017), pp. 125–36

Beattie, Cordelia, 'Gender and Femininity in Medieval England', in *Writing Medieval History*, ed. by Nancy F. Partner (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), pp. 153–70

Bennett, J. M., and S. McSheffrey, 'Early, Erotic and Alien: Women Dressed as Men in Late Medieval London', *History Workshop Journal*, 77.1 (2014), 1–25

Berry, Craig A., 'What Silence Desires: Female Inheritance and the Romance of Property in the "Roman de Silence"', in *Translating Desire in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by Heather Richardson Hayton (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 191–206

Besamusca, A.A.M, *The Book of Lancelot: The Middle Dutch Lancelot Compilations and the Medieval Tradition of Narrative Cycles* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2003)

Blanc, Odile, *Parades et parures: l'invention du corps de mode à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997)

Bliss, Jane, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008)

Bloch, R. Howard, *Medieval French Literature and Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977)

Blockmans, Wim, 'Manuscript Acquisition by the Burgundian Court and the Market for Books in the Fifteenth-Century Netherlands', in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400–1800*, ed. by Michael North and David Ormord (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 7–18

———, 'The Splendour of Burgundy: For Whom?', in *Staging the Court of Burgundy*, ed. by Wim Blockmans (London: Harvey Miller, 2013), pp. 17–24

Blumreich, Kathleen M., 'Lesbian Desire in the Old French "Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 47–62

Boneau, Elise, 'Obscenity out of the Margins: Mysterious Imagery with the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles", *MS Hunter 252*', *ESharp*, 6.2 (2006), 1–18

Boone, Marc, 'Jacqueline of Bavaria in September 1425, a Lonely Princess in Ghent?', *The Ricardian*, 13 (2003), 75–85

Booton, Diane E., *Manuscripts, Market, and the Transition to Print in Late Medieval Brittany* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Boswell, John, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Bouchard, Constance B., 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Speculum*, 56.2 (1981), 268–87

Boyd, David Lorenzo, and Ruth Mazo Karras, 'The Interrogation of a Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London', *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 1.4 (1995), 459–65

Bozzolo, Carla, and Ezio Ornato, *Pour une histoire du livre manuscrit au Moyen Age: trois essais de codicologie quantitative* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1980)

Brown-Grant, Rosalind, *French Romance of the Later Middle Ages: Gender, Morality, and Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

———, 'Personal Drama or Chivalric Spectacle? The Reception of the "Roman d'Olivier de Castille et d'Artus d'Algarbe" in the Illuminations of the Wavrin Master and Loyset Liédet', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 123–39

Brown-Grant, Rosalind, Anne D. Hedeman, and Bernard Ribémont, eds., *Textual and Visual Representations of Power and Justice in Medieval France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015)

Brundage, James A., 'Carnal Delight: Canonistic Theories of Sexuality', in *Sex, Law, and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993), pp. 362–85

———, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

———, *Medieval Canon Law* (London: Longman, 1995)

Bullough, Vern L., 'Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 223–42

Burgwinkle, William E., *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Burr, David, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001)

Burrows, Daron, *The Stereotype of the Priest in the Old French Fabliaux: Anticlerical Satire and Lay Identity* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005)

Busby, Keith, *Codex and Context*, 2 vols (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002)

———, 'Narrative Genres', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval French Literature*, ed. by Simon Gaunt and Sarah Kay (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 139–52

———, '"Plus acesmez qu'une popine": Male Cross-Dressing in Medieval French Narratives', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 45–59

———, 'Post-Chrétien Verse Romance: The Manuscript Context', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes*, 14, 2007, 11–24

———, 'The Diabolic Hero in Medieval French Narrative: "Trubert" and "Witasse le Moine"', in *The Court and Cultural Diversity: Selected Papers from the Eighth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, the Queen's University of Belfast, 26 July–1 August 1995*, ed. by Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), pp. 415–26

Butler, Sara M., *Divorce in Medieval England: From One to Two Persons in Law* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013)

Bychowski, Gabrielle M. W., and Dorothy Kim, eds., *Special Issue on Transfeminisms* (*Medieval Feminist Forum*, forthcoming)

Bychowski, M. W., 'Trans Textuality: Dysphoria in the Depths of Medieval Skin', *Postmedieval*, 9.3 (2018), 318–33

Cadden, Joan, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Callahan, Christopher, 'Canon Law, Primogeniture, and the Marriage of Ebain and Silence', *Romance Quarterly*, 49.1 (2002), 12–20

Camille, Michael, 'Dr Witkowski's Anus: French Doctors, German Homosexuals and the Obscene in Medieval Church Art', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), pp. 17–38

Campbell, Kimberlee, 'Performing Gender in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Cultural Performances in Medieval France: Essays in Honor of Nancy Freeman Regalado*, ed. by Eglal Doss-Quinby, Roberta L. Krueger, E. Jane Burns, and Nancy F. Regalado (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007), pp. 79–89

Cartlidge, Neil, *Medieval Marriage: Literary Approaches, 1100–1300* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997)

Castelli, Elizabeth A., '"I Will Make Mary Male": Pieties of the Body and Gender Transformation of Christian Women in Late Antiquity', in *Body Guards. The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. by Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (New York: Routledge, 1991)

Caswell, Jean M., 'A Double Signing System in the Morgan-Mâcon Golden Legend', *Quaerendo*, 10 (1980), 97–112

Caviness, Madeline, 'Giving "the Middle Ages" a Bad Name: Blood Punishments in the "Sachsenspiegel" and Town Law Books', *Studies in Iconography*, 34 (2013), 175–235

Cayley, Emma, *Debate and Dialogue: Alain Chartier in his Cultural Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006)

du Chesne, André, *Histoire généalogique de la maison des Chasteigners* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1634)

Chess, Simone, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2016)

Claerr, Roseline, '"Que ma mémoire 'là demeure', en mes livres": Catherine de Coëtivy (vers 1460–1529) et sa bibliothèque', in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 101–18

Clark, Robert L. A., 'A Heroine's Sexual Itinerary: Incest, Transvestism and Same-Sex Marriage in "Yde et Olive"', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 89–105

Coleman, Joyce, 'Aural Illumination: Books and Aurality in the Frontispieces to Bishop Chevrot's "Cite de Dieu"', in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D.H. Green*, ed. by Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 223–52

———, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Collet, Olivier, 'Du "manuscrit de jongleur" au "recueil aristocratique": réflexions sur les premières anthologies françaises', *Le Moyen Age*, 103.3 (2007), 481–99

———, 'L'œuvre de Raoul de Houdenc et la définition des cadres littéraires du XIII siècle', in *Raoul de Houdenc et les* routes noveles *de la fiction 1200–1235*, ed. by Sébastien Douchet (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2018), pp. 33–42

Crane, Susan, 'Knights in Disguise: Identity and Incognito in Fourteenth-Century Chivalry', in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. by F.R.P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 63–79

Crapelet, Georges-Adrien, *Partonopeus de Blois*, 2 vols (Paris: Crapelet, 1834), I

Crocker, Holly A., 'Disfiguring Gender: Masculine Desire in the Old French Fabliau', *Exemplaria*, 23.4 (2011), 342–67

Croenen, Godfried, 'Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400', in *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris around 1400*, ed. by Godfried Croenen and Peter F. Ainsworth (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), pp. 1–20

Davidson, Roberta, 'Cross-Dressing in Medieval Romance', in *Textual Bodies: Changing Boundaries of Literary*, ed. by Lori Hope Lefkovitz (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), pp. 57–74

Davis, S. J., 'Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex: Intertextuality and Gender in Early Christian Legends of Holy Women Disguised as Men', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 10 (2002), 1–36

D'Avray, David, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

De Winter, Patrick M., *La bibliothèque de Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne (1364–1404): étude sur les manuscrits à peintures d'une collection princière à l'époque du 'style gothique international'* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1985)

Delisle, Léopold, *Le cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, 3 vols (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1868)

Denny-Brown, Andrea, 'Rips and Slits: The Torn Garment and the Medieval Self', in *Clothing Culture, 1350–1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 223–37

Dickson, Morgan, 'Verbal and Visual Disguise: Society and Identity in Some Twelfth-Century Texts', in *Medieval Insular Romance: Translation and Innovation*, ed. by Judith Weiss, Jennifer Fellows, and Morgan Dickson (Cambridge, England: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 41–54

Donahue, Charles, *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages: Arguments about Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Duffy, Eamon, 'Introduction', in *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Jacobus de Voragine and William Granger Ryan (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. xi–xx

Dufournet, Jean, 'Rutebeuf et les moines mendiants', *Neuphilogische Mitteilungen*, 85.2 (1984), 152–68

Easton, Martha, '"Why Can't a Woman Be More like a Man?" Transforming and Transcending Gender in the Lives of Female Saints', in *The Four Modes of Seeing: Approaches to Medieval Imagery in Honor of Madeline Harrison Caviness*, ed. by Evelyn Staudinger Lane, Elizabeth Carson Pastan, and Ellen M. Shortell (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 333–47

Emerson, Catherine, 'Setting a Place in the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles": The Illustrations of Glasgow, Hunter 252', *RELIEF*, 11 (2017), 82–95

Evans, Jennifer, '"They Are Called Imperfect Men": Male Infertility and Sexual Health in Early Modern England', *Social History of Medicine*, 29.2 (2016), 311–22

Farmer, Sharon A., *The Silk Industries of Medieval Paris: Artisanal Migration, Technological Innovation, and Gendered Experience* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017)

Faverty, Frederic E., 'The Story of Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in Mediæval Literature', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 13 (1931), 81–128

Fenton, Kirsten A., 'Men and Masculinities in William of Malmesbury's Presentation of the Anglo-Norman Court', *Haskins Society Journal*, 23 (2014), 115–24

Foehr-Janssens, Yasmina, and Olivier Collet, eds., *Le recueil au Moyen Âge: le Moyen Âge central* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010)

Füg-Pierreville, Corinne, 'Jeux de masques et fabliaux', *Revue des Langues Romanes*, 113.2 (2009), 371–86

———, 'Le déguisement dans *Trubert*: l'identité en question', *Le Moyen Age*, 114.2 (2008), 315–34

Garnier, François, *Le langage de l'image au Moyen Age* (Paris: Léopard d'or, 1982)

Gaude-Ferragu, Murielle, *Queenship in Medieval France, 1300–1500*, trans. by Angela Krieger (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

Gaunt, Simon, *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

———, 'Straight Minds/ "Queer" Wishes in Old French Hagiography: "La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine"', *GLQ*, 1.4 (1995), 439–57

———, 'The Significance of Silence', *Paragraph*, 13.2 (1990), 202–16

Geltner, Guy, 'Brethren Behaving Badly: A Deviant Approach to Medieval Antifraternalism', *Speculum*, 85.1 (2010), 47–64

———, 'Faux Semblants : Antifraternalism Reconsidered in Jean de Meun and Chaucer', *Studies in Philology*, 101.4 (2004), 357–80

———, *The Making of Medieval Antifraternalism: Polemic, Violence, Deviance, and Remembrance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Gilbert, Jane, 'Boys Will Be ... What? Gender, Sexuality, and Childhood in "Floire et Blancheflor" and "Floris et Lyriope"', *Exemplaria*, 9.1 (1997), 39–61

Giovénal, Carine, *Le Chevalier et le pèlerin: idéal, rire et réalité chez Raoul Houdenc, XIIIe siècle* (Aix-en-Provence: Presses universitaires de Provence, 2015)

Goldberg, Jeremy, 'John Rykener, Richard II and the Governance of London', *Leeds Studies in English*, 45 (2014), 49–70

———, 'John Skathelok's Dick: Voyeurism and "Pornography" in Late Medieval England', in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. by Nicola McDonald (York: York Medieval Press, 2006), pp. 105–23

Gouron, André, 'A la source de la distinction entre *verba de presenti* et *verba de futuro*: théologiens ou canonistes?', *Bulletin of Medieval Canon Law*, 28 (2008), 97–118

Gravdal, Kathryn, *Vilain and Courtois: Transgressive Parody in French Literature of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989)

Grayson, Saisha, 'Disruptive Disguises: The Problem of Transvestite Saints for Medieval Art, Identity, and Identification', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 45 (2009), 138–74

Gutt, Blake, 'Transgender Genealogy in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', *Exemplaria*, 30.2 (2018), 129–46

Halberstam, Jack, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005)

Heale, Martin, *The Abbots and Priors of Late Medieval and Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016)

Heller, Sarah-Grace, 'Anxiety, Hierarchy, and Appearance in Thirteenth-Century Sumptuary Laws and the "Roman de la Rose"', *French Historical Studies*, 27.2 (2004), 311–48

Helmholz, R. H., *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Holmes Beach, Fla: Gaunt, 1986)

———, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, ed. by John H. Baker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Horrox, Rosemary, ed., *The Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995)

Hotchkiss, Valerie, *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross-Dressing in Medieval Europe* (New York: Garland, 1996)

Hughes, Diane Owens, 'Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. by John Bossy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 69–99

Huot, Sylvia, *From Song to Book: The Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)

Jeannot, Delphine, *Le mécénat bibliophilique de Jean sans Peur et de Marguerite de Bavière (1404–1424)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012)

Johnson, Lesley, 'Women on Top: Antifeminism in the Fabliaux?', *The Modern Language Review*, 78.2 (1983), 298–307

Kane, Bronach Christina, *Impotence and Virginity in the Late Medieval Ecclesiastical Court of York* (York: University of York, 2008)

Karras, Ruth Mazo, 'Marriage, Concubinage, and the Law', in *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye, and E. Ann Matter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), pp. 117–29

———, 'The Regulation of Sexuality in the Late Middle Ages: England and France', *Speculum*, 86.4 (2011), 1010–39

———, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012)

Karras, Ruth Mazo, and David Lorenzo Boyd, '"Ut cum muliere": A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London', in *Premodern Sexualities*, ed. by Louise Fradenburg and Carla Freccero (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 101–16

Karras, Ruth Mazo, and Tom Linkinen, 'John/Eleanor Rykener Revisited', in *Founding Feminisms in Medieval Studies: Essays in Honor of E. Jane Burns*, ed. by Laine E. Doggett, Daniel E. O'Sullivan, and E. Jane Burns (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), pp. 111–21

Kay, Sarah, *The* Chansons de Geste *in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)

Kinoshita, Sharon, 'Heldris de Cornuâlle's "Roman de Silence" and the Feudal Politics of Lineage', *PMLA*, 110.3 (1995), 397–409

Kłosowska, Anna, *Queer Love in the Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Korteweg, Anne, 'La bibliothèque de Philippe de Clèves: inventaire et manuscrits parvenus jusqu'à nous', in *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'Etat: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Hanno Wijsman, and Céline Van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 183–221

Labbie, Erin F., 'The Specular Image of the Gender-Neutral Name: Naming Silence in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 63–77

Lachaud, Frédérique, 'Dress and Social Status in England before the Sumptuary Laws', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. by Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2003), pp. 105–23

Lagorgette, Dominique, 'Staging Transgression through Text and Image: Violence and Nudity in the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles" (Glasgow, University Library, Special Collections, MS Hunter 252, and Vérard 1486 and 1498', in *Text/Image Relations in Late Medieval French and Burgundian Culture (Fourteenth–Sixteenth Centuries)*, ed. by Rosalind Brown-Grant and Rebecca Dixon (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 89–104

Le Goff, Jacques, *The Birth of Europe* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005)

Legaré, Anne-Marie, '"La librairye de madame": Two Princesses and Their Libraries', in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. by Dagmar Eichberger and Yvonne Bleyerveld (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 206–19

———, 'Les Bibliothèques de deux princesses : Marguerite d'York et Marguerite d'Autriche', in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et renaissance*, ed. by Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 253–65

Leveleux-Teixeira, Corinne, 'Le droit canonique médiéval et l'horreur du scandale', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 25 (2013), 193–211

Lewis, Katherine J., *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000)

Linkinen, Tom, *Same-Sex Sexuality in Later Medieval English Culture* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015)

Logan, F. Donald, *A History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012)

Lowerre, Sandra, 'To Rise Beyond Their Sex: Female Cross-Dressing Saints in Caxton's "Vitas Patrum"', in *Riddles, Knights and Cross-Dressing Saints*, ed. by Thomas Honegger (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 55–94

Luxford, Julian M., *The Art and Architecture of English Benedictine Monasteries, 1300–1540: A Patronage History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005)

Maddocks, Hilary Elizabeth, 'The Illuminated Manuscripts of the "Légende Dorée": Jean de Vignay's Translation of Jacobus de Voragine's "Legenda Aurea"' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Melbourne, 1990)

McCarthy, Conor, *Marriage in Medieval England: Law, Literature, and Practice* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004)

Mcclintock, John, and James Strong, *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, 12 vols (New York: Harper, 1883), v

McDougall, Sara, 'The Opposite of the Double Standard: Gender, Marriage, and Adultery Prosecution in Late Medieval France', *Journal of History of Sexuality*, 23.2 (2014), 206–25

———, 'The Transformation of Adultery in France at the End of the Middle Ages', *Law and History Review*, 32.3 (2014), 491–524

McSheffrey, Shannon, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006)

Metzler, Irina, 'Sex, Religion, and the Law', in *A Cultural History of Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ruth Evans (Oxford: Berg, 2011), pp. 101–18

Milliken, Roberta, *Ambiguous Locks: An Iconology of Hair in Medieval Art and Literature* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012)

Mills, Robert, 'Homosexuality', in *A Cultural History of Sexuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ruth Evans (Oxford: Berg, 2011), pp. 57–80

———, 'Male-Male Love and Sex in the Middle Ages 1000–1500', in *A Gay History of Britain: Love and Sex between Men since the Middle Ages*, ed. by Matt Cook, Robert Mills, Randolph Trumbach, and Harry Cocks (Oxford: Greenwood World, 2007), pp. 1–43

———, *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)

Morel, Barbara, *Une iconographie de la répression judiciaire: le châtiment dans l'enluminure en France du XIIIe au XVe siècle* (Paris: Édition du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 2007)

Moréri, Louis, 'Henri Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV, 277

———, 'Henri II Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV, 277–78

———, 'Robert Etienne', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IV, 277

———, 'François III de Sassenage', *Le Grand Dictionnaire Historique, ou le Mélange curieux de l'Histoire sacrée et profane, etc*, 10 vols (Paris: Les libraires associés, 1759), IX, 167

Muir, Carolyn Diskant, *Saintly Brides and Bridegrooms: The Mystic Marriage in Northern Renaissance Art* (London: Harvey Miller, 2013)

Murray, Jacqueline, ed., *Love, Marriage, and Family in the Middle Ages: A Reader* (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview Press, 2001)

———, 'On the Origins and Role of "Wise Women" in Causes for Annulment on the Grounds of Male Impotence', *Journal of Medieval History*, 16.3 (1990), 235–49

———, 'Twice Marginal and Twice Invisible: Lesbians in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Bullough, Vern L. and James A. Brundage (New York: Garland, 1996), pp. 191–222

Musson, Anthony, 'Images of Marriage: A Comparison of Law, Custom and Practice in Medieval Europe', in *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. by Mia Korpiola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 118–46

———, 'The Power of Image: Allusion and Intertextuality in Illuminated English Law Books', in *Citation, Intertextuality and Memory in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Yolanda Plumley, Giuliano Di Bacco, and Stefano Jossa (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011), pp. 113–26

Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina, 'Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 39.3 (2009), 597–617

Naber, Antoinette, 'Jean de Wavrin, un bibliophile du quinzième siècle', *Revue du Nord*, 273 (1987), 281–93

———, 'Les manuscrits d'un bibliophile bourguignon du XVe siècle, Jean de Wavrin', *Revue du Nord*, 284 (1990), 23–48

Neddermeyer, Uwe, 'Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer quantitativen Bestimmung der Buchproduktion im Spätmittelalter', *Gazette du livre médiéval*, 28 (1996), 23–32

Nold, Patrick, *Marriage advice for a Pope: John XXII and the power to dissolve* (Leiden: Brill, 2009)

Noonan, John. T, 'Marriage in the Middle Ages: I. Power to Choose', *Viator*, 4 (1973), 419–34

Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale, et autres bibliothèques (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1813), IX

Ogden, Amy V., *Hagiography, Romance, and the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"* (Princeton: Edward C. Armstrong, 2003)

Otis-Cour, Leah, '*De Jure Novo*: Dealing with Adultery in the Fifteenth-Century Toulousain', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 347–92

Owen-Crocker, Gale, 'Cope', ed. by Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles*, 2012

Parish, Helen, *Clerical Celibacy in the West, c.1100–1700* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Payer, Pierre J., *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150–1300* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009)

Pearcy, Roy J., 'Relations between the *D* and *A* Versions of *Bérenger au long cul*', *Romance Notes*, 14 (1972), 173–78

———, 'The Source of Rutebeuf's "Frere Denise"', *Neuphilogische Mitteilungen*, 83.2 (1982), 118–26

Pedersen, Frederik, 'Did the Medieval Laity Know the Canon Law Rules on Marriage? Some Evidence from Fourteenth-Century York Cause Papers', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994), 111–52

———, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000)

Perret, Michèle, 'Travesties et Transexuelles: Yde, Silence, Grisandole, Blanchandine', *Romance Notes*, 25.3 (1985), 328–40

Piérart, Z.J., *Excursions Archeologiques et Historiques* (Maubeuge: Levecque, 1862)

Platelle, Henri, 'Le problème du scandale: les nouvelles modes masculines aux XIe et XIIe siècles', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 53.4 (1975), 1071–96

Putter, Ad, 'Transvestite Knights in Medieval Life and Literature', in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 279–302

Raoul de Houdenc, *The "Songe d'Enfer" of Raoul de Houdenc: An Edition Based on All the Extant Manuscripts*, ed. by Madelyn Timmel Mihm (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1984)

Richards, Christina, Walter Pierre Bouman, Leighton Seal, Meg John Barker, Timo O. Nieder, and Guy T'Sjoen, 'Non-Binary or Genderqueer Genders', *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28.1 (2016), 95–102

Richards, Christina, Walter-Pierre Bouman, and Meg-John Barker, 'Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders', in *Genderqueer and Non-Binary Genders*, ed. by Christina Richards, Walter Pierre Bouman, and Meg-John Barker (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 1–8

Rider, Catherine, 'Between Theology and Popular Practice: Medieval Canonists on Magic and Impotence', in *Boundaries of the Law: Geography, Gender and Jurisdiction in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Musson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 53–66

———, *Magic and Impotence in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Robins, Williams, 'Three Tales Of Female Same-Sex Marriage: Ovid's "Iphis And Ianthe," The Old French "Yde et Olive", and Antonio Pucci's "Reina d'Oriente"', *Exemplaria*, 21.1 (2009), 43–62

Rouse, Richard H., and Mary A. Rouse, 'The Commercial Production of Manuscript Books in Late-Thirteenth-Century and Early-Fourteenth-Century Paris', in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. by Linda Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1990), pp. 103–15

———, 'The "Sept Sages de Rome"', in *Der Codex im Gebrauch*, ed. by Christel Meier, Dagmar Hüpper, and Hagen Keller (Munich: Fink, 1996), pp. 127–41

———, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols (Turnhout: Miller, 2000)

———, 'The Book Trade at the University of Paris, ca. 1250–ca. 1350', in *Authentic Witnesses: Approaches to Medieval Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. by Richard H. Rouse and Mary A. Rouse (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), pp. 259–338

Rousseau, Constance M., 'Neither Bewitched nor Beguiled: Philip Augustus's Alleged Impotence and Innocent III's Response', *Speculum*, 89.2 (2014), 410–36

———, 'The Spousal Relationship: Marital Society and Sexuality in the Letters of Pope Innocent III', *Mediaeval Studies*, 56 (1994), 89–109

Rudy, Kathryn M., 'Kissing Images, Unfurling Rolls, Measuring Wounds, Sewing Badges and Carrying Talismans: Considering Some Harley Manuscripts through the Physical Rituals They Reveal', *The Electronic British Library Journal*, 2011 <http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2011articles/articles.html> (accessed 25 February 2017)

———, *Piety in Pieces: How Medieval Readers Customized Their Manuscripts* (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2016)

Rutebeuf, *Œuvres complètes de Rutebeuf.*, ed. by Michel Zink, 2 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1989), I

Saenger, Paul Henry, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)

Salisbury, Joyce E., *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London: Verso, 1991)

Sautman, Francesca C., 'What Can They Possibly Do Together? Queer Epic Performances in "Tristan de Nanteuil"', in *Same Sex Love and Desire Among Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Francesca C. Sautman and Pamela Sheingorn (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 199–232

Schäfer-Althaus, Sarah, *Gendered Body* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2017)

Schmidt, et al., Hans M., 'Masters, Anonymous, and Monogrammists', *Grove Art Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) <www.oxfordartonline.com> (accessed 8 August 2017)

Sheehan, Michael M., 'The Formation and Stability of Marriage in Fourteenth-Century England: Evidence of an Ely Register', *Mediaeval Studies*, 30 (1971), 228–63

Siebler, Kay, *Learning Queer Identity in the Digital Age* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

Smith, David M, *The Court of York 1400–1499: A Handlist of the Cause Papers and an Index to the Archiepiscopal Court Books* (York: University of York, 2003)

Smith, Robert D., and Kelly DeVries, *The Artillery of the Dukes of Burgundy, 1363–1477* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005)

Solberg, Janet L., '"Who Was That Masked Man?": Disguise and Deception in Medieval and Renaissance Comic Literature', in *The Stranger in Medieval Society*, ed. by F. R. P. Akehurst and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 117–38

Spencer-Hall, Alicia, and Blake Gutt, eds., *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019)

Stock, Lorraine Kochanske, 'The Importance of Being "Stable": Masculinity and Feminine Empowerment in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 7–34

Stones, Alison, 'Appendix IV: Illustrated "Miracles de Nostre Dame" Manuscripts Listed by Stylistic Attribution and Attributable Manuscripts Whose "MND" Selection is Unillustrated', in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 374–96

———, 'Appendix VI: Owners of "Miracles de Nostre Dame" Manuscripts', in *Gautier de Coinci: Miracles, Music and Manuscripts*, ed. by Kathy M. Krause and Alison Stones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), pp. 407–42

———, 'The Stylistic Context of the "Roman de Fauvel", with a Note on "Fauvain"', in *Fauvel Studies: Allegory, Chronicle, Music, and Image in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Français 146*, ed. by Margaret Bent and Andrew Wathey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 529–67

Stratford, Jenny, 'The Manuscripts of John, Duke of Bedford: Library and Chapel', in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Rogers (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994), pp 329–50

Stump, Phillip H., *The Reforms of the Council of Constance, 1414–1418* (Leiden: Brill, 1994)

Swift, Helen, '"Pourquoy appellerions nous ces choses differentes, qu'une heure, un moment, un mouvement peuvent rendre du tout semblables?": Representing Gender Identity in the Late Medieval French "Querelle des Femmes"', in *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600–1530*, ed. by Elizabeth L'Estrange and Alison More (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 89–106

Szkilnik, Michelle, 'The Grammar of the Sexes in Medieval French Romance', in *Gender Transgressions: Crossing the Normative Barrier in Old French Literature*, ed. by Karen J. Taylor (New York: Garland, 1998), pp. 61–88

Tanner, Norman P., and Sethina Watson, 'Least of the Laity: The Minimum Requirements for a Medieval Christian', *Journal of Medieval History*, 32.4 (2006), 395–423

Terrell, Katherine H., 'Competing Gender Ideologies and the Limitations of Language in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Romance Quarterly*, 55.1 (2008), 35–48

Tougher, Shaun, *The Eunuch in Byzantine History and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2008)

Tracy, Larissa, 'Chaucer's Pardoner: The Medieval Culture of Cross-Dressing and Problems of Religious Authority', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 54.2 (2018), 64–108

Valentine, David, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007)

Vaughan, Richard, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004)

Vleeschouwers-Van Melkebeek, Monique, 'Incestuous Marriage: Formal Rules and Social Practice in the Southern Burgundian Netherlands', in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003)

———, 'Separation and Marital Property in Late Medieval England and the Franco-Belgian Region', in *Regional Variations in Matrimonial Law and Custom in Europe, 1150–1600*, ed. by Mia Korpiola (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 78–97

Walsh, Christine, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Waters, Elizabeth A., 'The Third Path: Alternative Sex, Alternative Gender in "Le Roman de Silence"', *Arthuriana*, 7.2 (1997), 35–46

Watt, Diane, 'Behaving like a Man? Lesbian Desire, and Gender Play in "Yde et Olive" and its Adaptions', *Comparative Literature*, 50.4 (1998), 265–85

Weisl, Angela Jane, 'How to Be a Man, Through Female: Changing Sex in Medieval Romance', *Medieval Feminist Forum*, 45.2 (2009), 110–37

Wijsman, Hanno, 'Les manuscrits de Pierre de Luxembourg (ca 1440–1482) et les bibliothèques nobiliaires dans les Pays-Bas bourguignons de la deuxième moitié du XVe siècle', *Le Moyen Age*, 113.3–4 (2007), 613–37

———, *Luxury Bound: Illustrated Manuscript Production and Noble and Princely Book Ownership in the Burgundian Netherlands (1400–1550)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010)

———, 'Politique et bibliophilie pendant la révote des villes flamandes des années 1482–1492: Relations entre les bibliothèques de Philippe de Clèves et de Louis de Bruges et la librairie des ducs de Bourgogne', in *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'Etat: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. by Jelle Haemers, Hanno Wijsman, and Céline Van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 245–78

Wright, Vanessa, 'Illuminating Queer Gender Identity in the Manuscripts of the "Vie de Sainte Eufrosine"', in *Trans and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography*, ed. by Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, Forthcoming)