Gender, Power, and Persona in the Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil

by

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Centre for Medieval Studies
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Abstract

The late eleventh and early twelfth centuries saw a revival in the study of Ovid in the literary circles of the Loire Valley region of France. The poetry of Baudri, abbot of Bourgueil from approximately 1078-1107 and archbishop of Dol from 1107 until his death in 1130, exemplifies this trend. Baudri’s determinedly Ovidian collection contains 256 poems, several of which are addressed to nuns and to boys subject to his authority as abbot. Baudri’s use of Ovid displays an intricate understanding of the issues of gender and power at play in Ovid’s works, in particular the *Ars Amatoria* and *Amores*. Baudri uses his position of authority to manipulate his inferiors into behaving in ways that are pleasing to him, crafting an unflattering persona that shares many characteristics with the unsympathetic Ovidian amator and praeceptor amoris. Baudri’s letters to boys problematically evoke the tradition of monastic friendship letters, using classical allusion to represent an inappropriately sexualized and manipulative discourse. His letter to the nun Constance and her reply depict a struggle for control of discourse. Constance, by following Ovid’s instructions to the elegiac puella in her reply to Baudri, demonstrates that she is circumscribed by Baudri’s dominant male discourse, which she nonetheless manages to undermine from within. Baudri’s depiction of the power relationships between himself and his social inferiors mirrors the relationship between the Ovidian praeceptor amoris and the elegiac puella, and consequently engages with the plight of his inferiors in the same way that Ovid’s
poetry draws attention to the dangerous lives of the courtesans in his elegy. Furthermore, his Ovidianism can be situated within the context of the contemporary Gregorian Reforms. In the same way that the *puella* can be seen as a projection of elite Roman males’ experience of disenfranchisement amidst the rise of the Principate, Baudri’s problematic correspondence with his social inferiors reflects social anxieties in the face of the Church’s assertion of centralized power and curtailment of clerical freedoms.
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Introduction

Baudri of Bourgueil, sometimes called Baldric of Dol, was a prolific author of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries who served as abbot of Bourgueil and ultimately as archbishop of Dol-de-Bretagne. The bulk of Baudri’s literary output, which will be discussed below, consists of prose works, but he also published a diverse collection of poetry; his Ovidian letter poems, specifically those addressed to nuns and boys, are the subject of this dissertation. When discussing Baudri’s Ovidianism, previous scholars have tended to focus on his use of the *Heroides*. While I agree that the *Heroides* represent an extremely important source text for Baudri, here I explore instead his use of Ovid’s *Ars* and *Amores*, and discuss the implications of his decision to emulate the elegiac genre as an abbot. I argue that the current feminist understanding of Ovidian elegy is instructive for such an inquiry, because the same concerns with power and gender that feminist scholars have noted in Ovid are also visible in Baudri’s adaptations of Ovid. In Chapter 1, I discuss the current state of feminist scholarship on Ovid, and also outline the surviving medieval commentary tradition on Ovid’s poems. Despite the evident disjunction between the modern understanding of Ovid and the documented medieval readings of his poems, I argue that the best indication of medieval understanding is not necessarily these surviving commentaries, which present mainly the background information deemed essential for elementary students. An analysis of medieval poetry that engages with classical sources can be more instructive, as it illustrates the issues that scholars saw on a more

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1 There are, of course, numerous variations of his name, both medieval and modern (Baudry, Baldricus, etc.), and while it is more customary to refer to him by the seat of his abbacy rather than by that of his archbishopric, both toponyms are common. See Henri Pasquier, *Un poète latin du XIe siècle: Baudri, abbé de Bourgueil, archevêque de Dol, 1046-1130, d’après des documents inédits* (Angers: Lachèse et Dolbeau, 1878), 22-23, for an account of several variations of Baudri’s name.
profound level. In Baudri’s case, his poetry reveals his engagement with the complex issues of power and control that we discuss in Ovid today.

In Chapter 2, I examine Baudri’s paired correspondence with a nun named Constance, and I also touch upon his other poems addressed to women. I discuss the current debate in modern scholarship regarding Constance’s authorship of her reply to Baudri and the implications of this debate. I argue that whether Baudri or Constance wrote the poem, however, Baudri’s decision to include it in his collection allows us to draw conclusions about his poetic project based on the contents of the letter. The Baudri-Constance correspondence depicts a struggle for control of discourse that mirrors the power struggle between the amator and puella in Ovidian elegy. By following the Ovidian praeceptor’s instructions to the elegiac puella in her reply to Baudri, Constance demonstrates that she is circumscribed by Baudri’s dominant male discourse in the same way that the puella is circumscribed by Ovid’s elegiac discourse. At the same time, Constance’s poem still manages to undermine this discourse from within.

Chapter 3 focuses on Baudri’s poems to boys and their use of sexual themes borrowed from Ovid, Horace, and Vergil. Although some scholars have argued that the poems’ homoerotic undertones are mere literary convention put to the use of moral instruction, I argue that their erotic subtext cannot be ignored.² The poems’ ambiguity is in fact integral to their meaning, as Baudri uses sexual language to manipulate the boys into behaving in ways that please him. Although his demands seem on one level like legitimate spiritual advice, a reading that accounts for their sexual undertones problematizes the poems’ message, and Baudri’s poetic persona along with it. In Baudri’s poems to women and his poems to boys, he repeatedly uses

² When I speak of erotic verse, I am referring to poems that contain any sort of romantically or sexually charged language, explicit or implied.
the language of Ovidian elegy, as well as tropes borrowed from other classical poets, to problematize his persona’s use of his authority as abbot.

Chapter 4 situates Baudri’s poems within the context of the contemporary Gregorian Reforms, and draws a comparison between Baudri’s poetic engagement with the reforms and the relationship between Roman elegy and the social changes that occurred at the beginning of Augustus’ reign. In the same way that the puella can be seen as a projection of elite Roman males’ experience of disenfranchisement amidst the rise of the Principate, Baudri’s problematic correspondence with his social inferiors reflects social anxieties in the face of the Church’s assertion of centralized power and curtailment of clerical freedoms. I argue that, although Baudri presumably did not know the full details of Augustus’ reforms and did not necessarily understand Ovid’s poems as a reaction to the Augustan moral program, he did note the overwhelming concern with power and control in Ovid’s poetry. Moreover, the public discourse of the Gregorian Reforms linked power and sexuality in much the same way we see in Ovid’s poems. Ovidian elegy therefore presented itself as an ideal medium for Baudri to grapple with contemporary anxieties about the reform movement and to formulate a discourse of dissent.

Despite Baudri’s prolific literary output and the prestige of his office, surprisingly little is known about his life. To date there exists only one book-length biography of Baudri, that of Henri Pasquier, which dates from 1878. As Jean-Yves Tilliette has observed, the biography is “well-informed,” but does tend towards an overly-favorable portrayal of Baudri. Tilliette refers on more than one occasion to Pasquier as Baudri’s “hagiographer,” and this assertion is not unfounded. As Tilliette also notes, the only surviving documents detailing Baudri’s life are

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roughly sixty charters either mentioning his name or signed by him,\textsuperscript{5} half a dozen administrative letters about or addressed to him,\textsuperscript{6} and Orderic Vital’s funeral oration dedicated to Baudri.\textsuperscript{7} These documents tell us little about Baudri’s life, and most of what is known has been drawn from his own works.\textsuperscript{8} In the introduction to his edition and translation of Baudri’s poetry, Jean-Yves Tilliette has sorted through the pertinent documents and created as reliable a biography as possible, so I will follow his account closely here (elaborating on certain details that are pertinent to arguments I will make later).\textsuperscript{9}

Baudri was born in 1045 or 1046\textsuperscript{10} in Meung-sur-Loire (near Orléans);\textsuperscript{11} nothing is known of his family’s social standing save that it was probably not aristocratic. In his poems and in his \textit{De visitatione infirmorum} he mentions a sister and a nephew who was a priest.\textsuperscript{12} We know little

\textsuperscript{5} As Tilliette notes, in the nineteenth century André Salmon transcribed the documents relating to Baudri’s abbacy (Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1338, pp. 331-406); Pasquier, in his aforementioned biography of Baudri, digests the documents related to his archiepiscopacy into a timeline (Pasquier, 282-80). See Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, v.

\textsuperscript{6} These include two letters of Pope Pascal II (awarding Baudri the position of archbishop) and one of Calixtus II (summoning Baudri to the first Lateran council). See Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, vi n.4.

\textsuperscript{7} Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, v-vi.

\textsuperscript{8} Gleaning biographical information from an author’s poetry is of course problematic, but since many of Baudri’s poems do contain demonstrably factual information, the method is relatively reliable when undertaken with care.

\textsuperscript{9} See Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, v-xv.

\textsuperscript{10} These dates are derived from surviving documents which state that Baudri died in 1130 at the age of 84. See Pasquier, 273 n. 1; Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, x n.25.


\textsuperscript{12} Because the \textit{De visitatione} was erroneously attributed to Augustine in the past, it appears in Jacques-Paul Migne, \textit{Patrologia Latina} (henceforth PL) vol. 40, col. 1147-1158, among Augustine’s \textit{opera spuria} (Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, xi n. 26). The work is dedicated to Baudri’s dying nephew. See also Baudri, cc. 114.9; 126.105; 250.11. Baudri may have had two nephews, but scholars disagree on this point. In addition to the nephew mentioned in the aforementioned sources, Phyllis Abrahams, in her notes to c.250 (XXIX by her numbering), says
about his schooling, besides that at an early age he studied under a Hubert, whose death he laments in one of his poems.  

Otherwise, his educational background remains a mystery; Tilliette posits that he may have attended one of the cathedral schools, given the evident quality of his training. In his poem urging a man named Gerardus to become a monk, Baudri mentions having been enticed by his own love of learning in the past (77.132-136); Tilliette suggests the possibility that, prior to becoming a monk, Baudri considered a career as a school master. In any case, he eventually did become a monk, and was made abbot of Saint-Pierre-de-Bourgueil, a Benedictine monastery, at some point between the years 1078 and 1082. Emma of Blois, the

that she has found mention of an “Arnaldus clericus archiepiscopi Baldrici nepos” (Arnaldus the clerk, nephew of the archbishop Baudri) in a charter from Tours (dated between 1107 and 1123 according to Tilliette, but between 1107 and 1130 according to Gerald Bond). The charter in question is transcribed in Salmon’s Tours manuscript (1338, p. 406). Bond takes this Arnaldus to be a second nephew of Baudri’s, but Tilliette, who is more vague on the subject, says merely that Baudri had one nephew, the one mentioned in his poems and his De visitatione, and that it is doubtful that this nephew should be identified with the Arnaldus of the charter. See Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, vi n. 7; and Gerald Bond, “‘locus amoris’: The Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture,” Traditio 42 (1985): 145 n. 5. It should be noted that Bond at least in part seems to differentiate the two nephews based on his assumption, derived from c.126.107, that the first nephew’s name is Iulus; this assumption is incorrect, since Baudri only calls his nephew Iulus in the context of a very clear Vergilian allusion. C.126 is a description of Baudri’s ideal life, and he writes, “Preludat uacua michi paruus Iulus in aula,/ Quem soror atque meus ullicus ediderint” (Little Iulus would play before me in my vacant hall,/ whom my sister and my overseer bore) (126.106-7). The references are to Aeneid 2.710 (when Aeneas says that “parvus Iulus” will walk with him) and 4.328-29, where Dido says she would be less upset by Aeneas’ departure if he had gotten her pregnant and “si quis mihi paruulus aula/ luderet Aeneas” (if a little Aeneas were playing in my hall). I cite Mynors’ edition of the Aeneid throughout (Vergil, Opera, ed. R.A.B. Mynors [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969]). Sylvia Parsons discussed this particular allusion in her recent paper, “Vergil and Domestic Fantasy in Baudri of Bourgueil and Reginald of Canterbury,” at the 45th International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI (May 13, 2010).

13 C. 74, “De Magistro Suo Planctus” (Lament about his teacher). The poem makes it clear that Hubert was his teacher in Meung. See also c.191.37-44.

14 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, vii. Tilliette observes that scholars have traditionally assumed that Baudri completed his training at Angers, but that this assumption is based purely on the fact that he later demonstrates “familiarity” with “several Angevin masters and students” (introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, vii).

15 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, viii; 192 n. 38. Tilliette also mentions the theory, widely held but not testified by any documentary evidence, that Baudri lived in the world before becoming a monk (192 n. 38). In c.77, Baudri specifically says that while he loved reading, he preferred to teach himself rather than to rely on a teacher.

duchess of Aquitaine, founded the abbey in 990, and in Baudri’s time it was quite wealthy. During his abbacy, Baudri seems to have devoted a great deal of energy to increasing the abbey’s resources.  

Despite his apparent administrative skills, Baudri’s tenure as abbot was not without controversy. Ivo of Chartres reports, in an outraged letter to Hugh, archbishop of Lyon and papal legate, that in 1098 (by Tilliette’s account; 1097 by other accounts) Baudri attempted to acquire the bishopric of Orléans for himself after the deposition of the briefly-elected bishop Sanction. The affair seems to have proceeded as follows. Upon the death of Bishop John I of Orléans, controversy arose surrounding the election of his successor, with some clergy supporting a young candidate (also named John) and the majority backing an older man named Sanction. After various machinations from both sides, Sanction won the consecration and, upon his entry into the city as bishop, freed prisoners according to a local custom. Immediately


18 Hugh of Lyon is also known as Hugh of Die, because he held the bishopric of Die before becoming archbishop of Lyon.

19 Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, vii-viii; Pasquier, 201 (quoting from Clémencet’s *Histoire littéraire de la France*, vol. 11 [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1759], 97-99, which in turn is quoting from Mabillon’s *Annales ordinis s. Benedicti*, vol. 5 [Paris: Charles Robustel, 1713], 146-148).

20 Yves de Chartres, *Correspondance*, ed. Jean Leclercq (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1949), *ep.* 65, pp. 282-291. Most of Ivo’s outrage is in fact directed at Raoul, the archbishop of Tours. The bulk of the letter informs Hugh that Raoul recoronated King Phillip I (Philip had himself recoronated several times in an attempt to cement his power) against Hugh’s wishes (Hugh had excommunicated him) purely so that the king would appoint John as bishop of Orléans. Thus in effect Raoul, who controlled John, would have control of both Tours and Orléans. Ivo asserts several times in his letter that John is entirely under Raoul’s power and that the two are sleeping together; the letter exemplifies several of the concerns of the contemporary reforms that I will discuss in Chapter 4.

afterward, however, he reportedly mistreated one of these prisoners and had him reincarcerated. This outraged many people, and consequently the archbishop of Lyon annulled Sanction’s election. According to Ivo, the same John who had previously been a candidate was favored by the king (Philip I) to replace Sanction, while Baudri was favored by the queen (Bertrade). Baudri was apparently so assured of his success that he arrived in Orléans to be consecrated, only to learn that John had already obtained the post through simony. Baudri, it seems, had also intended to purchase the office using resources from Bourgueil, but John was able to draw on greater capital.22 Ivo writes:

Moreover your ingenuity should know that when the abbot of Bourgueil, with mouth agape and hands open, had come in great security to the court on Christmas to receive the bishopric (as that aforementioned queen had promised him), because more and fuller sacks of money were perceived to be hiding in the repositories of John’s friends than with the abbot, the former was admitted, and the latter was excluded. And when the abbot asked the king why he had deceived him in this manner, he replied: “Endure this for now, until I make my profit from this man, and afterwards ask that he be deposed, and then I will do your will.”

Tilliette argues that there is no reason to believe that Ivo fabricated his account, and rightly notes that the story indicates that the Gregorian reforms, which targeted, among other things, simony and lay investiture, had not yet managed to be imposed in France.24 The story also showcases, however, the conflict that had begun to arise between reformers and local officials; as Tilliette

22 See Pasquier, 201-202; Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, vii-viii; and Yves de Chartres, Correspondance, 288.

23 Yves de Chartres, Correspondance, 288.

24 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, viii
notes, people had begun to take issue with practices that were still “the rule rather than the exception,” and tensions rose as reform efforts intensified while many persisted in the old way of doing things.

Whether or not there is any truth behind the charges of simony, they had little impact on Baudri’s fortunes. He continued on as abbot of Bourgueil, although, as Tilliette notes, near the end of his tenure the abbey seems to have had some difficulties regarding its Poitevin possessions, the details of which remain unknown. Regardless, in 1107 at the Council of Troyes in May, Paschal II elevated Baudri to the archbishopric of Dol (this time there were no accusations of simony or of otherwise non-canonical activities). The archdiocese of Dol was always highly contested because the archdiocese of Tours claimed jurisdiction over it, but as François Duine notes, the letters in which Pascal II elevates Baudri maintain the division between the two archdioceses, giving Dol authority over Northern Brittany and Tours control of the southern portion. Still, Baudri did have competition for the post; the clergy of Dol preferred Vulgrinus, the chancellor of Chartres, to Baudri, but since Vulgrinus himself did not wish to take up the post, Ivo of Chartres asked the pope to reconsider his approval of Vulgrinus’ election and also asked the clergy of Dol and Count Stephen to desist in their attempts to elevate him.

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25 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, viii.
26 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, viii. Tilliette cites Baudri’s own Itinerarium siue epistula ad Fiscannenses (PL 166, col. 1173-1182), in particular the phrase “et jam inquietus Pictaviensis turbo inchoaverat nequiter efflare” (the restless Poitevin storm had already begun to blow wickedly) (1173). Tilliette also cites c. 201.82, in which the nun Constance characterizes Baudri as one “quem nimium tellus Pictaua sollicitat” (whom the Poitevin land harasses excessively).
27 See Pasquier, 223-225; Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 147-48; and Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, viii.
28 François Duine, La métropole de Bretagne: Chronique de Dol composée au XIe siècle et catalogues des dignitaires jusqu’à la révolution (Paris: Champion, 1916), 118.
29 Presumably Count Stephen I of Penthièvre; he was the only count named Stephen in this region at this time. See Stéphane Morin, Trégor, Goëlo, Penthièvre: Le pouvoir des Comtes de Bretagne du XIe au XIIIe siècle (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010), which catalogs the counts of the region. Duine also identifies the Stephen in the letter as Stephen of Penthièvre; see Duine, 118.
Baudri thus prevailed and was officially consecrated as archbishop by the papal legate Gerard of Angoulême on Christmas of 1107.\(^{31}\)

By Baudri’s own account, as well as those of several of his contemporaries, Brittany was a particularly challenging place to govern.\(^{32}\) As Bond and Tilliette both note, Baudri complains in his *Itinerarium*, by means of an extended metaphor, that despite his best efforts he can make little progress with his new subjects:

\[\text{Occasione autem accepta non inhonesta ultron[e]us}^{33}\ \text{minorem migravi ad Britanniam…. Altius igitur sublatus, et in cathedra pontificali collocatus … et in Dolensi sede pallio archiepiscopali decoratus, Britannorum citeriorum fines coepi deambulare; sed rosas Burgulensiisibus assimiles illis in campestribus nequaquam potui reperire; seu enim aliquantulum emarcuerant, seu penitus aruerant, seu radicitus exstirpatae nulla signa, quod saltem fuerint, proferebant; sed deserta, inculta, et squalidas salsugines solitudo illa praetendebat. Cum Axa, Caleb filia, super asinum sedens, coepi suspirare (Jos. XV), non quia migrationis nostrae me poenituerit, et ad gazas pristinas reverti voluerim; sed quia copiosiorem florum ubertatem quam videbam, videre voluerim. Institi paulisper agris exossandis, oleis plantandis; sed terrae maritimae barbarae mephitica devictus, substiti; et quia incassum laboraveram, vehementer erubui.}\(^{34}\)

But having received a not dishonorable opportunity, I willingly migrated to Brittany…. Accordingly, having been raised higher, and having been placed in the pontifical chair … and having been adorned with the archiepiscopal pallium in the seat of Dol, I began to walk through the territory of the nearer Bretons; but on those plains I was not at all able to find roses similar to those of Bourgueil; for either they had withered somewhat, or they had become thoroughly dry, or, having been entirely uprooted, they offered no sign that

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\(^{30}\) Bond, “*Iocus amoris,*” 147; Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, vii n. 16; Duine, 118; see Ivo’s *ep.* 176 and 178, in *PL* 162, col. 178, 180. Regrettably, the second volume of Leclercq’s more recent edition has never appeared, so *Patrologia Latina* is the only source for Ivo’s later letters (i.e. from letter 71 on).

\(^{31}\) Duine, 118; Pasquier, 282-83.

\(^{32}\) See Bond, “*Iocus amoris,*” 148 n. 15; Duine, 119 n. 1; Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, ix. Bond, Tilliette, and Duine all cite various accounts from authorities such as Marbod of Rennes, Orderic Vitalis, Robert of Arbrissel, and Peter Abelard, all of whom depict the people of Brittany as savage and impious.

\(^{33}\) *PL* prints “ultroncus,” which must be a misprint.

\(^{34}\) *PL* 166, col. 1173. As Pasquier notes, the voyages discussed in the *Itinerarium* are not dated, but are narrated in chronological order; Pasquier proposes that the first trip (to England) took place in 1120, when Baudri’s difficulties in his diocese were the greatest; see Pasquier, 289-90. Tilliette also suggests that these journeys took place after Baudri’s suspension (Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, ix-x). Bond, however, places these journeys within the first year of Baudri’s archiepiscopacy (Bond, “*Iocus amoris,*” 148).
they even existed; but that wilderness extended uncultivated deserts and squalid brine. With Axa, the daughter of Caleb, sitting on my ass, I began to sigh (Josh. 15:18), not because I regretted my migration and wanted to return to my former treasures; but because I wished to see a more plentiful abundance of flowers than I saw. For a short time I applied myself to removing the rocks from the fields and planting olive trees; but, overcome by the barbarous vapor of the maritime land, I stopped; and because I had labored in vain, I blushed vehemently.

The twelfth-century chronicler Orderic Vitalis also mentions Baudri’s dissatisfaction with his new post, saying,

Indomitis enim Britonibus praeerat, quorum peruersitatem tolerare non poterat. Vnde proteruos et exleges frequenter deserebat, et in Normanniam fugiebat…. Ibi scriptis et dogmatibus suis auditores suos ad Dei cultum incitabat, et uicina cenobia Fiscannum scilicet ac Fontinellam atque Gemmeticum aliaque plura usitabat, et in timore Dei sacris sermonibus confortabat.35

For he was in charge of the untamed Bretons, whose perversity he could not tolerate. Therefore he frequently deserted those violent and lawless men and fled to Normandy…. There with his writings and teachings he incited his listeners to the worship of God, and he visited the nearby monasteries of Fécamp, Fontenelle, and Jumièges and many others, and he strengthened them in their fear of God with his holy sermons.

Baudri did indeed vacate his post frequently. He travelled to England and Normandy and found both places preferable to Brittany, as he himself states in the Itinerarium;36 moreover, in the same work he characterizes living in Brittany as a sort of exile in comparison to England.37 But many of his documented trips were related to his duties as archbishop, not a symptom of his dislike of Brittany; Pasquier catalogs several such journeys. For example, Baudri traveled to Rome in 1108-1109, according to Pasquier for the purpose of receiving the insignia of his office from the

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36 PL 166, col. 1173-1174.

37 PL 166, col. 1174A: “Laetatus sum, et ad Angliae comparationem, Britanniam, quam incolere coeperam, autumavi exsilium” (I rejoiced, and I affirmed that compared to England, Brittany, which I had begun to inhabit, was a place of exile).
pope. He stopped at the abbey of Saint-Florent on his way back from Rome in 1109 to confirm several of the monks’ possessions, and he also traveled to Avranches in 1112 to sign a document. He traveled to Rome again in 1116 to attend the Lateran council, and attended the council of Reims in 1119.

Baudri’s frequent travels at this stage of his archiepiscopacy thus mainly suggest that he was adequately performing his duties. A better indication of his difficulties is the fact that he seems to have lacked the support of his own suffragans in the ongoing jurisdictional dispute between Tours and Dol. More significantly, in 1120 the papal legate Gerard of Angoulême actually suspended Baudri because of Baudri’s dispute with one of the canons of Dol. Baudri was accused of unjustly seizing a prebend from the canon in question, and his suspension resulted in his being unable to consecrate Donoal, the newly elected bishop of Saint-Malo, who had come to Dol seeking ordination. Baudri was reinstituted relatively quickly, but the indignity of the incident seems to have spurred the semi-retirement in which he spent the remainder of his life. Pope Calixtus II summoned him to the Lateran Council in 1123, which he attended (the issue of the prebend was settled there), and he continued to perform his various duties, but he spent most of his time residing in one of Dol’s dependent priories in Normandy, Saint-Samson-sur-Risle. Baudri died in Normandy on January 5, 1130 at the age of 84, shortly

38 Pasquier, 282-283, and 282 n. 2.
39 Pasquier, 283-84.
40 Pasquier, 284-85.
41 Duine, 35-36; Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, ix.
42 See Duine, 118; Pasquier 285-86; Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, ix; Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 149.
43 Duine, 118; Pasquier, 285-86 n. 4.
44 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, ix.
45 Pasquier, 286; Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 149.
46 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, ix; Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 149.
after consecrating the church of Saint-Samson-sur-Risle; he was buried in the monastery at
Préaux.\(^{47}\)

Baudri’s extensive literary output consists of several prose works which were relatively
popular in the Middle Ages, and his aforementioned, less widely circulated collection of poetry,
which will be discussed below. Arguably his most important prose work is the *Historia
Hierosolymitana*,\(^{48}\) a highly influential account of the First Crusade drawn primarily on the
anonymous *Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum* but also drawing on other sources,
quite possibly oral accounts of the events.\(^{49}\) Baudri wrote the *Historia* in approximately 1107.\(^{50}\)
Also important is his *Vita beati Roberti de Arbrissello*,\(^{51}\) a biography commissioned by
Petronilla, the first abbess of Fontevraud. Tilliette notes that the work, which was written shortly
after Robert’s death in 1116, is generally considered less valuable than the other surviving
biography of the preacher;\(^{52}\) still, scholars make much of the fact that Baudri and Robert were
likely friends,\(^{53}\) and as Bruce Venarde has observed, the existence of such a friendship could
account for Petronilla’s request that Baudri write Robert’s biography.\(^{54}\) Baudri’s aforementioned
*Itinerarium siue epistula ad Fiscannenses*,\(^{55}\) which Tilliette dates to approximately 1123,\(^{56}\)
provides us with several important details about Baudri’s life and also, as Tilliette notes, is

\(^{47}\) Pasquier, 287; Duine, 119; Bond, “‘Locus amoris,’” 149; Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, x.

\(^{48}\) *PL* 166, col. 1057-1152.

\(^{49}\) Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xi.

\(^{50}\) Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xi.

\(^{51}\) *PL* 162, col. 1043-1058.

\(^{52}\) Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xiii.

\(^{53}\) Pasquier cites the friendship as evidence of Baudri’s sympathetic feelings toward the Gregorian Reforms (Pasquier, 205); I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter 4.


\(^{55}\) *PL* 166, col. 1173-1182.

\(^{56}\) Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xiv.
important for art historians because it contains a description of Fécamp as it appeared in Baudri’s time.57

Baudri also wrote a treatise entitled De visitatione infirmorum, which, as mentioned above, was wrongly attributed to Augustine for centuries.58 The work is dedicated to Baudri’s dying nephew and was quite popular in the Middle Ages.59 In addition, Baudri wrote a Gesta pontificum Dolensium, which does not survive apart from a few fragmentary references in another medieval work,60 and his Epistula ad Petrum Gemmeticensum priorem,61 which, as Tilliette notes, bears witness to Baudri’s close ties to Jumièges.62 Baudri also wrote several works of hagiography. His Vita sancti Samsonis is a rewriting of a late ninth- or early tenth-century work, and has only recently been edited for the first time.63 He wrote his Vita sancti Hugonis Rothomagensis episcopi64 (Saint Hugh of Rouen) at the request of the abbot Urso of Jumièges; this Vita again replaced an earlier work.65 Baudri’s Acta translationis capitis sancti Valentinii martyr Gemmeticum in Gallia66 (Acts of the transfer of the head of Saint Valentine the martyr to Jumièges in France) recounts various miracles attributed to the intercession of Saint

57 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xiv.
58 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, x-xi; see PL 40, col. 1147-1158. This volume of PL is, in fact, devoted to the opera spuria of Augustine.
59 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xi.
60 See Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xii n. 34 for details.
64 PL 166, col. 1163-1172.
65 Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xiii.
66 PL 166, col. 1151-1163.
Valentine at Jumièges. Similarly, his De scuto et gladio sancti Michaelis⁶⁷ (On the shield and sword of Saint Michael) recounts the story of some relics possessed by Mont-Saint-Michel.⁶⁸ Tilliette mentions several other saints’ lives that are sometimes attributed to Baudri, but argues that at least one of these cannot be Baudri’s work, as it is transmitted in a tenth-century manuscript, and that the other attributions have never been defended.⁶⁹ Finally, Baudri himself tells us that he composed some sermons⁷⁰ and at least began to write a verse paraphrase of Genesis and the story of Moses,⁷¹ and possibly some verse hagiographies,⁷² but these works do not survive today.⁷³

Baudri’s literary versatility is therefore well-attested, but of all his works, it is his poems which have arguably attracted the most interest from modern scholars. Baudri’s collection contains 256 poems, although two of these are letters addressed to Baudri by others.⁷⁴ The remaining 254 poems are the work of Baudri, and almost all of them date to the time of his abbacy in Bourgueil, between the years 1078-1107.⁷⁵ The poems survive in only one manuscript, Vaticanus Reginensis Latinus 1351, which is composed of at least four distinct parts of differing

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⁶⁸ See Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xii n. 35 for details about the various surviving versions of this work.

⁶⁹ Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xiv-xv.

⁷⁰ c. 1.61.

⁷¹ cc. 1.59 and 200.164-66.

⁷² c. 1.60.

⁷³ Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xiv-xv.

⁷⁴ That is, c. 201, by the nun Constance, and c. 204, by a certain Odo. See Chapter 2 for more on the issue of these poems’ authorship.

⁷⁵ Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xv.
hands, size, and quality. Tilliette has demonstrated that at least part of this manuscript, folios 5-108 (corresponding to cc. 1-153), was probably copied under Baudri’s direct supervision. The diverse collection contains epitaphs, riddles, invectives, a long poem which describes something reminiscent of the Bayeux tapestry, and many epistolary poems. The addressees of the epistolary poems include other abbots, archbishops, secular nobles, monks, nuns, and youths subject to Baudri’s authority as abbot. Many of these poems are simply letters of friendship, but many others deliberately blur the line between friendship and love, using sometimes ambiguous, sometimes decidedly erotic vocabulary while repeatedly proclaiming the chaste or ludic nature of the love. Moreover, a distinctly Ovidian feel characterizes the collection, and Baudri’s epistolary poems in particular betray the influence of the *Ars Amatoria*, the *Amores*, the *Heroides*, and Ovid’s exile poetry.

Despite his many other sources, Baudri himself insists on his own Ovidianism. As Gerald Bond has pointed out, Baudri makes it very clear that he is styling himself after Ovid with his three sets of paired letters, which show a progression from mere adaptation of Ovid (his new version of the Paris-Helen correspondence of the *Heroides*), to impersonation of Ovid (the letters between Ovid and Florus), to the insertion of his own persona into the Ovidian framework (the letters between Baudri and Constance). Baudri’s poems, like Ovid’s, exhibit a consistently playful feel and a preoccupation with the manipulation of their addressees’ behavior, and place

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76 Jean-Yves Tilliette, “Note sur le manuscrit des poèmes de Baudri de Bourgueil,” *Scriptorium* 37 (1983): 241. Each of the composite portions does seem to date from roughly the first half of the twelfth century. See Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xxxix-xli.

77 See page 311 of Hilbert’s edition of Baudri’s poems for a breakdown of which poems appear on which folios of the manuscript.

78 Tilliette, “Note sur le manuscrit,” 241-45; See also Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xxxviii-xlii.

79 On this poem see Chapter 2, pp. 97-99. For a list of several scholarly treatments of the poem, see p. 98, n. 102.

great emphasis on the power differential between Baudri and the addressees he is attempting to manipulate. Ovid is of course not the only poet whose works attempt to influence the behavior of others, and Baudri’s verse exhibits the influence of many other classical poets as well. But Jean-Yves Tilliette’s account of the *loca parallela* in Baudri’s poems demonstrates that citations of Ovid outnumber citations of any other source, ancient or medieval, in Baudri’s collection (and vastly so in the case of all but Vergil).\(^81\) Baudri’s preoccupation with love and play, the frequency of his recourse to Ovidian allusion, and the pervasive sense of power imbalance in many of his poems all add up to convey a distinctly Ovidian impression.

In fact, Baudri represents a key figure in the Ovidian revival which began in the Loire Valley in the mid- to late-eleventh century.\(^82\) Scholars have long recognized the period of renewed interest in Ovid’s poetry during the High Middle Ages, dubbed the *aetas Ovidiana* by Ludwig Traube.\(^83\) The abundance of school commentaries on Ovid’s works and the production of imitative poetry by medieval poets both attest to Ovid’s popularity during this period. This is certainly not to say that Ovid was the only classical author of importance during this time, or that Traube’s distinction between the ninth and tenth centuries as the *aetas Vergiliana*, the tenth and

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\(^{82}\) Gian-Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, tr. Joseph B. Solodow (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 360. The heightened classicism in the Loire Valley at this time led to the creation of the term “Loire Circle” or “Loire School” to describe the efforts of poets like Baudri and his contemporaries Marbod of Rennes and Hildebert of Lavardin; but as Tilliette has noted, nothing so formal as a “Loire School” ever existed, and, moreover, from 1050-1100, the period in question, “The Loire Valley did not have a monopoly on humanism” (Tilliette, introduction to *Poèmes*, vol. 1, xxxiv). For more on the beginning of the *aetas Ovidiana* with a particular emphasis on Baudri’s role, see Tilliette, “Savants et poètes du Moyen Âge face à Ovide: les débuts de l’*aetas ovidiana* (v. 1050-v. 1200),” in *Ovidius redivivus: Von Ovid zu Dante*, ed. M. Picone and B. Zimmermann (Stuttgart: M & P, 1994), 63-104.

eleventh as the *aetas Horatiana*, and the twelfth and thirteenth as the *aetas Ovidiana* should be understood as a hard and fast rule. Indeed, Baudri himself imitates Vergil, Horace, and Ovid frequently, and all three classical poets play a role in shaping the tone of his collection. But the period in question does exhibit a definite increase in the importance of Ovid. As Gian-Biagio Conte notes, while Ovid’s poems had of course been read throughout late antiquity and the Carolingian period, Vergil, Horace, and other poets remained far more popular at that time. By the late eleventh century, however, preferences had changed, and we can see the so-called *aetas Ovidiana* as “above all the age when Ovid’s love poetry attained a cultural preeminence unmatched before or since.”

A consideration of both Baudri’s use of Ovid and the influence of contemporary events on this Ovidianism will enhance our appreciation of Baudri’s verse.

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84 Traube, 113.
85 Conte, 360.
86 Conte, 360.
Chapter 1
Contemporary and Medieval Approaches to Ovid

An examination of Baudri’s adaptation of Ovidian elegy necessitates several preliminary theoretical discussions. Modern studies of the medieval reception of Ovid necessarily proceed from a conception of his works rooted in twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship, and the inevitable disjunction between the modern and medieval approaches to Ovid must therefore be addressed. A comparison of these two approaches requires both a thorough review of the modern Ovidian scholarship that has been most influential on my work, and a discussion of what we know about the medieval understanding of Ovid (and the various ways in which this can be ascertained). The most obvious source for the latter is the surviving medieval commentary tradition. But commentaries hardly constitute exhaustive evidence of the medieval intellectual tradition, and an equally valid indicator of medieval thought is the way in which medieval authors interact with the source text in their own compositions. I contend that, while the commentary tradition makes it clear that medieval readers did not have an entirely accurate idea of Ovid’s historical situation, medieval literary adaptations of Ovid nonetheless demonstrate that this did not preclude them from sensing the same sorts of underlying issues in his poems that we discuss today.

Feminist scholars have focused extensively on elegy, and Ovid’s works as a whole lend themselves well to feminist analysis, in large part because he gives women a voice in the *Heroides* and because women and their concerns play such a central role in his elegy (see, for example, *Amores* 2.13 and 2.14, on abortion). Judith Hallett’s seminal article, “The Role of Women in Roman Elegy: Counter-Cultural Feminism,” offered the first real feminist reading of elegy. Hallett argues that because elegy centers on the elevation of the woman and the debasement of the male lover, effectively inverting the normal roles demanded of men and
women in Roman society, the elegists created a “counter-culture” which repudiated the traditional *mores* of their times; Hallett’s interpretation makes proto-feminists out of the elegists as a group.¹ Hallett’s article led to a series of debates with Aya Betensky, who challenges Hallett’s use of the term “feminism” to describe literary actions that did not result in social change, and also argues that despite the elevation of the woman in elegiac *servitium amoris*, elegiac women ultimately remain sex objects.² Hallett stands firm, however, pointing to ways in which Betensky has misrepresented her argument and maintaining that Roman elegists still construct love interests whom they value for their brains and their personalities, not just as mindless, passive objects.³ Betensky remains unconvinced, rejecting Hallett’s attempts to link elegy with society, and insisting that the poems represent “elegiac convention that is incompatible with the real world.”⁴ Despite Betensky’s objections, most critics now would agree that while elegy is a literary form and contains standard generic tropes, the elegists all approach these tropes in different ways, and we can read their variations in approach productively against the social context in which they were written. Hallett’s article thus paved the way for the application of feminist theory to Roman elegy, ⁵ but, as we shall see, Betensky’s reservations about the ultimate ability of elegiac women to escape objectification also play a key role in subsequent studies.


Ellen Greene follows closely in Hallett’s footsteps, seeing in Ovid’s poetry a proto-feminism similar to that which Hallett sees in Propertius, but not because of any disruption of gender roles. Instead, Greene argues that Ovidian elegy highlights and exposes the problematic aspects of elegiac love, “revealing how the elegiac stance of servitude toward the mistress is self-serving for the amator and dehumanizing toward women.”

In her earlier book, *The Erotics of Domination*, Greene covers similar and important ground. She argues that in Propertius, despite the predominance of the *servitium amoris* motif, the depiction of the elegiac mistress nonetheless suggests “the entrapment of the woman within a discursive practice that preserves her object status and places her in a symbolic order structured around male fantasies of control over women’s autonomy and sexuality.” But, whereas “Propertius’ narrator never removes the mask of the elegiac lover, never abandons the elegiac fiction of sexual role inversion,” Ovid,

... while exploiting the elegiac convention of the image of the *amator as servus amoris*, reveals ... that this image is merely a rhetorical posture, a ruse for seduction and manipulation. Thus, by implicating his *amator* in a multitude of contradictions and letting us “see through” his manipulations and exploitations of women, Ovid shatters the fiction of the male narrator as enslaved and the female narrative subject as his enslaver.

She concludes that “by provoking us into a gradual uneasiness at the consequences of domination, Ovid’s poems invite us to question the perspectives of a lover who espouses and practices conquest and deception as a way of life.” She then links Ovid’s problematizing of the elegiac power dynamic to a critique of Roman society at large, arguing that “the *amator*’s blatant

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10 Greene, *Erotics*, 68.
deception and exploitation of women demonstrate how the version of *amor* practiced by the *amator* is woven inextricably with an ideology of male domination and power which reflects Roman mercantilist and imperialist attitudes.”

The exploitation of women depicted in elegy is therefore indicative of a problematic social and political system which Ovid invites us to question.

Like Greene, others follow in the spirit of Hallett’s original work, but they diverge from the optimism of her conclusion. Barbara Gold, for example, in her article “Finding the Female in Roman Poetry,” invokes Alice Jardine’s concept of *gynesis*, or “the putting into discourse of ‘woman.’” Such an approach looks for spaces in the canonical male-authored texts “where there is an uneasiness in the representation of gender for both the author and reader, where the language seems to have more potentiality to be interpreted from many different perspectives, where the marginalized characters seem to be trying to ‘speak,’ and where there are border challengings (voices speaking against the text).”

Focusing on Propertius, Gold argues that “he is destabilizing the traditional roles and qualities assigned to women by casting both her [i.e. Cynthia] and himself in so many different and conflicting roles and by problematizing his representation of her.” In other words, Propertian elegy creates precisely the sort of space that Jardine posits in her theory of *gynesis*. But Gold stops short of agreeing with Hallett’s positive view of the elegists’ intentions, pointing to the important study by Kathryn Gutzwiller and Ann

14 Gold, 84.
15 Gold, 90.
Michelini, in which they demonstrate that, despite the Roman elegists’ reversal of traditional Roman gender roles, “by using the subversive strain of the Hellenistic to effect a covert reversion to the masculine ethos, Roman love poets found ways of reasserting traditional male dominance in matters of sex.”

Thus many scholars who have built on Hallett’s work see in elegy not an overt attempt to elevate women and challenge traditional Roman gender roles, but rather a form of discourse which, deliberately or not, destabilizes the dominant social structure by disrupting the fixed categories of gendered traits that we expect to see, but which still works from within that dominant structure.

Along similar lines, Mary-Kay Gamel examines the abortion poems in the *Amores* (2.13 and 2.14). She argues that in the *Amores* as a whole, “When compared with one another and placed within their context, the words of the amator reveal gaps and slippages between the effects he ostensibly intends to achieve and meanings suggested by the text as an entity beyond his control.” She thus contends that the poems invite what she calls a “female reading,” in which one looks “beyond the male concepts, assumptions, and structures so obviously displayed by the amator.”

Although the poems are ostensibly about Corinna’s near-death as a result of the abortion, Gamel demonstrates that the amator shifts the focus of his discussion, elaborating instead on the impact the events will have on him. He details his own suffering while attempting to control Corinna, even twisting his prayer for her recovery to suit his purposes: because of the prayer, if she lives she will be indebted to him. As a result of the “mistakes, gaps, and silences”

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18 Gamel, “Non Sine Caede,” 186.

in the text, Gamel argues that the abortion poems invite us to “question the amator’s male version of love, politics, and poetry.”\textsuperscript{20} The poems are “ideologically interconnected with a social and political system that encourages self-aggrandizement, aggression, and conquest” and “depict gender relations rife with inequality, oppression, and deception,”\textsuperscript{21} and we are meant to notice this and find fault with the system.\textsuperscript{22}

Most scholars now agree that despite any apparent role-reversal exhibited in the genre, elegiac women remain thoroughly controlled by their male lovers and thus by the dominant social discourse. But while some scholars argue that elegy ultimately succeeds at destabilizing the dominant ideological system by highlighting the problems inherent in the system, others are skeptical of the degree to which we can argue that Ovid’s potentially subversive way of presenting such problematic material outweighs the damage done by the mere fact of presenting it. In other words, some scholars believe that an objectionable portrayal of women, even if presented subversively, still propagates the patriarchal system of oppression. One particularly formative study arguing for such a pessimistic reading of elegy (and of the Ovidian corpus as a whole) is Amy Richlin’s article, “Reading Ovid’s Rapes.”\textsuperscript{23} Richlin argues that efforts to interpret Ovid’s repeated portrayal of violence against women as subversive are problematic. No matter what the motivation, “A text about rape may also be about something else, but it is still a

\textsuperscript{20} Gamel, “Non Sine Caede,” 200.

\textsuperscript{21} Gamel, “Non Sine Caede,” 200.

\textsuperscript{22} For a similarly optimistic reading of Ovid’s destabilization of the dominant social mores, see Julie Hemker, “Rape and the Founding of Rome,” Helios 12, no. 1 (1985): 41-47. Hemker argues that by ironically referring to Livy’s account of the Rape of the Sabines, Ovid’s own version in Book 1 of the Ars “undercuts his narrator’s praise of the Sabine incident” and offers “a brilliant exposure of the underlying assumptions concerning rape, the subjugation of women, and militaristic imperialism” (44).

text of rape,” ‡24 and Ovid’s portrayal of rape is consistently troubling. In the case of the *Ars* (Richlin also discusses the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*), Richlin argues that Ovid trivializes rape in his retelling of the Rape of the Sabines; “the women’s fear is displayed only to make them more attractive…. Likewise, for the Sabine women, there is really nothing to be worried about, because they are getting married. Their fears are cute…, and the whole thing is a joke.” ‡25 In the other rape in the *Ars* (the story of Achilles and Deidamia), the message is that women enjoy being forced. As Richlin puts it, “These two passages from the *Ars Amatoria* show both enjoyment of women’s fear and objectification of women. Whereas *pati* is repugnant to men, here *pati* is women’s nature, and they enjoy it…. The erasure of female subjectivity is complete; the poem presents the female reader with no exit.” ‡26

Phyllis Culham has argued a more extreme point: that feminist efforts to reappropriate male-authored texts such as Ovid’s differ little “from the rereadings which produced the Ovidius Christianus, Ovide Moralisé and Ovid the Neoplatonist,” ‡27 and do not particularly help with what, in her view, should be feminism’s chief concern—“the recovery of women’s lived reality.” ‡28 Culham therefore takes issue with the canon itself, and concludes that “If we are to reappropriate our own field, we will have to begin by refusing to perpetuate the assignment of privilege to male-authored, canonical texts.” ‡29 Her view has found little favor, however; in the same volume, Mary-Kay Gamel responds to Culham’s article and notes that we need to work with what evidence we have, and in the case of Classical Antiquity, that means relying on male-

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‡24 Richlin, “Reading Ovid’s Rapes,” 159.
‡25 Richlin, “Reading Ovid’s Rapes,” 168.
‡26 Richlin, “Reading Ovid’s Rapes,” 169.
‡28 Culham, 161.
‡29 Culham, 165.
authored texts. Gamel also notes that, in her view, Ovid’s works are particularly well-suited to feminist analysis because they “dramatiz[e] the problems of Roman social and political relations with special attention to gender;” furthermore, since most “male-readings” of Ovid ignore this aspect of his works, feminist readings of the same texts are all the more important. In other words, various forms of discourse, male-authored or not, can act to destabilize ideology from within by problematizing it. Feminist readings of elegy uncover and discuss the ways in which this occurs.

Thus, with some exceptions, most recent feminist scholarship on elegy has argued that the elegists, in various ways, call attention to the problematic dynamics between men and women in their poems. The genre’s evident concern with gender and power has led to two distinct, but related lines of investigation: first, as to the social status of the elegiac woman (i.e., whether she is a matron or a courtesan), and secondly, as to the likelihood of a connection between the genre’s existence and the rise of Augustus and the end of the Roman republic. Various readings

31 Gamel, “Reading ‘Reality,’” 172.
32 Gamel, “Reading ‘Reality,’” 172.
33 There are far too many excellent feminist studies of elegy for me to discuss them all here; for a more thorough list, my bibliography should be consulted. I will note here that, in addition to the individual studies listed, entire issues of journals have been devoted to feminist issues in elegy; see, for example, Helios 17, no. 2 (1990), several articles from which have already been cited; Classical World 92, no. 5 (1999), ed. Paul Allen Miller and Chuck Platter, entitled “Power, Politics, and Discourse in Augustan Elegy;” and Arethusa 33, no. 2 (2000), ed. Trevor Fear, entitled “Fallax Opus: Approaches to Reading Roman Elegy.” For a more thorough survey of Ovidian scholarship (through 2006) than I am able to give here, a good place to start is the introduction of Roy Gibson, Steven Green, and Alison Sharrock, eds., The Art of Love: Bimillennial Essays on Ovid’s “Ars Amatoria” and “Remedia Amoris” (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Some of the studies listed in my bibliography explore issues similar to those already discussed, while others make points that, while not detailed here, are nonetheless important from a feminist perspective, e.g. Wyke’s work on the Propertian puella as a symbolic representation of the elegiac genre in ch. 2 of The Roman Mistress: Ancient and Modern Representations (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 46-77 (the chapter originally appeared in JRS 79 [1987]: 47-61). Finally, two recent studies on the Heroides have also informed my thinking about Ovid’s work and my theoretical approaches. They are: Sara H. Lindheim, Mail and Female: Epistolary Narrative and Desire in Ovid’s “Heroides” (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003); and Efrossini Spentzou. Readers and Writers in Ovid’s “Heroides”: Transgressions of Genre and Gender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
of Ovid’s poetry as pro-\textsuperscript{34} or anti-Augustan\textsuperscript{35} have cropped up over the years, although Duncan Kennedy’s argument that “the degree to which a voice is heard as conflicting or supportive is a function of the audience’s—or critic’s—ideology, a function, therefore of reception”\textsuperscript{36} has also found favor. I am inclined to agree with Kennedy, and in any case, for my purposes the fact that the preoccupation with power and control in Ovid’s poems reflects their engagement with their political situation is more important than any definitive determination of the poems’ stance.\textsuperscript{38}

Regarding the social standing of the elegiac \textit{puella}, there is no need to discuss here the now outdated practice of reading elegiac poems, and thus the women in them, biographically. In \textit{The Roman Mistress}, Maria Wyke convincingly puts to rest any possibility of contending that the elegiac woman constitutes a pseudonymous representation of the poet’s real mistress.\textsuperscript{39} Nor does she argue that the ideological nature of the poems is dependent on the \textit{puella}’s status as

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\item \textsuperscript{34} See, for example, Fergus Millar, “Ovid and the \textit{Domus Augusta}: Rome Seen from Tomoi,” \textit{The Journal of Roman Studies} Vol. 83 (1993): 1-17. Millar argues that while Ovid’s personal views must remain unknown, his poetry is decidedly pro-Augustan, and his exile poetry thus depicts him not as a “subversive dissident” but as an “outraged loyalist whom the regime has rejected” (Millar, 1).
\item \textsuperscript{35} P.J. Davis’ work is a prime example of the anti-Augustan viewpoint; see Davis, “Ovid’s \textit{Amores}: A Political Reading,” \textit{Classical Philology} Vol. 94, no. 4 (Oct. 1999): 431-499. Davis’ recent book, \textit{Ovid and Augustus: A Political Reading of Ovid’s Erotic Poems} (London: Duckworth, 2006) presents revised versions of this and other articles, along with new work, and similarly argues that Ovid’s elegy is anti-Augustan.
\item \textsuperscript{37} See, for example, Alison Sharrock, who notes “that all readings are appropriations and that in the end a text of itself cannot be either ‘pro’- or ‘anti’- ‘Augustan’, only readings can be,” before proceeding to give an anti-Augustan reading of her own (Sharrock, “Ovid and the Politics of Reading,” \textit{Materiali e discussioni per l’analisi dei testi classici} 33 [1994], 98). As Sharrock notes, the main consideration in the case of the \textit{Ars} and \textit{Amores} has been the status of the \textit{puella}; if she is a matron, the poems are subversive, but if she is a courtesan, the poems do not depict adultery, and thus represent “just the lads having a good time—and reinforcing their aristocratic superiority at the same time…” (98). I do not believe that the \textit{puella}’s status as a courtesan renders the poems unproblematic, however, as will be discussed below.
\item \textsuperscript{38} As Sharrock points out, it is no doubt possible to interpret the \textit{Ars} as either anti-Augustan or pro-Augustan, depending on whether one sees them as exemplifying undesirable behavior that Augustus is rightfully attempting to eliminate or as encouraging the violation of his laws; what is difficult is “to remove the political dimension altogether” (Sharrock, “Ovid and the Politics of Reading,” 107-108).
\item \textsuperscript{39} See especially ch. 1, “Mistress and Metaphor in Roman Elegy,” 11-45, which is a revised version of an article that originally appeared in \textit{Helios} 16, no. 1 (1989): 25-47.
\end{itemize}
courtesan or matron. Instead, she perceptively argues that the elegiac woman is a literary construct, of whom we must make sense through consideration of the “relation of elegiac narratives to all the other cultural discourses of the specific period in which they were produced.”  She notes that while elegy as a whole cannot be read as a direct protest of the *Leges Iuliae* because elegy predates the legislation, the appearance of this legislation nonetheless “demonstrate[s] that the discourses about female sexuality with which elegy was already engaged were now being institutionalized. Female sexual practice was now enshrined in law as a problematic issue with which the whole state should be concerned.” Elegy is therefore “a response to, and a part of, a multiplication of discourses about the female that occurred in the late republic and early empire.”

Focusing on the significance of the elegiac lover’s refusal to act as a productive member of society (by participating in politics and war, and by marrying and producing children), Wyke argues that “it is not the concern of elegiac poetry to upgrade the position of women, only to portray the male narrator as alienated from positions of power and to differentiate him from other, socially responsible male types;” Wyke thus marks her departure from Judith Hallett and others who would attribute a form of feminism to elegy. Elegiac women therefore do not represent real women; the elegiac woman’s real purpose is to serve as a metaphor. As Wyke succinctly puts it,

> The elegiac poets exploit the traditional methods of ordering female sexuality (that locate the sexually unrestrained and therefore socially ineffective female at the margins of

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40 Wyke, 32.
41 Wyke, 41.
42 Wyke, 41.
43 Wyke, 42-43.
society) in order to portray their first-person heroes as displaced from a central position in the social categories of Augustan Rome. Wyke further explores this issue in a later chapter of her book, proposing that “With the progressive realignment of authority around the princeps, elegy’s metaphor of erotic servitium could trope Rome’s male elite as seduced from virile republican libertas into an abject state of feminine enslavement.” Wyke therefore sees in elegy not an attempt to subvert the dominant social discourse (at least with regards to women), but rather a means to play with the figure of the displaced and disempowered male in Augustan Rome.

Duncan Kennedy notes that one problem with readings such as Wyke’s is that they impose their own discourse onto a text and thus limit its interpretation in an attempt to find meaning. As Kennedy says, “Every discursive intervention … attempts or effects a closure of a sort with greater or lesser success, figured in the (illusion of) fulfilment of the desire which informs the intervention” and “A ‘reading’ … is always more or less accommodated to the context in which it appears, and for which it has been invoked, ordered and shaped.” Thus the evidence cited to justify one interpretation of elegy could easily be cited as supporting an entirely opposite conclusion, depending on the aims of the interpreter. Kennedy notes that this was the case even in Augustus’ day, because “power is never an absolute, but is always generated out of what it depicts itself as needing to control, and figures of power must constantly negotiate their

44 Wyke, 44.
46 Wyke, 177.
48 Kennedy, The Arts of Love, 12.
position within the discourses which constitute them as a focus of power.”

In other words, Augustus himself could easily skew an “anti-Augustan” reading of a poem to serve his own purposes by pointing to the negative aspects of the poet’s persona as undermining the legitimacy of any opinions expressed in his poetry. Wyke acknowledges this problem:

Duncan Kennedy reminds us that conclusions are not self-evident, for Augustan elegy can be processed by its readers (both then as now) in such a way as to generate and emphasize contradictions which might imply opposition to the regime or, conversely, to minimize or iron them out. The self-presentation of elegy’s male ego as a depraved effeminate could be read, for example, as legitimating the moral programme of Augustus by marking out precisely the kind of behaviour which was thought to require reform if the state was to be restored to its proper virility.

But Wyke notes that whatever we conclude from this fact, in elegy, “love, writing, and gender are all marked out as areas of contestation—as the genre’s problematic,” and she proceeds with her interpretation.

Kennedy himself does not make this point in order to shut down attempts at interpretation, but to make us aware of the problem. As he puts it,

I have presented elegy as not already historically determined and circumscribed in the past and awaiting the discovery of its determination, but as a discourse in which we remain involved, a discourse constituted by all the forces that moulded the text plus its reception, including our own, in recognition of both its ‘determinateness’ and its ‘contingency.’

There is no one correct interpretation of literature, because every act of interpretation is shaped by the interpreter’s own ideological context, but that does not mean we should not continue to interpret, because our interpretations are part of what gives the text meaning. And indeed,

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50 Kennedy, The Arts of Love, 37. Kennedy cites the example of a poem by Propertius (2.15), noting that even if the poem were interpreted as saying that the Battle of Actium should never have happened, “this reading itself is open to appropriation in a way that could have served Augustus, for example by characterizing the poem as the ravings of a debauched rake, the very sort of attitudes Augustus was propelled into power to control” (37).

51 Wyke, 177.

52 Wyke, 178.

53 Kennedy, The Arts of Love, 100.
Kennedy, like Wyke and other feminist scholars, notes that the struggle for control and domination is a key dynamic in elegy. Kennedy demonstrates how the lover’s discourse, by means of various elegiac tropes (such as servitium amoris), attempts to turn the beloved into an object that can be controlled, suppressing the beloved’s desires when they are incompatible with those of the lover.54 Thus Kennedy, like Greene and others, sees the lover’s portrayal of the woman as a domina and himself as a slave as manipulative:

The lover, by making such a spectacle of his suffering, and by implying that his pain is knowingly afflicted [sic] by someone hard-hearted, is trying to impose on the beloved a self-image of hard-heartedness which she may very well wish to reject as not being ‘really’ her. But how can she reject the imposition of this image upon her in a way that is going to ‘prove’ to the lover that she is not ‘really’ like that? There is only one way within the discourse in which she is being entrapped and her identity constructed for her: by submission (sexual or otherwise) to the lover. The lover’s discourse emerges as an incessant attempt to control, to mould, to construct for the beloved an identity (as ‘object’) that she will accept or reject in the same way, by ‘giving’ herself to the lover.55

The lover’s covert manipulation and objectification of the mistress through elegiac discourse and its various tropes represents an extremely important aspect of elegy from the standpoint of modern criticism, and has influenced many other readings of the poems.

As already mentioned, Wyke argues that the elegiac puella is not a real woman, but a “written woman” who serves a metaphorical purpose in elegy. Sharon James takes a different and innovative approach to the question (though her reading and Wyke’s are not mutually exclusive, and their approaches are closely related). While she, like Wyke, does not believe that the elegiac puellae represent real historical women, she convincingly argues that the puellae do represent a class of women: they must be meretrices “based on the courtesan of New Comedy.”56

54 Kennedy, The Arts of Love, 72-76.
55 Kennedy, The Arts of Love, 74.
56 Sharon L. James, Learned Girls and Male Persuasion: Gender and Reading in Roman Love Elegy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 21. James of course acknowledges, citing Wyke, that the women in elegy are not all of the same variety (she cites the women in Book 4 of Propertius as an example), but she argues that “the
In this assertion she departs from many of her predecessors, although now most scholars would agree with her. Roy Gibson has argued that the elegiac woman is a deliberately ambiguous figure, in response to Augustus’ attempts to delineate the two classes of women so sharply. While I agree with Gibson that the elegiac poets’ treatment of the *puellae* does use deliberately ambiguous language, I believe that James’ view that the *puella* must be a courtesan for the poems to make sense is correct, and that any ambiguity of language is part of the poetic fiction, in keeping with the literary game and the *amator’s* attempts to manipulate the *puella*. Using this understanding of the *puella* as a starting point, James proceeds to read elegy from the *puella*’s point of view, examining the implications, for her, of the *amator*’s various demands. Briefly, she argues that because the elegiac *puella* is a courtesan, she depends on the money she can earn from her various clients (the elegiac *amator* included), and all the more so since a mistress … is the dominant woman—and, more importantly, the generic woman—of elegy,” and this generic woman is thus the focus of her study (21). See also James, “Women Reading Men: The Female Audience of the *Ars Amatoria*,” *Cambridge Classical Journal* (formerly *PCPS*) vol. 54 (2008): 136-37.

57 Sylvie Laigneau argues, conversely, that most of the women in elegy are matrons, and specifically identifies Ovid’s Corinna and Propertius’ Cynthia as such; see Laigneau, *La femme et l’amour chez Catulle et les élégiaques augstéens. Collection Latomus* 249 (Brussels: Latomus, 1999), 199-202; 207. But Laigneau makes her case less convincingly than does James. James is not the first to assert that the elegiac puellae are courtesans—see, for example, Paul Veyne, *Roman Erotic Elegy: Love, Poetry, and the West*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 1-2. But James is the first to insist on the central importance of this point and to read elegy from the perspective of these women.


59 As James notes, “the puella’s profession engenders all the circumstances that elegy needs, that make elegy possible. Yet elegy insists on ignoring that profession, acknowledging it only clandestinely and grudgingly, while expecting readers to recognize it immediately” (James, *Learned Girls*, 212-213). The amator’s attempts at persuasion would not function if he acknowledged the puella’s status as a courtesan and thus her financial needs, because such an acknowledgement would eliminate his ability to believe in the possibility of obtaining sexual favors for free on any sort of regular basis. The game would be ruined, because the thrill is in the chase, and in the amator’s capacity to pretend that he has actually won the puella’s affection. Of course, the amator does know better, but the game depends on his ability to pretend that he does not.
courtesan has only a limited number of years in which she is young enough to work. As a result, to the *puella* the standard elegiac trope in which the *amator* tries to persuade her to give away her favors for free (or in exchange for poetry instead of money) will ring hollow. As James puts it, “To her, poems offer only elegiac male persuasion, but no material benefit, and they underscore the gender divide of elegy, in which the male speaker retains a financial advantage over his beloved, despite his claims to be her helpless slave.”60 The *puella* must resist the *amator*’s attempts at persuasion, while still keeping his sexual interest.61 James describes a scripted relationship in which both parties have a role to play:

But elegy both implicitly and explicitly identifies its preferred love object as a *docta puella*—a “learned girl” who can understand, appreciate, and evaluate the literary strategies of a given poem—and requires a gendered structure of partnered opposition, in which the lover and his *puella* engage in their strategic tactics in a complex choreography of regular opposition balanced by occasional union.62

Moreover, while the *praeeceptor amoris*, in *Ars* Book 3, ostensibly gives advice to women with the goal of leveling the playing field, the astute *puella*, having read Ovid’s poetry, will realize that his instructions actually benefit the *amator*.63 According to James,

The *praeeceptor* himself unwittingly destabilises, even destroys, his desired type of female audience: by revealing too many secrets about men to his reading women, he transforms them into the hardened and cynical women that elegy perpetually resents, the demanding women that he himself consistently deplores.64

60 James, *Learned Girls*, 72.
63 James, “Women Reading Men,” 156. The *puella* is instructed to behave in ways that men will find most desirable, which is arguably sound professional advice, but she is also instructed to accept poems in lieu of money from poets; this advice is selfish on the part of the *praeeceptor* and the *puella* will recognize that she should in fact do the opposite.
Ovid’s poems create a situation in which the *puella* knows exactly what she needs to do in order to be appealing to her clients, and also knows exactly how the same clients are going to attempt to persuade her to act against her own self-interest. In order to be successful she must, to a certain extent, act in accordance with the *praecceptor*’s instructions, but she must also stop short of giving away favors for free. Her behavior is necessarily constrained by her financial dependence on her upper-class clients, but the *puella* possesses enough self-determination and intelligence to recognize the realities of her situation and resist giving in to demands that would compromise her financial situation.

James also discusses the elegiac male’s desire to see the *puella* cry or otherwise suffer, the predominance of infidelity and deception in Ovid’s poems, and Ovid’s depiction of “a regularized, systematic male anger and revulsion against women.”

James argues that the *amator* resents the *puella* because he cannot fully control her, despite having the upper hand in the relationship, and that in emphasizing this fact, Ovid exploits and exposes elegy’s inherent disingenuities—particularly those based in privileges of gender and class—by making explicit what was always present but usually only implicit, and hence easily overlooked, in the works of Propertius and Tibullus: a powerful resentment against the *docta puella*, a desire for physical and emotional revenge against her, an awareness of the risks faced by courtesans, and the constant, though submerged, consciousness of the social, legal, and sexual advantages of being an elite man in ancient Rome.

James therefore sees Ovid’s poems as “designed to make readers rethink at least Roman love elegy, if nothing else.”

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Augustus and his moral legislation, not only were elite males “suddenly no longer politically free agents … but even their private lives … were no longer their own to control.”68 She further argues that the elegiac puella, as a figure to whom Augustus’ marriage laws did not apply, represents “private space,” and thus

offers [the disenfranchised elegiac poets] an opportunity to escape the narrowing confines of their public and private lives; to try on roles of servitude, immobility, loss of self-control …; to create a poetic space devoted to the personal life and the pursuit of nonreproductive sex; to make a poetic gesture of refusal to compliant public service of military, public, and personal obligations.69

This interpretation, variations of which have been discussed above, explains the amator’s preoccupation with and anxiety about controlling the elegiac puella.

This summary of feminist scholarship on Ovid’s elegies, though obviously not exhaustive, represents the work that has been most influential to my own understanding. I am particularly indebted to the work of James, Kennedy, and Wyke. For the purposes of this dissertation, my personal understanding of the Ars and the Amores can be summarized as follows. With James, I believe that the elegiac puella is a courtesan, and that, as such, she must endeavor to make herself sexually attractive to the elegiac amator by taking into account the instructions in all three books of the Ars, as well as information found in the Amores. At the same time, since she is dependent on the money earned from her encounters with the amator, she must resist his attempts to persuade her into trading sex for poetry. This puts her in a delicate position, as James notes, since part of what makes her undesirable in the amator’s eyes is her insistence on receiving payment; the puella must find a suitable balance that will enable her to earn money without alienating the amator. As a result, although the puella is an independent

68 James, Learned Girls, 217.
69 James, Learned Girls, 218, 217.
courtesan and has the ability to accept and reject clients as she sees fit, I believe, with Greene, Gamel, et al., that the *puella* is ultimately circumscribed by the dominant male discourse, because she must adapt her behavior entirely to suit the whims of the *amator*. But, like James, Gold, and Gamel, I believe that there are clear “gaps” in the text that disrupt the discourse from within, inviting the reader to question the propriety of the elegiac system. Finally, Wyke and James both read the elegiac *puella* as a figure for engaging with the elite Roman male’s sense of disempowerment and alienation in the wake of the Augustan regime. This brilliant reading enriches our understanding of the poems and accounts for their obsession with issues of power and control. As will become clear, in my view these issues represent a fundamental component of Ovid’s poems not only in modern readings. Baudri, reading and imitating Ovid’s works in the Middle Ages, picks up on the same issues of power, manipulation, and control, and adapts them to his monastic context.

One of the challenges inherent in a discussion of the medieval reception of classical literature is the inevitable disjunction between the modern and medieval understandings of ancient texts. Indeed, Hans Robert Jauss argues for the necessity of contextualizing our understanding of a work’s reception based on the “horizon of expectations” that existed in the time of reception:

> The reconstruction of the horizon of expectations, in the face of which a work was created and received in the past, enables one … to pose questions that the text gave an answer to, and thereby to discover how the contemporary reader could have viewed and understood the work. This approach corrects the mostly unrecognized norms of a classicist or modernizing understanding of art…. It brings to view the hermeneutic difference between the former and the current understanding of a work; it raises to consciousness the history of its reception, which mediates both positions.\(^70\)

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\(^70\) Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 28. This is a key concern for Jauss, who further warns against “the interpreter who, supposedly bracketing himself, nonetheless raises his own aesthetic preconceptions to an unacknowledged norm and unreflectively modernizes the meaning of the past text” (29).
In other words, it would be problematic to discuss Baudri’s reception of Ovid based purely on modern readings of Ovid, without any consideration of the sorts of issues medieval readers saw in Ovid’s works. One indicator of medieval understanding is, of course, the surviving medieval commentary tradition.\textsuperscript{71} Ovid’s works received a great deal of scholarly attention in the Middle Ages. The medieval tendency to “moralize” Ovid, or to allegorize his content to fit Christian ends, has been well-documented.\textsuperscript{72} Moralizing commentaries, however, tend to focus only on the \textit{Metamorphoses}, and also date, for the most part, several centuries later than the period of Baudri’s activity (although Arnulf of Orléans did write allegorical comments on the \textit{Metamorphoses} in the twelfth century).\textsuperscript{73} As Ralph Hexter notes in his work on earlier commentaries on the \textit{Ars}, \textit{Ex Ponto}, and \textit{Heroides}:

Scholars have tended to concentrate on later medieval commentaries (thirteenth through fifteenth centuries) by known scholars (John of Garland, Giovanni del Virgilio, Pierre Bersuire) on the \textit{Metamorphoses} to the exclusion of earlier, anonymous commentaries and commentaries on the other works that make up Ovid’s literary output. Many of the later, attributable commentaries are very original. In their allegorizing and moralizing they reflect both a popularizing trend … and perhaps orthodoxy’s pressures on all facets of life, particularly the learned establishment…. The later, moralizing commentaries seem to have formed the scholarly \textit{communis opinio} about medieval Ovid commentaries in general. The earlier, mostly neglected texts are surprising in the relative scarcity—in fact, considering the texts discussed in the following pages, the total absence—of allegorizing and Christianizing comment.\textsuperscript{74}

Since medieval commentators, as a rule, interspersed their own contributions with passages lifted wholesale from earlier commentaries, the attribution and dating of specific content can be a

\textsuperscript{71} In my discussion of the medieval commentary tradition I am indebted to Emily Blakelock, who is always willing to share her considerable knowledge of the tradition and with whom I have frequently consulted.

\textsuperscript{72} See Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling} for bibliography.


\textsuperscript{74} Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling}, 10-11.
challenge. Still, it will be instructive to examine commentaries that have been dated to within a century or so of Baudri’s time. As Hexter notes, Ovid’s erotic poetry, in particular the *Ars* and *Remedia*, was used in medieval classrooms, and even elementary students read his works; this is apparent from the extant commentaries, many of which contain basic grammatical and syntactical explanations and vocabulary glosses instead of more advanced content. But even the more sophisticated commentaries, presumably designed for more advanced students, demonstrate that teachers used Ovid’s texts to teach and exemplify specific concepts; the goal was not necessarily for students to achieve a thorough understanding of all aspects of the works. For example, Hexter discusses one commentary which expounds mainly on Ovid’s rhetoric, at the expense of mythological or grammatical clarification.

Since the surviving commentaries are designed for student use and have obvious points of emphasis, we certainly cannot say that they represent the entirety of medieval understanding of Ovid or his works. But from the surviving *accessus* (the introductory sections found in many medieval commentaries, concerned with explicating “the causes determining [the work’s] origin, the matter of which it was composed, its intention, the useful lessons to be learned from it, its title, and, finally, to what part of philosophy it should be ascribed”), we do know that medieval readers were interested in contextualizing ancient works. As Fausto Ghisalberti notes,

… when speaking of the matter of the poem, its contents and characteristics would be described in such a way as to lead on to its efficient cause, namely the poet himself, and thence to the poet’s life, in the search for the reasons which induced him to write it, reasons which varied from one epoch to another according to the conditions of the

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75 Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 19.
78 Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 42.
author’s existence. In speaking of the *Metamorphoses*, the biographical circumstances adduced as causes would be different from those chosen when treating of the *Ars Amatoria* or the *Tristia*. The usefulness of the work chosen by the commentator would also lead up to biographical points concerning the advantages which the author himself gained, or hoped to gain, from it.\(^{80}\)

Biographical and historical details also appear in the glosses themselves, to varying degrees; Ralph Hexter notes, for example, that the early thirteenth-century *Ars* commentary by William of Orléans focuses more on historical details than does the late-twelfth-century commentary by Arnulf of Orléans (Arnulf, on the other hand, is more interested in mythological details).\(^{81}\) Hexter also discusses a Copenhagen manuscript (Hafn. 2015) that contains an *Ars* commentary, much of which is the work of Fulco of Orléans (another late-twelfth-century commentator). This commentary further suggests that historical context, or some version of it, was taught alongside Ovid’s texts; the commentator “explains some customs and institutions of Ovid’s Rome but skips others that he expects users of the commentary to know already with the tag ‘fabula satis nota est’.”\(^{82}\)

Judging from the commentary tradition, medieval readers tended to read Ovid’s poems biographically. For example, in Hexter’s edition of a relatively late *accessus* to the *Amores*,\(^{83}\) the commentator assumes that the elegies reflect Ovid’s real adventures in love:

\[
\text{Auctoris siquidem materia de amore suo est. Distat autem hoc opus ab opere artis amatorie, quia in arte amatoria dat precepta; in hoc opere ludicra tractat et iocosa.}
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\(^{80}\) Ghisalberti, “Mediaeval Biographies,” 10.


\(^{82}\) Hexter, “Sex Education,” 309; for more on this manuscript see Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 42-77.

\(^{83}\) This *accessus* appears in a manuscript (elm 631) which contains material “copied in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries” (Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 103), but Hexter has dated this particular material to the fourteenth century. See Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 103-104.
Intentio sua est quedam de amoribus suis iocose exponere. Causa intentionis duplex est: uel ut delectet, uel ut prosit.\textsuperscript{84}

Accordingly the matter of the author is his own love. This work, however, differs from the work of the \textit{Ars Amatoria}, because in the \textit{Ars Amatoria} he gives precepts; in this work he discusses fun and playful things. His intention is to explain playfully certain aspects of his own loves. The reason for his intention is twofold: either to delight, or to be useful.

In the earlier \textit{accessus} edited by Huygens (which comes from twelfth-century German manuscripts),\textsuperscript{85} the assumption is the same:

\begin{quotation}
Ovidius de Amatoria Arte dat precepta amantibus ut sint cauti, hic autem de Amore et in semetipso complet precepta.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quotation}

In the \textit{Ars Amatoria} Ovid teaches lovers to be cautious; here, however, he carries out his precepts about love in himself.

The \textit{Bursarii super Ovidios} of William of Orléans suggests that Ovid’s instructions in the \textit{Ars} are meant to be taken seriously, and that he wrote them to amuse himself, but also with the intention of helping people:

\begin{quotation}
Videns Ouidius ex amoris ignorancia iuuenes deuiare, quare eis compaciens opus istud tractare proposuit, in quo materia ipsius est Amor. Intencio instruere iuuenes et puellas, utilitas quantum ad auctorem delectatio, quantum ad legentes amoris cognicio.\textsuperscript{87}
\end{quotation}

Ovid, seeing youths go astray out of ignorance of love, and therefore pitying them, resolved to prepare this work, in which his material is love. His intention is to instruct youths and girls; the utility for the author is amusement, and for the readers a knowledge of love.

\textsuperscript{84} Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling}, 223-24.


\textsuperscript{86} Huygens, \textit{Accessus ad auctores}, 37, \textit{Sine Titulo II}, lines 6-7.

The commentaries do not seem to have a uniform or consistent conceptualization of the elegiac *puellae*. In clm 631, Corinna is imagined to be not just a matron, but none other than Livia herself:

Ouidius utique ingenuis parentibus oriundus, Augusti Cesaris uxor amamuit, quam in libro amorum qui sine titulo dicitur Corinnam sub umbra ueri nominis appellavit.\(^{88}\)

Ovid, at any rate, born from noble parents, fell in love with the wife of Augustus Caesar, whom he called Corinna under the shadow of her real name in the book of loves which is called *Sine Titulo*.\(^{89}\)

In the twelfth-century manuscript Hafn. 2015, also edited by Hexter, the *accessus* to the *Ars* says that Ovid’s intention is to instruct “youths and girls” in love,\(^{90}\) but does not elaborate further, except to imply that Ovid’s target audience consists of individuals who run some risk as a result of their behavior:

Siquidem uidens Ouidius iuuenes et puellas quasdam tempore suo ex impericia amoris peril\(\langle\rangle\)culum incurrantes, alios cogi ad laqueum, alios ad suspendium, ne amplius tale †\(\langle q(uam) \rangle\) pat(i)a\(\langle n\rangle\)tur, eos in amore peritos reddit.\(^{91}\)

Indeed Ovid, seeing youths and certain girls in his time meeting with danger because of their inexperience of love, some being forced to the noose, others into hanging themselves, so that they not further †suffer any such thing, renders them skilled in love.\(^{92}\)

In the glosses themselves, however (which have not been edited, but which Hexter has studied), Hexter notes that the commentator takes Ovid at his word and assumes that since he has said he will not teach adultery to matrons, the women in question must be prostitutes; the elegiac *vir*, however, he assumes must refer to a legitimate husband, which leads him at least once to a

\(^{88}\) Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 221.

\(^{89}\) Many commentaries refer to the *Amores* as *Sine Titulo* because it appeared in some manuscripts without a title; they then propose various explanations for Ovid’s decision not to give the work a title.

\(^{90}\) Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 219: “Ouidius intendit iuuenes et puellas in amorem instruere.”

\(^{91}\) Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 219.

\(^{92}\) Hexter discusses the textual issues here, and suggests several possible sources for the corruption; the sense is clear enough, however, despite the problems.
creative interpretation in an attempt to save Ovid from inconsistency. The *accessus* edited by Huygens also specifies youths and girls as Ovid’s intended pupils in the *Ars*, noting in the section devoted to the *Remedia* that:

Ovidius iste amandi librum composuit, ubi iuvenes amicas acquirere, acquisitas benign tractare docuit, et puellas ad idem instruxerat.

This Ovid composed a book about loving, in which he taught youths how to acquire girlfriends, and how to treat them kindly once they were acquired, and he had instructed girls in the same thing.

William of Orléans also speaks of *puellae* and *iuvenes* in his *accessus* to the *Ars*. But in his actual glosses, he implies on several occasions an awareness of the possibility that Ovid is addressing courtesans, not respectable women. The first such occasion occurs in the comment on *Ars* 1.31 (in which Ovid tells matrons not to read his work):

Insigne pudoris, id est signum castitatis. ‘Vitta’ enim castitatem significat.

Mark of modesty, that is sign of chastity. For a ribbon is a sign of chastity.

In this case, William appears to understand that Ovid’s instructions are nominally destined only for “unchaste” women.

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93 In the context of *Ars* 1.579-80, in which Ovid is giving instructions on how to behave at a dinner party, the commentator says, when Ovid mentions the *vir*, “Sicut etiam nunc dicit de legitimo uiro, scilicet de Amore. al<^i^>ter esset sibi contrarius, quia superius dixit se non docere adulterium nisi remotas institas idest matronas (1.579, f.19v)” (As also now he is talking about her legitimate husband, namely about Cupid. Otherwise he would be contradicting himself, since above he said that he would not teach adultery unless dress bands, that is matrons, were removed). Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 73-74.


95 The commentary goes on to say that Ovid wrote the *Remedia* because people went overboard and started loving inappropriately, which brought hatred upon him; see below.


He makes a more specific remark much later, in his comments on *Ars* 3.615. In this portion of the *Ars*, Ovid mentions that while teaching a matron to deceive her husband would be improper, he sees no problem in teaching a freedwoman to elude her guardian:

qua uafer eludi possit ratione maritus
quaque uigil custos, praeteriturus eram.
nupta uirum timeat, rata sit custodia nuptae:
hoc decet, hoc leges duxque pudorque iubent.
te quoque seruari, modo quam uindicta redemit,
quis ferat? ut fallas, ad mea sacra ueni.  
(ARS 3.611-16)

In what way a sly husband may be eluded
And in what way a vigilant guardian, I was going to pass over.
Let a wife fear her husband, let a wife’s guarding be sure:
This is fitting, the laws and leader and modesty command this.
For you also to be guarded, whom the liberation rod just now set free,
Who would bear it? So that you may deceive, come to my rites.

In his recent commentary Roy Gibson has explained the custom to which the passage refers:

Two aspects of the manumission process are run together by Ovid. The verb refers to the slave’s purchase of her freedom by paying a sum of money to her owner ... *uindicta* refers to the ceremonial claim, made at the moment of manumission before a magistrate, that the slave is really of free status. After the slave had been touched by a rod (*uindictam imponere*), the owner made no defense and the magistrate pronounced her free.

But William interprets the lines somewhat differently:


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For you likewise to be guarded, whom the rod just now set free, who would bear it? Construe: Who would bear for you to be guarded likewise, that is, similarly to a wife, o you, prostitute, whom the rod, that is the rod of the praetor. Because it should be known that, whenever women were placed in a brothel, the praetor struck them, and from his touch they had licence to sin, and for this reason he says: redeemed, namely, from condemnation, because it was the custom that, if any woman were able to be caught in adultery, she was buried alive in accordance with that line in Ovid’s *Fasti*: “An unchaste woman perishes in this way.” [*Fasti* 6.459].

Although William completely misunderstands the significance of *vindicta* (and numerous other details), he does grasp that adultery was a crime in Ovid’s time, at least for women. His comment also demonstrates that he understands *meretrices* as exempt from anti-adultery legislation, and, on a more basic level, that he sees them as a possible class of addressee for these poems. In the commentary on the *Remedia*, William again suggests that Ovid’s female pupils (or at least some of them) might theoretically be prostitutes. In his comment on *Rem. 384* (part of Ovid’s lengthy digression about the suitability of his poetry, in which he argues that a Thaïs cannot play the role of Andromache or vice versa, but that since he writes elegy, Thaïs is appropriate for his poems), William first gives a relatively literal interpretation. But he then gives several alternate interpretations, including the following:

Vel aliter: Peccat in Andromachen | quisquis agat Tayda, id est agat de Tayde a simili parte, si ego instruo meretrices quid pertinet ad matronas.\(^{102}\)

Or otherwise: He sins against Andromache | whoever treats Thaïs, that is, deals with Thaïs in a similar manner, [i.e.] if I instruct prostitutes in what pertains to matrons.

William seems to interpret Ovid as saying that it would be a sin to instruct a prostitute in what pertains to matrons, but that since his poetry pertains to prostitutes there is no problem. If so, his interpretation is not far from the truth.

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\(^{101}\) In fact, this line of the *Fasti* refers specifically to Vestal Virgins, not to women at large.

The point that emerges most clearly from the commentary tradition is that medieval readers understood Ovid’s works in the context of his exile. Having read his exile poetry, they were well aware of his *carmen et error*, and the commentators, aware that the *Ars* represents the *carmen*, propose various theories to explain the *error*. Moreover, one of the categories within a medieval *accessus* is “intentio,” and for many of Ovid’s poems, his authorial intention is asserted to be the pacification of Augustus, or at the very least, his fellow citizens. Huygens’ edition of the *accessus* mentions several times that the *Ars* alienated Ovid from his fellow citizens because it incited youths to unchaste behavior. For example, one of the *accessus* to the *Amores* (there are two) accounts for the collection’s supposed lack of a title in this way:

Et quare hic non habeat titulum, sciendum est. Nam antequam componeret istum, composuerat Ovidium de Amatoria Arte et cunctas fere matronas et puellas fecerat adulteras et hinc Romanos sibi reddiderat inimicos, et ideo ne adhuc maius incideret odium huic non adposuit titulum, nos autem lectores apponimus Ovidium sine titulo.

And it should be known why this book does not have a title. For before he composed this, he had composed *Ovid on the Art of Love* and had made almost all the matrons and girls adulterous, and as a result he had rendered the Romans hostile to him, and therefore


104 In Huygens’ edition of the *accessus* to the *Fasti*, for example, we read that Ovid wrote the *Fasti* after he had offended the Romans with the *Ars*, but that “Dubitatur enim ubi composuerit hunc librum. Dicunt quidam quod eum in exilio composuerit, alii vero dicunt antequam mitteretur, ut sic sibi placaret Cesarem” (There is doubt as to where he wrote this book. Some people say that he wrote it in exile, but others say he wrote it before he was sent there, so that in this way he might be reconciled with Caesar). See Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*, 38. In a thirteenth-century commentary to the *Metamorphoses*, edited by Frank Coulson, the commentator says that “Offenderat enim Augustum Cesarem per Artem Amatoriam. Vnde ad sui reconciliationem per deificationem Iulii Cesaris a se ostensam scribit ad honorem Augusti de mutacionibus rerum vt uerisimile uideatur Iulium in stellam mutari, quod est in fine presentis operis ostensurus. Et hec est eius intencio” (For he had offended Augustus Caesar with the *Ars Amatoria*. Whence for his reconciliation by showing the deification of Julius Caesar, he wrote about the changes of things in honor of Augustus, so that it would seem realistic for Julius to turn into a star, which he will show at the end of the present work. And this is his intention). See Frank T. Coulson, ed., *The Vulgate Commentary on Ovid’s “Metamorphoses”: The Creation Myth and the Story of Orpheus*, TMLT 20 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1991), 28. Of course, the various *accessus* to the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto* say that Ovid’s goal was to ask his friends to intercede with Augustus on his behalf, which is unsurprising since Ovid is very explicit about this. At least one commentary also says that Ovid’s goal was to warn others not to repeat his mistake; see Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 220.

lest still more hatred befall him, he did not give this book a title, but we readers entitle it *Ovid Without a Title*.

Similarly, the commentary attributes to Ovid the following motivation for writing the *Remedia* after his publication of the *Ars*:

> Quidam autem iuvenes voluptati nimium obedientes non solum virgines, verum et ipsas matronas et consanguineas minime vitabant, virgines coniugatis sicut non uxoratis se pariter subiungebant. Unde Ovidius ab amicis et ab aliis in maximo odio habebatur; postea penitens, quos offenderat sibi reconciliari desiderans vidensque hoc non melius posse fieri quam si dato amore medicinam adinveniret, hunc librum scribere aggressus est, in quo pariter iuvenibus et puellis irretitis consulit, qualiter contra illicitum amorem se armare debeant.  

However certain youths, excessively obedient to their lust, failed to avoid not only virgins, but also matrons and their own relatives, and virgins likewise joined themselves to married men as well as to unmarried men. Whence Ovid was held by his friends and others in the greatest hatred; afterward, being penitent, desiring to reconcile with those whom he had offended and seeing that this could not be better accomplished than if he devised a cure for the love that he had given, he undertook to write this book, in which he counsels ensnared youths as well as girls as to how they should arm themselves against illicit love.

This commentator views the *Ars* as problematic because he credits the work with causing people’s adulterous behavior. Ovid consequently infuriates everyone, not just Augustus. In its section on the *Tristia*, the same commentary lists the *Ars* as one possible reason for Ovid’s exile, along with two other reasons that appear repeatedly throughout the commentary tradition:

> Quaeritur autem cur missus sit in exilium. Unde tres dicuntur sententiae, prima quod concubuit cum uxore Cesaris Livia nomine, secunda quod sicut familiaris transiens eius porticum vidit eum cum amasio suo coeuntem, unde timens Cesar ne ab eo proderetur misit eum in exilium, tercia quia librum fecerat de Arte Amatoria, in quo iuvenes docuerat matronas decipiendo sibi allicere, et ideo offensis Romanis dicitur missus esse in exilium.  

But it is asked why he was sent into exile. Whence three opinions are reported, the first being that he slept with Caesar’s wife, Livia; the second, that since he was an intimate acquaintance, while passing through his portico he saw him having sex with his lover,

106 Huygens, *Accessus ad auctores*, 34.4-12.  
whence Caesar, fearing lest he be betrayed by him, sent him into exile; the third, because he had made the book on the Art of Loving, in which he had taught youths to attract matrons to themselves by deceiving them, and therefore, because he had offended the Romans, he is said to have been sent into exile.

The accessus to the Epistulae ex Ponto in the same manuscript\(^{108}\) cites two of the same reasons, but rather than postulating that Ovid slept with Livia, it instead proposes that Ovid saw Augustus with Ovid’s own wife:\(^{109}\)

Dicitur et hunc librum in Ponto insula Scithiae composuisse, quo missus erat in exilium ab Octaviano Cesare propter librum quem scripserat de amore, per quem corruptae fuerant romanae matronae vel, ut quidam volunt, quia cum uxore sua sive cum puero rem eum habuisse perceperat.

He is said also to have written this book in Pontus, an island in Scythia, where he had been sent into exile by Octavian Caesar on account of a book which he had written about love, through which Roman matrons had been corrupted or, as certain people have it, because he had seen him having relations with his wife or with a boy.\(^{111}\)

A late-twelfth- or early-thirteenth-century German manuscript,\(^{112}\) edited by Hexter, cites the same reasons as the Tristia commentary quoted above (that is, the Ars, sleeping with Livia, or seeing Augustus with a boy), expressing a preference for the third option as being most likely.\(^{113}\) It is not until roughly the fourteenth century that more “fabliau-like”\(^{114}\) explanations for the exile begin to appear in the commentary tradition. Ghisalberti and Hexter each cite different

\(^{108}\) Or, more precisely, in the same set of manuscripts, since Huygens’ edition is based on several.

\(^{109}\) Hexter, Ovid and Medieval Schooling, 102 discusses this.

\(^{110}\) Huygens, Accessus ad auctores, 35, De Ponto, lines 10-14.

\(^{111}\) Of course, given the lack of consistency with which medieval authors use third-person reflexives, “sua uxore” could, I would argue, also refer to Livia, especially given the commentator’s usage in the above quote, “vidit eum cum amasio suo coeuntem,” which surely must refer to Augustus’ own lover, not Ovid’s.

\(^{112}\) Clm 14753.

\(^{113}\) Hexter, Ovid and Medieval Schooling, 220: “Tres cause dicuntur esse quare fuerit in exilio positus: uel quia opus illud amatorium composuit; uel quia cum uxor oppercutoris concubuit; uel quod melius est, quia uidit Cesarem cum amasio suo concumbere” (There are said to be three reasons why he was put in exile: either because he composed that amatory work; or because he slept with the wife of the emperor; or, which is better, because he saw Caesar sleeping with his lover). See page 102 of the same work for more details on the manuscript.

\(^{114}\) Hexter, Ovid and Medieval Schooling, 221 n. 7.
manuscripts that tell more or less the same story, in which Ovid, while climbing a ladder to get into Livia’s tower bedroom, is forced to climb down; Vergil, however, removes some of the rungs from the ladder and Ovid falls, and is exiled because his broken leg betrays his crime.\textsuperscript{115}

Finally, it is worth noting that, while some commentaries fail to comment on Ovid’s explicitly sexual content, both the Hafn. 2015 commentator and Arnulf of Orléans actually elaborate on it. As Ralph Hexter notes of the \textit{Ars} glosses in Hafn. 2015,

Near the end of both books 2 and 3 Ovid discusses sexual intercourse very openly. The commentator makes no protests or condemnations. That the comments continue through these passages shows that he did not expurgate them: he expected his students to study them, and with the same aid he gave them throughout the poem. When he feels Ovid is speaking obscurely, he clarifies things.\textsuperscript{116}

Likewise, Arnulf of Orléans, whose commentary on the \textit{Ars} has been partially edited by Fausto Ghisalberti,\textsuperscript{117} expounds at length on the end of Book 3, where Ovid discusses sexual positions.\textsuperscript{118}

He writes:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Parva vehatur equo} i. ascendat ed [sic]\textsuperscript{119} equitet super virum, sicut eques super equum…. \textit{Strata preceptum est quod mulier longi lateris pedibus suis sepositis et cervice retroflexa viro succumbat, stet vir in obliquum et dum choit vir cum tali femina stet vir ille \textit{sic fusus}, extendens se ex obliquitate lecti positis renibus. Solve, habere soluti [sic]\textsuperscript{120} in concubitu.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

\textit{Let a short woman be carried on a horse} that is, let her mount and ride on the man, like a knight on a horse…. \textit{Let her press the covers} the precept is that a woman with a long

\textsuperscript{115} See Ghisalberti, “Medieval Biographies of Ovid,” 14, and 50 (Appendix H); Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling}, 221.

\textsuperscript{116} Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling}, 72.

\textsuperscript{117} See Ghisalberti, \textit{Arnolfo d’Orléans}, 166-169.

\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ars} 3.777-84.

\textsuperscript{119} The Italian equivalents of Latin words occasionally make their way into Ghisalberti’s edition.

\textsuperscript{120} I am assuming that this should read \textit{solutum}, to agree with \textit{crinem} in Ovid’s text (\textit{Ars} 3.783). There are numerous instances of problematic Latin in Ghisalberti’s edition, although it is unclear whether these are the result of sloppy editing or reflect problems in the original manuscript.

\textsuperscript{121} Ghisalberti, \textit{Arnolfo d’Orléans}, 169. Note that the copy of Ovid from which Arnulf was working differed from the modern critical edition in several places.
flank should lie under the man with her feet apart and her neck bent back, *let the man stand at an angle* and when a man has sex with such a woman, *let the man stand thus extended*, extending himself with his loins positioned from the side of the bed. *Loosen*, have loose during sex.

Both Arnulf and the Hafn. 2015 commentator appear unconcerned with whether or not this content is appropriate for students, focusing instead on ensuring that the students are able to understand Ovid’s text. This contrasts notably with the later allegorical commentary tradition, which is concerned with rendering Ovid’s questionable content suitable for Christian readers.

Judging solely from the surviving commentary tradition, Ovid’s erotic works were understood literally and biographically in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Ovid is always taken at his word, so commentators assume that Ovid’s intention in the *Ars* really is to teach love, and that the *Amores* reflect a real relationship. Similarly, the elegiac *puella* is sometimes read as a prostitute, because Ovid himself says that his instructions are not directed at matrons. The commentaries from this period focus on conveying Ovid’s literal meaning and elaborating on rhetorical, historical, and mythological details to varying degrees, depending on the commentator’s own preferences; they attempt to contextualize Ovid’s works based on what can be gleaned about his circumstances from details mentioned throughout his poetic corpus. The main focus is on Ovid’s exile and the reasons for it, and his works are understood with reference to his banishment. But ultimately, the commentaries make it clear that the texts were a means to an end; students read Ovid to learn Latin and to develop a sense of rhetorical strategies and basic mythological and historical information. Thus medieval commentaries demonstrate how Ovid was used in the classroom, but to get an idea of the more complex issues that medieval scholars saw in Ovid’s texts, we must look further.

Marilynn Desmond has studied Ovid’s influence on the medieval vernacular tradition. She too examines the surviving *accessus* and commentaries, concluding from them that medieval
readers took the *Ars* “as a serious treatise on desire and sexuality,”\(^{122}\) and that “lacking much specific knowledge or information regarding the Augustan age, medieval readers lacked the framework within which to appreciate the ironic texture of the poem.”\(^{123}\) While I do not agree that medieval readers were entirely unable to grasp Ovid’s irony, Desmond is absolutely correct in her assessment of the content of medieval commentaries. Desmond further argues that vernacular versions of the *Ars*, influenced by these serious interpretations of the poem, “show an obsessive interest in elaborating on the mechanics of heterosexual performance.”\(^{124}\) Still, this does not mean that vernacular authors were oblivious to other dimensions of Ovid’s works. Desmond gives a very perceptive reading of our current understanding of issues of empire and dominance as portrayed in the *Ars* and notes that, while serious didactic readings of the poem dominated the medieval schoolroom and influenced its vernacular reception, Chrétien de Troyes’ *Cligès* “juxtaposes the heterosexual plot of courtship and desire to the demands of empire and dominance, an imperial thematics that nods towards the *Ars Amatoria* as the originary exploration of colonialism and desire.”\(^{125}\) Thus Chrétien’s reading of the *Ars* displays an awareness of multiple levels of meaning, in particular of the ways in which “the *praeeptor*’s discourse of sexual domination and conquest mimics the discourses of Roman coloniality.”\(^{126}\) As the commentaries do not (as far as I am aware) make this connection explicitly, Chrétien’s reading of Ovid goes beyond the medieval understanding that we can extrapolate from the commentary tradition. Similarly, despite the fact that medieval commentaries interpret Ovid’s

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123 Desmond, *Ovid’s Art*, 37.
124 Desmond, *Ovid’s Art*, 53-54.
125 Desmond, *Ovid’s Art*, 53.
126 Desmond, *Ovid’s Art*, 36.
poetry biographically, attributing the actions and thoughts of the *praeeceptor* and *amator* to Ovid himself, some medieval imitators of Ovid’s poetry give a very different impression of their understanding. Baudri’s poems, for instance, demonstrate that he recognized the difference between the historical Ovid and the persona portrayed in his poems. In the *Tristia*, Ovid stresses that playful poems can easily come from the pen of a virtuous poet:

crede mihi, distant mores a carmine nostro
(vita verecunda est, Musa iocosa mea)  (*Tr*. 2.353-54).

Believe me, my morals differ from my poetry
(My life is modest, my Muse is playful).

Baudri picks up on Ovid’s’ verse with a lengthy allusion in a poem to a friend named Galo:

Nec iuuenilis amor nec me malus abstulit error:
   Sed michi iocundo Musa iocosa placet.
Musa iocosa placet, quoniam michi uita iocosa:
   Vita iocosa tamen facta iocosa fugit,
Que tamen et scripsi tanquam uir totus amoris:
   Volo liber passim compita circumeat.
Musa iocosa michi, sed uita pudica iocoso:
   Et tamen innocuum fascinat inuidia.  (193.101-108)

Neither youthful love nor wicked error carried me off:
   But a playful muse pleases me, since I am playful.
A playful muse is pleasing, because my life is playful:
   My life is playful, nevertheless it flees playful deeds,
Things which, nevertheless, I have also written as a man entirely devoted to love:
   I want my book to circulate throughout the crossroads.
My muse is playful, but the playful man has a chaste life:
   And nevertheless envy bewitches an innocent man.

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128 Here I adopt Tilliette’s comma in place of Hilbert’s period, and Tilliette’s colon in place of Hilbert’s comma in the following line, because Tilliette’s punctuation better renders the sense of the poem.

129 Hilbert prints “Nolo,” but Tilliette argues convincingly for “Volo” (in the manuscript the initial is faded). See Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 279 n. 40. Having recently examined the manuscript myself, I see no way to argue for Hilbert’s reading. The initial may be faded, but it is not illegible, and can only be a V.
He makes similar claims elsewhere in his corpus (see, for example, Chapter 3, in which I discuss the protestations of innocence in Baudri’s poems to youths). But in this case, the direct allusion to Ovid makes explicit the fact that Baudri has modeled his own poems after Ovid with the understanding that Ovid’s poems are not meant to be taken at face value.

Baudri’s allusion thus betrays a more complex understanding of issues of persona than we see reflected in the commentaries. In fact, this is not surprising if we consider that anyone attempting to read Ovid both literally and biographically will eventually come across Ovid’s protestations that his poetry does not reflect his life and, if paying attention, will notice the paradox entailed in such a reading. If Baudri’s reading of Ovid differs from what we find in the commentaries on such a basic level, it is certainly not unrealistic to assume that his overall understanding of the poems is more complex than the level of the commentaries. And indeed, I would argue that Baudri’s own adaptations of Ovid are the most reliable indicator of how he understood Ovid. The commentary tradition, while a good starting point, remains too focused and elementary to be a valid delimiter of the possibilities of medieval understanding.

To return to Jauss’s theory of the “horizon of expectations,” Susan Suleiman has noted in her discussion of Jauss’s work that “what appears necessary is the “multiplication” of horizons of expectation, the realization that even in the distant past and in a single society there was no such thing as a single homogeneous reading (or listening) public.”130 Any number of factors can influence how a given reader understands a work, and surely the issues emphasized in Baudri’s own poetry are a good indication of what issues he saw in Ovid, since, as Jauss notes,

A literary event can continue to have an effect only if those who come after it still or once again respond to it—if there are readers who again appropriate the past work or authors who want to imitate, outdo, or refute it. The coherence of literature as an event is

primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics, and authors.\(^{131}\)

If it is the continued response to a work that makes the work effective and gives it meaning, working backward from a response to a given work would seem to be a very basic means of arriving at the responder’s horizon of expectations. Finally, as Wolfgang Iser (who belongs to the same school of thought as Jauss) argues, the reader of a text creates meaning by filling in the “gaps” or “unwritten part” of the text:

These gaps … may be filled in different ways. For this reason, one text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled. In this very act the dynamics of reading are revealed. By making his decision he implicitly acknowledges the inexhaustibility of the text; at the same time it is this very inexhaustibility that forces him to make his decision.\(^{132}\)

If we as readers notice a theme in Ovid and pick up on the same theme in Baudri’s imitation of Ovid, we are justified in noting this similarity, and even in supposing that Baudri might have noticed some of the same issues in Ovid as a modern reader. This is true even though Baudri would not have expressed his thoughts exactly as we do or had recourse to philosophies such as feminism that modern readers use as tools to explain the issues they see at play in the poems.

Thus, as I shall argue in subsequent chapters, the fact that modern readers note the near obsession with issues of power and control in the poetry of both Ovid and Baudri is no accident; we notice them because they are there. Modern readers account for these issues in Ovid’s poetry in part by understanding them as a reaction to Augustus’ rise to power and the subsequent

\(^{131}\) Jauss, 22.

disenfranchisement of the Roman nobility. Whether Baudri knew Ovid’s precise historical situation or, even if he did, would have accounted for Ovid’s concern with power with reference to Augustus is irrelevant. What is important is that Baudri must have noticed the issue’s presence, because his own poems pick up on it; I would argue that, even if he did not know Ovid’s entire historical context, he is drawn to Ovid’s poetry because of the way it deals with power. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the Gregorian reforms of Baudri’s own era displayed distinct parallels to Augustus’ moral reforms. If we see Ovid’s poems as a means of coming to grips with the rise of Augustus, it is certainly plausible that these poems would speak to Baudri and that he would see fit to adapt them to his own time and situation. Far from anachronistically projecting a modern understanding of Ovid onto a medieval reader, this reading reveals Baudri’s uncannily astute response to qualities in Ovid that we do not normally credit medieval readers with observing.
Chapter 2
The Baudri-Constance Correspondence and Other Poems to Women

The most transparently Ovidian poems in Baudri’s collection are his three sets of paired letters, clearly modeled after the *Heroides*. The first pair, cc. 7 and 8, offers Baudri’s own, significantly different version of *Heroides* 16 and 17 (the correspondence between Paris and Helen).¹ Ovid’s Paris writes to Helen well after his arrival at Menelaus’ court, but in Baudri’s poems Helen and Paris have not yet met; Paris sends his letter from sea, en route to Sparta. Baudri’s adaptation contains greater emphasis on the inevitability of what is to happen—his Paris repeatedly tells Helen she has little choice in the matter because the gods have already ordained that she will go with him, although he does still give her a list of reasons why she should go willingly. Baudri’s version of Paris’s letter also contains an anachronistic digression describing the Loire Valley.² In her reply, Baudri’s Helen faces her fate with reluctant resignation, whereas Ovid’s Helen is noncommittal and takes Paris to task for his presumption. The second pair, cc. 97 and 98, unites the tradition of the *Heroides* with that of the *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, consisting of a letter from Florus (a man of Baudri’s creation) to Ovid in exile, and of Ovid’s reply. Florus laments the injustice of Ovid’s punishment, saying that Ovid’s poems are a cover for the true cause of his exile—Augustus’ anger over rumors about Ovid and Livia—and says he is going to come join Ovid in exile. Ovid writes back and tells Florus not to join him, but to stay in Rome and fight for

¹ When comparing Baudri’s and Ovid’s versions of the letters, we must remember that in the Middle Ages, *Her. 16.39-144* were unknown (Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling*, 197). The missing excerpt includes Hecuba’s prophetic dream, the Judgment of Paris, the building of the ships bound for Troy, Cassandra’s warning, and Paris’ initial arrival in Sparta.

² Gerald Bond gives an insightful reading of this digression in “Composing Yourself,” 92. He returns to the idea in *The Loving Subject*, 61.
his pardon. He complains about his situation in much the same way the real Ovid does in his exile poetry.

The third set of paired letters (cc. 200 and 201), consisting of Baudri’s letter to a nun named Constance and of her reply, will be the central topic of this chapter. Given the clear debt of these letters to the *Heroides*, the obvious first question to ask is whether Baudri, in imitation of Ovid, fabricated both letters, or whether they are the product of his actual poetic exchange with a real woman. Unsurprisingly, scholars are thoroughly divided on this issue. At the time of the poems’ composition, a woman named Constance was living at the convent of Le

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3 Otto Schumann first raised the possibility that Baudri wrote both letters, noting that if he did, he may also have written the only other letter in his collection not attributed to him, c.204, which purports to be by an Odo (Otto Schumann, “Baudri von Bourgueil als Dichter,” in *Studien zur lateinischen Dichtung des Mittelalters: Ehrengabe für Karl Strecker zum 4. September 1931*, [Dresden: Baensch Stiftung, 1931], 162-63). As far as I can tell, Schumann and Tilliette (Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 300, c.200 n.1) are the only scholars to cast doubt on Odo’s authorship; in general, scholars who assume that Baudri wrote Constance’s letter never question Odo’s authorship. F.J.E. Raby is non-committal about Constance, discussing the letter in his text as if it were her work, but noting that “Schumann … raises the question whether these letters are anything more than poetical exercises in which the reply was equally the work of Baudry. This is, indeed, a possibility which cannot be excluded” (F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934], 344 n. 1). Winfried Offermanns takes no more of a stand than does Raby, merely noting Schumann’s observation and adding that if Baudri did write both letters, he himself puts the ambiguity of a spiritual love letter into practice in Constance’s misunderstanding reply (Winfried Offermanns, *Die Wirkung Ovids auf die literarische Sprache der lateinischen Liebesdichtung des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts* [Wuppertal: Kastellaun, 1970], 109 n.1). Christine Ratkowitsch believes the correspondence is fictive, meant to de-eroticize the *Heroides* by replacing the lovers with a nun and a monk, or “amor carnalis with amor spiritualis” (Christine Ratkowitsch, “Io und Europa bei Baudri von Bourgueil,” in *Arbor amoenas comis: 25 Jahre Mittellateinisches Seminar in Bonn, 1965-1990*, ed. Ewald Konsgen [Stuttgart: Steiner, 1990], 155). Peter Dronke believes the letter is authentic, on the basis of the genuine passion that he sees in it; he cites Manitius (*Vom Ausbruch des Kirchenstreites bis zum Ende des Zwölften Jahrhunderts*, vol. 3 of *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. Paul Lehmann [Munich: Beck, 1931], 888), stating that there are “clear differences in style and tone” between the two letters. Moreover, he points out that Baudri says that Constance’s poetry has made him love her, and that he also praises the poems of one Muriel in a different poem (c.137); Dronke therefore argues that “one could not consistently take Constance’s poem away from her without at the same time accusing Baudri of a far more elaborate series of fabrications” (Peter Dronke, *Women Writers in the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua † 203 to Marguerite Porete † 1310* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984], 85). Finally, he points to the existence of many other similar letter-poems from women to their superiors dating from the same time in a neighboring region, as well as to Marbod of Rennes’ own letter-poems which claim to be rescripta to girls (and the one surviving reply) (*Women Writers*, 85). Katherine Kong rightly acknowledges that, while she sees no reason to doubt Constance’s authorship, authenticity is always a difficult issue, and much of the existing evidence could be taken as support for either side, depending on how it is interpreted (Katherine Kong, *Lettering the Self in Medieval and Early Modern France* [Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010], 28; Katherine Kong, “Epistolary Positions: Gender and Authority in Medieval and Early Modern French Letters,” [PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2004], 64 n. 17). Gerald Bond believes the letter is authentic, as we shall see. Jean-Yves Tilliette also believes that Baudri wrote Constance’s letter and, rightly questioning the assumption that depth of emotion proves authenticity, he endeavors to demonstrate the impossibility of Constance’s authorship using a strictly philological approach (“Hermès amoureux,” 139-144, 160-161).
Ronceray, in Angers, which was probably the home of many of Baudri’s female addressees. As Gerald Bond notes, this abbey was “noted for the noble origins and literate instruction of its students.” In addition, Baudri wrote two other poems and an epitaph for a Constance, and Bond, along with other scholars, has noted that the tone of Constance’s letter differs from that of Baudri’s other poems. He is therefore convinced that Constance wrote the letter herself.

On the other hand, Jean-Yves Tilliette, the main proponent for Baudri’s authorship of the letter, argues that Constance’s letter contains numerous echoes of Baudri’s poetic corpus, which he sees as precluding her authorship because he does not believe she could have had access to Baudri’s collection. Along similar lines, he cites the letter’s many citations of classical authors as problematic, because he finds it unlikely that an author so “scandalous” as Ovid would have been distributed to young girls from noble families. He has also analyzed the poem’s metrical tendencies and finds that they match Baudri’s other poems. He thus concludes that Baudri wrote both letters, just as he did in the two other sets of paired letters in his collection. Some of

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4 Bond, The Loving Subject, 229 n. 71; Dronke, Women Writers, 86; Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 137-138.
5 Bond, The Loving Subject, 229 n. 71.
6 Bond, The Loving Subject, 229 n. 71; Dronke, Women Writers, 85. While I am sympathetic to the idea that Constance wrote her own letter, difference in tone is a shaky foundation on which to build such an assertion. Baudri was, after all, an accomplished poet, and could certainly have varied his tone depending on whether he was impersonating a woman or impersonating himself. Ratkowitsch makes a similar point (“Io und Europa,” 156).
7 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 142.
8 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 142.
9 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 141; he also contends that it is unlikely that advanced instruction in versification would have been conducted in women’s monasteries at this time, stating that the other surviving exempla from this time of poems by women are paltry and mediocre.
10 Tilliette makes some other points as well, which he acknowledges are weaker (such as that the manuscript otherwise contains only poems written by Baudri, with one exception, and that both Baudri’s poem and Constance’s reply contain the same number of lines). The latter piece of evidence is utterly meaningless; it is unclear why Tilliette thinks a real Constance would be less likely than an imaginary Constance to imitate the structure of the pedagogic letter to which she is replying, and indeed Tilliette himself admits that if Baudri has set the rules of the game, it makes sense for Constance to follow them (“Hermès amoureux,” 140). Tilliette says that no single piece of evidence on its own demonstrates conclusively that Constance is not the author, but that taken all together, they are convincing.
Tilliette’s points are well taken, although others, such as the idea that a woman could not have cited Ovid extensively, are less convincing. Tilliette says that the lack of any documentation of the literary education of women in French convents at this time is telling,\textsuperscript{11} which is certainly true. Nonetheless, it is dangerous to reject the possibility of Constance’s authorship purely because of such documentary silence. Such education may have been rare, but that does not preclude the possibility that Constance was an exception to the norm. And if Constance did receive a thorough literary education, she could certainly have imitated Baudri’s style and metrical tendencies in her reply; indeed, it would make sense for her to do so, as will be discussed below. And I suspect that, were Baudri’s letter addressed to a man instead of to a woman, the same characteristics of the reply that Tilliette cites as precluding Constance’s authorship would be cited as evidence of the poetic aptitude of Baudri’s astute correspondent. Indeed, as already mentioned, while many scholars question Constance’s authorship of the letter, only Schumann and Tilliette seem to note that Baudri might also have written c. 204, the only other letter in his collection that purports to be by someone else (a man named Odo).\textsuperscript{12}

At any rate, it is probably impossible to resolve the question with certainty. For the purposes of this analysis, I would argue that the issue of the letter’s authorship has no effect on our ability to use the pair to analyze Baudri’s poetic persona. First of all, we must maintain the distinction between the historical author of a work and his or her literary persona. Just as we distinguish between Baudri and his poetic persona, the Constance represented in the poem must

\textsuperscript{11} Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 142.

\textsuperscript{12} I am reminded of the similar debate surrounding the authorship of Sulpicia’s elegies; see, for example, Alison Keith, “Critical Trends in Interpreting Sulpicia,” \textit{Classical World} 100.1 (2006): 3-10, for a thoroughly convincing rebuttal of arguments (such as that found in Thomas N. Habinek, \textit{The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity, and Empire in Ancient Rome} [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998], 122-36) against the possibility of female authorship in Rome.
also be distinguished from any historical person on whom she may be based. As a result, whether Baudri wrote both letters or Constance wrote her own reply, both the Baudri and the Constance depicted in the letters are literary constructs, and what matters for the purpose of this analysis is that Baudri is depicted as exchanging love letters with a nun. Furthermore, Baudri’s complete collection survives in a lone manuscript witness, and Tilliette himself has shown that Baudri probably had a direct hand in assembling the portion of this manuscript that contains the first 153 poems. While the correspondence with Constance is found in a part of the manuscript whose composition Baudri did not directly supervise, Tilliette has demonstrated that Baudri took great care in assembling his collection for recopying in the first place, so it is not unreasonable to assume that Baudri himself made sure that the Constance letter was transmitted along with his own. This means that regardless of authorship, Baudri intended for the two to be taken as a literary unit, a fact which enables us to draw legitimate conclusions about Baudri’s collection as a whole using both letters.

The question of authorship is not irrelevant, however, if we are considering more basic gender concerns. The distinction between an authentic female voice and a male voice impersonating a female voice of course affects our understanding of the pair of poems. Elizabeth Harvey treats the subject of voice at length in her book on Renaissance English texts, *Ventriloquized Voices*. She coins the term “transvestite ventriloquism” to describe “texts that


14 Again, Baudri’s collection does not otherwise include responses to letters he has sent; the only other poem in the collection that is not by Baudri is number 204, “Versus Odonis ad Abbatem” (verses of Odo to the abbot).

15 Katherine Kong also argues that authenticity does not matter in the case of these letters, for similar reasons: “… I am not making an argument about how historical people ‘really felt,’ and for my analysis the actual authorship of these two verse epistles is less significant than the fact that tone-breaking comes from what is presented as a female voice, and that the exercise of epistolary agency issues from the position of a respondent who is a subordinate: a younger student, and a woman. This departure in register is all the more striking considering the playfully ambiguous letter to which it replies” (Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 28).
share a common feature: although written by male authors, they are voiced by female characters in a way that seems either to erase the gender of the authorial voice or to thematize the transvestism of this process.”  

Harvey observes that in non-dramatic texts, the male usurpation of the female voice “is usually explained with reference to a persona, which, while useful as a distinction, is neither historicized nor gendered as a theory.”

She specifically discusses the implications of ventriloquism in the Heroides, and builds on Linda Kauffman’s assertion that Ovid’s use of the female voice is subversive, in that “to write like a woman is to challenge conventional notions of tradition, of origins, of fathers, of paternity, of authority, of identity” (since the Heroides constitute an epistolary retelling of epic and thus challenge the primacy of the genre). Harvey agrees that this is Ovid’s strategy, but notes that Kauffman does not fully articulate the duplicity inherent in his approach:

Ovid can write from the perspective of the woman precisely because he is not himself a woman; he metaphorizes the figure of woman, associating her with a constellation of attributes that are already traditional and will remain so: erotic passion, abandonment, desire that cannot be satisfied, rhetorical skill, especially as expressed in the complaint. The very characteristics that Ovid uses to define these women are also the qualities that render them marginal in Roman society (and in subsequent cultures), and it is the recognition (and perpetuation) of their marginality that makes Ovid’s impersonation of them subversive. Ovid, like Hoffman in Tootsie or Derrida in Spurs, uses the metaphor of woman as a lever for dismantling certain patriarchal values, but, unlike the heroines he ventriloquizes, he simultaneously partakes of the very privilege he seeks to expose.

In other words, although Harvey believes Ovid is successful at subverting Augustan values, his method remains problematic; as she puts it in her introduction, “ventriloquism is an

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17 Harvey, 3.
19 Kauffman, 42, 44, 61.
20 Harvey, 40.
appropriation of the feminine voice, and … it reflects and contributes to a larger cultural silencing of women.”\textsuperscript{21}

Sara Lindheim takes up the issue in her book \textit{Mail and Female}. Although she ultimately posits that the heroines’ evident performativity undermines Ovid’s attempts to “circumscribe women by means of a single, universal definition, to achieve some form of control over women by turning them into Woman” by implying that their self-portraits are false,\textsuperscript{22} she still points to the inescapable trouble with transvestite ventriloquism: “… the heroines become the vehicle through which the poet, in the guise of writing like a woman, constructs a masculine fantasy or illusion of the Woman.”\textsuperscript{23} An author’s appropriation of the female voice may well draw attention to female marginality, but it only does so from within the framework of the system it seeks to subvert. These interpretations of transvestite ventriloquism in the \textit{Heroides} are particularly pertinent to the Baudri-Constance correspondence, since it is modeled after Ovid’s poems. The issue of authorship need not affect our interpretation of the letter’s meaning in context, but the assumption that Baudri wrote it adds an undertone of patriarchal oppression: regardless of his intent, in appropriating Constance’s voice, Baudri passes off his own assumptions about how a woman would feel and behave as the actual words of a real woman, and this is ultimately an act of control and domination. That said, Baudri could not help being a man, and if he did write Constance’s letter, we can still read it as articulating a possibility of resistance that could be appropriated by a female reader—as I will argue, the letter calls attention to, and thereby problematizes, Baudri’s attempts to dominate Constance.\textsuperscript{24} I would contend that the possibility

\textsuperscript{21}Harvey, 12.
\textsuperscript{22}Lindheim, 183.
\textsuperscript{23}Lindheim, 183.
\textsuperscript{24}This argument is indebted to the numerous studies detailed in Chapter 1 which see in Ovid’s elegies a similar disruption of the dominant discourse. Likewise, Carolyn Dinshaw makes a similar argument about Chaucer and the
that an eleventh-century man’s poem attempts to problematize masculinist ideology outweighs the inherent duplicity of the poem’s potential transvestite ventriloquism.

These letters have received a great deal of scholarly attention. Previous treatments of the Ovidianism of the Baudri-Constance correspondence have tended to focus on the letters’ relationship with the *Heroides*, their most obvious source text. These fundamental studies have greatly elucidated Baudri’s poems, but the *Heroides* are not the only Ovidian text on which the letters depend. A consideration of Baudri’s (and Constance’s) appeals to the *Ars* and the *Amores* adds significant nuance to our understanding of the poems. The power struggle evident between Baudri and Constance in the letters becomes much more complicated if we take the *Ars* and *Amores* into account; allusion to these poems forces us to compare Baudri’s and Constance’s relationship to that between an elegiac *puella* and *amator*. This dynamic is indicative of larger trends in the collection as a whole. Previous studies have highlighted the issues of desire and

Wife of Bath in her book *Chaucer’s Sexual Poetics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). Dinshaw argues that although the Wife of Bath speaks from within the confines of patriarchal discourse, she is not “trapped within the ‘prison house’ of antifeminist discourse” but rather “mimics patriarchal discourse … not in order to “thwart” it altogether, to subvert it entirely, but to reform it, to keep it in place while making it accommodate feminine desire” (115-116). Dinshaw also notes that the Wife of Bath seems to be Chaucer’s favorite character, and suggests that “The Wife is a source of delight for this male author precisely because through her he is able to reform and still to participate in patriarchal discourse; he recuperates the feminine within the solid structure of that discourse” (116). My point diverges somewhat from Dinshaw’s, in that I believe Constance is still trapped within a patriarchal discourse; she just manages to undermine that discourse subtly from within.

25 Of course, there are plenty of other intertexts as well. For the precedent of elegiac letters addressed to a nun, the obvious source is Venantius Fortunatus and his letters to Radegund (see especially poems 8.5-10). Fortunatus puts the vocabulary of the *exclusus amator* to use; for example, in his lament to Radegund before she goes into seclusion for Lent, he writes: “omnibus exclusis uno retineberis antro:/nos magis includis, quos facis esse foris./et licet hoc lateas brevibus fugitiva diebus,/longior hic mensis quam celer annus erit./tempora subducis, ceu non videaris amanti” (8.5.7-11) (“With everyone shut out, you will be held in one cave:/it’s more like you’re imprisoning us,/whom you make stay outside,/and although you’re hiding here, a fugitive for a few days,/this month will be longer than a swift year./You’re stealing time, alas, you may not be seen by the one who loves you.” See Fortunatus, *Opera Poetica*, ed. Friedrich Leo, MGH AA vol. 4, part 1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881). Baudri certainly had read Fortunatus, because, as Tilliette has noted in his edition, he cites his poems often. Fortunatus is an important precursor to Baudri’s own use of elegy, although his playfulness does not reach quite the same level of Baudri’s in c.200.
control in these letters. I build on these studies, but depart from them on two key points. Firstly, while issues of desire and control are inextricably linked in these letters, I do not believe that we can say that Constance’s letter represents an outpouring of sincere emotion. I therefore disagree that such sincerity is a means of taking control from Baudri; on the contrary, Constance uses her emotional outbursts to highlight and play to Baudri’s attempts to control her. Secondly, in contrast with Gerald Bond’s contention, which I will outline below, that Constance’s letter strives to create a publically acceptable female voice for discussing issues of desire, I argue that Constance deliberately problematizes the discourse that Baudri has forced upon her.

Winfried Offermanns’ study, unlike many others, notes the letters’ heavy debt to the *Ars* and *Amores* as well as to the *Heroides*. He details many of Baudri’s allusions to these Ovidian works, and rightly notes that his use of Ovid renders his poem thoroughly ambiguous, especially to what he terms an addressee who shows “a latent willingness to misunderstand” his intentions. But ultimately, Offermanns feels that Baudri succeeds in writing a spiritual love letter, putting pagan mythology and erotic verse to the service of spiritual, Christian love. In his view it is Constance who misunderstands Baudri’s efforts, and thus she writes a sincere love complaint in reply, utterly failing to spiritualize her own expressions of love. Offermanns’ perceptive article makes many important points, but I disagree with his assertion that Baudri’s

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26 There are many similarities between the Baudri-Constance correspondence and the letters of Abelard and Heloise; Kong explores these parallels in her study (see Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 55-108). The Baudri-Constance correspondence (circa 1107; see below, note 47, and Chapter 4, pp. 203-205, for a discussion of how this date is derived) predates that of Abelard and Heloise (1130s; see Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 57), however, so I will not discuss the latter here.

27 Offermanns, 109. I agree with Offermanns’ assertion of Baudri’s ambiguity, but would not agree that Constance’s response displays a “latent willingness to misunderstand his intentions” (as Offermanns puts it, “Dieses Spiel mit der intentionalen Ambivalenz und allegorischer Selbstelexegese birgt bei aller Vollendung die Gefahr, im Wortsinn [und damit falsch] verstanden zu werden, besonders bei einer Adressatin, die gefühlsmäßig schon eine latente Bereitschaft dazu zeigt” [109]).

28 Offermanns, 109.

29 Offermanns, 109.
letter, for all its ambiguity, ultimately succeeds at expressing legitimate spiritual love, and that Constance merely misunderstands it. I also disagree with Offermanns’ reading of Constance’s letter as sincere. Offermanns repeatedly notes Baudri’s deliberate ambiguity; I see this ambiguity as more central to the letters than he does, and I believe that it remains unresolved and that Constance plays along with Baudri’s ambiguity, which she fully understands, in her reply.

Gerald Bond’s article “Composing Yourself” and his book The Loving Subject examine the development of Baudri’s poetic persona through his paired letters, noting how Baudri progresses from Ovidian imitation, in which he assumes the character of Paris as his persona (Paris-Helen), to impersonation of Ovid himself (Florus-Ovid), to a third stage of self-impersonation, in which he inserts his own persona into the Ovidian framework (Baudri-Constance). In his correspondence with Constance, according to Bond, Baudri combines three distinct voices: his institutional role as a teacher; his status as vates, conferred because of the allegory and chastity present in his poem, which adds a degree of “sincerity and authority;” and his persona as a playful, Ovidian lover-poet, which undercuts his position as vates. Bond argues that this combination “indicates an effort to establish and authorize a new poetic voice for the composition of and about a new private ‘self’ which embraced nature, poetry, and their intertwined productive powers,” although he says this triple voice does not account for most of Baudri’s other letter-poems, in which he does not claim the role of vates. Bond argues, citing Offermanns, that in the case of his poems to boys, “Baudri’s very literary success … resides in his striking ability to suspend his creations between truth and lie, to leave the reader unsure of

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30 Bond, “Composing Yourself,” 104; The Loving Subject, 60-64.
31 Bond, The Loving Subject, 64.
32 Bond, The Loving Subject, 64. Bond argues that these other poems mark the complete emergence of Baudri’s literary persona, because it is only in them that there is a “collapse of character and author” (64).
the nature of the relationship between Baudri and his correspondent, as Ovid had done with his mysterious Corinna.”

This is absolutely true, but not just for his poems to boys; the same situation is at play in his poem to Constance.

Regarding Constance’s reply, Bond states that it “affords an early and remarkable view of one noblewoman’s struggle with the competing demands of religious ideology, literary discourse, and physical desire,” rightly noting that the reply is a construct, despite its apparent sincerity, and arguing that Constance is able to assume her desiring persona because of the protection bestowed by the “poem’s fictional immunity.” He further argues that whereas in Baudri’s letter “any momentary ambivalence is instantly contradicted,” Constance’s letter is constantly ambivalent and clings to its ambiguity of meaning in order to create a “publically acceptable” female voice that can explore issues of desire. Bond’s conception of Baudri’s persona as a literary construct that is deliberately ambiguous and difficult to distinguish from the real Baudri is central to my own understanding of Baudri’s poems. On the other hand, he appears to argue that ambiguity emerges not in this poem but in Baudri’s other letter-poems, and that Baudri’s poem to Constance is “judiciously orthodox” because of its appeal to allegory and to Baudri’s role as uates to give the love in the poems unambiguous meaning; I am not convinced of this, since in all of these poems, he undercuts his role as abbot using Ovidian allusion, which makes orthodoxy impossible.

33 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 65.
34 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 142.
35 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 143; “Composing Yourself,” 100.
36 Bond, “Composing Yourself,” 116 n. 44.
38 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 64.
Peter Dronke argues that Constance models her response to Baudri’s “mercurial virtuoso display” after the *Heroides* because they enable her to combat his deliberately concealed emotions by imitating Ovid’s heroines’ wide range of fully expressed emotions.\(^{39}\) But he also notes the “deliberate incongruity” between the tragic situations in the *Heroides* and Constance’s own decidedly non-tragic situation, observing that this adds an element of humor.\(^{40}\) Still, ultimately seeing her letters as expressing serious emotion, he argues that:

> Fundamentally, what Constance feels for Baudri is … a blend of hero-worship, tenderness, solicitude and even possessiveness. She wants him to be in a special way hers. But because she knows he cannot be hers as lover without causing a scandal that would destroy their deliberately built structure of ardent friendship, she relies on all the expressions of more extravagant fervour to intimate that an element of wit is, after all, dominant. Paradoxically, it is the heated language that, by its continual hints of an inherent inappropriateness, enables her to keep a certain cool composure.\(^{41}\)

Dronke’s point about Constance’s continual hints of “an inherent inappropriateness” is well taken, and figures centrally in my own reading of the poem. Regarding his argument that sincere emotion lurks behind Constance’s letter, however, I do not believe we can determine what Constance’s true emotions were, but I do believe that her letter deliberately undermines the idea that her emotions are sincere.

In her book *Lettering the Self in Medieval and Early Modern France*, Katherine Kong argues that since letter-writing was so structured during the Middle Ages, any deviation from the expected conventions of the genre can be seen as a form of agency on the part of the deviant writer. She sees in Constance’s letter an assertion of agency, because, as she argues, Constance’s reply rejects Baudri’s joking and insists on a serious tone.\(^{42}\) While I agree that

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Constance asserts herself in her letter, I think that she complicates her serious tone using Ovidian allusion, as will become clear. In a similar vein, Constance S. Wright, citing Peter Dronke’s work, stresses the fact that Baudri’s letter is an attempt to exercise control over Constance, and that it is part of a large tradition of similarly-themed letters that existed from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, in which the man struggles for control and the woman struggles for dominance or equality. Wright argues that in his letter, Baudri takes on the tone not of the men in Ovid’s *Heroides* but rather of Saints Jerome and Ambrose, exhorting Constance to virginity. She further argues that Constance’s reply simultaneously attempts to establish her own identity and to win the poetic contest Baudri has instituted by writing the better love poem, all the while serving as “a passionate avowal of the ways in which she loves him.” According to Wright, Constance succeeds in her efforts to outdo Baudri at his own game, catching all of his allusions and one-upping them. She adopts the persona of both the abandoned women of the *Heroides* and of the nun pining after Christ; Wright argues that Constance does so in a manner that makes it impossible to determine if any sincere emotion lies behind the letter or not, and that ultimately, she evades Baudri’s attempts at domination and categorization. Wright’s understanding of these poems is particularly important to my own, and I agree with almost everything she says, except for her final interpretation, namely that Constance unproblematically evades domination.

Baudri calls his letter a love poem, but one which is safe for Constance. He praises Constance for her beauty, but stresses that he wants her to remain a virgin, and for their hearts to be joined while their bodies remain separate; as he puts it, “sit iocus in calamo” (let the game be

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44 Wright, 160.

45 Wright, 166.
He says that her eloquence has motivated his feelings for her, before describing her physical beauty for twelve lines. He then states that he loves her only for her virginity, and repeatedly urges her to remain a virgin. He says that while they should have chaste conversations, no one should blame him for sometimes saying playful things; when he is older he will write only serious things. He closes by telling her to live as his and to do everything that he has told her; he is busy with weightier writings, but he writes poems to no woman besides her. He says he will read any response she might send, and will reply. Finally, she can choose to conceal his letter or show it to others, as she wishes.

In her reply, Constance informs Baudri that she read his letter repeatedly, before placing it under her left breast and going to bed, where she was unable to sleep because the letter had stirred her emotions so greatly. She praises Baudri for his poetic genius for thirty-two lines before extolling his physical appearance for six more lines. She laments that she has not seen Baudri in a year, and wishes he were there, although they would have to be chaperoned. She expresses her fears of infidelity on Baudri’s part and her jealousy of potential rivals. She says that she chooses to write to Baudri because she can write things she would be ashamed to say in person, and adds that a chaste life should commend their games. After suggesting several ruses

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46 Bond’s translation—Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173. It should be noted that *calamus* is not itself a euphemism for penis (or, at least, it is not listed as such in J.N. Adams’ *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* [London: Duckworth, 1982]). But a case can still be made to consider it as such by analogy with other similar words with documented sexual connotation, such as *caulis*, *virga*, and *scapus*. Moreover, Adams also notes that *iocari* and *iocus* can also stand in for sexual acts, citing several examples from Ovid’s *Ars*. See Adams, 161-162.

47 The date of the poems is uncertain, but Tilliette speculates that they could have been written at the end of Baudri’s career as an abbot, based on an allusion in Constance’s poem to Baudri’s departure to civilize a barbarous land (as Baudri himself, as archbishop, later calls Brittany): “Vade uiam tutam: petat alter barbara regna./ Est grauis indomitas poena domare feras/ atque tibi digna uiux respondere ualebunt./ <C>um sint indocte, pritinus edomitae‖ (201.139-142). (Go the safe route: let someone else seek barbarous kingdoms. / It is a grave hardship to subdue untamed wild beasts/ and they will hardly be able to respond worthily to you,/ since after being tamed, they are still unlearned). See Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 298 n.54. It is impossible to say for sure, but Tilliette’s suggestion seems reasonable. Bond seems to agree, since he notes in his discussion of the poem that Baudri calls himself *iuvenis* despite being 50 years old (Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 63). See Chapter 4, pp. 203-205, for more on the dating of these poems.
he may contrive to come visit her, she breaks off, saying, “Fool! Whom am I teaching? You yourself should be teaching me,” (201.167) a clear nod to the abbot’s role as teacher, but also to the didactic tradition of Ovid’s Ars. The remaining couplets consist of Constance’s repeated pleas for Baudri to come visit her, her conviction that he would find a way if he so wished, and a complaint about the suffering occasioned for her by his absence.

Before moving forward with an analysis of the poems, it is worth pausing to consider the contextual significance of Constance’s name. Although, unlike the elegiac puella, the Constance on whom the Constance in the poems is based was likely a real woman, the argument could still be made for reading the figure of Constance allegorically. More precisely, Constance the historical woman may or may not have existed and may or may not have been the author of c.201, but even if she did exist and did write her own poem, this does not preclude the possibility that Baudri, in his half of the exchange, turns her into an allegory. 48 Peter Dronke hints at such an interpretation in passing, although evidently still proceeding under the assumption that Constance is real, when he writes (in reference to Baudri’s comparison of Constance to women and goddesses of Greek myth), “Lest any of these comparisons might carry a hint of unfaithful loving, Baudri, in three refrain-like couplets, addresses her who is Constancy personified.”49 Indeed, in the three couplets to which Dronke alludes, Baudri calls Constance by name three times, each time in the same metrical position in the hexameter line and followed by a form of possum for added emphasis:

48 Conversely, even if it could be demonstrated that Constance is entirely fictive, this would not necessarily mean that she must be read as an allegory. And if we do assume that she is real, Baudri’s allegorization of a real woman could arguably be seen as a means of depriving her of agency, in that he takes a real person with her own thoughts and motivations and reduces her to a literary trope whose function he, as the initiator of the poetic exchange, controls.

49 Dronke, Women Writers, 87. The couplets in question are c.200.29-34. Dronke, however, believes not only that Constance is a real woman, but that she wrote her poem herself and that it reflects her true feelings of affection for Baudri. He therefore does not actually read the poem allegorically in any sense; see Woman Writers, 84-91.
Inmemor esse tui nunquam, Constantia, possum,
Quem tua forma tui non sinit inmemorem;
Inmemor esse mei citius, Constancia, possem,
Quam compellar ego non memor esse tui;
Inmemor esse mei nunquam, Constancia, possis,
Vt michi persoluas foedus amoris idem. (200.29-34)

I can never be forgetful of you, Constance;
Your beauty does not allow me to be forgetful of you;
I could sooner be forgetful of myself, Constance,
Than I could be compelled to be forgetful of you;
May you never be able to be forgetful of me, Constance,
So that you may fulfill the same pact of love for me.

Viewing Constance as a personification of her name is an obvious way of approaching the poems, especially given her oft-professed loyalty towards both Baudri and God, and such an understanding meshes well with Christine Ratkowitsch’s reading. As mentioned above, Ratkowitsch, while acknowledging that Constance may have been a real person and that she may even have exchanged less-impressive poetry with Baudri, believes that Baudri wrote c.201 himself. Accordingly, she sees cc.200 and 201 as Baudri’s attempt at de-eroticizing Ovid’s *Heroides*; by her interpretation, Baudri replaces the Ovidian lovers with a monk and a nun, and thereby replaces *amor carnalis* with *amor spiritualis*. Offermanns’ interpretation is similar; he argues that since Baudri takes care to qualify his erotic language and Ovidian imagery with the assertion that he intends chaste love, he transforms his erotic letter into a letter of purely spiritual love. Both Ratkowitsch and Offermanns therefore interpret the erotic love described in the poems as a metaphor or allegory for spiritual love. Constancy is, no doubt, a feature of spiritual love, but neither Ratkowitsch nor Offermanns makes this connection, and none of the extant

50 Ratkowitsch, “Io und Europa,” 155-156.
51 Ratkowitsch, “Io und Europa,” 155.
scholarship on the poems makes an extended appeal to allegory or attempts to assign signification to the individual characters in the poems.

The name “Constance” is evidently significant, because both Constance and Baudri play repeatedly with the idea of Constance’s constancy. Baudri places great emphasis throughout his poem on the importance of Constance’s adherence to her vows:

In te conciuem uolo uiuere uirginitatem,
In te confringi nolo pudiciciam. (200.39-40)

I want virginity to live in you as a fellow citizen,
I do not want chastity to be shattered in you.

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53 It should be noted that, in addition to allegory, medieval writers also had recourse to the representational concept of figura which, as articulated by Erich Auerbach, involves the prefiguration of one real person or event by another, such as Adam as a figura of Christ (see Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], 47-48). As Peter Dronke notes, in literature this can function similarly to allegory, but it makes a greater allowance for the reality of the person involved, permitting “the simultaneous presentation of vividly individual creations and hidden meanings—meanings that do not conflict with the perception of individuality but are consubstantial with it.” See Dronke, Introduction to *Dante and Medieval Latin Traditions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), viii. So, for example, by Auerbach’s interpretation, in *The Divine Comedy* Beatrice is a figure of divine revelation, but she is also the real person whom Dante knew and thus “her relation to Dante cannot fully be explained by dogmatic considerations” (Auerbach, 75). As will be discussed in Chapter 3, both the literal and figurative meanings are always present in allegory as well, so there is not a substantial difference between the two modes of representation besides the necessity, in the case of figura, that the character be a real person. But if we assume that Constance is real, the theory behind the concept of figura is useful to keep in mind. While of course the Constance in the poem is distinct from the real Constance just as Baudri and his persona are distinct, the characteristics of the real Constance have to be considered when considering the character, even when we consider her allegorically as a figure representing constancy, because all of these aspects play a crucial role in shaping the figure of Constance. We must be careful not to draw conclusions about the real Constance based on her poetic counterpart, but that poetic counterpart, conversely, necessarily derives her meaning in part from what we know about the real Constance. It is also worth asking, however, whether the average medieval reader would have considered Constance to be a real person. My suspicion is that the abundance of letter-poems in Baudri’s collection addressed to well-known historical figures would have kept the possibility, or even probability, of her reality present in a medieval reader’s mind. On the other hand, if a medieval reader considered the poems in relation to the other two sets of paired letters in the collection, both of which portray fictional exchanges between literary figures/deceased historical individuals, the question of Constance’s reality would grow more complicated.

Gerald Bond (*The Loving Subject*, 64) also refers in passing to Baudri’s use of allegory in his poem, but never specifies exactly what he is interpreting as allegorical.

55 Of course, another literary mechanism that would enable this sort of wordplay is Isidorian etymology. As Suzanne Akbari notes, while Isidore and other medieval theorists saw both allegory and etymology as ways of expressing the truth, they understood allegory as an indirect and figurative way of doing so, but etymology as a direct and literal way. See Suzanne Conklin Akbari, *Seeing Through the Veil: Optical Theory and Medieval Allegory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 16. Because Constance’s name literally does mean constancy, the expectation is for this name to reveal the truth behind her character, and Baudri and Constance can be seen as playing with this expectation.

56 This is Bond’s translation; see Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173.
Ipse tue semper sum uirginitatis amator,
Ipse tue carnis diligo mundicia.
Nolo uel ad modicum pro me tua mens uioletur;
Irrita spes esset, irrita suspicio. (200.81-84)

I myself am always a lover of your virginity,
I myself desire the cleanness of your flesh.
I do not want your mind to be violated even a little on my account;
Hope and suspicion would be aroused.

Constance, in turn, emphatically tells Baudri that she is loyal to him:

Ridebunt alii; sed ego fidissima semper
Planctibus et lacrimis participabo tuis.
Ergo dico tibi: me praetermittere noli;
Nullam maioris inuenies fidei. (201.149-52)

Others will laugh; but I, always the most faithful,
Will share in your laments and tears.
Therefore I say to you: do not overlook me;
You will find no woman of greater faith.

But she also professes her devotion to her monastic vows and to God, noting that Baudri’s repeated admonitions are unnecessary since she has been conducting herself chastely of her own accord:

Ipse iubes, dilecte meus, tu precipis, inquam,
Vt castis operam legibus attribuam.
Attribuam: sic ipse iubes, sic ipsa preopto,
Sic hucusque dies disposui propios. (201.109-12)

You yourself order, my beloved, you instruct me, I say,
To devote my effort to the laws of chastity.
I will do so: thus you order, thus I myself choose,
And thus, so far, have I arranged my own days.

Both Baudri and Constance are playing with the significance of the name. Baudri repeatedly addresses his correspondent as “Constancy,” but implicitly, by the very act of writing his poem,
he forces her to be otherwise. He addresses a love letter to “Constancy personified,”57 to borrow Dronke’s phrasing, and despite Baudri’s obsessive insistence on the innocence of his love, his instructions that she be constant to both him and God seem disingenuous in a monastic context. He even undermines his own claim that he desires her to remain chaste when he says that if her mind is corrupted by his letter, hope would be aroused (200.83-84). Constance, in turn, by highlighting in her reply her fidelity to both Baudri and God, shows the extent to which this discourse is problematic, because as a nun, she cannot be constant to both earthly and heavenly romantic relationships at the same time.

Allegory is admittedly a favorite tool of medieval authors, and so the appearance of the name Constance would likely flag the possibility of allegorical interpretation for any medieval reader. But Baudri and Constance in a sense frustrate attempts at a straightforward reading of allegory in the poems because of the way in which they problematize the nature of Constance’s constancy. For the sake of comparison, there is another precedent for the medieval use of the figure of Constance as a quasi-allegory, albeit in the work of Chaucer (which postdates Baudri’s work by almost 300 years).58 “The Man of Law’s Tale” is about a woman named Custance, daughter of the emperor of Rome. Custance is forced to marry the sultan of Syria (who, along with his entourage, converts to Christianity so that he may marry Custance). Custance and the sultan return to Syria to dine with the sultan’s mother, who has all of the new Christians killed at the banquet, leaving only Custance alive. The Sultaness sets Custance adrift in the sea. She eventually lands in Northumberland among pagans, converts some of them, is falsely accused of murder, and is acquitted by the power of God. She marries the king and bears him a son, but is

57 Dronke, Women Writers, 87.
accidentally banished due to the contrivance of the king’s mother. Custance undergoes several other ordeals before returning to Rome, and ultimately the Syrians are slaughtered by the Romans, Custance is reunited with her father and her husband, and her son becomes emperor. Throughout the tale, Custance is repeatedly established as a saintly character who maintains and spreads her faith, continually overcoming adversity. While the tale of course contains multiple levels of meaning and supports numerous interpretations, one obvious and internally consistent way of reading the figure of Custance is as an allegory of the Christian faith triumphing over evil. If Custance represents faith, the symbolism of the other characters is equally clear, as Chaucer’s characterizations of them are relatively one-dimensional and unambiguous. Her foes represent evil, or the enemies of the faith, and her adherents represent the opposite.

The Baudri-Constance correspondence does not function in exactly the same way as Chaucer’s work. It is more reminiscent of the Song of Songs, in that it focuses exclusively on the relationship between a man and a woman. But while both the Song of Songs and the Baudri-Constance correspondence have been interpreted as using the language of erotic love to describe a spiritual relationship, which can be seen as problematic because it sexualizes a non-sexual idea, the Baudri-Constance correspondence further undermines itself by its problematic depiction of the nature of Constance’s constancy. In the Song of Songs, the relationship between the two lovers, while sexualized, is a legitimate relationship. In the Baudri-Constance correspondence, both parties have already vowed themselves to God, so by being constant to each other, they are violating the spirit of their religious constancy. In other words, Constance is an imperfect embodiment of constancy, and this disrupts the reader’s expectation of an allegory with a

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60 Of course Baudri, we will learn, is not actually being constant to Constance, although he tells her he is.
straightforward, moralistic message. As a result, by reading the language of erotic love in the Baudri-Constance correspondence as an unproblematic means of expressing spiritual love, Offermanns and Ratkowitz suppress the complexities of the poems. Understanding Constance allegorically as a figure who is defined by her constancy is essential as this analysis of these poems proceeds, because the necessity that she violate the spirit of her vows in the context of this poetic exchange is the basis of what renders the poems so problematic.

The most obvious source text for these poems is Ovid’s *Heroides*. Baudri and Constance are separated; they write love letters to each other in the tradition of Ovid’s paired letters. In particular, Constance’s letter is thematically reminiscent of Hero’s reply to Leander (*Her.* 19), although it contains only one (dubious) borrowing from the poem: “Tandem fessa dedi nocturno membra sopori” (201.13) could be an allusion to *Her.* 19.56 (“subit furtim lumina fessa sopor”), although it could just as easily come from *Aen.* 3.511 (“fessos sopor”) or 4.522 (“fessa soporem”), both of which are equally unlikely; in fact, Baudri’s own poem 121.11 (“demus membra sopori”) seems more probable than the classical sources. Still, Hero’s letter makes sense as a source for Constance, given the similar situations of the two women: both are cloistered, in a sense, and rely on the initiative of their male correspondents to come and see them; both also describe a forbidden love, and one which would be dangerous to realize. But the influence of the *Ars* and the *Amores* is also visible, and understanding how they are being used is essential if we are to understand the medieval poems. This chapter’s main concern will be the depiction of the power imbalance between Baudri, a ranking church official, and Constance, a mere nun, and the ways in which this imbalance mirrors the power dynamics in the *Ars* and *Amores*. I will build on Sharon James’ work on the power dynamics in Ovid’s poetry. James

61 Tilliette’s commentary notes all of the possible sources for Constance’s verse (Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 294 n.7).
demonstrates, convincingly in my view, that the *puellae* of elegy are independent courtesans, who were in control of their situations, but were also of lesser social status than the wealthy, noble lover-poets. The *puella* has a finite number of years in which to earn the money she will live on for the rest of her life, and is dependent on the business of clients such as the poet-lover. But one of the principal tropes of elegy is that the lover-poet tries to convince the *puella* to trade sex for poetry instead of money. And so begins an elaborate game, in which the *puella* has to find the balance between keeping the *amator* happy while still not giving in to his demands. Ovid’s poems enumerate ways the *puellae* have to act in order to keep the *amator*’s interest. In short, the *amator* attempts to control the *puella*; she must endeavor to resist this control, but her position of social inferiority nonetheless compels her to grant the *amator* some power, in that his desires set the rules of the game.\(^{62}\)

A similar situation is visible in the Baudri-Constance exchange. Baudri is an abbot, a relatively powerful man, writing to a nun. Constance does not have the freedom that Baudri does, and he is in a position of power over her, even though he is not in charge of her specific abbey, by virtue of his rank. Constance herself says as much, mentioning that even the mother superior of her abbey fears Baudri because of his power:\(^{63}\)

\begin{quote}
At tu, qui dominus nullo custode teneris,
Quem, quia multa potes, ipsa nouerca timet,
Maturato gradus et me uisurus adesto;
Sumptus et comites sufficienter habes. (201.159-62)
\end{quote}

But you, who as a lord are held by no guard,
Whom, because you are capable of many things, my stepmother herself fears,

\(^{62}\) James, *Learned Girls*, throughout; see especially page 25.

\(^{63}\) Most readers agree that *nouerca* refers to Constance’s abbess (see Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 191 n. 5; Dronke, *Women Writers*, 90 n.1), but Tilliette suggests that the expression serves merely as a reminder that the poems are an Ovidian fiction (Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 298 n. 56). It seems more likely to me that the word is designed to serve a dual purpose, allowing Constance to discuss her abbess without deviating from the standard vocabulary of her Ovidian context.
Hasten your steps and come to see me;  
You have sufficient funds and companions.

Baudri sends Constance a letter in which he both attempts to control her body with his repeated admonitions of chastity and initiates a blatantly sexual poetic game.\(^{64}\) Perhaps Constance is not obligated to reply; nonetheless, because of Baudri’s rank, she presumably feels some compulsion to do so.\(^{65}\) But Constance’s letter demonstrates that she is wise to Baudri’s game, understands the problematic power dynamics implicated in it, and is able to reply in kind. Moreover, Constance appears to use her letter to gain the upper hand; by replying according to Ovid’s rules, she makes a mockery of Baudri’s poetic persona, using Ovidian allusion to equate him with the self-absorbed and patently ridiculous *amator* of elegy. But this apparent victory is complicated by the fact that Baudri himself has instituted the game, in which case it could be argued that

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\(^{64}\) Indeed, one could argue in a Foucauldian sense that Baudri’s frequent injunctions of chastity serve to heighten the sexuality of his poem, in that prohibition tends to increase desire. See, for example, Volume 1 of *The History of Sexuality*, in which Foucault argues for the link between power and pleasure: “The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report, and family controls may have the over-all and apparent objective of saying no to all wayward or unproductive sexualities, but the fact is that they function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasure and power. The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions, monitors, watches, spies, searches out, palpates, brings to light; and on the other hand, the pleasure that kindles at having to evade this power, flee from it, fool it, or travesty it. The power that lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing; and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, or resisting…. These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries to be crossed, but perpetual spirals of power and pleasure.” (Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction (La volonté de savoir)*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), 45.

\(^{65}\) A possible objection could be raised here regarding the likelihood that Constance’s abbess would have approved of Constance’s sending such a letter. But Belle Stoddard Tuten has done extensive work on the abbey of Le Ronceray (I am assuming that this is indeed where Constance was based), and the various charters and historical records show that the nuns there actually possessed a relatively high degree of autonomy: “The comparative freedom with which Ronceray nuns moved about the city further permitted them to maintain ties with their families and form additional social connections” (Belle Stoddard Tuten, “Holy Litigants: The Nuns of Ronceray d’Angers and their Neighbors, 1028-1200,” [PhD diss., Emory University, 1997], 44). This is not to say that the nuns were under no restrictions. On the contrary, Tuten notes that whereas monks were free to manage monastic holdings outside the cloister themselves, nuns, even those at Le Ronceray, had to rely on lay officers because, while they technically had the option of leaving the cloister to visit these properties, “frequent or unaccompanied travel was not considered proper for religious women, and probably happened less often” (Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 66-67). In general, the women of Le Ronceray enjoyed more freedom than some nuns, and certainly more than the Rule of *Benedict* called for, but they were still under more limitations than their male counterparts, as Tuten’s dissertation demonstrates (in particular, she discusses the abbey’s “relative poverty and lack of power in the ecclesiastical hierarchy” [11]). This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
Constance is merely fulfilling Baudri’s desire to have his persona undermined. Previous scholars have argued that Constance succeeds entirely at evading Baudri’s attempts at domination. I believe that she uses her poem to draw attention to the fact that she is being controlled, and to undermine Baudri’s persona; but at the same time, this is all part of the game that Baudri designed, so she is not escaping from domination at all.

In other words, by replying in accordance with the rules of elegy, Constance equates her relationship to Baudri with that between the elegiac puella and amator. She thereby calls attention to the problematic dynamics that are at play, which could be seen as a means of destabilizing the dominant discourse to which she is subject. But even if she does temporarily destabilize this discourse by calling attention to its flaws, she at no point escapes from it, because the only way she can point to these flaws is from within the confines of the discourse in question. By using the language of elegy to reply to Baudri’s letter, she is on the one hand creating a crack in the dominant ideological construct, but at the same time, she is also ultimately just doing what Baudri wants her to do, in the terms that he wants her to use. Here Judith Butler’s reading of Sophocles’ Antigone provides a helpful point of comparison. Butler discusses how Antigone, in rebelling against Creon’s edict, appropriates the language of the power against which she is rebelling. In speaking with him and claiming her deed, she becomes “manly,” as the chorus, Creon, and messengers note, thus “embodying the norms of the power she opposes.” As Butler notes:

And so, as she begins to act in language, she also departs from herself. Her act is never fully her act, and though she uses language to claim her deed, to assert a “manly” and

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66 Wright and Kong, for example.
68 Butler, Antigone’s Claim, 10.
defiant autonomy, she can perform that act only through embodying the norms of the power she opposes.69

Ultimately, therefore, although Antigone does rebel against Creon’s edict, she never escapes his domination or the domination of the political system at work on her:

Her language is not that of a survivable political agency. Her words, understood as deeds, are chiasmically related to the vernacular of sovereign power, speaking in and against it, delivering and defying imperatives at the same time, inhabiting the language of sovereignty at the very moment in which she opposes sovereign power and is excluded from its terms. What this suggests is that she cannot make her claim outside the language of the state, but neither can the claim she wants to make be fully assimilated by the state.70

She voices her opposition and acts against the rules, and so in a sense she succeeds in partially undermining the system, and perhaps even in creating a subtle shift in the ideological field, but she does not escape its influence or overthrow it entirely. On the contrary, as Butler also notes: “Although her defiance is heard, the price of her speech is death.”71 Of course, Antigone performs an overt act of rebellion, whereas any rebellion we read in Constance’s actions occurs entirely under the guise of complete compliance with Baudri’s rules; but the correspondence between the two heroines’ situations remains a useful point of departure for our analysis of these poems.

Baudri’s emphasis on the importance of Constance’s remaining a virgin is analogous to the behavioral instructions found in Ovid’s poems. Baudri does not merely tell Constance to remain a virgin because she has vowed to do so, but also because it is her virginity that makes her desirable to him. He makes this point more than once in the poem:

Ipse tue semper sum uirginitatis amator,

69 Butler, Antigone’s Claim, 10.
70 Butler, Antigone’s Claim, 28.
71 Butler, Antigone’s Claim, 28.
Ipse tue carnis diligo mundiciam. (200.81-2)

I myself am always a lover of your virginity,
I myself love the cleanness of your flesh.

Si mea uiuere uis, uiuues mea, uiue Diana

If you wish to live as mine, you will live as mine, live as Diana (200.115)

In fact, Baudri’s poem mainly consists of a list of ways in which Constance is pleasing to Baudri, and repeated injunctions that she continue to act in these pleasing ways. Ovid’s love elegy tends to proceed in much the same manner, and Ars 3 is largely devoted to the topic of how women can be pleasing to men (and specifically to the Ovidian persona, since his instructions as praeceptor mesh with the desires of the speaker of his elegies). One particular Ovidian echo further emphasizes the reading of Baudri’s poem within the context of the elegiac tradition. At the beginning of his poem, Baudri states,

Quod sonat iste breuis, amor est et carmen amoris
Inque breuis tactu nulla uenena latent. (200.7-8)

What this letter sings is love and a love song,
And no poisons lurk in the touch of the letter.

The phrase “nulla uenena latent” is reminiscent of a line from Amores 1.8, in which the lena Dipsas tells the puella that in order to trick the man into giving money, she should tell him what he wants to hear. She states:

lingua iuuet mentemque tegat: blandire noceque;
impia sub dulci melle uenena latent. (Am. 1.8.103-4)

Let your tongue be pleasing and let it conceal your mind: flatter and harm;
Wicked poisons lurk under sweet honey.

This line, situated at the beginning of Baudри’s poem, is an indication of how we should understand it as we read further. Where the lena has told the puella that poisons lurk in sweet
language, Baudri assures Constance that no poisons hide in his letter. The use of this line signals that Baudri’s poem should be taken in the tradition of disingenuous love lyric. It also gives the reader pause. Is the poem truly safe, or is Baudri just telling Constance what she wants to hear so that she will do what he wants (in this case, participate in his poetic game)?

Constance’s reply does play along with Baudri’s game; it even contains the exact same number of couplets, demonstrating that she is following his lead. Moreover, Constance displays a thorough knowledge of the rules of Ovidian elegy, picking up on Baudri’s allusions and taking the game a step further. Her letter follows several precepts from the *Ars* and the *Amores*. Constance flatters Baudri, she shows jealousy of potential rivals, she asks him why he has not come to see her, and she reminds Baudri of her overall inaccessibility. She also places God in the role of the elegiac *vir*, using him to remind Baudri of his secondary rights to her attention. In short, she makes Baudri believe he is loved, while limiting her accessibility in order to incite his love further, just as the elegiac *puella* is supposed to do. A closer examination of the poems in question will make this point clear.

In both the *Amores* and the *Ars*, Ovid stresses the idea that *puellae* should consider poetry an acceptable, even desirable, gift in exchange for their love. In the *Ars* he also tells the *puella* that poets desire nothing other than fame:

\[
\text{quid petitur sacris, nisi tantum fama, poetis?}
\]
\[
\text{hoc uotum nostri summa laboris habet. (Ars 3.403-4)}
\]

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72 As Katherine Kong points out, “[Baudri’s] repeated assurances that his words are harmless suggest exactly the opposite, that his words can cause harms that must be assuaged” (Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 33); Baudri further emphasizes the idea with this allusion.

73 Katherine Kong points out that the major themes of the Baudri-Constance correspondence are tropes of verse epistles from this period; she cites as examples the praise of eloquence and beauty, regret at separation, anticipation of a future meeting, and even “Ovidian descriptions and themes” (Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 27). This is undoubtedly true, but the unrelenting Ovidianism of the letters and the manner in which these themes are combined, add up to a product that displays much more than mere adherence to generic tropes (as Kong herself notes and demonstrates; she lists the ways in which the letters diverge from the typical [Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 27-28]).
What do sacred poets seek, besides fame alone?
The whole of our labor has this wish.

Accordingly, in her poem, Constance devotes much space to praising Baudri for his poetic prowess and wisdom, comparing him to the great prose authors of antiquity and to Homer:

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O quantus uates, quam preeditus iste poeta,
        O quam diuino quelibet ore canit,
Quis sapor in dictis, o que sapientia uerbi,
        O quam discretus iste uir in calamo.
<Et> reor in factis est uir discretior iste;
        Omnia prudenter et facit et loquitur.
Hunc si Roma sibi quondam meruisset alnumum,
        Iste Cato rigidus, Tullius iste foret.
Hunc facerent uerba Ciceronem, facta Catonem;
        Multos iste ualet solus Aristotiles.
Iste uidetur et est et dictur alter Homerus;
        O quanta uersus commoditate canit. (201.21-32)
```

Oh how great a prophet, how gifted is this poet,
Oh, with what divine speech he sings whatever he sings,
What taste there is in his sayings, oh, what wisdom is in his words,
Oh how distinguished this man is in his pen.
<And> I think that this man is more distinguished in his deeds;
He does and says all things prudently.
If Rome had once deserved such a foster child for itself,
This man would have been rigid Cato, he would have been Cicero.
His words would make him a Cicero, and his deeds a Cato;
This man alone is worth many Aristotles.
This man seems to be, and is, and is called another Homer;
Oh, with what great appropriateness he sings his verses.

As already mentioned, in the Amores, the lena Dipsas advises the puella to flatter her lover in order to get what she wants from him (Am. 1.8.103-4). Of course, in this case the advice comes not from the Ovidian persona, but from a lena, whose advice has a very different end. In Ars 3, the praeceptor advises the puella how to get and keep lovers, with transparently selfish motives, since he advises her to accept poetry in exchange for her favors. The lena, a former prostitute

herself, teaches the *puella* how to make as much money as possible, with the goal of helping her\(^75\) (it is hinted that her motivations are not entirely unselfish either; the *lena* says the girl will be grateful for her advice, suggesting that she hopes to earn a handout, and also says explicitly that she herself will not be poor if the girl becomes rich).\(^76\) But regardless of source, the precept is clear: in order to have a successful relationship, the *puella* must tell the *amator* what he wants to hear. Constance takes this advice to heart; she devotes in succession thirty-nine of the poem’s 178 verses (roughly one-fifth) to praising Baudri’s skill and beauty. Furthermore, her praise is excessive almost to the point of absurdity, giving the impression, if not almost demanding, that it is facetious;\(^77\) read in this way, the potential insincerity and artificiality of Constance’s poem begins to emerge. In the *Amores*, Dipsas makes it clear that flattery is used to deceive the *amator*; it is not a reflection of the *puella*’s true feelings. Baudri has already hinted at this idea by quoting the Dipsas poem in his own letter; Constance picks up on his allusion and makes use of the same precept. In this Ovidian context, Constance’s flattery equates Baudri with the Ovidian *amator* who can be manipulated by empty praise. Constance, in turn, is equated with the *puella*, who plays a game by necessity and whose real emotions never come into play.\(^78\)

Accessibility plays a key role in the dynamic between Ovid’s *puella* and *amator*. In Book 3 of the *Ars*, the *praecceptor* tells the *puella* to make herself inaccessible sometimes, because this will inflame the desire of the *amator*:

\[
\text{quod datur ex facili, longum male nutrit amorem:}
\text{miscenda est laetis rara repulsa iocis.}
\]

\(^75\) On this see Gibson, “*Ars Amatoria*” Book 3, 19-21.

\(^76\) James, *Learned Girls*, 64; *Amores* 1.8.28; 1.8.105-7.

\(^77\) Peter Dronke has noted this as well: “The hyperboles of praise save themselves from being infatuation by always verging on humour…” (*Women Writers*, 88).

\(^78\) See James, *Learned Girls*, esp. 204, where she points out that the *amator* wishes the girl to show emotion so that he can feel as if he has control over her.
That which is given easily, fosters long love poorly:
The occasional refusal should be mixed with happy games.
Let him lie before the doors, let him say, ‘cruel door’
And let him do many things submissively, and many threateningly.
We don’t tolerate sweet things; we should be revived with bitter drink;
Often a small boat perishes when overwhelmed by favorable winds.
This is what doesn’t permit wives to be loved:
Men come together with them whenever they want.
Add a door, and let a doorman say to you with harsh speech,
‘You can’t,’ and love will touch you too, because you are shut out.

The same sentiment is found in Amores 1.8:79

saepe nega noctes: capitis modo finge dolorem;
et modo, quae causas praebat, Isis erit. (Am. 1.8.73-4)

Deny nights often: sometimes feign a headache;
And sometimes Isis will furnish an excuse.

Both the *lena* and the Ovidian *praecceptor* stress that if entry is always granted, it will cease to be desirable; periodic refusal is a must. As a nun, Constance’s situation is not entirely analogous; she can never grant Baudri access in the way meant by Ovid, and she cannot control his access to her in the same way the *puella* can. But she nonetheless finds a way to play with this idea, emphasizing instead the fact that he could come and see her, but that they could not be alone together:

Hoc iacet in gremio dilecti scedula nostri;
Ecce locata meis subiacet uberibus.

---

79 And in other poems in the *Amores*, such as 2.19; but I cite 1.8 because it gives instructions to the *puella*, whereas 2.19 is addressed to a *vir*. 
O utinam noster nunc hic dilectus adesset,
   Qui sensum proprii carminis exprimeret.
At circumstarent comites michi uel duo uel tres,
   Quamuis ipse sue sufficiat fidei;
Ne tamen ulla foret de suspitione querela,
   Saltem nobiscum sit mea fida soror.
Clara dies esset nec solos nos statuisset
   Hoc fortuna loco, sed magis in triuio.  (201.69-76)

The letter of our beloved lies in this lap;
   Look, it lies placed under my breasts.
Oh, would that my beloved were here now
   To explain the meaning of his own poem.
But two or three companions would stand around me,
   Even though he himself would suffice for his trustworthiness.
Still, lest there be any accusation of suspicion,
   Let my faithful sister be with us, at least.
The day would be bright, and fortune would not have put us
   All by ourselves in this place, but rather out in public.

By reminding Baudri of her status as accessible yet inaccessible, Constance is adapting the
Ovidian precepts to fit her own circumstances. He is entirely free to be in her company, but
because any time spent with her would be chaperoned, Baudri can never have true access to
Constance; presumably, this setback is meant to have the same effect on Baudri as periodic
exclusion has on the Ovidian amator.

Of course, both the Ovidian praeceptor and the lena also admonish the puella to alternate
exclusion with episodes of access, so that the lover does not become too frustrated. Obviously,
Constance cannot grant Baudri literal access in the way a puella would. But, as Katherine Kong
has pointed out, “[Constance] paints the scene of her reading, inviting the reader into her room—
a nun’s room being a place to which outsiders do not normally have access.”
Moreover, before reminding Baudri that their visits would be supervised, Constance describes herself fondling
Baudri’s letter, a stand-in for Baudri himself, and placing it underneath her breasts. This is in

80 Kong, Lettering the Self, 45.
fact the second time she has described herself in this manner; the first comes at the beginning of
the poem, in several iterations:

Perlegi uestram studiosa indagine cartam
Et tetigi nuda carmina uestra manu.  (201.1-2)

I’ve read through your letter with studious examination,
And I’ve touched your poem with my bare hand.

Composui gremio posuie sub ubere leuo
Scedam, quod cordi iunctius esse ferunt.  (201.9-10)

I gathered the sheet in my lap, and I placed it under my left breast,
Which they say is more closely linked to the heart.

Tandem fessa dedi nocturno membra sopori;
Sed nescit noctem sollicitatus amor.  (201.13-14)

At last I gave my tired limbs over to the night’s sleep;
But anxious love is ignorant of the night.

In somnis insomnis eram, quia pagina uestra
Scilicet in gremio uiscera torruerat.  (201.17-18)

In sleep I was sleepless, because of course your page
In my lap had burned my insides.

By leading into her description of their imagined meeting with sexually charged language, only
to undermine the idea of this meeting with the reminder that it would not be unsupervised,
Constance creates a similar effect. With her explicit language and depiction of her bedroom she
does grant Baudri access, figuratively speaking. But then she takes it away by reminding him
that physically, she will never be fully accessible to him.\(^8\)

\(^8\) In discussing the opening of Constance’s poem, Wright points out that “In other epistolary discourse of desire, the
letter of the beloved is greeted by the lover as the presence but absence of the beloved. By stroking the page with
her hand, and placing this tactile reminiscence of her beloved in her bosom, and having an orgasm because of it,
Constance is performing an extremely bold maneuver with the topos which Baudry had suggested to her” (Wright,
162). If we interpret Constance’s wakeful night as an orgasm induced by Baudri’s letter (and this is not much of an
interpretive stretch at all), then the figurative access that Constance is granting is all the more explicit.
Related to this theme is that of the rival, a key player in elegy to whom Ovid allot a great deal of space. The subject of the rival comes up in both *Ars* 3 and *Amores* 1.8. In *Ars* 3, the *praeeceptor* tells the *puella* not to let new lovers perceive a rival, for it will frighten them off, but that once a relationship is established, the rival is necessary to keep it going:

```
dum cadit in laqueos, captus quoque nuper, amator
solum se thalamos speret habere tuos;
postmodo riualem partitaque foedera lecti
sentiat: has artes tolle, senescet amor. (Ars 3.591-94)
```

While he’s falling into your snares, and likewise when he’s just been caught,
Let a lover expect that he alone has your bed;
Afterwards, let him perceive a rival and that the treaties of the bed are shared:
Remove these stratagems, and love will waste away.

Dipsas, the *lena*, also emphasizes the necessity of a rival:

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ne securus amet nullo riuale caueto:
non bene, si tollas proelia, durat amor. (Am. 1.8.95-6)
```

Beware lest he love securely, with no rival:
Love does not endure well if you remove battles.

Constance does not give any indication that Baudri needs to worry about other men as rivals for her affection (quite the contrary, actually); but since she is a nun, there is an automatic rival whom she makes sure to mention: God. This is to be expected, and I do not wish to argue that the only reason she mentions her obligation to God is to make Him into an Ovidian *vir*; nonetheless, God does perform this function quite neatly within her poem. In mentioning her duties to God, Constance reminds Baudri that while they are able to engage in this poetic game, her true obligation is to God, with whom Baudri cannot compete:

```
Casta fui, sum casta modo, uolo uiuere casta;
O utinam possim uiuere sponsa Dei.
Non ob id ipsa tamen uestrum detestor amorem;
Seruos sponsa Dei debet amare sui.
Tu sponsi seruus, tu frater tuque coheres,
Tu quoque, tu sponsi dignus amore mei.
```
Sponsa sui sponsi uenerari debet amicos;
     Ergo te ueneror, te uigilanter amo. (201.113-20)

I have been chaste, I am chaste now, and I wish to live chastely;
     Oh, would that I could live as the spouse of God.
Nevertheless, I don’t hate your love on this account;
     God’s spouse should love His servants.
You’re the servant of my spouse, you’re brother and you’re coheir,
     You likewise are worthy of my spouse’s love.
A wife should revere her husband’s friends;
     Therefore I revere you, I love you vigilantly.

The vocabulary of marriage is conveniently common both to the monastic context and to the relationship between the elegiac *puella* and *vir*. Sharon James has shown that the *vir* of elegy is not in fact the *puella*’s husband, but rather her primary customer. Baudri may or may not have understood the Ovidian *vir* in such a way, but this is irrelevant because it would have been clear to him that the *vir* was a man who had some sort of primary claim on the *puella*’s affections, whether he was her husband or someone else. In Constance’s case, God really is her husband, as far as she is concerned, but the key point is that just as the *puella*’s primary responsibility is to her *vir*, so Constance’s is to God. The elegiac *amator* must compete with the *vir* for time with the *puella*. Constance’s *sponsus*, a decidedly higher authority, is a more problematic foil for Baudri. Constance says that being married to God does not preclude her love for Baudri; quite to the contrary, she uses their shared monastic devotion as a means of rationalizing their love. But she makes it clear that Baudri’s importance is secondary. She does not dwell on the point, but it is another parallel between her poems and her Ovidian models. In reminding Baudri both that he cannot have free access to her and that her devotion to him is only secondary to her devotion to God, Constance plays the elegiac role expected of her, reminds the reader of the problematic nature of the exchange (despite her clever rationalization), and calls

attention to the complicated power dynamics underlying the letters. In Ovid’s poems, alternation between access and exclusion, as well as the flaunting or disguising of the existence of a rival, is part of an elaborate game between the amator and the puella. The puella theoretically has control over whether or not to admit the amator, but in practice he exercises control over her behavior in this regard, because she is forced to grant or deny access strategically, according to the dictates of the amator’s desire. Constance’s play with the ideas of rivals and access therefore allude to this power-play. Her letter alternates between lasciviousness and chastity in ways designed to arouse Baudri; her imitation of Ovid here, by reminding the reader of the power imbalance in Ovid’s own poems, serves to highlight the imbalance inherent in her own situation, as she, too, is forced into a game in which Baudri has set the rules.

In the Ars, perhaps the most important piece of advice Ovid has to offer is that the puella must make the amator believe he is loved:

```
efficite (et facile est) ut nos credamus amari:  
prona uenit cupidis in sua uota fides.  
spectet amabilius iuuenem et suspiret ab imo  
femina, tam sero cur ueniatque roget;  
accedant lacrimae, dolor et de paelice fictus,  
et laniet digitis illius ora suis.  
iamdudum persuasus erit; miserebitur ultro  
et dicet ‘cura carpitur ista mei.’  
praecipue si cultus erit speculoque placebit,  
posse suo tangi credet amore deas. (Ars 3.673-82)
```

Make us (and it’s easy) believe we are loved:  
Belief comes readily to those who are eager for their own desires.  
Let a woman look at a youth rather lovingly, and let her sigh deeply,  
And let her ask why he comes so late;  
Let tears be added, and feigned grief about a mistress,  
And let her tear his face with her fingers.  
He will immediately be persuaded; moreover, he’ll pity her  
And he’ll say, ‘this woman is consumed with care for me.’  
Especially if he is elegant and pleasing to the mirror.

83 James, Learned Girls, 137.
He will believe that goddesses can be touched by love for him.

Dipsas makes a similar point, albeit in fewer words, saying, “nec nocuit simulatus amor: sine credat amari” (nor does feigned love do any harm; allow him to believe he is loved) (Am. 1.8.71). In fact, extreme self-control, to the point of feigning tears and controlling blushes, is of the utmost importance; Dipsas tells the puella that blushes are only good if they are feigned, and that real emotion can get her into trouble (Am. 1.8.35-6). In the world of Ovidian elegy, the girl’s real emotions are irrelevant. Her job is to make as much money as possible, and to act in whatever way is necessary to accomplish this goal.\textsuperscript{84} It is here that power comes into play, since it is the amator whose desires dictate the way in which the puella must behave.

In her letter, Constance follows the precepts of Ars 3.673-82 very closely. She does not, of course, scratch Baudri’s face, since he is not physically present. But she obeys those instructions that it is possible for her to follow in letter form. In particular, she asks why he has gone so long without coming to visit her; this is of course part of the tradition of the Heroides, but it is relevant in the context of the Ars as well. Constance’s unhappiness at Baudri’s absence is the main theme of her letter. It is worth citing these portions of the poem at length in order to show the progression of Constance’s complaints:

\begin{quote}
O michi si dabit tantum spectare prophetam,
O michi si dabitur colloquii morula. (201.19-20)

Oh, if only it would be granted to me just to look at the prophet,
Oh, if only a small delay for conversation would be granted.

Versibus hunc uideo, namque aliter nequeo.
Ve michi, cum nequeam, quem diligo, sepe uidere;
Me miseram, nequeo cernere, quod cupio.
Afficiar desiderio precibusque diurnis;
In cassum fundo uota precesque Deo.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{84} This is thoroughly discussed in James’ book \textit{Learned Girls}.  

84 This is thoroughly discussed in James’ book \textit{Learned Girls}. 

Annus abit, ex quo, quem quero, uidere nequiiui;  
Attamen ipsius carmina sepe lego.  

I see him in his verses, for otherwise I can’t see him.  
Woe is me, since I can’t often see the man I love;  
Wretched me, I can’t see what I desire.  
I am weakened from desire and with daily prayers;  
In vain I pour forth vows and prayers to God.  
A year has passed in which I have not been able to see the man whom I seek;  
But still, I often read his poems.

Cur ad nos uenias, occasio multa paratur:  
Ad quem sermo michi, presul in urbe manet.  
Clerus me mandat, abbates, ille uel ille;  
Me trahit ad comitem res facienda michi.  
Demens quem doceo? me debes ipse docere.  
Si tibi causa deest, negligis, ut uenias.  
Cura tibi de me non est, nisi ueneris ad me,  
Nec tua uel modicus uiscera tangit amor.  

Many a pretext is contrived as to why you should come to us:  
“A bishop with whom I need to speak is staying in the city;  
The clergy commands me, or the abbots, or this man, or that man;  
A matter I have to attend to draws me to the count.”  
Fool! Whom am I teaching? You yourself should be teaching me.  
If you lack a reason for coming, you’re being negligent.  
You don’t care about me, if you won’t come to me.  
Nor does even a little love touch your heart.

She begins by lamenting the fact that she cannot see him, but by the end she changes her focus, attributing Baudri’s absence to his lack of initiative, and finding fault with him for it.  

85 Although there are not any direct correspondences between the two texts, Constance’s affective language in a religious context cannot help but remind the reader of the *Song of Songs*. As many have noted, Alcuin of York, an abbot himself, wrote poems containing similarly eroticized language, but his poems were more directly modeled after the *Song of Songs*. Stephen Jaeger sees Alcuin’s poems as falling squarely and unproblematically within the tradition of the “cult of friendship” (see Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999], 43-50), but John Boswell argues that some of his language “can scarcely be called anything but passionate” (Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980], 190). The habitual allegorizing of the *Song of Songs* in the Middle Ages is indicative of the text’s problematic nature, and Alcuin’s adoption of its language in arguably homoerotic poems both problematizes his own poetry and calls the proper interpretation of the biblical text into question. By evoking the *Song of Songs* in a poem whose main intertext is Ovidian, Constance even further destabilizes the interpretive boundary between carnal and spiritual love, in both her poem and the biblical text.
follows the praeceptor’s next suggestion, namely that of feigning jealousy over an imagined mistress. Baudri’s letter includes Baudri’s assertion that Constance is the only woman to whom he writes (200.168). Anyone who has read the rest of the collection knows that this is untrue; this mirrors the situation in Amores 2.7, in which Ovid denies to a suspicious Corinna that he has cheated on her, only to give himself away in 2.8, in which he berates Corinna’s slave for having allowed Corinna to find out that he slept with her. Peter Dronke observes that “It is even possible that Baudri placed his fib deliberately, knowing he would be caught out on it, giving away the game of his ‘exclusive’ loves, his amatory poses.”87 I would argue that this is almost undeniably the case. He certainly crafts his collection to ensure that the reader is entirely privy to his persona’s deceits; indeed, his other letters to/about women precede this letter in his collection, and are almost all grouped together (cc. 134-142; 153 is separate, but still precedes the Baudri-Constance paired letters).88 The adventure of attempting to hide the existence of a rival from one’s mistress, all the while expecting to be caught and looking forward to the girl’s subsequent anger, is part of the game of elegy, and Constance is well aware of this fact.89

Constance brings up her suspicions of a rival twice. In both cases, she backpedals slightly after suggesting the possibility of Baudri’s infidelity, assuring him that she does trust him, and that her accusations are the result of her extreme depth of emotion:

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86 Again, complaints of this sort are central to the Heroides, but they can be understood with reference to the Ars as well.
87 Dronke, Women Writers, 87.
88 With the exception of the problematic c.207, directed at an unnamed (and quite possibly imaginary) woman (I am excluding his epitaphs for women from consideration here, since they are an entirely different sort of poem).
89 See Ars 2.391-408, in which the praeceptor advises men on how to keep the puella from perceiving her rival; Ars 2.409-414, where he says that if the girl does find out, the solution is to deny it and to get her to sleep with him, which will make her forget her anger; and Ars 2.445-54, in which the praeceptor changes his mind and advises men to let their girls perceive a rival, because it will make them jealous and therefore more desirable. See James, “Women Reading Men,” 153-154 on this point.
Forsitan idcirco, miseram me, carmina misit,
   Que me corrigerent, que michi uerba darent,
Vt se dissimulet, ut me sua littera fallat,
   Leniat ut nostrum callida carta metum.
Heu, quid non timeam? nunquam secura quiescam;
   Nec michi tutus amor, nec michi tuta fides.
Dum noua dat precepta michi, plus ipsa fatigor;
   Nunquam non possum suspiciosa fore.
Hunc timeo rapiat, dum nescio, quilibet error;
   Omnis uirgo meis inuidet auspiciis.
Nulla quidem uirgo me fortunatior esset,
   Si michi tutus amor tutaque pacta forent.
Firma fides nostrum quamuis michi firmet amicum,
   Credere non possum tuta sue fidei;
Nec fidei discredo sue nichil inde timendum,
   Perdere sed timeo, quod uehementer amo. (201.83-98)

Perhaps he sent his poem for this reason, wretched me,
   To correct me, to give me empty words,
So that he could disguise himself, so that his letter would deceive me,
   So that his cunning letter would alleviate my fear.
Alas, what should I not fear? I will never rest securely;
   Neither my love nor my faith will ever be safe.
When he gives new precepts to me, I am more tormented;
   I can’t ever not be suspicious.
I fear that some straying may snatch him away, while I’m unaware;
   Every virgin envies my good fortune.
Indeed, no girl would be luckier than I am
   If my love and my agreements were safe.
Although firm faith affirms my friend for me,
   I cannot safely trust in his fidelity;
Nor do I distrust his faith, in which there is nothing to be feared,
   But I fear to lose that which I vehemently love.

Virginis alterius sic nomen abominor, ut sim
   Virginis ad nomen frigidior glacie.
Sed, sicut tibi uis, credam credamque uolenti,
   Credam dictanti; tu quoque crede michi. (201.133-36)

I hate the name of another girl so much, that I am
   Colder than ice at the name of any girl.
But, as you wish, I will trust you, and I will trust you wanting me to,
   And I will trust you writing to me; you likewise, trust me.
The idea of knowing that her jealousy is irrational but being unable to stop feeling it because of the depth of her love is one of Constance’s greater debts to Hero’s letter (Her. 19.107-109). But it is also in keeping with the praecceptor’s advice about jealousy in the Ars, namely, not to go overboard because it gets tedious:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{sed te, quaecumque est, moderate iniuria turbet,} \\
\text{nec sis audita paelice mentis inops,} \\
\text{nec cito credideris...} \quad (Ars 3.683-85)
\end{align*}
\]

But whatever it is, let injury disturb you moderately,
And don’t lose your head if you hear about a mistress,
And don’t believe too quickly...

He emphasizes this point with a long digression about the story of Procris, Cephalus and Zephyr, warning that it is dangerous for a puella to believe the amator has another mistress. But, in Ars Book 2, the praecceptor tells his male pupils that it is desirable to have a girl who is jealous:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{o quater et quotiens numero comprendere non est} \\
\text{felicem, de quo laesa puella dolet!} \quad (Ars 2.447-8)
\end{align*}
\]

Oh, four times happy, and more than can be counted,
The man about whom a wounded girl grieves!

Constance finds the balance between the two extremes in her own poem. She does express concern about a rival. But she tempers her jealousy by assuring Baudri that she knows he is not really cheating, and explains her concerns as an indication of just how much she loves him. Constance is following Ovidian instructions which say that she must manipulate the man into believing he is loved, controlling and feigning her own emotions to the precise specification of the praecceptor amoris, who instructs her in the behaviors that the amator will find most appealing. Again, we are reminded that the puella, in this case Constance, is responding not necessarily out of desire, but because she is constricted by Baudri’s position of power over her.
Various scholars have argued that Constance’s letter, in imitating the forlorn voices of the women in Ovid’s *Heroides*, gives the impression of serious, heart-felt emotion. Some have observed that this seems incongruous in the face of Baudri’s letter which, although clearly also meant to be taken in the tradition of the *Heroides* inasmuch as it is a paired letter sent to an absent woman who is addressed in the terms of a lover, has little else in common with those poems. But Baudri’s insistence on his poem’s status as a game, his playful tone, and his preoccupation with controlling and teaching (aspects which others have also noted) are all more in keeping with Ovid’s *Ars* and *Amores* than with Ovid’s other poetry. In light of such parallels, Constance’s letter is much less jarring, because in fact it follows the conventions of Ovidian elegy for the behavior of the *puella*. On the one hand, then, Constance is just playing along with Baudri’s game in the way expected of her. But in so doing, she is calling attention to the problematic power dynamics of the exchange, because the game Baudri has initiated is entrenched in Ovidian tradition, which highlights such issues. At the very least, Constance is making visible what ideology attempts to occlude. And in this, she goes further than Ovid does in the *Ars* and *Amores*, since his *puellae* never speak in their own voices.

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90 e.g. Dronke, *Women Writers*, 87-88; Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 45.

91 “Rather than attempting to imitate the voices of the male lovers in Ovid’s *Heroides*, or the awed tones of Fortunatus to his spiritual superior, Radegunde, Baudry takes the stance of Sts. Jerome and Ambrose in their treatises on virginity” (Wright, 160); “[Constance’s] repeated demands [for a visit] exceed the self-proclaimed playful tone of Baudri’s letter by demanding specific extra-textual action of dubious moral character…. Casting Constance’s reply as a medieval extension of the *Heroides* tradition would account for its lamenting tone, yet its context suggests a different reading: Carmen 201 is not a standalone poem. It responds to a carefully crafted letter that is highly sensitive to tone and anxious to control its interpretation. Constance does not return a light-hearted reply to Carmen 200, a letter-poem insistent on its playfulness. Rather, she engages in a more serious kind of play…” (Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 41).

92 Wright and Kong, e.g.

93 Although even if they did, there would still be the problem of transvestite ventriloquism; and the *Ars* and *Amores* do a very good job of highlighting the troubling dynamics of the *puellalamator* relationship even without ever allowing the *puellae* to speak for themselves. On elegiac female speech, see now Sharon L. James, “*Ipsa Dixerat*: Women’s Words in Roman Love Elegy,” *Phoenix* 64, no. 3-4 (2010): 314-344.
Linda Hutcheon's work on parody affords another helpful way of understanding the use of Ovid in these poems. Hutcheon defines parody as “imitation with critical difference,” arguing that a work does not have to be humorous or disparaging of its source material to constitute parody. I do not believe that Baudri’s and Constance's poems constitute Ovidian parody so much as they do Ovidian allusion (by Hutcheon's definition, allusion is, like parody, a means of “simultaneous activation of two texts,” but allusion “does so mainly through correspondence--not difference, as is the case with parody”). Nonetheless, some of her points about parody also apply to allusion, and are pertinent here. Hutcheon notes what she calls a “central paradox of parody: its transgression is always authorized. In imitating, even with critical difference, parody reinforces.” In other words, even a parody that mocks its source material still “inscribes the mocked conventions onto itself, thereby guaranteeing their continued existence.” Parody incorporates and preserves, and thereby legitimizes, to a certain extent, its source material; the same is true of allusion to an even greater degree, since transgression is not necessarily part of allusion. By alluding to Ovidian elegy in his own poems, Baudri perpetuates the power dynamic found in Ovid’s works. Whether or not we ultimately read Ovid’s depiction of these dynamics as subversive, both his and Baudri’s poems depict a situation in which a man dominates a woman, and in recreating, even if with the intent of problematizing, such a situation, the poets are still reinforcing it. Constance, in turn, by incorporating Ovid into her reply,

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95 Hutcheon, *Parody*, passim; see 50-68, for example.
97 Hutcheon, *Parody*, 43.
99 Hutcheon, *Parody*, 75.
demonstrates that she is still ultimately inscribed in an oppressive discourse, whether or not the poems in question have the effect of destabilizing this discourse.

The poems, and their characterization of Baudri, have implications for Baudri’s poetic persona, especially since Baudri cultivates the same image in his poems to boys (as will be discussed in the following chapter). But if the attempt to exert an inappropriate degree of control over his inferiors constitutes a recurring theme in Baudri’s poetry as a whole, it makes sense to wonder about his other poems to women. His collection contains several, and they all share common features, such as injunctions to remain virginal or demands for poetic exchange or feedback. Baudri’s desire for poetic exchange with his female correspondents is one of his biggest preoccupations; he values these women for their intellectual capabilities. But as it happens, none of the poems display the same degree of flirtatious impropriety as does the paired correspondence with Constance. Issues of control are still at the forefront of many of these poems, but for the most part, Baudri does not problematize his commands with Ovidian allusion and sexualized language to the extent that he does in c.200. The situation is somewhat complicated by the fact that not all of Baudri’s female correspondents are his social inferiors; two of them, Adela of Blois and Cecilia of Normandy, are the daughters of William the Conqueror. Cecilia also happens to be a nun—her father offered her to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, in Caen, at an early age after his victory at Hastings—and so his poem to her (c.136, which praises her virtue and exhorts her to be a good nun) is entirely appropriate. While his overt message is much the same as that in the letter to Constance, Baudri’s language in his poem to Cecilia is much less ambiguous:

100 Of course, it makes sense that he values these women for their learnedness, because there would be little point in sending clever Ovidian poetry to women who lacked the capacity to understand his cleverness.

Regia uirgo uale, uale, inquam, regia uirgo,  
Virgo Romuleis tunc anteferenda puellis,  
Virgo uirginibus nunc anteferenda coeuis,  
Quam pater augustus equauit regibus Anglis,  
Quam species forme cum virginitatis amore  
Et morum probitas ingenti laude uenustat,  
Quam satis exornat sua sollicitudo legendi,  
Quam patre nobilior sponsus sibi gratificauit.  
Ergo placere tuo, uirgo, contende marito:  
Nam neque nupsisti quasi cuilibet e grege sponso,  
Sed magis egregio, cuius te forma perennet,  
Quod tibi, que multa est, librorum lingua loquetur.  

Royal virgin, be well, be well, I say, royal virgin,  
Virgin who would in the past have been preferred over all Roman girls,  
Virgin who now must be preferred to all virgins of her same age,  
Whom her august father made equal to the English kings,  
Whom the beauty of her form, together with her love of virginity  
And probity of morals, adorns with great praise,  
Whom her care for reading sufficiently embellishes,  
Whom her spouse nobler than her father makes pleasing to himself.  
Therefore, virgin, try to please your husband:  
For you did not just marry any husband out of the flock,  
But rather an extraordinary one, whose beauty should preserve you,  
Which the language of books, of which there is much, will tell you.

Unlike in the paired correspondence with Constance, here Baudri does not dwell on Cecilia’s physical beauty; he praises her character, beauty, learning, and lineage equally, and then tells her to try to be worthy of her divine husband. In the remaining lines of the poem Baudri offers his service to Cecilia and asks her to say hello to another nun in her abbey and to write back. He never proclaims the innocence of his correspondence, because there is no need. The poem is short, to the point, and devoid of the elements that render his letter to Constance so problematic.

He addresses two poems to Adela, one of which is the famous c.134, a 1368-verse description of the contents of Adela’s bedroom (and ecphrases of the various works of art found
Of course, the fact that Baudri can describe the inside of Adela’s bedroom at all, let alone in such detail, is potentially suggestive (what was he doing in there?). Baudri does acknowledge that he made up the whole description, albeit at the very end of the poem:

Ecce coaptavit thalamum tibi pagina nostra
Inque tui laudem sollicitata fuit.
Nempe decet talis talem thalamus comitissam.
At plus quod decuit quam quod erat cecini. (134.1351-1354)

Behold, my page has fitted the bedroom to you
And it was solicited for your praise.
Of course such a bedroom befits such a countess.
But I have sung more what was suitable than what was true.

Nonetheless, his brief disclaimer after such a lengthy description is not thoroughly convincing (and he never actually says he has not been in the room; rather, he says his song does not describe her room as it actually is). At any rate, as Thomas Moser notes:

Whatever the courtly situation in Blois at the turn of the century, Baudri feels free, in his play with classical Ovidiana and classical wisdom—in a poem designed to compliment the lady for her pedigree, her morals, her learning, and her literary sensibilities—to turn the countess into an eroticized object of male desire at the same time that he creates her as an icon of human understanding.103

The poem is no doubt playful and it certainly does depict Adela as an “eroticized object of male desire.” Moser cites, for example, Baudri’s hint that many of Adela’s admirers come to see her


103 Moser, 61-62.
in the hopes of procuring sexual favors from her, even though he also makes it clear that their
efforts avail them nothing:

Hanc morum probitas, hanc castum pectus honestat,
Nobilis hanc soboles ornat amorque uiri.
Sunt tamen et multi, quos commendare puellis
Et decus et probitas et sua forma queat,
Hanc qui temptassent: sed quid temptasse iuuaret?
Seruat pacta sui non uiolanda thori.
Hanc decor insolitus et inequiperanda uenustas
Commendatque simul gratia colloqui.
Sunt tamen et multi, quos commendare puellis
Et decus et probitas et sua forma queat,
Hanc qui temptassent: sed quid temptasse iuuaret?
Seruat pacta sui non uiolanda thori.
Hanc decor insolitus et inequiperanda uenustas
Commendatque simul gratia colloqui.
Sunt tamen et multi, quos commendare puellis
Et decus et probitas et sua forma queat,
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Sunt tamen et multi, quos commendare puellis
Et decus et probitas et sua forma queat,
Hanc qui temptassent: sed quid temptasse iuuaret?
Seruat pacta sui non uiolanda thori.
Hanc decor insolitus et inequiperanda uenustas
Commendatque simul gratia colloqui.
Sunt tamen et multi, quos commendare puellis
Et decus et probitas et sua forma queat,
Hanc who tempt her: but what would it accomplish to tempt her?
She keeps the inviolable pacts of her marriage.
Her unusual honor and unequaled loveliness
Commend her, along with the grace of her conversation.
But who would be able to soften such hard flint?
They look at her without result: but it is pleasing to look.
They think of great rewards, while they feed on empty hope,
And they irritate their eyes by gaping at her.
Nor is it any wonder, since her beauty shines so greatly,
That she should be placed over all maidens.\(^{104}\)

C.134 is a special case, and is not analogous to Baudri’s shorter letter-poems; nonetheless, it
does sometimes fall into a tone similar to that found in the Constance correspondence, but by no
means to the same degree.

\(^{104}\) Bond also discusses this excerpt; see *The Loving Subject*, 150-51.
In his other poem to Adela (c.135, “Ad eandem pro cappa quam sibi promiserat”), Baudri requests the gift of a cloak in return for his poem. The request is repeated from the end of c.134, in which Baudri also asks for a reward for his poem:

Cartula nuda uenit, quia nudi cartula uatis:
   Da nude cappam, sique placet, tunicam.  (134. 1357-58)

My little paper comes nude because it is the paper of a nude poet:
   Since it is nude, give it a cloak, and if it’s pleasing, a tunic.

In c.135, Baudri argues that since his poetry will immortalize Adela, the least she can do is send him a cloak:

Quam peto, quam petii, si reddas, Adela, cappam,
   Que deceat dantem, deceat simul accipientem,
Nulla michi maior, melior michi femina nulla:
   Nam regina michi tu fies ex comitissa.
Te quoque maiorem formabunt carmina nostra,
   Carmine tu nostro latum spargeris in orbem,
Vt te nosse queat et Ciprus et ultima Tile,
Aethiopes, Indi, Getulus et insula queque.  (135.1-8)

If you bestow upon me, Adela, the cloak which I seek, which I have sought,
   A cloak which would suit the woman giving it, as well as the man receiving it,
There will be no greater or better woman to me:
   For from a countess you will become a queen to me.
My poems likewise will make you greater;
   By my poem you will be spread through the wide world,
So that both Cyprus and farthest Thule may know you,
   And the Ethiopians, the Indians, the Gaetulian, and every island.

This is not unlike the elegiac argument that the puella should sleep with the poet in return for being immortalized by his poetry, but Baudri’s poem does not contain the sexual imagery found in elegy. As Tilliette notes, the poet as beggar is a time-honored topos exploited by poets from

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105 (To the same woman, for the cloak which she had promised him).
Martial to the Archpoet. Baudri’s use of the trope highlights Adela’s social superiority by placing her in the role of his patron. It is also used for comic effect, as emphasized in the last lines of the request. After describing at length the lavish cloak which he hopes to receive, decorated with gold and precious gems (135.17-24), Baudri further justifies his request by noting that part of Adela’s duty is to enrich the Church and adorn its servants (135.28-29). But he returns to the cloak in the final line of the poem, specifying:

Et caue, ne desi etiam sua fimbria cappe. (135.32)

And take care that the cloak doesn’t lack a fringe.

This almost bathetic closure, implying that the gift of a fringed cloak will fulfill Adela’s responsibility to “ditare … thesauros aecclesiarum” (enrich the treasuries of the churches) (135.29) is amusing, and is typical of what one finds in Baudri’s poetry. But it does not have the same feel as Baudri’s letter to Constance. It is playful, but not risqué. On a similar note, c.134 is composed in elegiac couplets, but if we take only the shorter poems addressed to women into account, cc.135 and 136 are both written in dactylic hexameter, whereas the others are all elegiac couplets; this is perhaps a means of indicating the different status of his royal addressees.

106 “… il ne se réfère bien entendu pas à la réalité—l’abbé du riche monastère de Bourgueil ne vit pas dans la misère—, mais à un autre topos, très largement exploité par des écrivains, de Martial à l’Archipoète, celui du poète quémandeur” (Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 216-17 n.525). Hugh Primas (c.1092-1160), an Orleanais poet active a generation or so after Baudri, made great use of the trope. As Fleur Adcock notes in her edition and translation of Hugh Primas’ poems: “Cloak-poems are a recognised genre. Primas took his inspiration for those he wrote from Martial, who has several epigrams on the subject: in VI.82, for example, he begs Rufus for a good cloak, and in VII.28 he eulogises a new toga he has been given but says that it will make his old cloak look ridiculous. He was the first Latin poet to write true ‘begging poems’ and to advertise his poverty shamelessly in his verse…” (Fleur Adcock, ed. and trans., Hugh Primas and the Archpoet [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994], x). See also Therese Latzke, “Der Topos Mantelgedicht,” Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch 6 (1970): 109-131.

107 Dronke also discusses this poem, albeit briefly, in Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric, vol. 1, Problems and Interpretations, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 211-12. Dronke’s main concern is to correct previous misconceptions about the poem and about the number of poems addressed to Adela in Baudri’s collection.
The other women with whom Baudri corresponds are probably all nuns and his poems to them sometimes contain elements of the sexualized playfulness found in his paired correspondence with Constance, but never sustained to the same degree as in c.200. Carmen 137 is addressed to Muriel, who, according to Tilliette, was a learned nun from Wilton. If Tilliette is correct (and there is no reason to believe he is not), Hildebert of Lavardin and Serlo of Bayeux also wrote letters to this same Muriel, who was, according to her epitaph by Herman of Tournai, an *inclyta versificatrix* (although none of her works survive). In his poem, Baudri praises Muriel’s learning at length, before turning more briefly to her beauty and chastity. He says that he has met her once and longs for a second meeting, where they could have a true exchange of the minds, but until then, they will have to be content with literary exchange, in which they will share each other’s secrets and correct each other’s errors. As in c.200, Baudri complicates this request for literary exchange by filling the letter with the double entendre of Ovidian allusion.

For example, when praising her virginity, Baudri says:

Littera multa solet duras mollire puellas;
Predurat pectus littera multa tuum. (137.19-20)

Much literature usually softens hard girls;
Much literature has hardened your heart.

The *dura puella* is of course a stock figure in elegy, and as Tilliette notes, line 19 is adapted from *Ars* 2.527, in which the *praecceptor* advises men to flatter their mistresses and even the doorposts when they have been shut out:

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108 I am excluding c.207, which does not have a specific addressee. The Beatrice in cc.140 and 141 is never clearly identified as a nun, but it seems a reasonable assumption, and c.140 does make reference to a veil, although qualified by the word *velut*: “Et uelut oppanso se uelut occultuit./ Tamquam per cribrum poterat tamen ipsa uideri./ In uelo siquidem multa fenestra fuit.” “And she concealed herself as if with a veil./ Nevertheless she could be seen as if through a sieve,/ since there were many windows in the veil.” (140.8-10)


postibus et durae supplex blandire puellae
et capiti demptas in fore pone rosas.  (Ars 2.527-28)

As a suppliant flatter the door posts and the hard girl
And put the roses removed from your head on the door.

But more importantly, the lines (as Tilliette also proposes as a possibility)\textsuperscript{111} thematically echo
Ars 1.455-484, in which Ovid advises men to try sending a letter first in an attempt to win over a
girl, noting that even the most resolute woman can be conquered eventually:

\begin{quote}
ergo eat et blandis peraretur littera uerbis,
exploretque animos primaque temptet iter:
littera Cydippen pomo perlata fefellit,
insciaque est uerbis capta puella suis.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
quid magis est saxo durum, quid mollius unda?
dura tamen molli saxa cauantur aqua.
Penelopen ipsam, persta modo, tempore uinces:
capta uides sero Pergama, capta tamen.  (Ars 1.455-54; 1.475-78)
\end{quote}

Therefore let a letter go forth and be inscribed with flattering words,
And let it investigate her feelings and let it first attempt the journey:
A letter conveyed on an apple deceived Cydippe
And the girl, unknowing, was captured by her own words.

\begin{quote}
What is harder than a rock, what is softer than a wave?
Nevertheless hard rocks are hollowed out by soft water.
You will conquer Penelope herself in time, only persevere:
You see that Troy was captured late, but it was captured nonetheless.
\end{quote}

Overtly, Baudri uses allusion to the \textit{Ars} to demonstrate that Muriel conducts herself
commendably by not behaving like an elegiac \textit{puella}; still, he does so by referencing a passage in
which the lesson is that the exchange of letters will, in the end, corrupt even the most virtuous of
women.  Granted, this is a minor point, but it does complicate Baudri’s message.  In addition, he

\textsuperscript{111} Tilliette, \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 2, 220 n. 9: “Vers 19: réminiscence du développement situé au livre 1,457-484 de l’\textit{Art d’aimer}?”
makes use of the exclusivity tactic deployed in c.200: Baudri tells Muriel that she is the only woman to whom he has written:

Porro mei calami res una retundit acumen:
Quippe puellarum nescit adire domos.
Nulla recept adhuc nisi tu mea carmina, urgo,
Nulli dixit adhuc cartula nostra uale.
Scripsimus ad socios, sat lusimus inter amicos;
Expers ludendi queque puella michi.
Sed tu me coges ignotum pergere callem
Nec dedignor ego tendere, qua moneas. (137.35-42)

Moreover, one thing blunts the sharpness of my pen:
Indeed, it does not know how to approach the homes of girls.
Thus far no virgin besides you has received my poems,
Thus far my little paper has bid farewell to no girl.
I’ve written to my associates, I’ve played sufficiently among friends;
Every girl lacks experience of playing with me.
But you will force me to proceed down an unknown path,
Nor do I refuse to go where you tell me.

Admittedly this is the first letter in Baudri’s collection to play this sort of Ovidian game with a woman, but it is certainly not his first letter to a woman, or even to a nun, since the letter to Cecilia precedes this one.

Carmen 138 is addressed to an Agnes, and consists of Baudri’s exhortation that she remain a virgin. The poem does exhibit one possible echo from the Amores,\textsuperscript{112} heavy repetition of the word amor, and Baudri’s ever-problematic protestations of chastity:

Quod tibi mando, uale communis epistola non est:
Non est communis, que speciale sapit.
Hec speciale sapit, quia carmen cantat amoris,
Qui tamen in Christo conficiatur amor.
In domino confectus amor sublimat amantes
Absque Deo siquidem lubricat omnis amor.
Nobis, virgineam qui uouimus integritatem,
Virginee maneat integritatis amor. (138.3-10)

\textsuperscript{112} Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 220 n.5; Tilliette proposes that “lubricat omnis amor” echoes Am. 1.9.1-2, “militat omnis amans.” This is certainly a possibility, although I will not push it here.
The greeting that I entrust to you is not a common letter:
    That which tastes special is not common.
This tastes special because it sings a love song,
    But a love which must be accomplished in Christ.
Love accomplished in the lord elevates lovers
    And accordingly all love without God is slippery.
For us, who have taken a vow of virginal integrity,
    Let the love of virginal integrity remain.

But otherwise it does not contain any objectionable content _per se_. In fact, it is often more reminiscent of Jerome’s letters of spiritual advice to women than to anything out of Ovid (and Tilliette notes that the poem even takes up parts of Jerome’s _ad Eustochium_ almost literally).\(^{113}\)
What is more interesting about this letter is its all-consuming concern about Agnes’ virginity. The poem seeks both to control and to define narrowly who Agnes is; Baudri repeatedly tells her that loss of virginity would, for her, entail a total loss of identity:

Virginitas uiolata semel nequit inuiolari:
    Equa tamen merces restitui poterit.
Ergo, qua polles, conserua uirginitatem:
    Quam si perdideris, desinis esse, quod es.
Desinis esse, quod es, amissa uirginitate;
    Heu fractura grauis, quam solidare nequis.
Perdere si quid habes, grauis hec iactura uidetur
    Amisisse, quod es; nil tibi sit grauius.
Ipsa meis monitis, mea si cupis esse, fauebis:
    Que mando, facies, si potes, et melius.  (138.21-30)

Once violated, virginity can never be unviolated,
    Although a fair reward can still be restored.\(^{114}\)
Therefore, conserve the virginity by which you are strong,
    Which, if you lose it, you cease to be what you are.
If you lose your virginity, you cease to be what you are;
    Alas, a serious fracture, which you cannot make whole.
If you have anything to lose, this loss seems a serious thing,
    To lose what you are; may nothing be more serious to you.

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\(^{113}\) Tilliette, _Poèmes_, vol. 2, 221 n. 6.

\(^{114}\) As Tilliette notes (_Poèmes_, vol. 2, 221 n. 9), this is a difficult line. Tilliette says: “Nous compérenons [sic] _merces_ au sens de ‘récompense éternelle’ d’après Hier., … ou Anselme de Cantorbéry…” and he translates the line in this way: “même s’il reste permis d’obtenir un jour la juste rétribution.” This seems as likely an explanation as any other.
You will favor my warnings, if you desire to be mine:
You will do what I order, if you can, and better.

Baudri is of course playing with the significance of her name; since she is Agnes, the embodiment of purity with a name that calls to mind the Lamb of God, if she loses her virginity she no longer lives up to her name and thus truly does cease to be what she is. Baudri uses wordplay to emphasize the fact that Agnes is entirely defined by this one characteristic. Again, Baudri’s advice to Agnes is not inappropriate, but the poem does display concerns about power and control that are a common theme in many of Baudri’s other poems. Baudri voices these concerns less problematically here than he does elsewhere, in that he does not undermine his message by overly sexualizing it, but the issues are there nonetheless.

Baudri writes two letters to a nun named Emma: cc.139 and 153. Tilliette proposes identifying her with the “Emma grammatica” of Le Ronceray, a proposition which is both tempting and convincing. In both poems, Baudri makes it very clear that Emma is an intelligent woman and that he respects her for this. The two letters, less playful than many of Baudri’s other efforts, indicate the extent to which Baudri could expect his female correspondents to be capable participants in his poetic endeavors. In c.139 he merely sends his greetings and expresses his admiration for her wisdom, noting that he formerly knew her only by reputation or by a brief conversation, but that now he has read her poetry, which has revealed the extent of her learning to him. He notes that she is a teacher, and wishes that he could be among her students:

Ad te concurrunt examina discipularum,

115 Moser discusses c.153; see Cosmos of Desire, 48-51 (Moser’s discussion of Baudri’s verse spans pp. 47-63).
Vt recreentur apes melle parentis apis.
Quodsi discipulos uester concederet ordo,
Vellem disciplus ipsem esse tuus. (139.15-18)

Swarms of female students run to you
like bees, to be refreshed by the honey of their parent bee.
But if your order allowed male students,
I myself would want to be your student.

The poem is respectful, and lacks the features that render c.200 so problematic. Similarly, c.153 shows great respect for Emma’s intellect; in fact, as Tilliette demonstrates, cc.1-153 constituted Baudri’s original collection of poems;117 in c.153, Baudri tells Emma that he is sending her the entire book of poetry, and he asks her to correct it for him with a critical eye:

Sed tibi nunc totum nostrum commendo libellum,
Vt studiosa legas, sollicite uideas.
Forma censoris, non allusoris amore
Vtere: non palpes, quod resecare decet. (153.9-12)

But now I entrust my whole book to you
So that you may read it studiously, and look at it solicitously.
Use the model of a censor, not the love of the player:
Do not flatter what should be cut.

The rest of the poem mainly consists of Baudri’s lament that no one writes poetry anymore, and that those who do write it do not receive any respect; these are all standard tropes from classical verse, and Tilliette catalogues Baudri’s main sources in his commentary.118 The poem lacks the flirtatious play of c.200. But the fact that Baudri addresses the closing letter of his original collection to a woman, and asks her to be his editor, certainly demonstrates his estimation of her abilities. In addition, provided that both Emma and Constance were nuns at Le Ronceray, the

118 Tilliette points to particular correspondences between this poem and Ovid’s Amores1.15; Ovid’s poem closes Book 1 of the Amores, while Baudri’s closes his initial collection; both poems treat the poets’ hatred of envy and faith in the immortality conferred by poetry; and while Ovid praises Tibullus, Baudri praises Marbod. See Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 233 n. 26.
poem potentially demonstrates how Constance is able, in c.201, to quote from various poems in
Baudri’s corpus: Emma might have shown the book to her. In a somewhat oblique set of lines,
while urging Emma to read his book, Baudri says:

Quas uis et quot uis, coeant aliquando sorores,
At non indocilis siue loquax coeat:
Garrulitas et lingua procax animusque malignus
Fascinat insontes et nocet obloquium.
Inter philosophos ualuit collatio multum:
Idcirco confer solaque multa lege. (153.17-22)

Sometimes let the sisters, as many and whichever ones you wish, come together,
But none who are indocile or talkative:
Loquacity and a frivolous tongue and a malicious mind
Bewitch the innocent, and gossip is harmful.
Among philosophers, conversation has been greatly effective:
Therefore confer, and also read many things alone.

Assuming Emma took this to mean that she should confer with her fellow nuns about Baudri’s
poetry, and that she actually did so, it would stand to reason that Constance might have been
among the chosen sisters. In any case, Baudri’s letters to Emma differ from his other letters to
nuns, in that he speaks to her much more like an equal; unlike in other poems to nuns, he shows
no concern with Emma’s physical appearance or adherence to her vows, and focuses only on her
ability to help him better his poetry.

Of Baudri’s remaining three letters to nuns, one is addressed to Constance. In this poem,
Baudri exhorts her to uphold her virginity and asks her to write to him, although again not as
playfully as he does in c.200. He devotes the majority of the poem to the issue of her virginity,
at the end asking her not to forget him and to keep a special place for him in her heart; the poem
basically reads as a toned-down version of c.200, although in this case, he mentions Emma and
another nameless nun, asking her to greet them for him (in the case of the nameless nun, it is to

119 As discussed above, Tilliette cites the fact that Constance’s poem quotes Baudri’s other poems as a possible objection to her authorship (Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 142).
reestablish the *foedus amicitiae* between them [142.43-44]). In c.200, of course, Baudri pretends that Constance is the only other woman in whom he is interested. The other two poems deal with a certain Beatrice, whom he chastises for not returning his letters (c.140) and teases for sending too short a response (c.141). In this series of poems, like in c.200, he attempts to draw Beatrice into his poetic games, but unlike Constance, Beatrice is not forthcoming. Although Tilliette dismisses the lines as motivated by the poem’s overall Ovidian tone and by the pun *mutum/mutilum* but otherwise unrelated to their context, the closing lines of c.140 are in fact the key to the poem, and make perfect sense in context. Baudri writes:

> Carminibus laudet uel damnet carmina nostra:  
> Sin autem, mutum sit pecus et mutilum. (140.25-26)

Let her praise or condemn my poems with poems:  
But if not, let her be a mute and hornless sheep.

The reference is to *Ars* Book 3, in which the *praecceptor* tells girls that, while they can appear before their lovers with disheveled hair provided they have a good head of hair, they should by no means allow themselves to be seen if their hair is thin enough to require a wig:

> turpe pecus mutilum, turpis sine gramine campus  
> et sine fronde frutex et sine crine caput. (Ars 3.249-50)

A hornless sheep is ugly, a field without grass is ugly  
As is a shrub without leaves and a head without hair.

Beauty is the elegiac *puella*’s most important trait, and the *praecceptor* warns her that she must never allow her lovers to find out that she requires a wig, since this would render her ugly and undesirable in their eyes. Beatrice, in turn, has been ignoring Baudri’s repeated requests for poetic correspondence, and he sends a letter whose closing lines imply that if Beatrice will not

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120 Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 2, 223 n. 10: “*coda* très caractéristique de la manière de Baudri. La citation d’Ovide (*pecus mutilum: Ars* 3.249), qui ne paraît guère en situation, est en réalité motivée par l’*annominatio mutum/mutilum*, et par la tonalité ovidienne du poème.”
acquiesce to his demands, she is as worthless as a bald courtesan. Baudri’s manipulative techniques are clear. But in c.141, we learn that Beatrice has only partially given in: she has written a poem, but one so short and trivial that Baudri is left unsatisfied; he fires off a short poem of complaint as a result:

Murem mons peperit, quia fatur muta Beatrix:  
Scripsit, dictauit pene locuta nichil.  
Vel nichil est, quod ait, uel, quod scripsit, tueatur  
Et sua defendat carmina carminibus.  (141.1-4)

The mountain has given birth to a mouse, because mute Beatrice speaks:  
She wrote, she composed, but she said almost nothing.  
Either what she says is nothing, or let her stand up for what she wrote,  
And let her defend her poem with more poems.

The opening reference is to Horace’s *Ars Poetica*, in which Horace warns would-be poets not to make sweeping claims in the opening of an epic, because:

parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.  (AP 139)\(^{121}\)

Mountains will go into labor, but a ridiculous mouse will be born.

Beatrice once again has resisted Baudri’s demands by sending too short a response, and he is attempting yet again to goad her into compliance. Constance’s letter conforms to Baudri’s wishes by participating in the game he has initiated; cc.140 and 141 show us what happens when a woman refuses to obey: a frustrated Baudri directs playful invective against her and then never speaks of her again, effectively silencing her, since the only voice she has is through what Baudri chooses to tell us about her. Arguably, as a voice of resistance, Beatrice’s silence speaks just as loudly as Constance’s long letter. Carmen 201 highlights the fact that Constance is yielding to Baudri’s pressure, demonstrating that she feels constrained to do his will; the Beatrice sequence

shows a woman attempting to resist Baudri’s domination. Neither woman ultimately succeeds at escaping the domination to which their letters call attention. Baudri cannot force Beatrice to reply but, as the editor of his collection, he does control whether or not we hear his female correspondents’ voices. And so Baudri has the last word; after c.141, he never mentions Beatrice again. But out of all of the women in these poems, only the obedient Constance is immortalized by a poetic epitaph of Baudri’s composition:  

Hic pausat uirgo, que scilicet innuba Christo  
Nupsit, sponsa Dei, nescia coniugii.  
Pectore constanti Constancia nomine fulsit  
Preclaro patrum stemmate nobilium.  
Ipsius pectus dituit littera diues,  
Vt potuit credi, dia Sibilla, tibi. 
Ecce sub hoc tumulo cinerascit mortua uirgo:  
Eius ad astra uolans spiritus alta colat.  

Here rests a virgin who, of course, being unmarried,  
Married Christ; a bride of God who did not know marriage.  
With a constant heart, Constance by name, she gleamed  
With the distinguished pedigree of her noble ancestors.  
Her heart was enriched with rich learning  
Of the sort that could be believed of you, Divine Sibyl.  
Behold, under this tomb the dead virgin is turning to ashes:  
May her spirit, flying to the stars, inhabit the heavens.  

The fact that Baudri’s other letters to women do not venture far from an acceptable form of discourse serves to highlight his departure from the norm in c.200. At the same time, these other letters do still contain elements of what makes his letter to Constance so compelling, and the repeated occurrence of such concerns in his collection adds weight to their already noteworthy

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122 Of course, Constance may be the only woman who did not outlive Baudri, so it is unwise to place too much importance on this point.

123 Note how here too, Baudri plays with the significance of “Constantia,” emphasizing that Constance is not just her name but the primary characteristic with which she is to be associated.

124 Here I have followed Tilliette’s punctuation, not Hilbert’s, in bracketing “dia Sibilla” with commas, because Tilliette’s interpretation of the phrase as a vocative makes more sense than the alternative.

125 See above, note 123.
predominance in cc.200 and 201. In the following chapter, I will discuss the similar manifestation of such issues in Baudri’s poems to youths; ultimately, I will argue that his collection’s overriding concern with power, control, and ideology is a reflection of his political climate and is, in part, a reaction to contemporary concerns about the ongoing Gregorian Reforms.
Chapter 3
Baudri’s Poems to Boys

In Baudri’s poetic corpus, his letters to men and boys vastly outnumber his letters to women (although, as Jean-Yves Tilliette points out, Baudri’s poems to women do account for a significant percentage of his verses, mostly due to the length of c.134, addressed to Adela of Blois). Baudri’s more copious correspondence with males is to be expected, given his position as an abbot. He writes not only to monks and boys within his own monastery but also to other abbots and archbishops about various subjects, and it stands to reason that he knew many more men than women who were able to appreciate his poetic games. The predominance of correspondence with males in Baudri’s corpus can be explained generically as well. Stephen Jaeger cites Baudri’s correspondence with monks and boys as an example of the phenomenon which he calls “ennobling love,” a discourse from which women were almost entirely excluded until the late eleventh century. According to Jaeger, ennobling love, a “primarily public experience” which is principally “a way of behaving, only secondarily a way of feeling,” was “a form of aristocratic self-representation” in the Middle Ages. It is particularly prevalent between individuals of differing rank (such as between teacher and student or king and favor-seeking subject). Exemplifying the social ideals of aristocratic society (i.e. friendship and love), ennobling love figures in various areas of noble society (lay, clerical, and monastic). “Its social function is to show forth virtue in lovers, to raise their inner worth, to increase their honor and

1 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 136. By his calculation, only eleven of the 256 poems in Baudri’s collection are letters to women, but these make up 1856/8731 of his verses. This calculation must include poem 141, “De eadem,” which is a four-line epigram about Beatrice (but not addressed to her). The preceding poem, which is also about Beatrice but is not addressed to her, does not figure in Tilliette’s calculations.

2 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 6, 24.

3 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 6.

enhance their reputation. It is, or is seen as, a response to the virtue, charisma, saintliness of the beloved.”

While women are not excluded from ennobling love in Baudri’s corpus, it is nonetheless unsurprising that men and boys figure more prominently, especially since as abbot Baudri had direct control over men and boys, not women.

Jaeger’s conception of ennobling love provides a helpful framework for examining Baudri’s poems, as it contextualizes the sentiments found in them. Tracing this discourse from Antiquity through the Middle Ages, Jaeger argues that letters that verge on the erotic were in fact a normal way of expressing friendship and respect, and should not necessarily be understood as implying any sort of sexual relationship. On the other hand, Jaeger draws attention to tensions in ennobling love, which arise in particular once women begin to enter the discourse. Ennobling love was supposed to be founded entirely on virtue, and “any love that incorporated and included sex was not ennobling.” In Jaeger’s view, “love of men for women could not ennoble, since sexuality was its natural fulfillment. Love and friendship of men for women that claimed ‘virtue’ and innocence inevitably roused suspicion.” But love between men was able to make use of erotic vocabulary without arousing suspicion. It is here that I depart from Jaeger, because even if we could ever be sure that a poem using erotic vocabulary had entirely innocent intentions, the other connotations of such vocabulary would not disappear. Duncan Kennedy makes a similar point about the irreverent allusion in Ars 1.1 to the opening lines of the Aeneid, which Ovid builds into an extended sexual metaphor. Quoting J.C. McKeown’s commentary,


6 Jaeger examines treatises on the subject of friendship (that of Cicero is the most influential) as well as actual epistolary exchanges (Fronto and Marcus Aurelius, for example).


which argues that reading innuendo here is inappropriate, Kennedy argues instead that if language has multiple meanings, these meanings can always both be present for the reader.\textsuperscript{11}

Moreover, Jaeger’s assertion that ennobling love was only rendered suspect by women’s entry into the discourse requires the problematic assumption that no medieval reader would have read homosexual love into a text. Modern scholarship frequently discounts such a possibility. Eve Sedgwick succinctly characterizes this trend: “Passionate language of same-sex attraction was extremely common during whatever period is under discussion—and therefore must have been completely meaningless.”\textsuperscript{12} She notes that this response and other similar dismissals of same-sex attraction in literature “reflect … some real questions of sexual definition and historicity. But they only reflect them and don’t reflect on them.”\textsuperscript{13} Even if we set aside the copious Ganymede tradition in medieval literature, the extant medieval customaries make it clear that homosexual love did not somehow cease to exist (or to be a concern) in the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{14} Dismissing the possibility that the love language in Baudri’s poems produces meaning on multiple levels entails an oversimplification of the poems. Under the guise of considering them in their historical context, such an interpretation focuses on only one aspect of this context and ignores the rest. Baudri’s poems clearly do belong to the tradition of chaste male friendship, but that tradition is not devoid of less chaste connotations.


\textsuperscript{11} Kennedy, \textit{The Arts of Love}, 63.

\textsuperscript{12} Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, \textit{Epistemology of the Closet, Updated with a New Preface} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 52.

\textsuperscript{13} Sedgwick, 53.

\textsuperscript{14} See below, pp. 141-47.
Alan Bray has investigated an analogous manifestation of male friendship in Elizabethan England. He details several examples of correspondence between friends, and notes that at that time “the image of the masculine friend was an image of intimacy between men in stark contrast to the forbidden intimacy of homosexuality.”\textsuperscript{15} Such male friendship was an acceptable and even integral part of Elizabethan society, and it manifested itself in surprisingly (to the modern reader) intimate ways, including bed sharing and public embraces.\textsuperscript{16} But Bray demonstrates, through a study of instances of sodomy accusations, that the distinction between the two types of intimacy “was neither as sharp nor as clearly marked as the Elizabethans would have us believe.”\textsuperscript{17} Elizabethan authors were able to exploit this lack of distinction. Bray gives the example of Marlowe’s play \textit{Edward II}, in which he “describes … what could be a sodomitical relationship, but … places it wholly within the incompatible conventions of Elizabethan friendship, in a tension which he never allows to be resolved. The image we see is simultaneously that of both friendship and its caricature.”\textsuperscript{18}

This is precisely the sort of tactic deployed in Baudri’s poems, and indeed, despite his observation that ennobling love can be entirely chaste, Jaeger rightly notes that with Baudri, the issue is much more ambiguous: “The threshold between guilt denied by silence and acknowledged by denial is crossed in Baudri. Along with a sense of guilt and shame as potential threats in chaste love, ambiguity enters the discourse in a big way in his poetry.”\textsuperscript{19} But this


\textsuperscript{16} Bray, “Homosexuality and Signs,” 42-43.

\textsuperscript{17} Bray, “Homosexuality and Signs,” 47.

\textsuperscript{18} Bray, “Homosexuality and Signs,” 49.

\textsuperscript{19} Jaeger, \textit{Ennobling Love}, 99.
statement refers specifically to Baudri’s correspondence with Constance, which Jaeger differentiates from his correspondence with boys, contending that, “What distinguishes Baudri’s letter to Constance sharply from his love letters to male friends and from any document in the history of ennobling love prior to the twelfth century is the continual warding off of suspicions of seduction and lechery … Innocence is oblivious of guilt.” Jaeger acknowledges that in Baudri’s case, “The flirtatious, provoking game with carnal love is common to both genders,” and ultimately sees all of his poems, including those to women, as instances of ennobling love with “pedagogic intention,” but despite this, he maintains that “sex is now part and parcel of the discourse of ennobling love, and it is one of the elements that entered necessarily with women.”

Gerald Bond, on the other hand, argues that “Homosexual love is always a potential meaning in these texts” and rightly notes that in c.11.13-14, the possibility of homosexual love is emphasized precisely by Baudri’s insistence that his friendship with John, the subject of the poem, is free from any taint:

\[
\text{Est quoque sanctarum genus illud amicitiarum,} \\
\text{Quod tandem nullis afficitur maculis. (11.13-14)}
\]

Likewise, it is that type of sacred friendship, Which is in the end afflicted with no stains.

\[\text{20 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 99.}\]
\[\text{21 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 97.}\]
\[\text{22 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 99.}\]
\[\text{23 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 101.}\]
\[\text{24 Inherent in John’s name, of course, are all the connotations of the John who was, according to the Gospel of John, Christ’s beloved apostle and the only apostle who stayed with him during his crucifixion (see John 19:26-27). John also laid his head on the Lord’s breast at the Last Supper (John 13:23). Whether or not Baudri’s John is a real person and this is his real name, the poem calls to mind the relationship between Christ and his apostle. Baudri therefore co-opts the pure biblical friendship into a potentially sexualized context.}\]
\[\text{25 Bond, The Loving Subject, 51.}\]
Nor is c.11 the only poem to a youth in which Baudri proclaims the innocence of his love; see also, for example, c.195.24 (although this poem has textual issues), addressed to a boy named Vitalis:

Sed neque quis sancti <nomen> d<e>pr<auet> amor<is>… (195.24)

But let no one pervert the name of sacred love…\(^{26}\)

as well as c.217.11-14, addressed to an unnamed boy, in which Baudri hopes that despite his playful words, his integrity will place him above suspicion, since as archbishop he must be chaste:

Si quando nobis surrepent uerba iocosa,
   Mores iocundos muniat integritas.
Pura fides et munda manus celebsque voluptas
   Pontificum debent associare pedem.  (217.11-14)

If playful words ever creep up on us,
   Let our integrity protect our playful character.
Pure faith and a clean hand and celibate desire
   Should travel with bishops.

While Jaeger is certainly correct that Baudri’s poem to Constance displays a much greater preoccupation with the issue of innocence than do these other poems, the presence of the concern throughout Baudri’s corpus undermines Jaeger’s assertion that sexuality only enters the discourse of ennobling love through women. But Jaeger is not alone in his views; Jean-Yves Tilliette utterly rejects the idea that Baudri’s poems to boys contain the possibility of homosexual love. He takes direct issue with John Boswell, who uses Baudri’s poems to youths as evidence for the acceptance, in Baudri’s time, of homosexuality.\(^{27}\) Tilliette sides instead with Jaeger’s

\(^{26}\) This is the last surviving line of the poem, so there is no way of knowing what the rest said.

\(^{27}\) Boswell, 244-47.
position in *The Envy of Angels*:\(^{28}\) the poems should not be taken literally, and instead develop moral themes.\(^{29}\) While it is certainly legitimate to dispute Boswell’s findings regarding the acceptability of homosexuality in the Middle Ages, to completely dismiss any homosexual reading of these poems is decidedly less so.

Given the disagreement about the connotations of Baudri’s use of erotic language and the obvious ambiguity that recurs throughout his letters, this chapter will examine Baudri’s poems to the boys under his charge. As Bond says, “The force of Baudri’s letter-poems … lies precisely in their hazardous play with the taboo, their display of the dialectic between the public language of restraint and the private thought of release embedded in a generic framework whose inherent duplicity reinforces the reader’s inability to resolve the ambiguities.”\(^{30}\) We know that in the monastic context, there was very real concern about potential impropriety between monks and young boys,\(^ {31}\) and Baudri’s frequent protests indicate that he had reason to believe that others might find his poems suspect. Baudri writes letter-poems that on the one hand seem to fit with the standard discourse of love between ranking males and their inferiors, but which, on closer examination, are not as innocent as one might think. My contribution to this issue will be to examine these poems within the context of Baudri’s pervasive Ovidianism, which is essential to a full grasp of their meaning.

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\(^{29}\) Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 1, 150 n. 1. Tilliette argues against Boswell’s thesis throughout his works. See, for example, “Hermès Amoureux,” 134, as well as his commentaries on individual poems in his edition and translation. For example: c. 3 n. 1 (*Poèmes*, vol. 1, 150): “Le [i.e. the theme of the poem] réduire à la *descriptio pueri* des vers 7-19 (une convention littéraire avec laquelle joue ici notre auteur) pour en faire un témoignage de la ‘culture gay’ (!) à laquelle J. Boswell annexe Baudri … conduit donc inévitablement au contresens;” c. 10 n. 1 (*Poèmes*, vol. 1, 167): “J. Boswell … interprète ce poème et le suivant comme des *paidika*, de façon selon nous abusive;” and c. 122 n. 30 (*Poèmes*, vol. 1, 227): “Aussi, prendre cette énumération au pied de la lettre, comme fait J. Boswell à seule fin d’enrôler Baudri sous la bannière de la culture ‘gay’ … nous paraît-il au moins naïf.”

\(^{30}\) Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 51.

\(^{31}\) Boswell, 187-88; this is discussed in more detail below.
In *The Loving Subject*, Gerald Bond makes several crucial remarks about these poems. He observes that since most of the boys in Baudri’s poems belong to the religious community, they cannot help but be subjected to the abbot’s authority. He says that Baudri “exploits his position, whether consciously or not, when he courts adolescents under his power. No matter how much he wants to speak in his own person, and no matter how innocent he thinks his game to be, his letter-poems interpellate such correspondents as subjects.” He also argues that Baudri is reacting to various ideological systems, but in particular that of the Reformists, and that his defense against these systems depends upon “self-impersonation in order to ‘elude’ interpellation as abbot and monk by withdrawing into an immune world of letters.” By defining his letters as games, Bond argues, Baudri frees them from their ties to the external world.

I will argue that Baudri does indeed consciously exploit his position as abbot, knowing full well that his game is not innocent, and that this abuse of power is of central importance to his poems involving boys. Moreover, while I do not disagree with Bond, I will argue that there is another layer to Baudri’s letter-poems. On one level, his self-impersonation and repeated proclamations of the ludic nature of his poems and the chastity of the game do enable him to “‘elude’ interpellation as abbot and monk,” in that he constructs a persona that is partially elsewhere, not entirely circumscribed by the rules of his profession. But, on another level, Baudri’s poems repeatedly highlight his position of authority, reminding the reader of the unequal power dynamic between the participants in the poetic game. In styling his poetic persona as Ovidian, Baudri picks up on similar issues of power in Ovid’s erotic poems, creating the poetic persona of an abbot who uses his position to manipulate the boys in his charge into behaving in a manner that he finds pleasing. As abbot it was of course his job to teach these

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33 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 68.
boys how to behave properly, but the lessons given in the poems often stray from what would be expected of an abbot. Baudri’s teachings frequently have a self-interested ring to them, enjoining the boys to behave in certain ways less because that is the proper way to behave than because it will bring Baudri pleasure. The elegiac persona of Ovid, whose poems were read as didactic texts in the Middle Ages,\textsuperscript{34} gives similarly selfish advice to the prostitutes addressed in the \textit{Amores} and in Book 3 of the \textit{Ars}. Like Baudri, who addresses his letter-poems to social inferiors, Ovid’s \textit{amator} and \textit{praecceptor amoris} enjoy a higher social standing than the prostitutes whose behavior they endeavor to control. In Ovid’s poems, it is clear that as an independent woman; the \textit{puella} is not obliged to obey the \textit{amator}. Nevertheless, given the \textit{amator}’s higher social position and the \textit{puella}’s status as a prostitute dependent on the income she earns from the \textit{amator}, she occupies a delicate position and must to some extent comply with his instructions in order to retain his attention and money. The \textit{amator} consequently has a certain amount of leverage. In Baudri’s case, the boys in his charge are obliged to obey him; the \textit{Rule of Benedict} says as much.\textsuperscript{35} This shared concern with controlling the behavior of social inferiors is therefore central to the works of both poets.

Baudri’s third poem, in which he chastises a youth for excessive haughtiness, demonstrates a selfish preoccupation with the boy’s actions under the guise of spiritual guidance. There is some disagreement regarding the identity of the boy in the poem; Tilliette points out, in the commentary to his edition, that the Italian translator G. Gardenal takes the “Alexis” of line 3 as a vocative, which Tilliette believes to be a mistake.\textsuperscript{36} Tilliette is likely correct, in which case

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{34} Hexter, \textit{Ovid and Medieval Schooling}, 17, 53, etc.
\item \textsuperscript{35} See, for example, \textit{RB} 5; 7.34.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Tilliette, \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, 150, c. 3 n. 3. In his edition, Tilliette punctuates the lines in question to make “Alexis” the name of the potential witness: “Cum mihi nil placeat nisi quod bene sit placiturum/ Nee mihi displiceat nisi quod sit displiciturum--/ Cuius testis erit, si testem queris, Alexis--/ Constat quod quicquid placet aut mihi displicet
Baudri never gives the name of his addressee. Of course, just the mention of the name Alexis (perhaps the same Alexis mentioned in c.129.30, in the context of a *locus amoenus* description), whether fictive or not, immediately brings to mind Vergil’s second *Eclogue*, in which the shepherd Corydon laments the boy Alexis’s lack of interest in him (Baudri’s c.129 makes particularly frequent allusion to the second *Eclogue*, which further strengthens the associations with the eclogue in c.3). Poem 3 does not contain any other particular echoes of the eclogue, with the possible exception of Baudri’s line 65 (“Confidis credisque tue nimium speciei,”), as compared to line 17 of the eclogue (“o formose puer, nimium ne crede colori:”); in both cases, the next lines contain a warning that beauty does not last. But it is the name Alexis that is important, as it evokes the tradition of this eclogue—Corydon loves Alexis, who spurns his love; in addition, Corydon realizes this love can never be realized, because Alexis is the property (and beloved) of Corydon’s master Iollas, with whom Corydon cannot hope to compete.\textsuperscript{37} The parallels with Baudri’s own situation, since both he and the boy are the servants of God, are clear; it is also significant that Corydon is a shepherd, while Baudri is an abbot, and plays the role of shepherd to his monks.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{37} For the futility of Corydon’s cause, see *Ec*. 2.1-2: “Formosum pastor Corydon ardebat Alexin./ delicias domini, nec quid speraret habebat” (The shepherd Corydon burned with love for the beautiful Alexis,/ the darling of his master, nor did he have any reason for hope) and 2.56-57: “rusticus es, Corydon; nec munera curat Alexis,/ nec, si muneribus certes, concedat Iollas” (You’re a rustic, Corydon; and Alexis doesn’t care for gifts,/ nor, if you were to vie with gifts, would Iollas yield.)

\textsuperscript{38} The comparison is made explicitly and repeatedly in the *Rule of Benedict*; see *RB* 2, passim.
As Wendell Clausen notes in his commentary on the *Eclogues*, Alexis was “the traditional name of a catamite” in classical poetry (he cites several Greek precedents). Baudri would, of course, have been unaware of the Greek precedents, but Clausen’s next observation in all probability would not have escaped him: by the time of Martial, Alexis was identified as a slave boy that Vergil himself loved and ultimately received as a gift from his patron. Of all the possible sources for this story, Baudri would most likely have come across it in the glosses on the *Eclogues*. Servius’ commentary on *Eclogues* 1.38-2.10 does not survive, so in his edition Georg Thilo instead prints from the Philargyrius commentary, as do several of the surviving medieval manuscripts of Servius. As that commentary puts it:


40 Clausen, 64 n. 2. Clausen cites several of Martial’s poems: 5.16.11-12, 6.68.6, 7.29.7-8, 8.55.12-20, 8.73.9-10; he also notes references to this tradition in Apuleius Apol. 10, the *Vita Donati* 9, and in Philargyrius I. As Clausen notes, Martial identifies Maecenas as the patron in question; otherwise the tradition names Asinius Pollio, which makes more sense since Pollio was Vergil’s patron when he wrote the *Eclogues*.

41 He could also potentially have read the *Vita Donati* (also known as the *Vita Donatiana* or the *Vita Suetonii vulgo Donatiana*, or VSD), although this life was more widely read during the Carolingian period and during a later Renaissance revival. Nonetheless, there are manuscripts of the VSD dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and an excerpted version of the VSD also exists. The excerpt also contains the Alexis story, and it survives in almost exclusively twelfth-century manuscripts. See Jan M. Ziolkowski and Michael C. J. Putnam, *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 180. For the texts of the two versions of the life, see Jacobus Brummer, ed., *Vitae Vergilianae*, in *Vol. 2 of Tiberi Claudi Donati ad Tiberium Claudium Maximum Donatianum Filium Suum Interpretationes Vergilianae*, ed. Henricus Georgii (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1969). Regarding Alexis, the text of the VSD reads: “libidinis in pueros pronioris, quorum maxime dilexit Cebetem et Alexandrum, quem secunda bucolicorum ecloga Alexim appellat, donatum sibi ab Asinio Pollione” (His desire was more inclined to boys, of whom he most loved Cebes and Alexander, who is called Alexis in the second *Eclogue* and was given to him by Asinius Pollio) (Brummer, 3).

42 Thilo, introduction to *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii Bucolica et Georgica Commentarii* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), v-vi. Thilo’s lengthy explanation can be summed up as follows: the Servian commentary on *Eclogues* 1.37-2.10 is missing in all of the manuscripts; in A and B it is just missing, and in P, H, M and Reginensi 1495 it has been filled in with material taken from Philargyrius’ commentary. Two commentaries by Philargyrius exist, and they seem to originate from one non-surviving commentary, which was excerpted differently by two different people to create the two surviving versions. The Philargyrius commentaries exist in the Laurentianus and Parisinus codices, and Thilo used the Philargyrius commentary as transmitted in L and P to supplement the material that PHMR supply in place of the lost Servian commentary. In his edition, in the body of the text, Thilo only prints the Philargyrian material, but he has edited the other annotations that appear in HRM, which others have also partially edited, and some of those annotations could be conjectured to have been drawn from the real, non-surviving Servian commentary. (“Restat ut de maiore quodam bucolicorum commentarii defectu loquar, qui, cum viginti quattuor membranae, quae olim primum locum teneuerunt in Lemovicensi interierint, idemne in eius archetypo fuerit incertum est. perierunt enim nescio quo casu Serviana ad buc. I 37-II 10 scholia; hit autem commentarius in AB, in PHM et in Reginensi 1495, de quo infra dicam, ita expletus est, ut ex ampliore Iunii Filargirii bucolicorum
ALEXIM dicunt Alexandrum, qui fuit servus Asini Pollionis, quem Vergilius, rogatus ad prandium, cum vidisset in ministerio omnium pulcherrimum, dilexit eumque dono accepit.43

ALEXIS they say is Alexander, who was a slave of Asinius Pollio; when Vergil, having been invited to lunch, had seen him, the most beautiful of all those in his service, he loved him and received him as a gift.

Anyone who read Baudri’s poem would have known Vergil’s second Eclogue, and would certainly have thought of the shepherd Corydon’s inappropriate (and somewhat pathetic) love for his fellow-slave. It is quite likely that the commentary tradition linking this Alexis with a real slave boy beloved by Vergil would also have come to mind for such a reader. The combined pederastic associations of the name Alexis serve to strengthen the hints of impropriety in Baudri’s poem.

Conversely, the name “Alexis” also invokes the Old French poem La vie de Saint Alexis and the entire hagiographical tradition of the saint. The first vernacular version of the life dates from the eleventh century,44 but the legend itself, which has its origins in fifth-century Syria,
made its way to the West in the tenth century through the archbishop Sergius of Damas.\textsuperscript{45} The relationship of the French version to the Latin versions is extremely complex. The main Latin version was edited by the Bollandists and can be found in the \textit{Acta Sanctorum},\textsuperscript{46} but none of the manuscripts which they use date from before the eleventh century.\textsuperscript{47} Experts distinguish four different types of Alexis lives, of which the text edited by the Bollandists represents the first.\textsuperscript{48} The French poem incorporates elements from at least one other tradition.\textsuperscript{49} The issue is further complicated by the existence of a Latin poem which is clearly related to the French poem; there is no scholarly consensus, however, on whether the Latin poet imitated the French poet or vice versa.\textsuperscript{50} But whether or not Baudri’s poem predates the French life of Alexis, various Latin versions were certainly in circulation and Baudri would have known the basic story. According to the legend, Alexis, the only son of a noble Roman couple, abandons his wife on his wedding night because he wishes to devote his life to God (much to the dismay of his parents and his wife). He goes to Edessa, in Syria, and becomes a mendicant. He stays there until his fame becomes burdensome, at which point he returns unrecognized to his parents’ home. He takes up residence under their stairs for the remainder of his life, the picture of humility and holiness. When he realizes his end is near, he writes down his life story and dies, his soul immediately ascending to heaven. In the meantime, Pope Innocent and the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius follow a disembodied voice to Alexis’ location. Upon the discovery of his autobiography (which his corpse is still clutching), Alexis’ identity is finally revealed. His parents and wife lament

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Acta Sanctorum} 31 (July, vol. 4), 238-70; see Storey, 21.
\textsuperscript{47} Maurizio Perugi, ed., \textit{La Vie de Saint Alexis} (Geneva: Droz, 2000), 52 n. 6.
\textsuperscript{48} Perugi, 52.
\textsuperscript{49} Perugi, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{50} Perugi 57; Elliott, \textit{Saint Alexis}, 15 n. 12.
piteously, but the pope consoles them with the observation that the saint will bring joy to all wretched people who pray to him. Various miracles occur around Alexis’ body, and we are told that Alexis’ widow and parents live together for the rest of their lives. St. Alexis’ virtue and devotion to chastity (indeed, he has no desire to consummate his marriage, and instead spends his wedding night giving his wife a sermon before departing) represent the complete opposite of the Vergilian Alexis, and the interplay between the two associations of the name reflects the constructed ambiguity of the poem. On the surface, the poem belongs to Jaeger’s “ennobling love” category (i.e. love without sexual connotations), but classical references repeatedly undercut this ennobled love, so that the poem simultaneously suggests both ennobled love and its opposite. The name Alexis calls to mind both the tradition of a revered French saint and the slave boy whom Vergil was reputed to love, and further emphasizes the duality of Baudri’s poem.

At any rate, as others have noted, Baudri’s injunction against haughtiness is technically sound spiritual advice, and is in keeping with his role as abbot and teacher. Stephen Jaeger and Mia Münster-Swendsen, for example, both discuss the importance in medieval schools of instruction in proper behavior.51 Jaeger and Münster-Swendsen see this sort of letter as a pedagogical tool (Jaeger discusses this poem specifically; Münster-Swendsen discusses the overall genre, but does not mention this poem). Jaeger argues that since the boy is threatened with the loss of the teacher’s affection (and consequently with all the benefits that accompany such affection) if he does not amend his behavior, “it is a poem of moral correction, not

homosexual courtship.”

The function of the erotic, he says, is that “the boy needs to be aware of the power of his beauty to arouse admiration, love, service … as he is aware of its power to arouse lust. He has learned to manage the lust of his fellows, but not to cultivate their affection.”

Münster-Swendsen makes a very similar point about this sort of discourse, but adds that the power dynamic between the teacher and student is complicated because “the master’s power is not total, but dependent upon the reciprocity of the relationship. Each needs the other to fulfil his role, their interdependency marking the horizontality which also characterizes the relationship.” Still, she argues, such correspondence ultimately highlights the master’s position of authority, because while he is free to assume various humbling postures, the student must always be more humble, and does not have the same degree of freedom within the discourse. I concur wholeheartedly with Münster-Swendsen on this point. Baudri’s letters participate in a preexisting discursive convention in which the teacher, by pretenses of humility and love, highlights his position of authority with the goal of compelling his student to behave properly. Baudri plays with this convention, embellishing a standard topos of student/teacher interaction with allusions to classical erotic verse, and thereby problematizing his use of authority. The debate between binary, opposing interpretations does not provide a fruitful approach to these

52 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 72.

53 Jaeger, Ennobling Love, 72-73. He notes that this paradigm had existed since antiquity, and further expounds on how it works: “Of course, the teacher courts the student and wins his love with praise, admiration, affection, but the first purpose is to husband that love and praise in order to fashion the boy’s manners to virtue” (Ennobling Love, 73).

54 “The love relationship between teacher and pupil was a deliberately cultivated construct to further an education whose ultimate goal was more than a transference of literary and scientific skills; it sought to recreate the whole man, perfect in both learning and conduct” (Münster-Swendsen, 317).

55 Münster-Swendsen, 312.

56 Münster-Swendsen, 323.

57 Indeed, the opening of the Rule of Benedict calls for obedient adherence to the master’s precepts and the father’s advice; here presumably Benedict means himself, but he uses the same terms to refer to the abbot in Chapter 2.
poems, because both meanings are always present; to insist upon a strict disjunction between the
two interpretations misses the point of Baudri’s poetry, which depends on the interplay between
both. The poems do not represent coded testaments to Baudri’s pederastic desires disguised in
the conventional language of pedagogy, but we cannot dismiss them as an unproblematic means
of imparting moral edification, either.

Baudri’s third poem does enjoin the youth in question to amend his unbecoming
behavior. But, as many have noted,58 he does so in unquestionably erotic terms. Baudri opens
by asserting that regarding whatever he finds pleasing or displeasing about the boy, his feelings
are justified and accurate. He then immediately begins to praise the boy’s appearance, and sweet
voice, at length:

Forma placet, quia forma decet, quia forma uenusta est:
Mala tenella placet, flauum caput osque modestum.
Vox tua demulcet nostras et mitigat aures,
Que tam dulce sonat quam dulce sonat Filomela:
Incertum an pueri sit uox tua siue puelle.
Orpheus alter eris, nisi uocem sauciet aetas,
Aetas a pueris que dat differre puellas,
Cum gena uestitur iuuenum lanugine prima
Et pande nares faciem speciemque uenustant.
Cor pectusque meum tua uitrea lumina tangunt:
Sidus enim geminum cristallina lumina credo.
His bene respondet caro lactea, pectus eburnum:
Alludit manibus niueo de corpore tactus.
Hec sunt, que debent aliisque michique placere,
Presertim cum te nec agat lasciuia iuuentus
Nec reprobet diuam membrorum composituram.
Hec michi cuncta placent, hec et michi singula mando. (3.7-23)

Your appearance is pleasing, because your appearance is becoming, because your
appearance is beautiful:
Your tender cheek is pleasing, as are your blond head and your modest mouth.

58 Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 51; Jaeger, *Ennobling Love*, 71; Boswell, 245; Tilliette comments on the “descriptio
pueri,” of lines 7-19, but dismisses this as a literary convention, siding with Jaeger’s interpretation of the poem as
educational over Boswell’s assertion that the poem bears witness to gay culture (Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 1, 150, c.3,
n.1).
Your voice soothes and calms my ears,
Which rings as sweetly as Philomela does:
It is uncertain whether your voice is that of a boy or of a girl.
You will be another Orpheus, unless age wounds your voice,
Age which causes girls to differ from boys,
When youths’ cheeks are clothed in first down
And their curved noses make their faces and appearances beautiful.
Your glassy eyes touch my heart and my breast:
Indeed I believe that your crystal eyes are twin stars.
Your milky skin corresponds well to these, as does your ivory breast:
A touch from your snowy body plays with my hands.
These are things which ought to please me and others,
Especially since lascivious youth does not drive you
And does not condemn the divine composition of your limbs.
All of these things please me, and I commend each of these things to myself.

This eroticizing description is typical of what one finds in classical verse, and it is impossible to ignore the pederastic nature of the genre that Baudri is imitating. Ovid’s verse, of course, is aggressively heterosexual—as he tells us in the Ars, this is because he believes sexual pleasure should be equal for both parties, which is not the case when boys are involved:

odi concubitus, qui non utrumque resoluunt:
    hoc est cur curi pueri tangar amore minus;  (Ars 2.683-84)

I hate sex that doesn’t provide release to both partners:
This is why I am less touched by the love of a boy.

The praecceptor’s concern with both parties’ equal enjoyment is insincere, as the poems repeatedly make clear. But nonetheless Ovid does not write any poems to boys, nor do any of

59 See, for example, Horace’s Odes 2.5 and 4.10, as well as several of Martial’s epigrams, including 3.65, 9.16, 9.17, and especially 4.42, which details what his ideal boy would look like and features many of the same characteristics that appear in Baudri’s poem. Amy Richlin has compiled a list of Martial’s poems about beautiful boys in her article, “Not Before Homosexuality: The Materiality of the Cinaedus and the Roman Law against Love between Men,” Journal of the History of Sexuality 4 (April 1993): 537 n. 34.

60 As Eric Downing notes, in reference to the praecceptor’s claims in Ars 3 that he is leveling the playing field, “The process is deliberately ‘mechanical,’ a system of inverted citations of his own text ostensibly designed to realign the altered bases of power. But the process is also deliberately ‘shallow’ in a way that ironically undoes the effect of the mechanical symmetry, at least insofar as it purports parity. No true equality is intended, despite the praecceptor’s alleged gender betrayal: women are merely shaped to the literary parts needed by men to play at and succeed at their literary game” (Eric Downing, “Anti-Pygmalion: The Praeceptor in Ars Amatoria, Book 3,” Helios 17, no. 2 [1990]: 238). The lack of true concern with equality in the Ars is exemplified by Ars 2.725-732, in which the praecceptor...
the other elegists after Tibullus Book 1.\textsuperscript{61} Ovid’s love poetry influences Baudri here in many ways, but for the precedent of writing poems to boys, we must look elsewhere. The \textit{Metamorphoses} certainly contain homoerotic tales. The Narcissus narrative of Book 3 is the most pertinent in this case, but Ovid groups together several other homoerotic stories in Book 10, including that of Ganymede, a myth of particular influence in the Middle Ages which Baudri also references in the poem.\textsuperscript{62} Both Vergil’s second \textit{Eclogue} (as already discussed), and Horace’s \textit{Odes} are particularly relevant. Martial’s homoerotic poems are also a possible source, assuming Baudri had access to them.\textsuperscript{63} Satire provides another precedent for the depiction of pederastic relationships in poetry. Baudri had read Juvenal and Persius,\textsuperscript{64} and in fact he quotes Juvenal’s second satire (against effeminacy/homosexuality) repeatedly in his poem to Constance (c.200).\textsuperscript{65} He was also familiar with Horace’s satires, which he imitates more directly throughout his corpus, as Christopher McDonough has demonstrated.\textsuperscript{66} Baudri and his contemporaries were

advise men that while it is better not to reach climax before their mistresses, if they are under time pressure they should disregard this advice and worry only about their own pleasure.

\textsuperscript{61} James, \textit{Learned Girls}, 12.

\textsuperscript{62} See below for more on Ganymede. Orpheus narrates these stories in the \textit{Metamorphoses}; the comparison of the boy to Orpheus in line 12 of Baudri’s poem is of course principally meant to emphasize the boy’s beautiful voice, but it also serves as an allusion to the homoeroticism of Book 10 of the \textit{Metamorphoses}.

\textsuperscript{63} Martial was not a school author, but his poems were accessible, by themselves or more often in anthologies, and the homoerotic poems were apparently not repressed. As Gian Biagio Conte tells us, “One family of manuscripts tried to expurgate all traces of heterosexual obscenity (remaining, however, generously hospitable to homosexual ones)” (Conte, 509). Baudri’s poems do not demonstrate any definitive influence of Martial, although Tilliette does find some verbal echoes, but we cannot rule out the possibility that he read him either.

\textsuperscript{64} Tilliette, introduction to \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, xxi.

\textsuperscript{65} See Tilliette, \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 2, 293, c. 200 n.62.

all well-versed in such texts, and the implications of referencing the genre would not have escaped his audience.

After telling the boy that his beauty is what pleases him, Baudri adds, much more briefly, that he praises him for refusing to be a Ganymede:

Laudo, louis quoniam Ganimedes esse refutas,
Et precor et laudo, ne corrumparis amando. (3.24-5)

I praise you, because you refuse to be the Ganymede of Jove,
I both praise you and pray that you not be corrupted by loving.

This backpedaling after such a lengthy eroticizing description is hardly convincing; the stark contrast between the two sections of the poem serves rather to highlight the questionable nature of the description. Moreover, the mention of Ganymede calls to mind the well-developed medieval tradition of Ganymede. Both John Boswell and Leonard Barkan have examined the numerous references to the Ganymede story in medieval and Renaissance literature and art.\(^\text{67}\) Boswell argues for the emergence of “specifically gay topoi” in literature between 1050 and 1150, of which Ganymede was the most prominent;\(^\text{68}\) Ganymede came to be more or less the equivalent of the modern word gay.\(^\text{69}\) References to Ganymede in literature were so numerous that Boswell says they cannot be fully catalogued, and both sympathetic and hostile writers made use of the motif.\(^\text{70}\) Baudri’s reference to the story, even though it is in passing and occurs, on the surface, in the context of praising a boy for not being a Ganymede, evokes both the original myth, in which the most powerful god abducts a boy and presses him into his own service, and


\(^{68}\) Boswell, 250-51.

\(^{69}\) Boswell, 253.

\(^{70}\) Boswell, 251, n. 29.
also the entire medieval Ganymede tradition, at a time when “Ganymedes” were not necessarily viewed with disapproval.\textsuperscript{71}

Furthermore, as much as Baudri likes the boy, he finds his haughtiness and inflexibility greatly displeasing, we soon learn; he admonishes him to become more yielding. On the one hand, this is useful spiritual advice; as abbot, Baudri should stamp out haughtiness in the boys under his charge. But in this case, the language used to correct the boy complicates the issue. Significantly, Baudri makes no mention of the dangers to the boy’s soul, or to any of the religious precepts that justify his critique. He uses instead the conventions and language of Classical Latin verse, specifically imitating Ovid and Horace, to warn the boy that his behavior will have consequences. He references the story of Narcissus, as well as the tradition of poems in which prostitutes are warned that they should stop being haughty and should agree to have sex with the poet, because one day their beauty will fade. These references suggest that Baudri’s main problem with the youth’s haughtiness is that he is attractive but refuses to pay attention to him. His otherwise legitimate spiritual guidance becomes suspect, because the reader senses that Baudri’s advice is not at all altruistic.

Part of Baudri’s tactic involves reminding the boy of the ephemeral nature of his beauty and of the eventual deterioration his body will suffer. Baudri draws on a trope from the classical tradition, in which a prostitute (the \textit{dura puella}) is either reminded that one day her beauty will fade.

\textsuperscript{71} Boswell argues that between 1050 and 1150, a “gay subculture” emerged, and that “Gay people were prominent, influential, and respected at many levels of society in most of Europe, and left a permanent mark on the cultural monuments of the age, both religious and secular. Homosexual passions became matters of public discussion and were celebrated in spiritual as well as carnal contexts. Opposition to gay sexuality appeared rarely and more as aesthetic partisanship than as moral censure; exceptions to this were ignored by religious and civic leaders” (Boswell, 334). Of Baudri himself, Boswell says that he “epitomizes the transition from the ascetic passions of the monastic love tradition … to the boldly erotic poetry more characteristic of the eleventh and twelfth centuries” (Boswell, 244). He argues that some of Baudri’s verses fall purely within the realm of “passionate but spiritual affection” (244), but that others “contain no pretense of spiritual affinity” (245). Boswell mainly uses the poems he interprets as homoerotic to argue that Baudri himself had no qualms about homosexual love, and that Baudri’s defensive disclaimers demonstrate his age’s altered attitudes towards it, since the issue is that as an abbot he writes erotic poems at all, not that he writes some of those poems to males.
fade and no one will want her, or else a poet exalts over a previously haughty prostitute who is now old and deserted.\textsuperscript{72} The trope can be varied, and an unyielding boy may be the subject of the poem and threats, as in Horace’s \textit{Ode} 4.10. In fact, the theme is particularly prevalent in Horace, and while on the one hand it fits with his general Epicurean philosophy, it is also clearly a form of sexual manipulation, especially since the women in question are prostitutes;\textsuperscript{73} being old and unwanted is not merely depressing, but represents a complete loss of livelihood.\textsuperscript{74}

Baudri’s warnings are confined to the end of the poem, after he has praised the boy’s beauty but criticized his haughtiness. He writes,

\begin{quote}
Confidis credisque tue nimium speciei.
Crede michi: speciem tibi labilis auferet aetas.
Instat enim, carnis quia corruptela peribit,
Cum decus atque decor, flos carneus, unde tumescis,
Illico marmoset, cum fies ipsemet alter,
Cum rugosa cutis, caro uero tabida fiet,
Cum te tussis aget, fluidus cum pulmo liquescet,
Cum tabes iecoris bella intestina ciebit:
Quod natura dedit, eadem tibi tollet idipsum. (3.65-73)
\end{quote}

You rely on and trust in your beauty too much.
Believe me: fleeting age/time will carry off your beauty.
Indeed, the time when your corruptible flesh will perish is impending.

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\textsuperscript{72} This theme is one of the various methods of persuasion found in the \textit{paraclausithyron}, although, as James points out, in elegy mention of the \textit{puella}’s profession is generally avoided, so the poet must be cautious, attempting to persuade without overtly mentioning the girl’s status as a prostitute (James, \textit{Learned Girls}, 136). The theme is a Hellenistic commonplace, but of course Baudri would not have known any Greek poems. His exposure would have come mainly from Horace and Ovid. See R.G.M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard, \textit{A Commentary on Horace: “Odes,” Book 1}, 1970 (reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 289-291, for more on this trope. Tilliette instead points to the passage, a “brutal and realistic description of old age,” as prefiguring the \textit{transi} theme that became popular in the later Middle Ages (Tilliette, \textit{Poèmes}, vol. 1, 151 n. 15; my translation). This is certainly a valid point, but the trope’s classical origins are more important for the purposes of my argument. Moreover, a \textit{memento mori} reading of the poem is not exclusive of other interpretations. Indeed if, as I argue, the poem perpetually oscillates between apparent moral edification and continual undermining of its supposed virtuous message, then using Horace’s sexualized poems to boys as a vehicle for an edifying Christian \textit{topos} is more of the same.

\textsuperscript{73} James, \textit{Learned Girls}, 136; also 51: Horace “rarely fails to mark his \textit{puellae} as members of the demi-monde.”

\textsuperscript{74} See Ronnie Ancona, \textit{Time and the Erotic in Horace’s “Odes”} (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994) for an exploration of issues of temporality and control in Horace’s \textit{Odes}. Ancona shows that the emphasis on temporality in the \textit{Odes} functions in relation to the poet’s construction of love as “characterized by the lover’s desire to control the beloved” (2).
When your beauty and elegance, the carnal flower of which you are so proud,
Will immediately wither, when you yourself will become someone else,
When your skin will become wrinkled, but your flesh will waste away,
When a cough will shake you, when your moist lungs will melt away,
When decay of your liver will provoke intestinal wars:
What nature has given, she will take away from you.

Baudri does not explicitly end this list of misfortunes with a warning that, once he has aged, the boy will be unlovable, but he does not need to; the implication is clear from the rest of the poem. The progression of Baudri’s argument (you are beautiful but haughty and do not pay attention to me; I will stop loving you if you do not change your behavior; and someday you will get old, and you will no longer be able to rely on beauty) is analogous to poems from the classical tradition. Of course, Baudri is able to imply that his complaints are justified spiritual advice, but his use of eroticizing imagery belies any such attempt. Moreover, the selfish nature of such threats is even more apparent in the sources Baudri is imitating; by modeling himself after Horace, Baudri undermines the legitimacy of his own discourse.

As already mentioned, Horace returns to this theme several times in his Odes. It should be noted here that Baudri was no doubt well versed in Horace. While Baudri does not appeal to Horace as blatantly as he does to Ovid, Horace nonetheless makes many an appearance in his collection. Tilliette states that we can tell from Baudri’s poems that he had a thorough knowledge, derived from subtle reading, of all of Horace’s works apart from the Epodes,\textsuperscript{75} and notes that Horace is Baudri’s biggest source after Ovid.\textsuperscript{76} This is unsurprising; Horace was a school author, and while medieval readers focused mainly on his Satires and Epistles, his Odes

\textsuperscript{75} Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xxi.

\textsuperscript{76} Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 1, 224 n. 3.
were by no means unknown. In addition to certain thematic influences, Tilliette has noted numerous citations from the *Odes*—enough so that it is indisputable that Baudri had read them. In Horace’s *Odes* the theme in question first appears in Book 1, poem 25, which describes the plight of Lydia, an aging prostitute whose suitors are growing progressively rarer:

Parcius iunctas quatiunt fenestras  
iactibus crebris iuvenes protervi,  
nec tibi somnos adimunt amatque  
ianua limen,

quia prius multum facilis movebat  
cardines. audis minus et minus iam:  
‘me tuo longas pereunte noctes,  
Lydia, dormis?’

in vicem moechos anus arrogantis  
flebis in solo levis angiportu  
Thracio bacchante magis sub inter-
lunia vento,  

More sparingly do violent young men  
Shake your closed windows with their frequent blows,  
Nor do they deprive you of sleep, and the door  
Loves the threshold,

The door which formerly moved its hinges  
Very readily. Now you hear less and less often,  
‘While I, you lover, perish during the long night,  
Are you sleeping, Lydia?’

In turn, a worthless old woman, you will weep  
In the deserted alley at the arrogance of adulterers,  
While the Thracian wind rages furiously  
Under the new moon.

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77 See, e.g., Conte 318, and L.D. Reynolds, ed., *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 182. In his article on Horace in *Texts and Transmission*, R.J. Tarrant notes that while there are several hundred surviving manuscripts of Horace, they have not been thoroughly investigated or catalogued (183). Nevertheless, many of the most authoritative manuscripts are French, and Baudri was well-positioned in the Loire Valley to have access to Horace.

78 That is, the door is stuck to the threshold because it is not opening and closing to admit lovers.

79 The translation is my own, but it is informed by suggestions from the Nisbet and Hubbard commentary.
Of this poem, Nisbet and Hubbard say, “This ode is an elaboration of a traditional motif: the rejected lover tells his beloved that her beauty will fade, and then she will be sorry,”\textsuperscript{80} and “[the ode] belongs mainly to the category where the rejected lover prays for revenge.” The poem’s message is clear: unyielding women should change their ways, because once they age, they will stop receiving attention from men (and the men they formerly rejected will take pleasure in their misfortune). As Ronnie Ancona notes, “the lover seeks to draw a distinction between himself and the beloved by pointing to how the beloved’s experience is determined by time, and this distinction itself is the basis of the lover’s effort to control the beloved.”\textsuperscript{81} The lover, who possesses money and thus power, is not subject to the same constraints as the courtesan, because increased age will not eliminate his ability to purchase a courtesan’s services. He is, however, affected by the woman’s refusal to admit him and accept his money. The poem’s rejected speaker paints a bleak picture of the deserted, desperate prostitute, driven to the streets (presumably in her youth she was a higher-class courtesan) where she still cannot find clients. This representation is an attempt at coercion.

Horace adapts this theme again in Book 4, this time in a poem addressed to a boy instead of to a woman:

\begin{quote}
O crudelis adhuc et Veneris muneribus potens,
in sperata tuae cum veniet pluma superbiae,
et quae nunc umeris involitant, deciderint comae,
nunc et qui color est puniceae flore prior rosae,
mutatus, Ligurine,\textsuperscript{82} in faciem verterit hispidam,
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{80} Nisbet and Hubbard, 289.
\textsuperscript{81} Ancona, \textit{Time and the Erotic}, 24.
dices ‘heu’, quotiens te speculo videris alterum,
‘quae mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit,
vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genae?’ (4.10.1-8)

O boy, still cruel and powerful with the gifts of Venus,
When down comes upon your arrogance unexpectedly,
And when the hair which now floats upon your shoulders falls away,
And when your color, which is now superior to the flower of the red rose,
Changes and turns, Ligurinus, into a shaggy face,
You will say, “Alas,” as often as you see yourself as another in the mirror,
“What my mind is today, why wasn’t it the same when I was a boy,
Or why can’t those cheeks return intact to this soul?”

Michael Putnam points out the poem’s preoccupation with the power that the boy’s beauty gives him, noting that Ligurinus’ “position of power depends on his beauty, and the loss of one betokens the disappearance of the other.” In fact, Horace’s poem is an attempt to wrest some of this power from the boy—the warnings of future powerlessness and regret are intended to manipulate the boy into relinquishing the power he currently possesses and yielding to the lover’s advances. Fraenkel misreads the poem, as Putnam also points out, when he interprets the final verses of the poem as representing “not only the anticipated complaint of Ligurinus but also the voice of a man who cannot help looking back on the time when he was young himself.” The poem has nothing to do with the speaker’s own past, and is merely an attempt at manipulation. By imitating poems from the classical tradition which overtly state that the young should have sex now while they still can, Baudri is able to add this sentiment to his own poems, even while purporting to say the opposite.

83 See above, note 82.
84 Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity*, 180. Putnam also points out that Horace’s poem is indebted to Vergil’s second Eclogue, noting that “its careful recollection here, postulating a prototype for Ligurinus in Roman literary precedent, has the effect of expanding still more broadly the reader’s timeframe” and that this creates a sense of the universality of the feelings Horace describes (Putnam, *Artifices of Eternity*, 178-79).
Ovid, too, makes use of the tactic in the third book of the *Ars* (the book containing his advice to women):

dum facit ingenium, petit hinc praecepta, puellae,
   quas pudor et leges et sua iura sinunt. 
quen tom esto est senectae: 
   sic nullum ubis tempus abibit iners. 
dum licet et ueros etiam nunc editis annos, 
   ludite: uent anni more fluentis aquae. 
ne, quae praeteriit, iterum reuocabit unda 
ne, quae praeteriit, hora redire potest. 
utendum est aetate: cito pede labitur aetas 
   nec bona tam sequitur, quam bona prima fuit. 
hos ego, qui canent, frutices uiolaria uidi; 
   hac mihi de spina grata corona data est. 
tempus erit, quo tu, quae nunc excludis amantes, 
   frigida deserta nocte iacebis anus, 
ne tua frangetur nocturna ianua rixa, 
   sparsa nec iuenies limina mane rosa. 
quam cito, me miserum, laxantur corpora rugis 
   et perit, in nitido qui fuit ore, color, 
quasque fuisseti canas a uirgine iures 
   sparguntur subito per caput omne comae! 
anguibus exuitur tenui cum pelle uetustas, 
   nec faciunt ceruos cornua iacta senes; 
nostra sine auxilio fugiunt bona: carpite florem, 
   qui, nisi carptus erit, turpiter ipse cadet. 
adde quod et partus faciunt breuiora iuuentae 
   tempora: continua messe senescit ager.  (*Ars* 3.57-82)

While my talent functions, seek precepts from here, girls,
   You whom shame and laws and your rights allow.
Be mindful now that old age is going to come upon you:
   In this way you won’t waste any of your time.
While it’s permitted and even now while you’re living your true years,
   Play: years pass by like flowing water.
A wave which has passed by cannot be called back,
   Nor can an hour which has passed by return.
You must make use of your age: age slips by with a swift foot
   Nor is the age which follows as good as the first age was.
I saw these bushes, which are grey, when they were violet beds:
   A pleasing crown was given to me from this thorn.
The time will come when you, who now shut out lovers,
   Will lie in the deserted night, a frigid old woman,
Nor will your door be broken down with nocturnal brawls,
   Nor will you find your threshold sprinkled with roses in the morning.
How quickly, woe is me, bodies are stretched with wrinkles
And the color which was on the shining face perishes,
And the white hairs which you swear you’ve had since you were a girl
Are suddenly sprinkled through your whole head!
Snakes slough off their old age with their delicate skin,
And shedding their horns keeps stags young;
Our goods flee without aid: pick the flower,
Which, if not plucked, will fall basely on its own.
Add that childbirth also lessens the time of youth:
The field grows old with continual harvest.

Both Ovid’s and Horace’s poems contain essentially the same message, but Ovid’s poem is much more overtly preceptive (a trait which Baudri’s poem shares). As already mentioned, Ovid’s role as teacher is the fundamental aspect of his poetic persona in the Ars, and Baudri picks up on this in imitating him. The praeceptor portrays himself as a divinely-inspired authority (the lines directly preceding this passage say that Venus has inspired him), who is in a position to advise the puellae on how they should behave, and then immediately warns them to accept all lovers before it is too late. Horace’s poems are also instructive, but focus more on the poet’s vindictive satisfaction with the haughty beloved’s eventual loss of beauty than on the pedagogical tone. But, as Roy Gibson notes in his commentary on this passage:

There is however one omission from Ovid’s warnings. Prostitutes conventionally worry that age and the loss of beauty will eventually impoverish them … and it is against this background that lenae tell their pupils to employ their youth before the onset of old age. For the moment this emphasis is absent in Ovid, who lays stress rather on the opportunities for pleasure in youth (62 ludite).\(^{87}\)

This key difference between the praeceptor’s advice and that of the lena is part of what marks his discourse as self-interested—the lena speaks from experience and legitimately wants to help the girl, so she gives her practical advice; the praeceptor wants the girl to sleep with him, so he tells her what he thinks will manipulate her into doing so, leaving out, for the time being, any

\(^{87}\) Gibson, Ovid, “Ars Amatoria” Book 3, 110.
unromantic reference to financial necessity. At the same time, the *puella*’s profession and financial needs are an inescapable undertone, so the *praeeceptor*, while poorly masking his role as lover under the guise of altruistic teacher, is able to avoid mentioning the possibility of an impoverished future for the girl while still implying it. Gibson notes Ovid’s self-interest and its relation to the aforementioned Horace poems:

Ovid also adopts something of the role of the self-interested lover in these lines (as Venus had predicted he would). His advice echoes passages where beloveds are begged to give themselves over to love before beauty fades … or where the rejected lover wishes on the beloved the fading of beauty and the suffering of rejection (Catull. 8.14ff., Hor. *Carm.* 1.25, 4.10; Prop. 3.24.31ff).88

As Gibson also notes, Ovid’s imitation of models such as Horace are part of what makes it clear that “Ovid is swapping the role of teacher for that of lover,” and hence that his advice is selfish.89 Baudri, in turn, imitates Horace, but also imitates Ovid imitating Horace; this marks his poetry as containing a similar degree of selfishness, because it hints that he would like the boy to play the role of the *puella*.

At the end of the passage, in what reads as an afterthought, the *praeeceptor* also warns of a particular danger to prostitutes, pregnancy, and its deleterious effects on their beauty. But this couplet is extremely important, as it highlights a tragic paradox in the life of a prostitute: pregnancy, besides being dangerous, will lessen her attractiveness and, consequently, her ability to make a living. But pregnancy is also a direct consequence of her profession.90 The interplay between playful tone and serious social commentary is typical of Ovid’s poetry, and it is likely part of what made him such an attractive source for Baudri. Baudri’s poem, in turn, alludes to what seems to have been a common problem for boys in monasteries—predation from older

monks. As already mentioned, Boswell observes that the *Rule of Benedict* calls for various precautions, presumably intended to prevent sexual relations between the monks. We see similar concerns, but to a much greater degree, in the customaries of Fleury and Cluny that date from approximately the time of Baudri’s abbacy. The Fleury customary in question is attributed to Thierry d’Amorbach; it was likely composed between the years 1010 and 1018, but would describe life at Fleury when Thierry was there, at the end of the tenth century. This is admittedly close to a century before Baudri’s tenure at Bourgueil, but it is still much closer in time than the sixth-century *Rule*, and therefore reflects much more accurately the current concerns and practices of French Benedictine monasteries in Baudri’s day. From Cluny, the other main center that dictated Benedictine practices, two customaries survive which are contemporaneous with Baudri. The first, by Ulrich of Cluny, was commissioned by the abbot William of Hirsau and dates from between 1079 and 1083-4. The other, by Bernard, also a monk at Cluny, is dedicated to Abbot Hugh of Cluny, who reigned from 1049-1109; the customary itself likely dates from around 1085. Isabelle Cochelin has argued that Ulrich

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91 Boswell, 187-88

92 This is all dependent on the assumption that Thierry d’Amorbach is indeed the customary’s author; experts have inferred this based on stylistic correspondences with work that is known to be Thierry’s, and based on the fact that Thierry had spent time in Fleury but knew the customs of Germanic monasteries, and was of Germanic origin himself (the author of the customary seems to have exhibited all of these traits). See Anselme Davril’s and Lin Donnat’s edition and translation for details (*Le coutumier de Fleury [Consuetudines Floriacenses Antiquiores] par Thierry d’Amorbach*, ed., trans., and annotated by Anselme Davril and Lin Donnat, with the collaboration of Gillette Labory, in *L’Abbaye de Fleury en l’an mil, Sources d’histoire médiévale* 32 [Paris: CNRS éditions, 2004], 148-151).


95 Davril, “Coutumiers directifs et coutumiers descriptifs,” 25.

actually finished his customary in 1080, and Bernard completed his in 1085, but that Ulrich’s describes life at Cluny during the 1060s, while Bernard’s describes practices from the late 1070s to the early 1080s.\textsuperscript{97} She also argues that Bernard’s customary uses Ulrich’s as a base text but greatly expands and corrects it, and that Bernard’s customary is therefore a much more reliable indicator of Cluniac customs at around 1080.\textsuperscript{98} Bernard’s customary is twice as long as Ulrich’s and contains many of the same passages, but seems to have been written with the aim of teaching novices all the details of the life they were undertaking, whereas other Cluniac customaries focus on the practices that interest them.\textsuperscript{99} The Rule of Benedict’s precautionary regulations about the interaction between boys and other monks survive in these customaries, which lends credence to the theory that this was a real and well-known concern.

Bernard’s customary contains several sections on how to manage novices, and one section entitled “De Pueris;” throughout these sections we see a preoccupation with the idea that the boys must not be left alone or even talk with any monks apart from their magister. Ulrich’s customary contains many of the same passages, typically almost verbatim, but I will quote from Bernard’s because it is the more reliable of the two. There are strict rules even for trips to the bathroom:

\begin{quote}
Eorum [i.e. puerorum] disciplina est hujusmodi: primo simul in loco uno dormitoriijacent, et singula eorum lecta Magistrorum lectis sunt discreta; nullus eo alius accedere praesumit. Si quis eorum opus habuerit in nocte ad necessarias ire, prius laterna accensa majore, Magistrum sonitu excitat prope se jacentem, qui surgens surgere facit et alium puerum, eorum alterutro sursum tenente laternam, medius inter illos Magister incedit, sic nimirum eos ducit et reducit, nec candelam extinguit, usque dum ambo sint recollocati; cum autem cunci se levaverint ad nocturnos, eunt simul ad necessarias, et pueri, et Magistri, ita ordinati, ut jam de duobus praemisi.\textsuperscript{100}
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{97} Cochelin, “Evolution,” 29-30 n. 3, 61
\textsuperscript{98} Cochelin, “Evolution,” 57, 61-2.
\textsuperscript{99} Cochelin, “Evolution,” 51.
\textsuperscript{100} Bernard the Monk, Ordo Cluniacensis per Bernardum Saeculi XI. Scriptorem, in Vetus disciplina monastica, ed. M. Herrgott (Paris, 1726); reprinted under the direction of Pius Engelbert (Siegburg: Schmitt, 1999), 201. Although
Their [i.e. the boys’] discipline is as follows: first, they all sleep together in one part of the dormitory, and each of their beds is separated by the beds of the masters; no one else presumes to approach that place. If any of them needs to go to the bathroom at night, first, having lit the larger lantern, he wakes the master lying near him with a sound, and the master gets up and also has another boy get up; one of the boys holds the lantern up high, and the master walks between them, and in this way he leads them there and back, and he does not extinguish the candle until both have been brought back to bed. Moreover, when they all wake up for Nocturns, they all go to the bathroom together—both the boys and the masters—arranged in the manner I just described in the case of two boys.

The customary also contains repeated injunctions against the other monks’ making signs to the boys or touching them:

Nullus unquam faciet eis signum, nec etiam Magister major nisi raro, et valde necessarium.\textsuperscript{101}

No one ever makes any sign to them, not even the senior teacher, except rarely, and if extremely necessary.

Cantor nunquam tanget eos, vel etiam tantum unum signum faciet extra Scholam.\textsuperscript{102}

The cantor never touches them, or even makes one sign to them outside of school.

Debent etiam Magistri in hyeme, ad intervallum quod est inter Nocturnos et Laudes, et insuper quandocumque Armarius cantat eis, vel auscultat Lectiones, sollicite habere oculos super eum, ne ullo modo unquam signum faciat eis.\textsuperscript{103}

In the winter, at the interval between Nocturns and Lauds, and in addition whenever the librarian sings to the boys, or listens to their readings, the masters must keep their eyes on him carefully, lest he ever make a sign to them in any way.

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I am not citing it directly, Ulrich’s customary can be found in \textit{PL} 149, col. 643-779 (\textit{Antiquiores Consuetudines Cluniacensis}).

\textsuperscript{101} Bernard, 202.

\textsuperscript{102} Bernard, 203.

\textsuperscript{103} Bernard, 209.
The concern about boys is emphasized by the fact that the customary takes the time to mention any conceivable situation in which a boy could possibly find himself alone and then to forbid this solitude, rather than just making a blanket statement and moving on. For example, a boy must never go to the infirmary alone:

Est et alia consuetudo, quatenus cum unus ducitur remanendi causa in Infirmaria, duo alii debent cum eo ire, videlicet pro reditu; non enim debet quisquam unus solus exire, nisi contingat quod alio modo fieri non posset, et tunc duo Magistri cum eo eant.\textsuperscript{104}

There is also another custom, that when one of them is brought to stay in the infirmary, two others must go with him, of course for the sake of the return trip; for no one should ever go out alone, unless it happens that it cannot be otherwise, and in that case, two masters must go with him.

Visiting monks are expressly forbidden from kissing the boys, a prohibition which seems particularly motivated by concerns about chastity:

Sciatur et hoc de eis infantibus, quod cum aliquis Frater extraneus osculatur Fratres, non osculatur eos;\textsuperscript{105}

Let it also be known about these children, that when any visiting brother kisses the other brothers, he does not kiss them.

Even more explicitly, concern about morals appears in the context of washing up in the morning:

Nullus nutritus debet eis aquam dare ab [sic] abluendum manus, nisi multum moribus et aetate maturus.\textsuperscript{106}

No \textit{nutritus} should give them water for washing their hands, unless he is very mature in morals and age.

The instructions on the boys’ seating in the cloister also note that no one must touch the boys:

Eorum sessio in Claustro ita est ordinata, ut pueri sedeant juxta murum, Magistri in cancellis claustri, ita ut eos possint jugiter intueri: per medium eorum nullus est omnino qui audeat transire, ubicumque fuerint quantumlibet sit locus angustus, et quantalibet sit

\textsuperscript{104} Bernard, 206.
\textsuperscript{105} Bernard, 206.
\textsuperscript{106} Bernard, 208.
Fratrum multitudo; tamen omnes cavent ita eis appropiare, ut non tangatur ab aliquo vestis eorum.\(^{107}\)

Their seating in the cloister is thus arranged, so that the boys sit near the wall, and the masters at the cancelli of the cloister, so that they can look at them continually: there is absolutely no one who would dare to go through their midst, wherever they are, however narrow the place is, and however great the multitude of brothers is; nevertheless everyone is so wary of coming near them, that their clothes are not touched by anyone.

These instructions all relate to boys, but there is also a section on youths and it shows the same sorts of concerns:

Nunquam debet se juvenis jungere alii qui videatur juvenis esse, in quovis negotio, etiamsi ille non sit in custodia, nec loqui, nec adjuvare eum ad vestiendum, vel ad tale quid, vel etiam signum facere, nisi de qualibet re necessaria, vidente, et audiente, et concedente Custode, et sedente inter utrumque. Alii vero maturiores qui bonae opinionis sunt, possunt cum juvenibus loqui de necessariis et utilibus rebus, sed tamen semper audientibus Custodibus.\(^{108}\)

A youth should never join himself to another who seems to be a youth, in whatever business, even if the person in question is not in custody, nor should he speak with him, nor help him get dressed, or with any other such thing, nor should he even make a sign to him, unless about a necessary thing, with his custodian seeing, hearing, and sitting between the two of them. Other older monks, however, who have a good reputation, can speak with youths about necessary and useful matters, but still, always within the custodians’ hearing.

This sampling is by no means exhaustive, and demonstrates Cluniac anxiety about sexual misconduct, in particular involving boys.

Thierry’s Fleury customary demonstrates similar concerns, stipulating that only monks of proven chastity and morals may have charge of the boys, and also stressing that they must never go anywhere unaccompanied:

Custos infantum qui et actor ordinatur probatissime castitatis atque munditie frater, vir gravitati studens vitiorum perscrutor, commissorum infantum clementissimus previsor…. Numquam enim solet puer aliquis nostrum solus alicubi incedere sed semper bini, sive

\(^{107}\) Bernard, 209.

\(^{108}\) Bernard, 211.
mittantur a magistro sive proprie necessitatis quid habeant, magistro subsequente virgamque gestante.\textsuperscript{109}

He who is appointed as custodian of the children, also known as their manager, is a brother of the most proven chastity and purity, a man of gravity, zealous in seeking out vices, and a most clement overseer of the children entrusted to him…. Indeed, no boy of ours is ever accustomed to go anywhere by himself, but rather they go everywhere in pairs, whether they are sent by their master or they have some necessity of their own, and always with a master following, carrying a switch.

Indeed, as Davril notes about the fact that the boys must never be alone, “On retrouve ce souci partout dans le monde monastique de l’époque, en Angleterre … à Cluny … etc.”\textsuperscript{110} The fact that a master carrying a switch must always follow the boys is of course indicative of a concern with normal discipline, but the further stipulation that the master cannot be alone with one boy clearly indicates anxieties of a more serious kind. In fact, Thierry makes explicit but cryptic reference to a scandal of such a sort in his section on sleeping arrangements:

Et hoc dicendum, quod lectuli infantum nequaquam fratrum lectis intermiscentur, sed potius in medio dormitorii fiunt ubi lucerne pendent, ut ex omni parte circumspici possunt. Lubricum quippe est valde et periculosum inter spiritales viros conversari pueros, quia nonnumquam scandalum permaximum atque destructio locorum inde procedit, sicut nuperrime experimento didicimus.\textsuperscript{111}

And it must be said that the children’s beds are by no means mixed in with the beds of the brothers, but are rather in the middle of the dormitory, where the lamps hang, so that they can be seen from all sides. Indeed it is very hazardous and dangerous for young boys to associate with spiritual men, because sometimes the greatest scandal and destruction of these places proceeds from this, as we learned by experience quite recently.

Evidently, the chastity of boys was a real concern, founded on real incidents of impropriety. In such a context, there is no way Baudri’s poems could have been understood as belonging solely

\textsuperscript{109} Thierry, 204, section 18.
\textsuperscript{110} Davril, 205 n. 120.
\textsuperscript{111} Thierry, 220, section 28. As Davril points out (n.165), the \textit{Rule of Benedict} 22.7, although discussing \textit{adulscentes} and not \textit{pueri}, stipulates the opposite—the youths’ beds are to be mixed among those of the older monks.
to the acceptable discourse of ennobling love—the more problematic sexualized language would have been apparent to any of his readers.

As Tilliette notes in his commentary, lines 17-19 of the description of the boy in Baudri’s third poem closely echo Ovid’s description of Narcissus in the *Metamorphoses*:

\[
\text{Sidus enim geminum cristallina lumina credo.}
\]

\[
\text{His bene respondet caro lactea, pectus eburnum:}
\]

\[
\text{Alludit manibus niueo de corpore tactus.}
\]

Indeed I believe that your crystal eyes are twin stars.  
Your milky skin corresponds well to these, as does your ivory breast:  
A touch from your snowy body plays with my hands.  

(Baudri 3.17-19)

\[
\text{spectat humi positus geminum, sua lumina, sidus}
\]

\[
\text{et dignos Baccho, dignos et Apolline crines}
\]

\[
\text{impubesque genas et eburnea colla decusque}
\]

\[
\text{oris et in niueo mixtum candore ruborem, (Met. 3.420-423)}^{113}
\]

Lying on the ground, he looks at his eyes, twin stars,  
And at his hair, worthy of Bacchus and of Apollo  
And at his youthful cheeks and his ivory neck and the beauty  
Of his face and the red mixed in with snowy white.

Baudri later makes the comparison explicit:

\[
\text{Sed te Narcissus reprimat, qui fabula uiiuit}
\]

\[
\text{Exemplumque manet elatis, ut resipiscant.}
\]

But let Narcissus restrain you, as he lives as a fable  
And remains as an example to the haughty, so that they may come to their senses.  

(3.33-34)

It is an unsurprising comparison, on the one hand; as Baudri himself says, Narcissus is the classic example of the negative consequences of haughtiness. But the comparison serves to highlight

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112 Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 1, 150 n. 6.

the letter’s eroticism, and adds a threatening undertone: Narcissus, Ovid tells us, is ultimately undone because he refuses to submit to another man’s demands:

Sic hanc, sic alias undis aut montibus ortas
luserat hic nymphas, sic coetus ante uiriles.
deinde manus aliquis despectus ad aethera tollens
‘sic amet ipse licet, sic non potiatur amato’
dixerat: adsensit precibus Rhamnusia iustis. (Met. 402-6)

Thus he had trifled with her [Echo], thus with other nymphs
Born in the waves or the mountains, and thus with crowds of youths.
Thence one scorned youth, raising his hands to the heavens
Said, “let him love in this way, and likewise let him not obtain his beloved.”
Rhamnusia [Nemesis] assented to his just prayers.

This is what leads Narcissus to fall in love with his own reflection and, ultimately, turn into a flower; the implication is that the boy, too, will suffer if he rejects Baudri’s advances.

Baudri, then, is making a powerful statement about his own poetic persona in modeling it after Ovid’s. Writing semi-erotic poems to the boys in his charge is a questionable action as it is (as Baudri knows, since he depicts his persona as repeatedly insisting that these friendships should be understood as chaste), and by styling himself as Horatian and Ovidian, Baudri further emphasizes the unequal power dynamic in the exchange. His poems portray him using his position as abbot to inappropriately manipulate boys, thoroughly complicating any positive moral message in the poems and forcing the association of his abbatial persona with that of the manipulative, insincere praeceptor amoris.

We find another manifestation of Baudri’s questionable persona in a series of three poems about a certain Teucer (the Trojans developed a reputation for faithlessness in the Middle Ages; Teucer is evidently not anyone’s real name). It should be noted that these are not letter-poems, because they are not addressed to anyone, but they are still pertinent because they are

114 Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 1, 222 n. 1.
about Baudri’s relationship with a boy. It is not apparent until the third poem in the series that
the Teucer in question is a youth; in fact, it is not immediately apparent what is happening at all.
The first poem (c. 118) is entitled “Allegorice de quolibet.” The poem says that Teucer,
formerly fifth among Baudri’s friends, is now to be numbered fourth; whoever was formerly
fourth has lost his place:

Quartus adest nostris internumerandus amicis
Teucer, quem quartum preposterus inserit ordo.
Ordine quintus erat: sed dum res anticipatur,
Fit subito quartus, qui quintus debuit esse.
Perdidit ergo locum, quia lentus distulit horam:
Ergo quintus erit, quem quartum prenumeraram. (118.1-6)

Teucer is here, to be numbered fourth among our friends,
Whom a reversed order inserted as fourth.
He was fifth in order, but while the matter was being anticipated,
He who should have been fifth suddenly became fourth.
Therefore he lost his place, because he sluggishly delayed the hour:
Therefore he will be fifth, though before I had numbered him as fourth.

The poem is vague about the circumstances behind this change, saying only that Teucer is
present, and that the displaced friend is slow or late. From there, fortune and fate are discussed,
as Baudri hopes for good fortune, saying it is the only way to achieve one’s desires. The next
poem (“De quo supra”) clarifies matters:

Carmen heri nostrum nostris ingessit amicis
Teucrum, quem nostrum spe colloquioque dicaram:
Nil michi de Teucro preter spem colloquiumque
Tempus adhuc dederat, tantum sperare licebat
Spesque fuit tanti, quanti res ipsa fuisset.
Qua spe tutus ego tuti quoque more loquutus
Mox Teucrum nostris specialibus adnumerai
Attribuitque gradum mea protinus optio quartum
Et, qui quartus erat, dilatus in ordine quinto est.
Quartum quippe gradum sibimet sperauerat alter.
Teucrum colloquio placuit temptare secundo:
Durus ebesque fuit, sua dicta incongrua nostris.
Obstipui, fateor, idem uir cum fuit alter:
Alter erat uerbis, habitu quoque corporis idem.
Id, quod dixit heri, nescit, negat, abnuit, odit.
Yesterday our song placed our Teucer among our friends,
Whom I had consecrated as ours because of hope and a conversation:
Concerning Teucer, time thus far had given me nothing besides hope and a conversation;
It was only permitted for me to hope,
And my hope was worth as much as the event itself would have been.
So I, safe in this hope, having likewise spoken in the way of a safe man,
Soon numbered Teucer among my special friends,
And my choice immediately assigned fourth place to him,
And he who was fourth was demoted to fifth place.
In fact, another had hoped to earn fourth place for himself.
I decided to test Teucer with a second conversation:
He was harsh and wooden, and his words were incongruous with ours.
I was amazed, I confess, when the same man was another:
He was another in his words, but the same in the appearance of his body.
That which he said yesterday he doesn’t know about, he denies, he rejects, he hates.
The grievous inconstancy of fickle Teucer was displeasing,
And I began to reproach myself rather vehemently
For favoring anyone whatsoever with a careless ear.
So now I am erasing Teucer from my heart:
Let him be removed from the fourth place which I had bestowed on him,
And he will never be preferred among my friends again,
And let him live under no monument of my love.

An enraged Baudri laments the previous poem, saying he was driven to write it by his overzealous hopes, which have now been dashed, as Teucer’s attitude towards Baudri has completely changed. Teucer now denies and hates everything that he told Baudri on the previous day (things which prompted his promotion in rank). Baudri declares himself displeased by Teucer’s inconstancy, and says he is deleting him from his heart, and that Teucer is no longer one of his friends. He also proclaims his intention to be more guarded with his affections in the future. In the third poem (“Iterum de eodem”), the only one of the three written in elegiac couplets, Baudri has another change of heart:
Meque frui Teucro speciali\textsuperscript{115} rebar amico
   Et factum dixi, quod poterat fieri.
Talis erat Teucer; sed Teucer mox fuit alter
   Et de corde meo destituendus erat.
Spem michi mutuit, quia se mutauerat ipse
   Et transgressus erat \textit{foedus amicitie}.
Inueor in Teucrum solitis circumdatus armis:
   Armatura michi nostra Camena fuit.
Et mox alterius genus intrans materiei
   Ipse priora citus carmina dececini.
Ilico castra mouens contra puerilia facta
   Inspico nostros in puerum cuneos.
Expers de Teuco, Teucri quoque federis expers
   Diuerti nostrum mox alias animum:
Intentusque alius Teucrique incurius ipse
   Nusquam de Teuco sollicitabar ego.
Contigit, ut Teucer rediens accederet ad me,
   Et michi \textit{seruittium} protulit ultro suum.
Quis sane mentis oblata cupita recuset?
   Nec fuit indignum supplicis obsequium.
Ergo correctum se factis testificatus
   Continuo Teucer promeruit ueniam.
Quis se testanti culpam ueniamque petenti
   Pectoris humani duruit ad ueniam?
Et uenialis erat, quia momentaneus, error
   Atque iuuentutis propria mobilitas.
En de conuerso letamur deque reuerso
   Et Teucro quartum reddimus ecce gradum. \textsuperscript{(120.9-36)}

And I was expecting to enjoy Teucer as a special\textsuperscript{116} friend,
   And I said that what could happen had happened.
Such was Teucer; but Teucer soon became another,
   And I had to forsake him from my heart.
He changed my hope, because he had changed himself
   And had transgressed the pact of friendship.
Surrounded with my accustomed arms I inveigh against Teucer:
   My Muse was my armor.
And soon, entering on another subject,
   I quickly unsang my previous songs.
Immediately marching forth against puerile deeds,


\textsuperscript{116} See above, note 115.
I deployed my troops against the boy.  
Hopeless about Teucer, and lacking a treaty from him,  
I soon diverted my mind elsewhere:  
And, intent on other things and not upset about Teucer,  
I was on no occasion worried about him.  
It happened that Teucer, returning, approached me,  
And willingly offered me his servitude.  
What man of sound mind would refuse desired things when they are offered?  
Nor was his obedience unworthy of a suppliant.  
Therefore, having demonstrated with his deeds that he had been corrected,  
Teucer immediately deserved pardon.  
Who of human heart has hardened himself  
To the pardon of someone admitting his guilt and seeking pardon?  
And his error was venial, because it was momentary,  
And his inconstancy was a product of his youth.  
Behold, we rejoice that he is converted and has returned,  
And we restore Teucer to fourth place.

Teucer has approached Baudri, apologized, and offered him his servitium; as a consequence,  
Baudri has restored him to fourth place.  

The linguistic parallels between Baudri’s language and that of Augustan elegy are striking. Most importantly, in 120.14, Baudri charges Teucer with violating the foedus amicitiae.  
Ovid uses the term “foedus” throughout the Ars to describe the sexual relationship between the amator and the puella. To cite just one example, in Book 3, when advising the girl to allow her lover to perceive a rival, he refers to the “partita foedera lecti,” literally the shared treaties of the bed. The term also has monastic and feudalistic uses, so Baudri is playing with its ambiguity to add sexual undertones to his poem.117 The servitium that Teucer offers Baudri in 120.26 is also a loaded term. As Jean-Yves Tilliette points out, the word can be understood in its feudal sense,118 but it is also significant that servitium is the normal word used in elegy to refer to the man’s self-

117 Bond, The Loving Subject, 65.  
118 Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 1, 224 n. 8.
imposed slavery towards his mistress. In elegy, the man uses his supposed *servitium amoris*, which mostly consists of his tendency to lie outside the girl’s door all night, pining after her, as a means to attempt to control her (he tries to manipulate her into giving in to his wishes by citing this *servitium*, even though from the girl’s perspective, such gestures are entirely worthless). Furthermore, the fact that he has the luxury of spending his time in such a way serves to highlight his position of wealth and power. Mia Münster-Swendsen discusses the similar use of the trope of *servitium* in the context of medieval letters between teachers and students, noting that typically the master will assume such postures, which actually serve to underscore his position of power, since:

> The master can choose to present himself as the student’s fellow, he can draw him up to his own level, but it is only on the surface that the power distribution appears to be altered. The student’s answer to the master’s praise of him is unanimously that of presenting himself as even more humble (and docile). Such subtle power-reversals end up underscoring the master’s mastery, intellectually and socially.

In this case, Baudri has shifted his use of the trope, since Baudri never adopts any sort of servile pose, and it is Teucer who must offer his devotion to Baudri in order to win back his rank. At any rate, in both Roman elegy and in Baudri’s poem, using the language of slavery in the context of love serves to highlight the unequal dynamic between the two parties. Baudri’s use of these terms further underscores in the reader’s mind the elegiac intertext.

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120 James, *Learned Girls*, 149, 151. James is not alone in noting this aspect of elegy. Kathleen McCarthy also discusses the elegists’ use of the trope as a means of controlling the *puella*. See Kathleen McCarthy, “*Servitium amoris: amor servitii*,” in *Women and Slaves in Greco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations*, ed. Sandra R. Joshel and Sheila Murnaghan (London: Routledge, 1998), 183. Ellen Greene argues that in his elegy, Ovid “reveals … that [the image of the *amator* as *servus amoris*] is merely a rhetorical posture, a ruse for seduction and manipulation” (Greene, *Erotics*, 67). Duncan Kennedy makes a similar point: “Referring to the beloved as *domina* ostensibly attributes all ‘power’ to her whilst at the same time seeking to bind her into a relationship in which the exercise of that ‘power’ is a function of the fulfillment of the lover’s desire” (Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 73).

121 James, *Learned Girls*, 147.

122 Münster-Swendsen, 323.
Linda Hutcheon’s work on irony affords a helpful way of thinking about the ambiguity Baudri creates with his use of terminology that is both elegiac and feudalistic. She states:

I am suggesting here that we stop thinking of irony only in *either/or* binary terms of the substitution of an “ironic” for a “literal” (and opposite) meaning, and see what might happen if we found a new way of talking about ironic meaning as, instead, **relational, inclusive, and differential**. If we considered irony to be formed through a relation both between people and also between meanings—said and unsaid—then … it would involve an oscillating yet simultaneous perception of plural and different meanings.  

She defines her terms:

Irony is a **relational** strategy in the sense that it operates not only between meanings (said, unsaid) but between people (ironists, interpreters, targets). Ironic meaning comes into being as the consequence of a relationship, a dynamic, performative bringing together of different meaning-makers, but also of different meanings, first, in order to create something new and, then … to endow it with the critical edge of judgment.  

By “inclusive,” she means that irony contains multiple meanings at once, and should no longer be seen as “a simple antiphrasis which can be understood by a straightforward meaning substitution.”  

“Differential” is meant to differentiate irony from other similar tropes, such as metaphor and allegory. Metaphor focuses on similarity, whereas irony is based on difference; allegory also relies on similarity, and its relation to the said versus the unsaid “is also usually restricted to a single set of substitutes,” which is not necessarily the case for irony.  

Baudri’s poems fit nicely into Hutcheon’s understanding of irony. They do indeed oscillate between meanings, and the poems’ readers will pick up on this, or not, depending on their familiarity with his classical sources, with the context of those sources, and with Baudri’s own monastic context and its tradition of friendship letters that use love language.

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124 Hutcheon, *Irony*, 56.
125 Hutcheon, *Irony*, 56.
In addition, the title of the poem in question is “Allegorice de quolibet,” a title which immediately suggests that the poem will not contain only one level of meaning. Tilliette discusses the word *allegorice*. He says that here it denotes “the metonymic use of the concrete for the abstract,” citing Isidore and Matthew of Vendôme, and proposes that Teucer is “allegorical for the affronts that he makes Baudri suffer, the image of the caprices of Fortune.”

This is certainly a legitimate reading of the poem, but Tilliette’s explanation of the term “allegorice” oversimplifies the concept of allegory. He implies that allegory has one meaning now, and had one, different, meaning in the Middle Ages. Suzanne Akbari has discussed allegory theorists’ difficulties in defining the trope, noting that attempts at definition tend to diverge from each other depending on whether they focus on the iconographical tradition or the rhetorical tradition. She points out that in attempting to pin down a definition of allegory, “many of these studies begin with a paradigm of good or successful allegory in order to define the genre, even though establishing such an exemplar restricts the critic’s definition to the qualities stressed in that particular allegory.” Even at the most basic level, there were two different types of allegory in the Middle Ages: *integumentum*, for poets, and *allegoria*, for theologians. As Rita Copeland and Stephen Melville remind us, medieval allegorists read allegory into the scriptures as well as into classical literature, but in the case of the scriptures, they believed in the veracity of both the literal text and the allegorical interpretation mapped onto

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127 Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 1, 222 n. 1.

128 To quote Tilliette in full, he says, “*Allegoria* au Moyen Age n’est pas à entendre dans le sens moderne du terme, mais dénote l’emploi métonymique du concret pour l’abstrait (cf. Isid. Hisp., *orig.* 1,37,22; Mattheus Vindocinensis, *Ars versificatoria* 3,43)” (Tilliette, *Poèmes*, vol. 1, 222 n. 1).

129 Akbari, 7.

130 Akbari, 8.
Akbari’s elaboration of Maureen Quilligan’s concepts of horizontal and vertical allegory helps elucidate the complexities of the trope. First, Akbari gives a basic definition of the concepts of horizontality and verticality:

It is easy to envision vertical and horizontal relationships: in the former, word and thing are seated within a hierarchy, one above the other; in the latter, they are on an equal footing, existing side by side. It is a spatial metaphor that helps the reader to understand a genre that, as noted above, refuses every attempt to name it.\textsuperscript{133}

In both cases the literal and figurative meanings have an impact on each other, but in the case of horizontal metaphor, the one is not subordinated to the other. Akbari elaborates on her definition at length:

[Vertical allegory] accords more importance to figurative than literal meaning … Vertical allegory includes personifications that consistently conform to the abstraction they are supposed to embody; in horizontal allegory, personifications lose their fixed identity as embodied abstraction and behave in ways that suggest they are less personifications than personae, fictional characters with motivations and emotions. Vertical allegory points toward a hidden meaning that the reader must construct within his own mind, a transcendent truth that cannot be conveyed through literal language; horizontal allegory satisfies the reader here and now, exposing the double (or triple) meaning of language explicitly within the text as pun or euphemism. Vertical allegory aims to convey a transcendent truth that cannot be expressed through literal language, whether it concern God, creation, or the nature of identity; horizontal allegory celebrates the play of words and the unfixed nature of linguistic meaning. I want to stress once more that no allegory is a perfect example of either extreme of allegory; yet each can be characterized fruitfully by using the terms of this dichotomy, for between the two points stretches a broad spectrum of possible variations of the genre.\textsuperscript{134}

Although Baudri’s poems date well before the thirteenth century (when Akbari argues horizontal allegory gradually begins to appear),\textsuperscript{135} I see elements of both types in his Teucer poems. As

\begin{footnotes}
\item[133] Akbari, 13.
\item[134] Akbari, 14.
\item[135] Akbari, 12.
\end{footnotes}
already mentioned, Tilliette’s interpretation of the allegory as pointing to the vicissitudes of Fortune is entirely reasonable (since Baudri himself discusses fortune overtly in the poems), and so we can clearly see the vertical allegory here, in that Baudri’s concrete story points to an abstract concept. But the characters in his monastic soap opera seem closer to the horizontal type—“personae, fictional characters with motivations and emotions.” Baudri’s own persona as it appears in this series of poems is carried through numerous other poems in his collection, which makes it seem all the more like an actual character.\(^{136}\) But regardless of which type of allegory Baudri’s poem is, in both types the interplay between the two levels is crucial. Akbari elaborates on this idea as well, citing various medieval allegorists as well as classical authors and giving the following analogy:

The form conveyed by the sperm (according to Aristotelian notions of biology) requires the passive matter of the female in order for conception to take place; correspondingly, the visible form requires some medium that it may pass through in order to be apprehended by the seeing subject. In each case, the medium - whether female body or diaphanous air - has the potential to change the form which passes through it, even to contaminate it. The allegories surveyed in this study engage with precisely such epistemological problems in their exploration of how knowledge can be mediated through language. Like the female body, like the diaphanous air, allegory is a medium which can degrade what it seeks to convey, but which is at the same time essential to the effort.\(^{137}\)

\(^{136}\) Although not entirely analogous, Duncan Kennedy’s work on realism and identification in elegy is instructive here. Baudri and Ovid use their own names for their poetic narrators, thus on the most basic level identifying their personae with themselves. Although we no longer read these poems biographically because we recognize the distinction between author and persona, Kennedy notes that on a certain level, “the use of a proper noun, a name, especially invites the kind of reading of a text that looks through it to a reality behind it” (Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 83). Maria Wyke makes the same point (Wyke, 12). Thus when discussing Veyne’s view of elegy as a semiotic construct and a “literary game” (Veyne, 154) in which the author and his persona remain entirely distinct, the puellae are nothing more than literary creations, and the ideal reader understands the game’s rules, Kennedy argues that Veyne’s approach “seeks to abstract elegy from the discursive situation in which it was produced and the assumptions which it exploited, the discursive situation by which it was shaped and in which it has been received” (Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 96). In other words, it does not account for the fact that even in the elegists’ own times, some of their contemporaries read their poems biographically. Kennedy would prefer readings that take both the biographical and semiotic interpretations into account, because elegy is “a discourse constituted by all the forces that moulded the text plus its reception” (Kennedy, *The Arts of Love*, 100).

\(^{137}\) Akbari, 18.
In allegory, then, the figurative and literal meanings always coexist simultaneously, because the one is dependent on the other. This being the case, we must examine the implications of Baudri’s literal meaning, since it is significant that he frames his allegory around his own letter to a youth.

Explicitly threatening the girl with the loss of the lover’s affections if she does not behave in accordance with his wishes is commonplace in elegy. As already mentioned, the idea occurs throughout Book 3 of the *Ars*. It also appears in *Amores* 1.10, when Ovid tells a girl, presumably Corinna, that he no longer loves her because she has asked him for gifts; he says that he does not object to giving them, but to being asked, so he will give them if she stops asking:

Qualis ab Eurota Phrygiis auecta carinis  
coniugibus belli causa duobus erat,  
qualis erat Lede, quam plumis abditus albis  
callidus in falsa lusit adulter aue,  
qualis Amymone siccis errauit in Argis,  
cum premeret summii uerticis urna comas,  
talis eras: aquilamque in te taurumque timebam  
et quicquid magno de Ioue fecit Amor.  
nunc timor omnis abest animique resanuit error,  
nec facies oculos iam capit ista meos.  
cur sim mutatus quaeris? quia munera poscis:  
haec te non patitur causa placere mihi.  
…

nec dare, sed pretium posci dedignor et odi;  
quod nego poscenti, desine uelle, dabo. (*Amores* 1.10.1-12, 63-4)

Such as she who, having been carried away from the Eurotas by Phrygian ships,  
Was the cause of war for her two husbands;  
Such as Leda was, whom the clever adulterer, concealed by white feathers,  
Deceived in the guise of a bird;  
Such as Amymone was as she wandered dry Argos,  
An urn pressing the hair on top of her head;  
Such you were: on your behalf I feared the eagle, the bull,  
And whatever Love has done through great Jupiter.  
Now all my fear is gone and the error of my mind has been healed,  
And that face of yours no longer captivates my eyes.  
Why have I changed, you ask? Because you ask for gifts:  
For this reason you cannot please me.  
…

It’s not giving money that I scorn and hate, but being asked;  
stop wanting that which I deny you when you ask for it, and I will give it.
Both here and in Baudri’s poem, the poet’s affection is a valuable commodity. The *puella’s* livelihood depends on it, and Teucer, besides presumably being bound by the *Rule* to do as Baudri says, would stand to benefit by moving up in the abbot’s hierarchy—he might, for example, gain special privileges, and Baudri himself says that the rank of fourth is highly-coveted (119.27). And, in both cases, the only way to retain this affection is to obey the commands of the poet. Baudri is alluding to this tradition in his poems.

Also present in Baudri’s poem, albeit not prominently, is the very Ovidian idea of gaining immortality through poetry. As already noted, Ovid continually attempts to convince girls of the value of appearing in his poems, and Baudri notes it at the end of poem 119, saying, “let him live under no monument of my love,” an allusion to the idea that Teucer might have gained eternal fame if Baudri’s love for him had endured, because he would have appeared in his poetry. This allusion is heightened both by the fact that so much of Baudri’s corpus consists of epitaphs honoring people who have died, and because in a monastic context we cannot help but think of the memorial books that recorded the names of deceased monks so that the surviving monks could pray for them. As it stands, the only poem in which Teucer will survive is one which slanders him. Again, Baudri is manipulating Teucer, attempting to wear down his resistance to Baudri’s advances.

Both the *Rule of Benedict* itself and the monastic customaries most relevant to Baudri’s milieu drive home how inappropriately Baudri makes such demands. The *Rule* in particular emphasizes the impropriety of favoritism on the abbot’s part:
Non ab eo persona in monasterio discernatur. Non unus plus ametur quam alius, nisi quem in bonis actibus aut oboedientia invenerit meliorem. *(RB 2.16-17, “Qualis debeat esse abbas”)*

The abbot should avoid all favoritism in the monastery. He is not to love one more than another unless he finds someone better in good actions and obedience.

Ordines suos in monasterio ita conservent ut conversationis tempus ut vitae meritum discernit utque abbas constituerit. Qui abbas non conturbet gregem sibi commissum nec, quasi libera utens potestate, inuste disponat aliquid. *(RB 63.1-2, “De ordine congregatensi”)*

The monks keep their rank in the monastery according to the date of their entry, the virtue of their lives, and the decision of the abbot. The abbot is not to disturb the flock entrusted to him nor make any unjust arrangements, as though he had the power to do whatever he wished.

The *Rule* states unambiguously that abbots should not rank their underlings; rank is assigned by order of arrival in the monastery, and the abbot may only disrupt it in the case of a monk who has distinguished himself with good deeds or obedience. Of course, Baudri is playing with this idea as well—Baudri is indeed changing Teucer’s rank based on his obedience, but evidently not the sort of obedience the *Rule* means. Likewise, the customaries of the time mention rank; but they refer to differentiation on the basis of age and experience, and make no allowance for favoritism. For example, when detailing the monks’ places in the choir, the Fleury customary states:

Ergo quasi quadam statione castrorum primores fratres per cancellos sanctuarii ac si dominici belli doctiores loca sortiuntur, qui veluti celestis regis milites inter turrita Hierusalem propugnacula armis intente orationis contra hostes dimicant tenuiores fratres intra muros positos cottidiano securos reddunt triumpho. Sunt autem et in choro sedilia posita,… Quorum per latera adolassentiores fratres locantur et pueri ante eorumdem sedilium primos gradus sistuntur, hoc est, ad scabella subpedanea.*

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139 Thierry, 210, 212. The accompanying French translation renders “primores fratres” throughout as “les plus anciens frères.” While the word actually just means senior ranking, not necessarily older, in the customary it is often juxtaposed with words that clearly do mean “younger,” which is, I suspect, why Davril translates it as “older.”
Therefore, as if in the watch of a camp, the higher ranking brothers take their places along the railing of the sanctuary, as they are more skilled at the lord’s combat, the brothers who, as if soldiers of the kingdom of heaven fighting with the arms of intent prayer among the towered ramparts of Jerusalem against its enemies, render the weaker brothers placed inside the walls safe with their daily triumph. Moreover there are seats placed in the choir,… at the sides of which the younger brothers are placed, and the boys are placed before the first steps of these same seats, that is, on footstools.

Baudri’s repeated insistence on Teucer’s rank is no accident; the reader is supposed to think of the Rule and notice the impropriety of Baudri’s poem. Not only should Baudri not be ranking the boys in the first place, but his method of ranking is gratuitously manipulative and runs entirely counter to the spirit of the Rule.

In summary, we have a series of poems in which an abbot endeavors to control the behavior of a boy by using his position of authority, offering the boy an enhanced rank if he cooperates, and the utter loss of the abbot’s affection if he does not. This idea is analogous to themes found in the Latin love poetry tradition, and Baudri draws on the troublesome power dynamics found in Ovid and Horace when writing his own poems. His collection is full of not-so-subtle hints to the reader that he wishes to be identified with Ovid; if we read his poems to boys with Ovid in mind, it becomes more difficult to accept Baudri’s protests that his poems are unproblematic literary games. Baudri’s target monastic audience would have been struck instantly by the poems’ lack of adherence to the precepts of the Rule of Benedict; the parallels between Baudri’s manipulation of boys and Ovid’s manipulation of courtesans are likewise hard

On the other hand, sometimes the word that he translates as “younger” is “iuniiores,” which could also just mean of inferior rank, so deciphering exactly what the customary means is difficult. In this case, the juxtaposition with “adolescentiores” and “pueri” does imply that age is the primary consideration.

The Fleury customary tells us that a chapter of the Rule was read aloud daily on non feast days: “Finita demum oratione resident omnes, deinde legitur a puero lectio conveniens, id est, si festus est de festo, ceterum privatis diebus omni tempore regula in promptu legitur” (Thierry, 232). In other words, everyone knew what it said.
to miss. In both cases, men of social position use every tool at their disposal to force their social inferiors into compliance. Baudri is thereby problematizing his own poetic persona, a fact which should affect the way we read his collection as a whole.

A fundamental aspect of these poems is that they simultaneously read as an accepted literary trope functioning as a means of education, and a problematic discourse showcasing the abuse of power within the monastic system. Moreover, the poems discussed in detail above are by no means unique in Baudri’s collection; plenty of others play with amorous subtexts, and not all of these contain any hint of the redeeming moralistic value of the poems previously discussed. The poems without such pedagogic content evidently undermine any attempt to read Baudri’s use of Ovidian themes as purely pedagogic, and therefore highlight the ambiguity of those poems which do contain moral precepts. For example, in c.10, Baudri writes to an unnamed boy with whom he has been exchanging poetry:

Nec rosa nec uiola plus tempora uerna decorat,
Quam iuenum solus agmina condecoras;
Qualis honor pratis flos plurimus herbaque iugis,
Tu forma, sensu talis honor sociis.
Ignatum facie te tota colligo mente
Et faciem rutilam sepe figure michi.
Si michi te socium felix accommodet hora,
Me Cersi credam spernere regis opes.
Si locus est, michi fac ignotus cognita signa
Et forme iudex sim Paris alter ego. (10.9-18).

Roses and violets do not adorn the springtime
More than you alone adorn the crowds of youths;
With your beauty and your sense, you bring the same sort of honor to your colleagues
As abundant flowers and perpetual grass bring to meadows.
I assemble you, unknown in face, with my whole mind,
And I often fashion your shining face for myself.
If a happy hour should make you my companion,
I would believe I could spurn the wealth of King Croesus.
If there is an opportunity, since you are unknown to me, make known signs,
and let me be the judge of your beauty, another Paris.
Here Baudri says explicitly that he daydreams about the youth. He also alludes to Ovid’s elaborate system of signs that the *puella* is supposed to use to communicate in secret with the *amator* at dinner parties, and which to a lesser degree the *amator* makes back to the *puella* (c. 10.17; see *Amores* 1.4 and 2.5), and to *Heroides* 16.258, in which Paris makes the signs to Helen. As Sharon James has shown, the preoccupation with the *puella*’s behavior in *Am. 1.4 and 2.5 reflects the elite male’s anxiety about his inability to control her;\(^{141}\) in the *Heroides*, Paris paints himself as the elegiac lover, on the surface attempting to persuade Helen to go with him willingly while peppering his discourse with reminders that Venus has already promised that Paris will have her, undermining the idea that she has any choice but to obey him. In referencing this tradition, Baudri at the very least makes it clear that his poem follows in the footsteps of Ovid, and arguably demonstrates his persona’s own preoccupation with controlling boys in more than just the acceptable manner. Boswell touches upon this poem, stating that in it, there is “no pretense of spiritual affinity,”\(^{142}\) in contrast with some of Baudri’s other poems, which he sees as showcasing “the older style of passionate but spiritual affection.”\(^{143}\) Even if the distinction between these two styles is more complicated than Boswell implies, he is certainly correct in characterizing this poem as “more baldly erotic.”\(^{144}\) Unlike the other poems already discussed, this poem contains no instructions for the boy, other than that he participate in poetic and erotic games; the only way to explain away this content is to disregard it as pure literary convention, which is rarely a suitable explanation in any case, and certainly not for a poet of Baudri’s caliber.

\(^{141}\) See James, *A Courtesan’s Choreography*, 284-292.
\(^{142}\) Boswell, 245.
\(^{143}\) Boswell, 244.
\(^{144}\) Boswell, 244.
In a poem that is less classicizing, in that it uses medieval end-rhyme and repetitive meter, Baudri attacks an unnamed false friend in the terms of a betrayed lover:

Litterulis seu uersiculis seu carmine leto
Debueras, quia sat poteras, mandasse ualeto.
Te precibus, te carminibus super astra locabam
Atque deis te sidereis sociare parabam.
Non latuit, res nota fuit, quia te cupiebam;
Peniteo, sed uix ualeo, quia desipiebam.
Alter eras, quam debueras, quia fictus amicus;
At fueram, qui debueram, quia fidus amicus.

Sanus ero, si desiero meliora probando
Huic equidem seruare fidem, qui fallit amando;
Immo quidem seruabo fidem, si fallere nitar
Sique tuis iam ficticiis sed et artibus utar.
Preterea, si propterea, quod corripimus te,
Constituas neque post renuas te uiuere iuste,
Sis humilis, fias docilis: puerilia gesta
Non recolo remanente dolo: fac honestus honesta.
Exhibeo, nam spe teneo michi te placiturum,
Vt ualeas et spe teneas tibi me uiuaturum.
Certus eam, te possideam, tu possideas me;
Certus eas, me possideas, ego possideam te. (143.1-8, 13-24).

With letters or verses or a happy poem
You should have, because you could have, bid me be well.
I placed you above the stars with my prayers and my poems
And I was preparing to associate you with the starry gods.
It was not hidden, the matter was known, that I desired you;
I regret it, but I am scarcely able to, because I was foolish.
You were other than you should have been, because you were a feigned friend;
But I was what I should have been, because I was a faithful friend.

I will be sensible if, trying better things,
I cease keeping faith in this one, who deceived me in loving;
Indeed I will be keeping faith, if I strive to deceive you,
And if I make use of your fictions and arts.
Moreover, if because of the fact that I am rebuking you,
You decide, and you do not afterwards refuse, to live justly.
If you are humble, if you become docile: I will not remember
Your puerile actions, provided you leave deceit behind; be honorable and act
honorably.
I put this forth, for I hold it in my hopes that you will please me:
May I go in certainty that you are well and hope for my well-being;
May I possess you, may you possess me;
May you go in certainty that you possess me, and I you.

Baudri tells the boy that if he listens to this rebuke and amends his behavior, all will be forgiven, placing this poem in the same category as c. 3 and the Teucer sequence. Though less explicit than some of Baudri’s other poems, this poem nonetheless uses the language of elegy (*fidem, artibus*, etc.) to chastise a boy whose crime appears to have been neglecting to correspond with Baudri. As Tilliette notes in his commentary, the poem contains three references to Ovid in a row: *meliora probando* (*Met.* 7.20), *fallit amando* (*Met.* 4.128), and *artibus utar* (*Trist.* 2.253). Although they do not come from Ovid’s love poetry, Tilliette rightly observes that this succession of Ovidian allusions brings us back to the register of love games. Yet again, Baudri expresses his otherwise legitimate moral instructions in the language of love, rendering the poem decidedly ambiguous.

In another poem, entitled “Ad Geraldulum,” Baudri essentially propositions a boy, though he is ostensibly only talking about poetic exchange:

Viue, Geraude, michi, queso, michi uiue, Geraude:
    Ipse tibi uiuam, uiue Geraude, michi.
Si michi rescribes et me sic sollicitabis,
    Quandoque rescribam sollicitatus ego;
...
Respondebo tibi, si uersibus exagitabis;
    Versus sunt uite portio magna mee.
Ille michi puer est puero iocundior omni,
    Qui proprium tabulis applicat ingenium.
Si cupis ergo michi, cupiasque, Geraude, placere,
    Libros et tabulas sedulus insequere.
...
Ingere cum quadam te nobis improbitate;
    Sic paries famam forsitam ipse tibi. (197.5-8, 11-16, 19-20)

Live for me, Gerald, I pray, live for me, Gerald:
    I will live for you; you live for me, Gerald.

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If you write back to me and you arouse/solicit me in this way,
   As often as I have been solicited, I will write back;
   
   I will respond to you, if you excite me with your verses;
   Verses are a great portion of my life.
That boy is more pleasing to me than any other boy,
   He who applies his own talent to tablets.
Therefore if you desire to please me, Gerald (and may you desire it),
   Pursue tablets and books sedulously.
   
   Force yourself on me with some shamelessness;
   Thus perhaps you will obtain some fame for yourself.

Here, Baudri has sexualized the process of literary exchange. Again, the boy has to behave in a certain way in order to please Baudri, but rather than demanding humble, monastically-appropriate behavior, Baudri demands that the boy exchange poetry with him. Moreover, the verb *sollicito* had definite sexual connotations both in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, as J.N. Adams has demonstrated.146 These examples are representative of the tone of much of Baudri’s poetry; more examples could certainly be cited, however. Baudri’s poems are games, and the game is ambiguity—he repeatedly plays with duality in the meanings of words and in the context of his allusions, producing poems that continually defy any attempts at straightforward, non-conflicting interpretation.

When Stephen Jaeger dismisses the possibility of homosexual subtext in medieval ennobling love, arguing that ambiguity and women entered the discourse at the same time, he closes off a potentially fruitful avenue of inquiry. As Eve Sedgwick notes, “… no one can know in advance where the limits of a gay-centered inquiry are to be drawn, or where a gay theorizing of and through even the hegemonic high culture of the Euro-American tradition may need or be

146 Adams, 184: “The interchange between the senses ‘masturbate’ and ‘futuo’ is also illustrated by *collicito*, which in Classical Latin could be applied to masturbation (Ovid *Am. 3.7.74*, Petron. 20.2, Mart.11.22.4, Maxim. *Eleg. 5.58*), but in the Medieval comedy *Lidia* (514) refers to *fututio*: ‘parce, precor’ Pirrus clamat, ‘dux, parce pudorem;/ non honor est istis sollicitare locis.’”
able to lead."\footnote{147} We cannot assume that such investigations will be unproductive without first attempting them, because we cannot predict what we might find or in what ways it will illuminate the text at hand. Jaeger is certainly correct that the public discourse of love functioned very differently in the Middle Ages than it does now, and that instances of ennobling love were acceptable and standard ways of communicating allegiance. Still, it is problematic to discount the erotic subtext of Baudri’s poems as mere literary convention. Erotic vocabulary and meaning are still present, and it is unlikely that Baudri’s readers would have failed to register the multiple shades of meaning inherent in his Ovidianism simply because it happened to fall within the confines of ennobling love. If such poems were fully acceptable pedagogical tools and the erotic elements were so standard that no one gave them a second thought, Baudri’s repeated claims of chastity would be entirely out of place. As Jaeger does note, Baudri’s protestations actually highlight the poems’ lack of innocence.\footnote{148} But this does not mean that without the protestations, the duality of meaning would disappear. On the contrary, the ambiguity inherent in ennobling love is what allows the claims of chastity to function—they draw attention to a possibility the reader already perceives on some level.

Moreover, it is not only in Baudri’s work that we see anxiety about the propriety of ennobling love. For example, Marbod of Rennes, who wrote many similar poems, published a retraction of his youthful works in his old age,\footnote{149} surely an unnecessary action if such poems

\footnote{147 Sedgwick, 53.}
\footnote{148 Jaeger, \textit{Ennobling Love}, 6, 99; see also Jaeger, \textit{Envy of Angels}, 312, and 473 n. 53.}
\footnote{149 Marbod of Rennes, \textit{Liber decem capitulorum}, ed. Rosario Leotta (Rome: Herder, 1984); the retraction occurs in the first chapter, entitled “Apto de genere scribendi,” vv. 1-4: “Quae iuvenis scripsi, senior dum plura retracto,/ paenitet et quaedam vel scripta vel edita nollem,/ tum quia materies inhonesta levisque videtur,/ tum quia dicendi potuit modus aptior esse” (When, as an old man, I reconsider the things which I wrote as a youth,/I regret them, and I wish that certain things had been neither written nor published,/both because the material seems shameful and trivial, and because my way of speaking could have been more suitable).}
were unproblematically conventional. Furthermore, several of Baudri’s poems which admonish youths to behave in a certain manner are devoid of problematic erotic vocabulary—see, for example, c. 5, in which Baudri admonishes a youth named Avitus to stop being greedy; c. 93, which is addressed to Philip, the younger brother of Count Stephen Henry of Blois, and contains advice about how to live a virtuous and productive life; and c. 113, in which Baudri praises a boy purely for his extraordinary literary prowess and advises him not to be overly proud about his achievements since they are ultimately a gift from God. Admittedly, the first two examples are not entirely analogous with Baudri’s other poems to boys, in that Philip is not Baudri’s inferior, while c.5 says that Avitus is rich, which makes it unlikely that he belongs to the monastic community. But c. 113 contains no indication that the boy is anything other than Baudri’s inferior, and the poem is entirely devoid of the erotic language that appears in Baudri’s other poems of this sort. This means that erotic content was by no means a necessary component of such poems. If such content can be absent, then its presence surely means something. Baudri was a learned and accomplished poet, and we do him an injustice if we attribute his poetic output to nothing more than mindless adherence to an antiquated convention. Baudri knew exactly what he was doing, and he had his reasons for doing it. What those reasons were is a more difficult question, however. It is, of course, impossible to give any definitive explanation, but we can certainly speculate, based both on Baudri’s likely understanding of his source material and its context, and an examination of Baudri’s own literary milieu and social context.

150 The almost complete cessation of Baudri’s poetic activity upon his promotion to archbishop is also potentially telling, although the demands of his position can also account for this—he would certainly have had less time for frivolous poetic pursuits.

151 Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 1, 202, c.93 n. 1.
Chapter 4
The Historical-Political Context of Baudri’s Poetry

Thus far, my discussion has been concerned mainly with contextualizing Baudri’s poetry from a literary standpoint. I have considered issues of power and gender in the poems as they relate to Baudri’s position as abbot, arguing that his position of authority over many of his correspondents problematizes his poetic discourse, but my discussion has not taken into account Baudri’s broader historical context. In this chapter I will take contextual considerations in another, extratextual dimension. The eleventh century saw substantial changes and reforms in Church administration and regulation, and Baudri, as a church official himself, felt the effect of these changes. I will argue that an examination of Baudri’s poems against the background of the Church’s institutional history reveals their engagement with contemporary tensions and anxieties in the face of what some have called a revolution.\(^1\) Furthermore, the poems’ frequent allusions to Ovid reveal Baudri’s sensitivity to similar issues at play in Ovid’s poetry. Although Baudri almost certainly did not possess entirely accurate knowledge of Ovid’s historical context, I argue that Ovid’s clear concern with power and control in the *Ars* and the *Amores* made these works a natural choice for Baudri to imitate when exploring similar issues in his own poetry. It is of course an oversimplification to say that elegy disappeared after Ovid,\(^2\) especially since authors such as Martial continued to engage with Ovid’s elegiac works in complex ways.\(^3\) Nonetheless, it is fair to say that although the works of Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid continued to exert


influence through Classical Antiquity, Latin love elegy as such never existed in the same way after Ovid. While the genre experienced occasional revivals such as that under Venantius Fortunatus in the sixth century,⁴ the scope of its sudden resurgence in Romanesque France remains noteworthy.⁵ This chapter will explore how the consolidation and centralization of institutional power in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries put circumstances into place that made elegy relevant again.

Other scholars have discussed Baudri in relation to the reforms, for the most part with a view to determining his reaction to them. Henri Pasquier (unsurprisingly, since his study evinces his determination to portray Baudri favorably) sees Baudri as dedicated to the reforms, citing his esteem for Hugh of Lyon (based on c.214, Baudri’s epitaph of Hugh) and Robert of Arbrissel, both of whom were zealous reformers themselves.⁶ Jean-Yves Tilliette, however, assumes the contrary.⁷ He notes that in Baudri’s works (both poetry and prose) one has trouble finding any

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⁵ People still read Ovid, and the elegiac couplet remained a popular meter for poetic composition, of course, but collections of love poems in the vein of Ovid’s Amores were rare until the late eleventh century. See Winthrop Wetherbee, “From Late Antiquity to the Twelfth Century,” in The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism, vol. 2, The Middle Ages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 129: “Symptomatic of the ‘Ovidianism’ that is a striking feature of the new, urban-courtly culture of the period are many skilful imitations of the Amores, Heroides and epistles Ex Ponto, which appear in a variety of contexts, not excluding the convent.” See also P.G. Walsh, “Part VII: Epilogue,” in The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, vol. 2, Latin Literature, ed. E.J. Kenney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 791; Conte, 360; and Tilliette, “Savants et poètes,” 99.

⁶ Pasquier, Un poète latin, 203-5. As Pasquier phrases it, “C’était l’époque où les papes et les saints personnages, travaillaient énergiquement à la réforme de l’Église. Quelques hommes austères, impatientes de voir la fin de tant d’abus, apportaient à cette grande œuvre un zèle que les papes étaient obligés de modérer. Les moines surtout se distingueraient par leur ardeur. Si nous en jugions par ses relations, loin d’être un de ceux qu’avait atteints la maladie du relâchement, Baudri avait pris place parmi ces médecins impatientes qui ne pouvaient souffrir de retard dans la guérison d’autrui” (203-4). See also Pasquier’s introduction, where he writes: “La douce physionomie de Baudri, moine et archevêque, nous est apparue comme celle d’un héritier chrétien des derniers rhéteurs de Rome. Nous avons voulu le faire revivre en étudiant ses œuvres, et, en réfutant les attaques dont il a été victime, montrer le poète chrétien à la fin du XIᵉ siècle, le bon religieux et le prêtre zélé pour la réformation de Grégoire VII, qui a été calomnié par ses frères.” (13-14).

firm expression of his views on the subjects of simony and clerical marriage. Tilliette, like Pasquier, notes Baudri’s warm epitaph of Hugh of Lyon, but counters with the rather more telling evidence of cc. 146 and 147, in which Baudri appeals to the archbishop Amatus to forgive him for an unidentified offense. Amatus was the archbishop of Bordeaux (he had previously been bishop of Oloron). He was a papal legate and, as Tilliette puts it, “one of the most zealous propagators of the Gregorian reform in France.” Tilliette suggests that the offense to which the poems refer is Baudri’s simoniaic attempt to acquire the bishopric of Orléans; this is a distinct possibility since both Baudri’s failed bid for the bishopric and Amatus’ intense hatred of simony are well documented. In any case, Amatus appears to have been entirely unwilling even to hear Baudri’s request, much less honor it; c.147 repeats the ignored request of c.146, and c.146 implies that this is not the first time Baudri has requested forgiveness:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Pontificum lex est ueniam prestare roganti:} \\
\text{Dissoluit legem, qui prohibet ueniam.} \\
\text{Optime pontificum, michi sic applaude roganti,} \\
\text{Vt michi pontificem te tua facta provent.} \\
\text{Aures ergo diu pulsatas pande benignus,}
\end{align*}
\]

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8 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 125.
9 Tilliette, “Hermès amoureux,” 125. The epitaph is relatively weak evidence, because Baudri’s collection contains 91 epitaphs and six tituli for death rolls (Tilliette, introduction to Poèmes, vol. 1, xvii). That he wrote one for a prominent bishop is unsurprising, and the language in c.214 is no more effusive than any of Baudri’s other epitaphs.
11 Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 228, c. 146 n. 3. See my introduction for the details of Baudri’s simoniaic efforts.
12 If we accept the conjecture that the poems refer to the Orléans simony incident, which occurred, according to Tilliette, in 1098, we can assume that they date from roughly that period (Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 228, c. 146 n. 3). Otherwise, the poems contain no clues to help us assign a date to their composition, except that given Baudri’s deferential tone and reference to Amatus and his fellow archbishops as a group of which he is not a part, he presumably wrote them during his abbacy, not his archiepiscopacy. See, for example, c. 146.3-4 and 9-10: “Optime pontificum, michi sic applaude roganti,/Vt michi pontificem te tua facta provent./ …Sin autem, certe querimonia nostra coequos/Tanget, ut emendent talia pontifices” (Best of pontiffs, show your approval of me asking,/So that your deeds prove to me that you are a pontiff./ …But if not, however, surely my complaint/ will touch your equals, so that the pontiffs may correct such things).
Quamque rogo supplex, inueniam ueniam. (146.1-6)

It is the law for pontiffs to grant pardon to those who ask:
He who withholds pardon breaks the law.
Best of pontiffs, show your approval of me asking,
So that your deeds prove to me that you are a pontiff.
Therefore kindly open your long-entreated ears,
and let me find the pardon which I seek as a suppliant.

Like Tilliette, Gerald Bond argues that “toward the implications of the Gregorian Reform one would have to guess that Baudri was at best neutral.” He cites as evidence Baudri’s playful poetry and his oft-cited poem criticizing a monk for abstaining from meat on the Sabbath (c.127), both of which “reflect a more relaxed interpretation of the monastic life than that of the Reformists.” In addition, Bond notes that several of Baudri’s other poems indicate that the monastic community may have criticized his secularism, and also cites Ivo’s account of Baudri’s attempt at simony. Moreover, Bond in part interprets Baudri’s poems as a direct response to the oppression of the reformers and his poetic methods as an attempt to “withdraw into an immune world of letters” to escape from the behavioral standards otherwise expected of a man in his position. Thus in Bond’s view, whether or not Baudri was openly hostile to all the aims of the reforms, his poetry at least suggests that he had little interest in conducting himself in keeping with the reformers’ strict standards.

13 Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 147.
14 Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 147.
15 cc. 1, 85, and 99.
16 Bond, “‘Iocus amoris,’” 147. Bond notes that Ivo’s accusation “may indicate that [Baudri] had not supported the excommunication of Philip of France at the Council of Clermont for the abduction of Bertrada of Anjou in 1092.” Bond also notes, however, that despite all this, “his enthusiasm for the so-called First Crusade and his support of the work of Robert of Arbrissel, the founder of Fontevrault, indicate a lively interest in the programs of Urban II” (“‘Iocus amoris,’” 147).
17 Bond, The Loving Subject, 68.
That Baudri felt, as Bond says, “at best neutral” towards the reforms is likely, especially given his near-total silence about the central issues of the movement. The main reformers of the era left behind plenty of strongly-worded pro-reform writings, which Fliche details thoroughly in his studies on the subject.\footnote{See Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne}, vol. 2; and \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}.} If Baudri really had been a vehement supporter of the reforms, we would expect to see this reflected clearly somewhere in his numerous surviving works. Still, Baudri’s silence on the matter does not constitute definitive proof of his feelings, and the evidence that does exist is somewhat ambiguous, given Baudri’s possible enthusiasm for certain aspects of Urban II’s agenda.\footnote{See above, note 16.} Furthermore, applicable here is Duncan Kennedy’s work in \textit{The Arts of Love}, in which he problematizes modern scholars’ attempts to derive from the elegists’ poetry their views of Augustus’ moral reforms. As discussed in Chapter 1, Kennedy observes that the elegists’ poems can be interpreted either as exemplifying the sort of inappropriate behavior that Augustus was rightly trying to reform, or as implying that Augustus’ actions are problematic, depending on the ideological aims of the interpreter.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Arts of Love}, 37.} As Kennedy puts it:

\begin{quote}
\ldots all definitions of ‘ideology’ are constructed from a standpoint (are thus themselves ‘ideological’), and although ‘ideology’ is frequently reified in this way, it cannot wholly occlude the possibility of representing ‘ideology’ as not monolithic but generated out of a process of constant contestation. Within this relativizing approach, ‘Augustus’ is viewed not as an individual but as a figure who was (and continues to be) a focus, an embodiment, of conflicting and often contradictory discourses, and everybody, not least Augustus, had to negotiate a position within them, a process involving all kinds of anxieties and uncertainties, as for example when the figure who was the focus for a discourse of moral regeneration at Rome found himself with an adulteress for a daughter.\footnote{Kennedy, \textit{The Arts of Love}, 37.}
\end{quote}

Alan Sinfield has made a similar point, arguing that although we are always subject to our dominant ideological system, dissidence remains possible precisely because ideology is not
singular, and in fact “its dominance depends on continuous processes of adjustment, reinterpretation, incorporation, dilution,” whereby the dominant discourse may either “tolerate, repress, or incorporate” oppositional discourses.\textsuperscript{22} Literature, which is constructed within ideology and is thus subject to the multiplicity of discourses which shape it, could not exist without “gaps, silences, and absences—that which the text is not—” because these gaps “frame” and define the text.\textsuperscript{23} As Sinfield notes, “all stories comprise within themselves the ghosts of the alternative stories they are trying to suppress.”\textsuperscript{24} If so, as Kennedy says, the ideological aims of the interpreter will indeed determine which way he or she chooses to interpret the opposing discourses contained within a given work. Accordingly, for my purposes, rather than attempting to determine Baudri’s “true” stance regarding issues of reform, it is more important to consider his poems as reflections of the anxiety and dissent that characterized his milieu.

The so-called Gregorian Reforms were in fact a complex series of societal changes that spanned the eleventh century and continued into the twelfth, but the roots of which can be traced back even further.\textsuperscript{25} Augustin Fliche’s monumental works remain the most authoritative and thorough studies on this subject, but recently scholars have begun to correct for Fliche’s pro-Roman bias, and many of the resulting studies are useful, although they lack the breadth of Fliche’s account. Despite the oversimplification and omission necessarily entailed in a summary of such a complex phenomenon, a survey of the fundamental details of the reforms will be sufficient to contextualize Baudri’s works. To begin with, the most basic (and important) trend

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{23} Sinfield, 37.
\textsuperscript{24} Sinfield, 37.
that characterized the eleventh century was the gradual shift from localized to centralized power. As Kathleen Cushing explains, at the beginning of the eleventh century, “western Europe remained essentially a world characterized by regionalism…. While most people were undoubtedly aware that they were the emperor’s or the king’s subjects, their understanding of this probably took a local form, that is, as the subject of the immediate duke, count, bishop or abbot.”26 The fragmentation and collapse of the Carolingian Empire had, over time, led to the rise of power for local dukes, whose influence grew as they married into royal families and joined forces with great monasteries.27 This came at the expense of centralized control. For example, in the West Frankish Kingdom, “the Capetian kings of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries … directly [controlled] little more than the region around Paris. Even more than the German emperors, the Capetian kings were often at the mercy of their more powerful neighbors such as the Duke of Aquitaine, the Duke of Normandy, and the counts of Blois and Champagne.”28

The Church was characterized by a similar lack of centralized control at this time. Many monasteries and churches had been destroyed in the invasions and turmoil of the previous century, and “those that still functioned had become ‘localized’, as quasi-autonomous units with their own ecclesiastical customs and practices.”29 Besides the lack of standardized religious practice, the Church had other concerns. Though there was of course a distinction between the powers of secular and religious leaders, kings still, in practice, convened Church councils,

27 Cushing, 10.
28 Cushing, 11.
29 Cushing, 12.
endowed monasteries, and even appointed bishops and abbots.\textsuperscript{30} This led to conflicts of interest, as archbishops and abbots were subordinate to the pope but might also owe loyalty to a duke or king.\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, bishops at the beginning of the eleventh century often had wives, or at least concubines (a bishop could not marry while in office, but if he already had a wife when ordained, he merely had to promise to cease having sexual relations with her).\textsuperscript{32} The clergy were also allowed to have wives, which led to economic problems for the church; as Cushing notes (in regards to the Council of Pavia in 1022, which attempted to enforce clerical chastity), “despite rich endowments, the alienation of church property to the sons of clergy and for the support of their wives or concubines was impoverishing individual churches and the Church as a whole at an alarming rate.”\textsuperscript{33} Cushing further observes that the pope possessed a great deal of power within Rome, but while his office remained respected, in practice “the pope’s authority to intervene directly throughout western Europe in the tenth and earlier eleventh centuries was often limited.”\textsuperscript{34} On the other hand, from the beginning of the eleventh century onward, partly as a result of increased dispute over monastic lands and privileges, people started to recognize the benefits that some degree of centralized Church authority would afford.\textsuperscript{35}

Thus by the beginning of the eleventh century, both secular and ecclesiastical power had become largely decentralized, but the need for some centralization was becoming apparent. The papacy, however, remained “an essentially passive institution,” waiting to be consulted and then

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Eamon Duffy, \textit{Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 113; Cushing, 13.
\item \textsuperscript{31} See Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 61-62; Cushing, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Duffy, 114; Cushing, 14-15.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Cushing, 99. See also Duffy, 114.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Cushing, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{35} John S. Ott and Anna Trumbore Jones, introduction to \textit{The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages} (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 12; Cushing, 23.
\end{itemize}
granting or denying requests rather than actively asserting its will.\textsuperscript{36} Although the Gregorian Reforms are so called because of Pope Gregory VII’s particularly zealous efforts at enforcing change, in practice “the development of the papacy into a force seizing the initiative to extend its authority over the western Church and Christian society as a whole” was a gradual progression that took place over the course of the entire eleventh century.\textsuperscript{37} Nor was the reform process entirely directed by the papacy; it was a complicated process driven by various instigators and for differing motivations. Maureen Miller, for example, notes (with R.I. Moore) that because of the episcopal role in arbitrating disputes and bishops’ general overall authority, communities as a whole saw the need for celibate clergy without familial or financial ties that might bias their decisions.\textsuperscript{38} Still, the role of the popes and their legates in promulgating the sorts of changes that characterize this period cannot be denied.

Scholars generally characterize the movement known as the Peace of God, which began in the late tenth century, as marking the beginning of the reform process, or at least as foreshadowing it.\textsuperscript{39} The term “movement” is misleading, however, because there was no centrally-directed campaign for reform; rather, councils arose independently in response to specific local concerns.\textsuperscript{40} These councils theoretically promoted peace and used the threat of excommunication to compel secular lords to respect the property of the Church and of the poor, often using saints’ relics to mobilize the people and thus garner popular support.\textsuperscript{41} But the Peace of God did not exclusively protect the interests of the poor at the expense of the wealthy, and in

\textsuperscript{36} Cushing, 24.

\textsuperscript{37} Cushing, 24.


\textsuperscript{39} Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 19; see Cushing, 39-54.

\textsuperscript{40} Cushing, 39.

\textsuperscript{41} Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 103; Cushing, 39-40.
fact secular nobles often took charge of enforcing the councils in the later eleventh century (and accordingly ensured that the councils accorded with their own agendas).\footnote{Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 8.} Cushing notes that one very important impetus behind the Peace of God was the growing contestation of land ownership between monasteries and nobles; noble families had often bequeathed land to monasteries, and increasingly these families were attempting to reclaim this land (sometimes claiming more than they had in fact given).\footnote{Cushing, 46.} The aims of the Peace of God evolved over time, and by roughly the first quarter of the eleventh century they more or less anticipated the aims of what we now call the Gregorian Reforms, such as the elimination of simony and the enforcement of clerical chastity.\footnote{Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 8; see also R.I. Moore, “Property, Marriage, and the Eleventh-Century Revolution: A Context for Early Medieval Communism,” in \textit{Medieval Purity and Piety: Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform}, ed. Michael Frassetto (New York: Garland, 1998), 191.} Cushing argues that simony and chastity became issues in part because the Church, in an effort to solidify its own position in relation to secular rulers, tried to justify its claims to superiority on moral grounds. Cushing explains the movement’s progression as follows:

The ‘peace’ developed in the first place from an ecclesiastical mobilization of the 
\textit{populus}, whose need for consistent protection mirrored that of the politically powerless Church. By harnessing the charismatic power of the saints’ relics, the Church provided a focal point for popular action, one that was replaced and reinforced in the processions and liturgies. Having thereby mobilized the laity in its efforts to promote peace, bishops and abbots increasingly faced the real issue: the need to stabilize their positions over the long term \textit{vis-à-vis} the castellans and secular rulers alike. Churchmen had to (re)establish not only their claim to direct society in terms of the faith, but also to show why it was in everyone’s interest that they be custodians of the aristocracy’s material wealth and to some extent its political power. The ‘peace’ therefore, perhaps inevitably, foreshadowed the outlines of a new social order, where distinctions would be drawn not only among the privileged and the underprivileged, but also between the lay and clerical spheres, with the latter needing to establish its purity and irreproachable conduct to justify its claim to superiority.\footnote{Cushing, 47.}
The Peace of God thus represents one dimension of the social change of the eleventh century, and shows how, in part, it arose from localized efforts to consolidate and cement ecclesiastical power. But despite recent scholars’ emphasis on such localized efforts (an emphasis which attempts to balance the previous trend of focusing almost exclusively on papal initiatives), the papacy’s direct role in enforcing change throughout Europe should not be overlooked. As already mentioned, though the pope had always claimed spiritual supremacy, the many localized centers of power in the early Middle Ages meant that papal authority did not extend beyond Rome in any consistent manner. By the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, however, the papacy had begun to extend its reach; Cushing argues that this was most apparent in the papacy’s increased tendency to award protection and privileges to monasteries, a practice which in the past had typically fallen on local bishops or secular rulers. As Cushing notes, “the sheer fact of making and receiving a grant acknowledged the implicit authority of the donor.” Thus to varying degrees throughout the eleventh century the papacy attempted to cement its power, but it was in the pontificate of Leo IX (1049-1054) that reform became an organized and concerted effort.

At the beginning of his pontificate, Leo IX set the stage for reform by convening numerous councils that targeted simony, clerical marriage, and lay investiture (despite the fact that he himself had been appointed pope by King Henry III); he continued this practice throughout his brief papacy. At the Council of Rheims (1049), for instance, Leo demanded that

46 Duffy, 114; Cushing, 58.
47 Cushing, 59.
48 Cushing, 59.
49 Moore, First European Revolution, 11; Cushing, 67.
50 Duffy, 114; Cushing, 66.
all those bishops present swear on the bones of Saint Remigius that they had not obtained their posts through simony; most were unable to make this declaration.\textsuperscript{51} As Duffy explains,

In one week, Leo had asserted papal authority as it had never been asserted before. Bishops had been excommunicated and deposed, a powerful and prestigious archbishop summoned to explain himself in Rome, and the whole system of payments for promotion within the Church had been earth-shakingly challenged. And Rheims was only the beginning. Leo launched an all-out attack on the financial traffic in ecclesiastical appointments, from village priests up to bishops and archbishops, deposing the guilty and even reordaining priests ordained by such bishops…. He enforced orthodox doctrine, condemning Berengar of Tours for heretical teaching on the eucharist, and he did what he could to reform practical abuses, like the appointment of bishops by the secular ruler without election by or with the consent of priests and people. He also began a campaign against married priests, insisting that all clergy must be celibate.\textsuperscript{52}

Leo also began the practice of appointing papal legates, a practice which his successors continued; Leo’s most noteworthy legates included Peter Damian and Hildebrand, the monk who later became Pope Gregory VII.\textsuperscript{53} These legates, who shared the pope’s goals of reform, helped to extend the papacy’s power, as upon their arrival in any diocese, their authority instantly superseded that of the local bishop.\textsuperscript{54}

Leo’s papacy came to a rather spectacular end after his failed campaign against the Normans, which ended in his capture; he died shortly after his release.\textsuperscript{55} His next two successors (Victor II and Stephen IX) accomplished little in their brief pontificates.\textsuperscript{56} Controversy surrounded the appointment of Stephen’s successor, as the Tuscan nobles installed a bishop from their own rank as Benedict X; the reformers refused to accept Benedict and consequently

\textsuperscript{51} Duffy, 114-115; Moore, \textit{First European Revolution}, 14.
\textsuperscript{52} Duffy, 115.
\textsuperscript{53} Duffy, 115-16; Cushing, 66.
\textsuperscript{54} Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 90.
\textsuperscript{55} Duffy, 116; Cushing, 67-68.
\textsuperscript{56} Duffy, 116-117; Cushing, 68.
crowned Gérard of Lorraine, the bishop of Florence, as Pope Nicholas II.  The reformers ultimately prevailed, and in 1059 Nicholas held a council at Rome in which he attempted to reform and to standardize the papal election process, ruling that the seven cardinal bishops (i.e. the senior clergy of Rome) were to choose subsequent popes. He also condemned clerical marriage, lay investiture, and simony, and urged canons not to hold personal property (though he did not formally forbid the practice). Upon Nicholas’ death in 1061 another schism arose when the reformers elevated Anselm of Lucca to the papacy (Alexander II) while the German court appointed the bishop Cadalus of Parma as Honorius II. After a long struggle, Alexander was enthroned, and his papacy (1061-73) greatly furthered the aims of the reformers. Alexander worked zealously to spread the papacy’s authority and to battle lay interference in ecclesiastical appointments (and thus simony). Fliche argues that these papal maneuvers were felt particularly strongly in France, mainly because the efforts of previous popes had utterly failed to take hold; Alexander clashed repeatedly with the Capetians as he blocked their interference in church affairs and battled the simony that was still rampant in the region. Upon Alexander’s death, Gregory VII was elected as his successor.

Gregory VII, whose papacy (1073-1085) overlapped with Baudri’s abbacy (c.1078-1107) was without a doubt the most zealous of the reformers, and he insisted on the pope’s absolute authority in all matters; as Cushing puts it, “Gregory’s real innovation … lay above all in the uncompromising language in which he set out apostolic prerogatives and demanded adherence to

57 Duffy, 118; Cushing, 68-69.
59 Cushing, 73-74; Duffy, 118-119; Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 27.
60 Cushing, 76.
61 Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 33; Cushing, 77.
them.”\textsuperscript{63} In 1075, Gregory published his \textit{Dictatus Papae}, which listed the privileges of the papacy. While many of his tenets “simply summarised long-standing claims of the papacy,”\textsuperscript{64} Gregory also claimed some highly contested privileges (such as the sole authority to change canon law) and made innovative assertions (for instance that the pope could depose emperors).\textsuperscript{65} He officially banned lay investiture (although it remains unclear exactly when he did this), and was uncompromising in his attacks on simony and clerical unchastity.\textsuperscript{66} As Cushing notes, the fact that Gregory reiterated his prohibition of simony and mandate for clerical celibacy in synods in 1074, 1075, and 1078, as well as repeatedly in letters, indicates the strong resistance with which the reforms continued to meet.\textsuperscript{67} Accordingly, Gregory intensified his efforts. He introduced the concept of permanent papal legates (Hugh of Lyon, whose epitaph Baudri wrote, was one of these); these legates created tensions between the pope and local bishops, “whose jurisdiction was undermined by the legates’ superior authority.”\textsuperscript{68} Moreover, Gregory held councils twice a year and any church officials summoned were obliged to attend; bishops were often required to give an account of their success, or lack thereof, at implementing reforms, and were sometimes threatened with the loss of their positions.\textsuperscript{69} Subordinates were encouraged to report simony or lack of chastity on the part of their superiors, and Gregory, through his legates, investigated these accusations, with offenders on occasion being relieved of their offices.\textsuperscript{70} Fliche documents Hugh of Lyon’s particular zeal at carrying out Gregory’s goals; Hugh

\textsuperscript{63} Cushing, 79; see also Duffy, 121.
\textsuperscript{64} Duffy, 121.
\textsuperscript{65} Duffy, 122; Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 79-83; Cushing, 79.
\textsuperscript{66} Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 76-79, 70.
\textsuperscript{67} Cushing, 100.
\textsuperscript{68} Cushing, 84.
\textsuperscript{70} Cushing, 100.
convened several councils and deposed numerous offending bishops, much to the outrage of the French episcopate.\textsuperscript{71} Gregory also urged the general public to “boycott the ministrations of simoniae or married clergy.”\textsuperscript{72} His reign extended the papacy’s reach and encroached on the authority of local officials, and he remained dedicated to his promotion of papal authority even during his exile at the end of his papacy.\textsuperscript{73}

It is unsurprising that Gregory’s intensive reforms provoked such resistance among local clergy and secular rulers, because his assertion of papal authority necessarily entailed for local officials the loss of privileges they had enjoyed for years. But in addition to the obvious self-interest behind their hostility, opponents of the reforms had theological and logistical justifications for their opposition. For example, in his examination of German reactions to Gregory’s program, I.S. Robinson notes that Gregory’s practice of encouraging inferiors to inform on their superiors engendered particular outrage because bishops saw it as a violation of the Pseudo-Isidorean decretals which specifically forbade this practice.\textsuperscript{74} Even those who were sympathetic to the general aims of the reforms sometimes took issue with this subversion of the traditional \textit{ordo} of the Church. Sigebert of Gembloux, for example, while supporting clerical chastity and the elimination of simony, argued that because the reforms had been implemented without regard for traditional hierarchy, they had resulted instead in violence and schism, which had negated the good that they might otherwise have accomplished.\textsuperscript{75} On the level of jurisdictional stability, opponents of the ban of lay investiture observed that because kings often

\textsuperscript{71} Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 92-94.

\textsuperscript{72} Cushing, 101.

\textsuperscript{73} Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 158 ff; Cushing, 78.

\textsuperscript{74} I.S. Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 170.

\textsuperscript{75} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 176-77.
endowed the Church with lands, it was only fair that they have a say in enthroning their local bishops, since they were entrusting them with large portions of their territory and might need to call upon the bishop for defense against enemy attacks.\textsuperscript{76} The reforms could thus be seen as interfering with a system that had worked harmoniously in the past.\textsuperscript{77}

Furthermore, bishops expressed resentment at being treated as if they were merely the pope’s servants, citing Cyprian’s teaching that all the apostles had received from Christ the same power as Peter.\textsuperscript{78} As Robinson notes, the passage in question (Cyprian’s \textit{De ecclesiae catholicae unitate}, Chapter 4) survives in a double redaction. One version is favorable to the primacy of the papacy (and was in fact often cited by the reformers), but the other version stresses instead the idea that all bishops possess a common authority.\textsuperscript{79} Accordingly, an anonymous work entitled \textit{Liber de unitate ecclesiae conservanda} (1091-3) interpreted “Matt. 16:18, the Petrine commission, as the founding of the episcopate: the fundamental fact of Cyprianic ecclesiology is not the \textit{primatus} enjoyed by St Peter’s own see, but the unity of the Church symbolised in the episcopate.”\textsuperscript{80} Rather than seeing the reform movement as a means of strengthening the Church, this text and its adherents saw Gregory as a divisive force, since his efforts had created factions within the episcopacy and undermined the traditional conception of bishops as constituting a fraternity which worked together to govern their sees and resolve disputes.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{76} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 181.
\textsuperscript{78} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 172.
\textsuperscript{79} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 172.
\textsuperscript{80} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 172.
\textsuperscript{81} Robinson, \textit{Authority and Resistance}, 172-73; 170.
Upon Gregory’s death in 1085, turmoil gripped the Church as a result of his successor’s (Victor III) reluctance to take office and the presence in Rome of the antipope Clement III; Victor’s brief papacy ended with his death in 1087, and Urban II, his successor (1088-1099), spent the first half of his papacy in exile. Despite this, during the first half of his papacy Urban held several councils outside Rome which furthered the aims of the reforms and helped strengthen Urban’s own position. In addition to continuing Gregory VII’s reform objectives, Urban set age restrictions for certain church positions, banned the clergy from possessing luxurious clothing, and forbade abbots from demanding compensation from those entering monasteries. In Rome, he reorganized the administrative structures of the papacy, giving more power to his cardinals, creating the papal curia (the previous administrative structures had been designed mainly for the governance of Rome, but Urban’s curia had a broader reach), and forming the beginnings of what would become the College of Cardinals. Urban also launched the First Crusade, an action which further demonstrated his power and authority as pope. He enlisted preachers to travel Europe to garner support for the cause, and as Moore notes,

In the 1090s two of the fieriest [preachers], Robert of Arbrissel and Vitalis of Mortain, were commissioned … to preach the crusade in the Loire valley. This access of respectability did nothing to moderate the vigour of their assaults on married and simoniacl priests, whose effect, Bishop Marbod of Rennes complained, was ‘not to preach but to undermine’.

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82 Cushing, 80.
83 Cushing, 84.
84 Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 208.
85 Cushing, 81; Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 208-9.
In the letter which Moore cites, Marbod urges Robert to desist from his infamous cohabitation with women and criticizes him for wearing tattered, dirty clothes, saying the former courts scandal and the latter is beneath his dignity. Despite his clear concern with clerical propriety, Marbod still complains about Robert’s tendency to denigrate ranking church officials in his preaching:


Moreover, there is the fact that in the sermons with which you are accustomed to instruct vulgar crowds and ignorant men, you not only reprove the vices of those who are present, as is fitting, but you also enumerate, disparage, and censure the crimes of church officials, which is not fitting. Such behavior seems to me as if someone were mixing poison into an antidote, or as if out of the same opening, against the order of nature, as the apostle James says, “[a spring] were pouring out fresh and salt water at the same time” (James 3:11). For this is not to preach, but to disparage. Moreover, I utterly fail to see what advantage there can be in the censure of people in their absence, or what spiritual benefit could result from this; but rather, you seem to some extent to give your ignorant listeners license to sin, when you put before them the examples of their betters, by whose authority they could protect themselves. For this is the condition of superiors, that, whatever they do, they seem to instruct. Indeed, absent men are better able to become angry and to complain than to be incited by your slander to emend their behavior.

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88 Robert’s ostensible rationale for such cohabitation was that forcing himself to sleep beside women but to avoid the temptation of having sex with them was a form of asceticism.

89 PL prints “docet,” but “decet” must be the correct reading.

90 PL prints “amanet,” which must be a misprint.

91 PL 171, col. 1484.
But perhaps it benefits you for the rank of the whole Church to become worthless in common opinion; you alone with your followers would be valued. Indeed there are plenty of people who interpret your actions in this way. But this cunning echoes the old human; it is earthly, animal, and diabolic. It does not befit your profession, it does not befit this pilgrimage, and it does not befit these clothes.

The resentment caused among local officials by the interference of outsiders is clear. Indeed, this resentment became such a problem that Urban temporarily suspended his appointment of permanent legates and reverted to the older system of temporary legations. Still, the legates remained a presence and continued to extend the pope’s influence throughout Western Europe (and, by the end of his pontificate, Urban had re instituted his permanent legates; the most influential in France were Hugh of Lyon and Amatus of Bordeaux).

Urban died in 1099 and was succeeded by Paschal II (1099-1118), the pope who promoted Baudri to the archbishopric of Dol in 1107. Throughout his papacy, Paschal remained embroiled in the Investiture Controversy, and had to contend with heated opposition from Henry I of England, Philippe I of France, and Henry IV and Henry V of Germany, all of whom struggled to maintain their privilege of appointing church officials as Paschal attempted to enforce the Gregorian reform agenda. Moreover, Paschal could not rely on the support of the French clergy, who often displayed more loyalty to the king than to the pope. Even Hugh of Lyon, a dedicated reformer, caused problems for Paschal (who had not, upon becoming pope, renewed Hugh’s legation) by undermining Paschal’s newly-appointed legates’ attempts to

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92 Cushing, 84; Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 211-12.

93 Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 323. This is the Amatus to whom Baudri appeals for forgiveness in a poem (see above).

94 Since Baudri composed almost all of his poems before being promoted to archbishop, there is no need to consider here the progress of reform efforts beyond Paschal’s papacy.

95 See Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 338-75.

96 Fliche, *La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne*, 344.
depose a simoniac bishop.\textsuperscript{97} When Paschal died in 1118, a satisfactory resolution to the investiture conflict remained to be reached, and efforts to implement reform continued.

On the whole, throughout the eleventh and early twelfth centuries the reforms struggled to take hold in France, where despite the efforts of dedicated and influential papal legates, local clergy and secular rulers continued to resist the Church’s will. Papal decrees, councils, and legates were one method of attempting to enforce reform, but, as Kathleen Cushing has noted, reformers also utilized a very specific form of rhetoric in promoting their objectives. Polemic of the sort that Marbod complains about to Robert of Arbrissel was extremely common, and it manifested itself in various literary forms, including letters and hagiography.\textsuperscript{98} Cushing argues that reformers in particular used “language of purity and pollution” to persuade people of the necessity for change, insisting on a sharp delineation between behavior that was appropriate for members of the Church and members of lay society.\textsuperscript{99} Reformers stressed that if the clergy did not remain pure and avoid secular contamination, there could be consequences for society as a whole. Cushing writes:

Most often … fears such as these largely concentrated on the activities of those members of the spiritual elite, that is, monks, who by virtue of their position as the agni immaculati (‘pure lambs’) needed especially to be insulated from contamination, lest the salvation of the Christian people in general be compromised. Despite cloistering, they were nonetheless seen as being particularly susceptible to corruption, a susceptibility no doubt exacerbated by the exclusion of women and the availability of young boys.\textsuperscript{100}

Conrad Leyser has argued that the practice of clerical sodomy afforded a convenient target for reformers such as Peter Damian who were concerned about the purity of the Church as a whole.

While Damian knew that the complete eradication of simony was impossible and would severely

\textsuperscript{97} Fliche, \textit{La Réforme grégorienne et la reconquête chrétienne}, 343-44.
\textsuperscript{98} Cushing, 112.
\textsuperscript{99} Cushing, 112.
\textsuperscript{100} Cushing, 113.
affect the Church’s ability to function, sodomy and fornication were sins which, according to the Fathers, were entirely unjustified, and therefore Damian could attack them with full force.\footnote{Leyser, “Cities of the Plain: The Rhetoric of Sodomy in Peter Damian’s ‘Book of Gomorrah,’” \textit{Romantic Review} 86, no. 2 (March 1995): 206-207.} Moreover, as mentioned above, moral probity became not just a spiritual desideratum, but one of the main justifications for the power possessed by monasteries. Rhetoric about purity had, of course, always existed in the Church, but, as Cushing puts it, during the reform period “its prevalence and vehemence was revolutionary.”\footnote{Cushing, 112.} Nor was the use of language of pollution limited to explicitly sexual concerns (i.e. clerical chastity); Cushing notes the sexualization of the discourse of reform as a whole, citing several instances in which simony is likened to the prostitution of the Church or the “rape of the bride of Christ.”\footnote{Cushing, 119-20.} Unsurprisingly, misogynistic language was also commonplace, as Peter Damian and other reformers used invective against women as a rhetorical tool directed at unchaste clergy.\footnote{Jo Ann McNamara, “The \textit{Herrenfrage}: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150,” in \textit{Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages}, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 8; Cushing, 123.} But Cushing argues that while some reformers really were concerned about issues of contamination, Gregory VII, for instance, despite making use of the same rhetoric, was mainly concerned with issues such as simony and clerical chastity as matters of obedience.\footnote{Cushing, 124.} The reform period was thus characterized by a public discourse that expressed general concerns about power, obedience, and control in terms of clerical and monastic sexuality.

The preceding summary of the principal concerns of the reform movement and of the language in which these concerns were expressed will serve to contextualize the remainder of
this discussion. The reforms, despite ultimately spanning many years and thus not constituting a particularly sudden phenomenon, nonetheless represented a significant and widespread series of social changes. As a result, a consideration of this context will enrich our understanding of the literature of the period, because it stands to reason that such a pervasive public discourse would have left its mark on contemporary cultural productions. Indeed, many of the leading authors of the day, as church officials, were precisely those men most affected by the sexualized discourse of reform. Baudri, an abbot himself, wrote his poems at a time of general upheaval, when papal authorities were contending with local officials (both religious and secular) for power. Authorities were attempting to curtail some rights that the clergy had previously enjoyed, and the reformers used rhetoric designed to heighten public anxiety about the sexuality of monks as a means of cementing their authority and winning support for their goals. Baudri’s poems to his social inferiors reflect this context, similarly linking sexuality with themes of power and control as Baudri attempts to manipulate his correspondents into behaving in ways that he finds pleasing. For example, to revisit a poem discussed in Chapter 3, Baudri complains in c.3 that a boy, whom he otherwise loves for his beauty, is excessively haughty and unyielding. Baudri first praises the youth’s beauty at length before criticizing this fault and warning the boy that the only way he can ultimately be pleasing to Baudri is by complying with his wishes and becoming more compliant:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dedecet hoc in te; de te michi dissplicet istud:} \\
\text{Ipse tuos fastus, sed et intractabile pectus} \\
\text{Odi, cor durum, morum simul improbitatem;} \\
\text{Odi pomposos, odi iuuenes silicinos;} \\
\text{Arbor lenta placet, odi non flexile robur.} \\
\text{Diligo uultum humilem; collum non flexile damno.} \\
\text{Si uis ergo michi, si uis, puer, ipse placere,} \\
\text{Pelle coturnosos et fastus reice tantos,} \\
\text{Ridenti arride, responde digna loquenti,} \\
\text{Flectere discere caput et lumina flectere discere,} \\
\text{Ipse tuis moderare oculis et disce uidere. (3.50-60)}
\end{align*}
\]
This is unsuitable in you; this displeases me about you:
I hate your pride, but I also hate your intractable heart,
Your hard heart, along with your wickedness of morals;
I hate pompous, flinty youths;
A pliant tree is pleasing, but I hate inflexible oak.
I love a humble face; I condemn an inflexible neck.
Therefore, if you want, boy, if you want to please me,
Banish and reject such lofty pride,
Smile at people who are laughing, and respond worthily when people speak to you,
Learn to bend your head and learn to bend your eyes,
Learn to regulate your eyes and learn to see.

The imagery here is mildly suggestive (he is more or less telling the boy to bend over, but this is the standard vocabulary used to describe haughtiness in Latin so it is not out of character), but it is this injunction combined with the rest of the poem that problematically links sexuality and power. While Baudri could have chosen any number of ways to chastise the boy for his lack of humility, he opts to articulate his correction through a poem charged with sexual imagery borrowed from both Ovid and Horace. As discussed previously, Baudri leads into the poem with a detailed and lingering description of the boy’s beauty modeled after Ovid’s depiction of Narcissus in the *Metamorphoses*, and closes with a warning, borrowed from both Horace and Ovid, that the boy’s beauty will one day fade, at which point no one will be interested in him anymore. Both of these classical allusions call to mind individuals (either boys or courtesans) who suffer unpleasant consequences as a result of their unwillingness to yield to sexual advances. Baudri’s poem therefore sexualizes what would otherwise be a legitimate piece of moral instruction, using classical references to imply his inappropriate sexual coercion of his inferiors.

The poems depict precisely the sort of behavior that caused such anxiety among many reformers. As noted above, uneasiness about monastic purity was heightened because of the
ready availability of young boys in monasteries, and concerns about homosexuality manifested themselves in the writings of reformers. As John Boswell notes, Peter Damian’s treatise *The Book of Gomorrah (Liber Gomorrhianus)* emphatically condemns clerical homosexuality, expressing outrage about the practice’s prevalence and its negative effects on the purity of the Church. In particular, Damian expresses concern that the practice undermines the integrity of the sacrament of reconciliation; as Boswell puts it, “He accused priests of having sexual relations with their spiritual advisees and stated that many clerics avoided ecclesiastical penalties by confessing to other gay clergy.” By hinting at an inappropriate relationship between himself and the boys under his authority, Baudri plays directly to the reformers’ fears about monastic sexual misconduct.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Baudri’s verse contains continual protestations of the innocent nature of his love for his subordinates. For example, in c.11, after praising the day at length for granting him a meeting with “Iohanne desiderato diutius” (John, desired for a long time), Baudri feels the need to specify:

\[
\text{Est quoque sanctarum genus illud amicitiarum,} \\
\text{Quod tandem nullis afficitur maculis. (11.13-14)}
\]

Likewise, it is that type of sacred friendship, Which is in the end afflicted with no stains.

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106 See Chapter 3, in which I discuss the concern displayed in medieval monastic customaries about protecting boys from the advances of monks. See also Cushing, 113.

107 Boswell, 210-11.

108 Boswell, 211. Boswell proceeds to argue that the pope’s lukewarm acknowledgment of the treatise, in which he agrees that clerical homosexuality is a problem but declines to take strict measures to combat the practice, indicates that the issue ranked low on the papacy’s list of concerns (Boswell, 211-12). This may be true, but despite the pope’s reluctance to actively pursue and punish homosexual clergy, the rhetoric of reform continued to emphasize the issue as a concern. Moreover, as Boswell himself notes (212), the pope did decree that the gravest offenders would suffer a reduction in rank.

109 This is from the poem’s title.
On a basic level, one could see these protestations as a reaction to the stricter concern with and enforcement of chastity within the Church. In an environment in which informing on officials who were in violation of the Church’s code of conduct was encouraged, an abbot writing love letters would naturally take pains to defend himself from accusations of impropriety. But Baudri’s poems display a much more complex engagement with his social milieu. Gerald Bond, as mentioned above, takes Baudri’s “self-impersonation” and his insistence on his poems’ ludic nature as a means of “‘elud[ing]’ interpellation as abbot and monk by withdrawing into an immune world of letters which denied stable nomination (that is, subjection through naming) of any kind.” But I would argue, on the contrary, that because they are written in the first person and frequently contain elements of spiritual advice, Baudri’s poems continually call attention to his position as abbot. Sometimes they even do so explicitly, such as c.94, in which Baudri advises a youth to stay in their abbey rather than leaving to become a hermit. As a result, they flaunt his noncompliance with the moral expectations of someone in his position. Baudri’s poems are a means of engaging with the issues of reform, and furthermore they constitute not a mere literary game or a private retreat from accountability, but an active form of resistance.

Instructive here is Foucault’s conception of the relationship between power, discourse, and resistance as articulated in Volume 1 of The History of Sexuality. Discourse, according to Foucault, functions as a part of power, but not necessarily as compliant with that power. As he puts it:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process

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110 Bond, The Loving Subject, 68.
111 For example, c.3 (discussed above) does contain legitimate advice, since pride is a sin.
112 The Teucer sequence (cc. 118-120) discussed in ch. 3 also calls particular attention to Baudri’s position of power because of his preoccupation with ranking his inferiors.
whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.\footnote{Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality Volume I}, 100-101.}

Power can be resisted by means of discourse, but only within the bounds of the power that is being resisted; as Foucault says, “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.”\footnote{Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality Volume I}, 95.} When analyzing the effects of discourse on power, Foucault argues, we must conceptualize “the world of discourse” as a “multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in various strategies,” and thus,

\begin{quote}
It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects—according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated—that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes.\footnote{Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality Volume I}, 100.}
\end{quote}

Baudri’s poetic discourse cannot be separated from Baudri’s position as abbot or from the reform context as a whole. By flouting the spirit of the reforms in his position of authority, engaging directly with the issue of monastic purity that was such a concern to reformers, Baudri complicates the public discourse on sexuality that was current in his time and makes his engagement with the issues of reform very clear. This is not to say that Baudri’s poetry should be read as depicting his own personal views, or that Baudri and his persona are one and the same. Rather, Baudri’s poetry merely articulates a form of resistance,\footnote{We cannot, however, say one way or the other whether Baudri personally espoused the problematic view of the reforms portrayed in his poems.} and the fact that it is written under his own persona makes it impossible to see the poetry as Baudri’s means of engaging with
the issues of reform from an immune position outside his monastic context. We can draw a
distinction between Baudri himself and his persona, and can to a certain extent separate Baudri
the man from his poetry, but we cannot separate his poetic persona from his poetry. Moreover,
even if Baudri’s poetry were not written in the first person under the persona of an abbot, it
would never be possible for his discourse of resistance to exist outside of the power structure it is
resisting.

Baudri depicts an abbot writing sexualized verse to his inferiors, using his own position
of power to disempower his subordinates by forcing them to participate in a discourse that
sexualizes them; yet many of the poems pose as appropriate letters of spiritual mentorship. For
example, to revisit another poem discussed in Chapter 3, Baudri writes the following eroticized
poem to a young friend with whom he is upset:

Litterulis seu uersiculis seu carmine leto
Debueras, quia sat poteras, mandasse ualetu.
Te precibus, te carminibus super astra locabam
Atque deis te sidereis sociare parabam.
Non latuit, res nota fuit, quia te cupiebam;
Peniteo, sed uix ualeo, quia desipiebam.
Alter eras, quam debueras, quia fictus amicus;
At fueram, qui debueram, quia fidus amicus.

Sanus ero, si desiero meliora probando
Huic equidem seruare fidem, qui fallit amando;
Immo quidem seruabo fidem, si fallere nitar
Sique tuis iam ficticiis sed et artibus utar.
Preterea, si propterea, quod corripimus te,
Constituas neque post renuas te uiuere iuste,
Sis humilis, fias docilis: puerilia gesta
Non recolo remanente dolo: fac honestus honesta.
Exhibeo, nam spe teneo michi te placiturum,
Vt ualeas et spe teneas tibi me ualiturum.
Certus eam, te possideam, tu possideas me;
Certus eas, me possideas, ego possideam te. (143.1-8, 13-24)

With letters or verses or a happy poem
You should have, because you could have, bid me be well.
I placed you above the stars with my prayers and my poems
And I was preparing to associate you with the starry gods.
It was not hidden, the matter was known, that I desired you;
I regret it, but I am scarcely able to, because I was foolish.
You were other than you should have been, because you were a feigned friend;
But I was what I should have been, because I was a faithful friend.

... 
I will be sensible if, trying better things,
I cease keeping faith in this one, who deceived me in loving;
Indeed I will be keeping faith, if I strive to deceive you,
And if I make use of your fictions and arts.
Moreover, if because of the fact that I am rebuking you,
You decide, and you do not afterwards refuse, to live justly,
If you are humble, if you become docile: I will not remember
Your puerile actions, provided you leave deceit behind; be honorable and act honorably.
I put this forth, for I hold it in my hopes that you will please me:
May I go in certainty that you are well and hope for my well-being;
May I possess you, may you possess me;
May you go in certainty that you possess me, and I you.

Although the poem makes it clear that Baudri is merely offended because he has sent the boy poems which have not been reciprocated, Baudri still attempts, near the end, to pretend as if a moral lesson is what is actually at stake, informing the boy that if he learns humility and docility (which he would demonstrate by giving in to Baudri’s demands), he may be forgiven and thus retain Baudri’s friendship. Likewise, as discussed in Chapter 2, c.200 consists largely of a list of characteristics which Baudri finds appealing in Constance (including a lengthy and sexually-charged description of her appearance) and of his repeated injunctions for her to continue to act in these pleasing ways. In particular he emphasizes the need for her to remain chaste, but he problematizes these instructions by transmitting them in an Ovidian love letter to which he expects her to reply.¹¹⁷ Moreover, in addition to praising her chastity, he also tells her that it is actually her skill at writing which has won his love:

In te sed nostrum mouit tua littera sensum

¹¹⁷ See 200.169-72, where he discusses the possibility that she will write back, and tells her to make sure he sees her letter so that he can reply in turn.
Et penitus iunxit me tua Musa tibi.
Denique tanta tuae uiuit facundia lingue,
Vt possis credi sisque Sibilla michi. (200.51-54)

But your writing moved my feeling for you
And your Muse has inwardly joined me to you.
Finally, so much eloquence resides in your tongue,
That you could be believed to be a Sibyl; and you are one to me.

It is Constance’s participation in the poetic game that Baudri truly values, and his letter automatically implicates her in this game. The letter thus depicts Baudri’s use of a sexualized discourse to attempt to control Constance’s behavior, and his repeated admonitions of chastity in such a context serve as a disingenuous cover for this fact, while still representing another way in which Baudri is attempting to dictate Constance’s conduct.

Baudri’s discourse is thus analogous to the rhetoric of the Gregorian Reforms, in that the reformers also used a sexualized discourse to attempt to enforce monastic and clerical compliance with their objectives of reform, and concealed their real concern with expanding and cementing the papacy’s authority (at the expense of local self-determination) under the guise of concern with the Church’s moral integrity. In other words, for both Baudri and the reformers, sexuality functions not just as an expression of itself, but as a discourse about power. As discussed above, in addition to their sexualization of the discourse relating to patently non-sexual issues such as simony (which portrayed their real anxiety over papal authority as concern that the Church was being prostituted), the reformers’ professed concern with clerical purity was also mainly an issue of power, since the Church’s holdings were threatened by the tendency of the clergy to bequeath Church property to their children. By adopting this discourse in which concerns with power are expressed in sexual terms, and by doing so in a problematic context in which it is clear that, as abbot, he is misusing his position of authority and attempting to
manipulate his subordinates inappropriately, Baudri problematizes the rhetoric of Gregorian reform.

The above applies both to Baudri’s poems to boys and those to women, but the poems to women contain an added dimension of engagement with contemporary realities. Because of their gender, nuns were automatically in a position of subordination to men, enjoying a lesser degree of power than their male counterparts. Fiona Griffiths has nicely summarized one of the main obstacles medieval nuns faced: their inability ever to achieve full emancipation from their reliance on male clergy. As Griffiths notes:

Since [nuns] could not be ordained, they remained dependent on priests (who were often ordained members of local monastic communities) to provide them with the sacraments and to act for them in their public capacity: to manage their business, negotiate with secular powers, and witness their charters. The provision of these services was known from the thirteenth century as the *cura monialium*—the care of nuns. For women’s houses the *cura* was an inescapable fact of the religious life. Since women could neither manage without the sacraments nor administer them themselves, they had no choice but to depend on men for their spiritual maintenance.\footnote{Fiona J. Griffiths, “The Cross and the *Cura monialium*: Robert of Arbrissel, John the Evangelist, and the Pastoral Care of Women in the Age of Reform,” *Speculum* 83 (2008): 312. For more detail on convents’ dependence on male clerics, see Penelope Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 180-191.}

Monks, conversely, could be ordained as priests, and so medieval monasteries were at least theoretically able to maintain autonomy and handle all of their own affairs themselves. Such independence was inherently impossible for nuns. Even though the abbess was technically in charge of the clergy employed by the convent,\footnote{Johnson, 184.} as women, the nuns were entirely dependent on such men to fulfill their spiritual objectives. Thus in the monastic world, men had managed to do away entirely with their need for women, but women remained beholden to the assistance of men. Besides the obvious symbolic oppression of never being able to achieve full self-determination, nuns’ dependence on male clergy also became a financial burden. As Penelope
Johnson notes, convents had to pay for the service of outside clergy, and thus often ended up offering services such as funeral masses at a loss; moreover, disputes often arose “over the nuns’ expectations of the priest and over his need for support.”

In the case of such disputes, if a compromise could not be reached, the nuns depended on the verdict of a male authority for resolution. Thus even on the most basic level, nuns existed in a position of relative disempowerment.

In addition, linked to the misogynistic rhetoric of reform discussed above was an increase in actual misogynistic policies within the Church and in the secular world. Jo Ann McNamara has argued that the reform period led to a destabilization of the gender system as a whole because of the increased exclusion of women from positions of power. The rise of primogeniture as the preferred system of inheritance forced younger sons to find new ways of supporting themselves, and new professions came into existence. As McNamara notes,

… celibate men monopolized most of the new positions, excluding women rigorously during the sensitive period of social readjustment. The papal revolution of the 1070s presaged a new centricity of the sacraments that underscored the male monopoly of the Catholic priesthood. The imposition of clerical celibacy excluded women even from their nonsacramental functions. This woman-free space was inexorably expanded as clerical men monopolized new educational opportunities. The renaissance in classical learning reestablished the theoretical intellectual and moral inferiority of women and enabled men implicitly to absorb all the positive qualities of “mankind.”

McNamara argues that this had negative consequences for both men and women, since by defining masculinity as an ability to dominate, men were forced to demonstrate their manliness by persecuting anyone perceived as weaker or other (that is, women and homosexuals, among

120 Johnson, 182.
121 Johnson, 182.
122 McNamara, 5.
But the principal result was that women were increasingly excluded and disempowered, and were subject to increased rhetoric which justified this exclusion based on women’s inherent inferiority.

Women also found themselves barred from certain sacred spaces based on the same rationale. In and of itself this was not a direct consequence of the Gregorian Reforms, since, as Jane Schulenburg argues, such exclusion was a particular problem for women between the ninth and twelfth centuries and the practice thus predated the reforms. Still, Schulenburg agrees that various periods of reform, including the Gregorian, “placed an increased emphasis on the regularization of monastic life, on celibacy with an exaggerated fear of female sexuality and threat of moral contagion, which resulted in a full-blown misogyny.” Schulenburg specifically examines the exclusion of women from monastic churches, noting that these bans frequently extended even to cemeteries, and points out that this often left women unable to practice their religion adequately or even visit their relatives’ tombs. Additionally, such bans could leave women unable to access saints’ relics and the benefits believed to proceed from them. These prohibitions were also reflected in monastic rules and were reinforced in various saints’ lives and legends, which spoke of the terrible consequences suffered by women who

123 McNamara, 22. Evidently the targets of such persecution were the most disadvantaged by it, although McNamara also makes a case for the suffering of the “psychologically maimed creatures the system produced,” (22) meaning the men who did the oppressing.


125 Schulenburg, 370.

126 Schulenburg, 355. For the monastic exclusion of women and the history of such exclusion in the Church, see David F. Noble, A World Without Women: The Christian Clerical Culture of Western Science, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

127 Schulenburg, 363.
entered prohibited areas. In turn, female monasteries often attempted to restrict male access, but, as discussed above, they could never fully eliminate the presence of men because of their need for the services that only male clergy could provide. Thus during the reforms women saw themselves increasingly devalued, disempowered, and excluded from male realms.

More specifically, as discussed in Chapter 2, if the Constance of Baudri’s poetry was real, she almost certainly resided in the abbey of Le Ronceray, in Angers. In her dissertation, “Holy Litigants: The Nuns of Ronceray d'Angers and their Neighbors, 1028-1200,” Belle S. Tuten comprehensively examines the history of Le Ronceray, and many of her insights are relevant here. Founded in 1028 by Fulk Nerra (the count of Anjou) and his wife Hildegard, the abbey was Hildegard’s particular favorite and had the benefit of her full protection until her death in 1046. Le Ronceray thus enjoyed safety and prosperity for the first eighteen years of its existence, but after Hildegard’s death, as Tuten puts it, the abbey’s position “became much more tenuous.” Many of the abbey’s subsequent problems had as their basis the fact that, in the eleventh century, the Anjou region experienced a flood of new monastic foundations and donations. The sudden proliferation of monastic communities resulted in intense competition for resources within the region: “The houses needed support from the lay people of the region;

128 Schulenburg, 355-363.
129 Schulenburg, 363: “Although female monasteries frequently adopted policies of strict active and passive enclosure, they were unable to get along without a male presence, for on the bottom line they required a priest for at least sacramental functions and confession. Therefore their rules stipulate, for example, that with the exception of bishops, provisors, suppliers, priests, deacons, aged lectors, builders, etc., men were forbidden entry into the secret parts of the monastery and in the oratory.”
130 And even if she was not real, given the various correspondences which have caused modern scholars to associate her with Le Ronceray, and given Baudri’s known associations with the abbey, it is likely that as a character she was designed to make us think of a nun of Le Ronceray.
their need for income through donation was urgent, and sudden rises in the fortune of one monastery could spell financial hardship for the others.\footnote{134}{Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 23.} Le Ronceray was no exception, and in particular after the death of Hildegard, Tuten notes that compared with many other (male) monasteries in the area, Le Ronceray was marked by “relative poverty and lack of power in the ecclesiastical hierarchy.”\footnote{135}{Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 11.} Tuten explores the relationship between Le Ronceray and its monastic and lay neighbors during this time, devoting particular attention to the numerous conflicts that are documented in the abbey’s surviving records and analyzing the various struggles that the nuns faced because of their gender.

Of course, all religious foundations, male or female, had to protect their holdings, and as discussed above, gifts received from secular rulers were particularly at risk of being reappropriated at a later date; conflicts ensued as a result of such conflicting claims on a regular basis for monks as well as nuns.\footnote{136}{Cushing, 46.} But at the time Baudri wrote his poems to Constance and other women, Le Ronceray was experiencing a period of particularly frequent attempts to deprive the abbey of its holdings. As Tuten notes:

In the 1080s, the “perverse cupidity” of a donor caused the nuns to pay out a large sum of money; around the turn of the twelfth century they complained of the “violence,” “injuries,” and “rapine” they experienced from their neighbors at the monastery of Saint-Nicolas. They also entered into a long feud, guerra, with a layman…. Complaints about their neighbors pervade the Ronceray documents, which bear out the nuns’ contention that their lay and monastic neighbors often challenged their property rights by using force or taking them to court.\footnote{137}{Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 2-3.}
The nuns of Le Ronceray were under attack from all quarters. Moreover, Tuten argues that in
the interests of future harmony the goal in both monastic and lay disputes was almost always to
reach a peaceful compromise and to maintain good relations; but unfortunately for the nuns,
“analysis of dispute documents shows that the nuns at Le Ronceray were more likely than their
male counterparts to experience difficulties obtaining settlements and were more likely to
encounter resistance from lay interests when questions over property arose.”138

A charter that can be dated to between 1100 and 1105 tells the story of Le Ronceray’s
protracted battle with a man named Goffridus Pulcherrimus.139 Goffridus was married to the
niece of a man named Lambertus, who was extremely devoted to the nuns of Le Ronceray.
Lambertus had given some property to the nuns, and Goffridus had quitclaimed it (ceremonially
renounced his claims), but as soon as Lambertus died, Goffridus reappropriated the gift. The
nuns eventually won the property back after a long conflict, but were forced to pay Goffridus
twenty sous and promise him and his wife burial in the abbey, despite the fact that he had
previously legally renounced his rights to the land.140 As a point of reference, Tilliette tentatively
dates Baudri’s cc. 200 and 201 (the correspondence with Constance) to around this time (some
point after 1100, but probably 1107)141 on the basis of the following vague references in
Constance’s letter:

\[\text{Si te Roma uocat, si te Magontia}\] temptat,

\[\text{Si te Roma uocat, si te Magontia}\] temptat,

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140 For this story, see Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 171.
141 Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 298.
142 Tilliette and Orbis Latinus both translate Magontia as Mainz, Germany (Mayence in French). See Tilliette,
Poèmes, vol. 2, 134; Johann Georg Theodor Grässe, ed., Orbis latinus; oder, Verzeichnis der wichtigsten
lateinischen Orts- und Ländernamen, ein Supplement zu jedem lateinischen und geographischen Wörterbuch, 2nd
Si meus es, retrahas mox ab utraque pedem.
Vade uiam tutam; petat alter barbara regna.
Est grauis indomitas poena domare feras
Atque tibi digne uix respondere ualebunt,
\textless C\textgreater um sint indocte, protinus edomitae.
Pullos indomitos ali\textperiodcentered multi domuerunt:
Si fortasse labor uester inanis erit.
Si michi discredens incassum forte laboras
Subripiatque alter iugera uix domita,
Affectus nimio tandem tunc ipse pudore
Ad ueteres sero regrediere uias.  \textsuperscript{143}

If Rome calls you, if Mainz tempts you,
If you are mine, soon withdraw your foot from both.
Go the safe route; let someone else seek barbarous kingdoms.
It is a grave hardship to subdue untamed wild beasts
And they will hardly be able to respond worthily to you,
Since after being tamed, they are still unlearned.
Many others have subdued untamed young animals:
Thus perhaps your labor will be in vain.
If, disbelieving me, you should by chance labor in vain
And another man should snatch away the acres that have scarcely been subdued,
At last, afflicted with excessive shame,
You will return too late to your old paths.

Tilliette interprets the reference to Mainz as possibly referring to Henry IV’s assembly of the enemies of Pope Paschal II in that city in the year 1100 for reasons relating to the Investiture Conflict.\textsuperscript{144} This is certainly a reasonable conjecture, and would allow us to date the poem to no earlier than that assembly, but it is hard to say for certain. The meaning of the rest of the passage...
is less obscure, however. Tilliette (rightly, in my view) proposes that Constance is referring to Baudri’s imminent departure for Brittany to take up his post as archbishop, observing that in later writings he refers to his post in almost exactly the same terms as Constance employs here.\footnote{Tilliette, Poèmes, vol. 2, 298 n. 54: “Nous nous demandons s’il ne faut pas voir ici une allusion au départ de Baudri pour la Bretagne, dans la mesure où celui-ci décira plus tard ses efforts infructueux pour civiliser cette terre ‘barbare’ dans les termes mêmes employés par Constance (Itinerarium, PL 166, c.1173c : et quia incassum laboraveram [d’après Lev 26.20], vehementer erubui; cf. v. 145 et 147). Les cc. 200 et 201 auraient alors été composés vers 1107 et symboliseraient, en quelque sorte, l’adieu de Baudri à l’otium bourgeois et aux jeux poético-érotiques : il est logique, dans ces conditions, que l’attente de ‘Constance’ soit destinée à rester vaine.”} If so, this allows for a much more precise dating of the poem, placing its date of composition sometime in 1107. Because of his mistranslation of Magontia, as mentioned above, Gerald Bond is unable to account for the first reference, but he, like Tilliette, suggests that the passage as a whole “seems to indicate that the promotion for Baudri to bishop of Dol … was under consideration.”\footnote{Bond, The Loving Subject, 191 n. 4.} In any case, the Baudri-Constance correspondence was most likely composed in the very recent wake of the nuns’ conflict with Goffridus Pulcherrimus, a conflict which exemplifies the degree to which the nuns were often at the mercy of their neighbors’ unjust whims. Indeed, throughout her dissertation, Tuten cites numerous examples of similar lay challenges with which the nuns were forced to contend.

While the nuns of Le Ronceray spent a substantial portion of the late eleventh and early twelfth century involved in disputes with their neighbors over property and privileges, Tuten demonstrates that in lay disputes, the nuns were on more or less equal footing with their male counterparts, all things considered. Based on the surviving charters for religious establishments in Angers, lay disputes made up roughly 34% of Le Ronceray’s documented transactions, while the average for male monasteries was only 25%, suggesting that the nuns spent slightly more time than any one of their male neighbors contending with lay challenges.\footnote{Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 211-14.} Despite this, in part...
due to their relative poverty compared to many of their male neighbors, their lower-profile disputes were often resolved without great difficulty; moreover, the nuns mainly had recourse to the same strategies for resolution as monks, and lay disputes ended in successful outcomes for the nuns about as often as they did for monks.\footnote{148 Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 213-14.} In disputes with their male monastic neighbors, however, Tuten argues that the nuns were somewhat disadvantaged because of their gender. While inter-monastic disputes, like lay disputes, could technically be resolved with peaceful compromises or by appealing to a mediator, in practice the bishop often had to become involved because monasteries tended to demand bigger settlements than lay individuals, making compromise less mutually beneficial; moreover, lower-ranking mediators were not always able to bring about a settlement.\footnote{149 Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 222-25.} By citing several specific examples taken from Le Ronceray’s charters, Tuten argues that, although the nuns of Le Ronceray were frequently successful in protecting their property from monastic challenges, these successes were often entirely dependent on the bishop’s support. This was technically the case for monks as well, as evidenced by the numerous cases in which the nuns prevailed against the monks because of the bishop’s judgment. But Tuten notes that monks, being independent of the bishop for the performance of their clerical functions, were in a better position to resist an unfavorable verdict.\footnote{150 Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 266-267.} In the case of nuns, the bishop could force their compliance with his will by threatening them with the cessation of the \textit{cura monialium}.\footnote{151 Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 267. See also Venarde, \textit{Women's Monasticism}, 134. Citing the same example as Tuten, Venarde discusses the nuns’ decision to relinquish a claim for fear of alienating the bishop.} The nuns were therefore somewhat more subject to the bishop’s will than were their monastic neighbors. They were further disadvantaged, Tuten notes, by their general inability to attend Church councils; often they
required male clerics to represent their interests to the bishop, and unlike monks, who could send representatives from within their own ranks, the nuns had to recruit outsiders who might refuse to help if they thought they would face repercussions from an angry bishop.¹⁵²

A less concrete difference between the nuns of Le Ronceray and their male neighbors was the manner in which their sanctity was defined. As discussed above, a major means by which the Church justified its power over secular authorities was by its sanctity as an institution.¹⁵³ One measure of the Church’s holiness was the purity of its monks and clerics, concern for which led to the sexualized discourse of reform.¹⁵⁴ But the exploitation of sanctity as a source of power was not merely a means of empowering the religious at the expense of the secular. Tuten observes, following Patrick Geary and Barbara Abou-el-Haj,¹⁵⁵ that monasteries also competed with each other for public recognition of their superior sanctity because of the prestige (and thus tourism, wealth, and power) that such recognition brought them.¹⁵⁶ As Geary notes, one of the best ways for a monastery to win a reputation was by obtaining relics and developing a cult tradition around a given saint:

Lacking human protection in the forms of military or economic force, [monasteries] looked to the protection of saints to reestablish lost prestige, intimidate local magnates, and outdistance other monasteries in the race for spiritual renown. A key ingredient in the development of the cult of a new patron was the acquisition of his or her relics; and possession of the remains of a popular saint could mean the difference between a monastery’s oblivion and survival. Hence, the acquisition of relics was a real necessity, and, as ever, the only means of acquisition were purchase, gift, invention, or theft.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Cushing, 47.
¹⁵⁴ Cushing, 47.
¹⁵⁷ Geary, 57.
Tuten argues that while the male monasteries in Angers often resorted to such measures (that is, the acquisition of relics and the composition of miracle stories and hagiography), the nuns of Le Ronceray did not, often going so far as to criticize their neighbors for their great efforts to acquire sanctity.\(^{158}\)

Tuten mainly interprets this positively, in the sense that nuns did not need to bother with other methods of acquiring sanctity because their sanctity depended entirely “on their public perception as Brides of Christ, an image which men could not invoke.”\(^{159}\) She does observe that the nuns had no other option because they lacked the resources to acquire noteworthy relics and to become a pilgrimage site,\(^{160}\) but also notes that this allowed them to save money that the monks had to spend on relics and manuscripts, a consideration that gains added importance because of the frequent outlay of funds required when there were property disputes.\(^{161}\) This is no doubt true, but the fact that their abbey’s perceived value (dependent on which was their receipt of lay donations) hinged entirely on the nuns’ purity can also be seen as limiting. As McNamara notes:

… the ranking of nuns as divine consorts flattered them with the intimacy of their bridegroom but also effectively pushed them out of the administrative hierarchy, as queens were being pushed aside by male ministers in terrestrial governments. The imagery associated with celibate women as brides of Christ was revived in male rhetoric, where it firmly placed even the most resolute virgin in the gender system as a structural wife.\(^{162}\)

\(^{158}\) Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 86-87.
\(^{159}\) Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 86-87.
\(^{161}\) Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 126.
\(^{162}\) McNamara, 21.
Moreover, while all religious figures were, as discussed above, subject to the increased concern about their sexuality brought about by the Gregorian Reforms, monks could (to a certain extent) draw public attention to other considerations besides their sexuality, and could develop a reputation for holiness based on their possession of relics, or even miracle stories of their own fabrication. Lacking this option, nuns were forced to rely solely on their reputation for chastity to cement their power in the region. In other words, they had no choice but to play into a public discourse obsessed with female purity if they wanted to maintain any degree of power in Angers. During the reforms, monks had to do this too, but they also had other options in a way that the nuns of Le Ronceray did not.

The Baudri-Constance correspondence is all the more meaningful if we take into consideration not just that Constance had less power than Baudri as his inferior and as a woman, but also the fact that her particular abbey suffered continual attacks from the surrounding monks and was generally at the mercy of ranking church officials to protect its interests. On one level, we can see Constance as a symbol for the disempowerment of religious women as a whole in this period, but Constance also speaks to the particular plight of the historical Constance’s nunnery. By forcing Constance into his poetic game, Baudri showcases the way in which nuns were utterly subjected to the power of ranking church officials. By sexualizing his poetic game, Baudri further problematizes this inequality. Constance, in turn, highlights exactly how much she is constrained by Baudri’s position of power, playing along with his game and submitting to the sexualized discourse he has initiated, all the while using Ovidian allusion to demonstrate that both she and her persona, like the elegiac puella, are compelled to play along and that this is problematic.163 As discussed in Chapter 2, c.201 hinges on the theme of Constance’s relative

163 See Chapter 2, where these points are demonstrated through close readings of the poems.
disempowerment, to which she calls direct attention with her repeated assertions that, while
Baudri has the power to come see her, she is unable to take any such action herself:

Ad te, si possem, pedes aut eques ultro uenirem;
   Non essent honeri pena pudorque michi.
Venero, si potero, uenissem, si potuissem;
   Sed disturbat iter seu nouerca meum.
At tu, qui dominus nullo custode teneris,
   Quem, quia multa potes, ipsa nouerca timet,
Maturato gradus et me uisurus adesto;
   Sumptus et comites sufficienter habes.

If I could, I would willingly come to you, either on foot or on horseback;
   Neither penalty nor shame would be a burden to me.
I will come, if I can, I would have come, if I could have;
   But my savage stepmother thwarts my journey.
But you, who as a lord are held by no guard,
   Whom, because you are capable of many things, my stepmother herself fears,
Hasten your steps and come to see me;
   You have sufficient funds and companions.  (201.155-62)

Constance points to Baudri’s superior financial situation, noting that he can afford the cost of a
journey and implying that she cannot; this is consistent with Tuten’s claim that Le Ronceray was
not as wealthy as the male monastic establishments in the region. Her comment that Baudri
possesses sufficient companions calls to mind another advantage enjoyed by male monasteries
but not by female establishments: the ready availability of male travel companions. Constance
also observes that Baudri is free to come and go as he pleases, whereas she is subject to the
whims of her abbess; in the span of five lines, Constance’s poem demonstrates several of the
fundamental disadvantages to which nuns, as opposed to monks, were subject.164 Because
Constance’s letter as a whole emphasizes both her powerlessness and the extent to which she is
constrained by and forced to play along with Baudri’s sexualized discourse, it can be seen as a

164 Of course, this final example is less an instance of gender inequality and more a result of the difference in rank
between Baudri and Constance. The fact that Baudri is abbot as opposed to a regular monk is what gives him the
freedom to come and go as he pleases.
reflection on the sorts of maneuvers that nuns were forced to perform in order to protect their abbeys’ holdings. Nuns had no choice but to abide by and play up the discourse of holiness that valued them only for their sanctity as determined by their sexual purity. Likewise, in her reply to Baudri, Constance plays the precise role demanded of her by Baudri’s poetic discourse.

As discussed in Chapter 1, many leading feminist scholars of Ovid have interpreted the figure of the elegiac puella as a metaphor of varying sorts. Alison Keith, for example, sees the puella as a metaphor for the elegiac genre in general, noting that many of her physical characteristics match the characteristics of elegiac verse, and that in the Amores, the poet’s dissatisfaction with the elegiac puellae mirrors his growing dissatisfaction with the genre; the puellae therefore serve as a means of commenting on questions of poetic style.165 Others, such as Sharon James and Maria Wyke, have seen the puella as a means of commenting on the political situation in Rome in the wake of Augustus’ rise to power and his moral legislation.166 What these approaches all have in common is that the puella is seen, at least in part, as a tool appropriated by the male poet for articulating a concern that falls mainly within the male sphere. In the interpretation which sees the puella as a means of exploring male disempowerment, sex and power are linked poetically, reflecting the anxieties about power and self-determination that are at the root of anxiety about Augustus’ policing of aristocratic sexuality. Both James and Wyke see the elegiac puellae as representing a space outside of productive society, and also, as courtesans who are not subject to the marriage reforms, as representing a space outside the scope of Augustus’ authority.167 By using elegy and the figure of the elegiac puella to explore issues of

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166 See Wyke, ch. 1 (“Mistress and Metaphor”) and ch. 5 (“Taking the Woman’s Part”); James, Learned Girls.
167 James, Learned Girls, 217-18. Wyke, 44.
disempowerment, the elegiac poets turn the *puella* into a figure on whom they can inscribe a representation of the anxieties felt by upper-class Roman males. As James puts it,

Elegy’s intense focus on the body of the *docta puella*, as both the means by which she makes her living and the physical space through which the lover-poets can delay engaging with the world of politics, the blank slate on which they can write their poetry and physically exorcise their frustrations, perhaps offers a suggestion about her anomalous and short-lived poetic importance. This is a poetry that focuses intensely on male-female sexual relationships, in a time when such relationships were beginning to receive official scrutiny.¹⁶⁸

She later elaborates, noting that:

Her very apartness, combined with her obstinately material circumstances, allows these poets to explore poetically and metaphorically their own changing times. Thus the lover-poets record, on the *puella’s* body, as it were, their own angers and frustrations at seeing themselves diminished in stature and subordinated to new hierarchies of power and relevance politically, socially, culturally, and historically, as well as their desire to avoid that diminution by escaping into sex, love, and poetry.¹⁶⁹

At the same time, James notes that the poems portray the dangerous realities of the lives of the *puellae*, and the extent to which they are at a disadvantage as compared to the *amator*;¹⁷⁰ elegy is thus much more than the mere co-opting of a female figure to reflect on the troubles of the elite male.

Much of what these scholars see in Ovid is applicable to Baudri. Constance and the boys with whom Baudri corresponds can be seen as figures on whom Baudri inscribes his discourse of resistance in that he uses them, as relatively disempowered figures whom he attempts to influence in inappropriate ways, to represent as problematic the ways in which various figures were disempowered by the Church’s assertion of its authority during the reforms. Baudri’s correspondents, like the Ovidian *puella*, can therefore be seen as literary tools. Moreover, like

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Ovid, Baudri also draws attention to the particular difficulties faced by women, all the more so since he gives a voice to Constance by printing her letter with his own. The fact that, as discussed in Chapter 2, Constance’s voice is only heard because of her compliance with Baudri’s poetic game further serves to emphasize the degree to which women were constrained by the dominant male discourse. But whereas James sees Ovidian elegy as possibly affording the poets an opportunity “to delay participating in public life and respectable marriage during a period of intense and constantly oscillating adjustment to their lives,” Baudri’s poems portray him as operating entirely within the system that is subject to the reforms (pace Bond). Written in the first person, the poems highlight both Baudri’s status as abbot and his position of authority over his correspondents, who also belong to monastic communities; Baudri’s repeated protestations that his love does not violate the rules of propriety heighten our awareness of his and his correspondents’ places within the system. Thus whereas Ovidian elegy attempts to articulate feelings of dissatisfaction with the new status quo from a place outside the scope of the new regime, Baudri’s poems remain entirely confined to a realm over which the Church and the reformers exercised control. This gives the poems a sense of futility, in that it is clear that there is no escaping from the dominant discourse. But this does not negate the poems’ attempts at resistance, and both Ovid’s and Baudri’s poems can be read as subversive. Ovid portrays noble males ignoring their responsibilities as dictated by Augustus, while Baudri portrays his authorial persona as subtly flaunting the spirit of the reforms from within a position of authority, even as he attempts to pass off his problematic letters as appropriate spiritual advice. In writing

171 Or, if Constance is merely a literary construct, he still somewhat gives women a voice by allowing his fictional correspondent to pronounce her own discourse of resistance.

172 James, Learned Girls, 218.
determinedly Ovidian poems to his inferiors, Baudri appropriates Ovid’s discourse of resistance and makes it his own.

For years, classicists have read Ovid’s elegy as a way of engaging with the theme of disempowerment, arguing that it draws attention both to the disenfranchisement of elite males under Augustus’ regime and the general plight of the Roman courtesan. Baudri’s poems, I have argued, can similarly be seen as a reflection of the anxiety surrounding the Gregorian Reforms and the disempowerment of local authorities as the Church asserted more and more centralized control. Ovid’s poems showcase the extent to which the *puella* is subject to the *amator*, problematizing the situation by highlighting negative aspects of the *amator*’s personality and drawing attention to the dangers that are inherent in the courtesan’s profession. Baudri’s poems function similarly; they demonstrate that Baudri’s correspondents are subject to his authority, and problematize his use of this authority by situating it in a sexualized discourse. As I argued in Chapter 1, even if Baudri had a very limited understanding of the Augustan context of Ovid’s poems, he still must have seen how Ovid links power and sexuality in his poems, because he consciously imitates Ovid when he treats power and sexuality in a similar way. At the very least, Baudri would have noted Ovid’s protestations that his advice is legitimate because it is not meant for the eyes of matrons, and would thus have recognized the possibility that Ovid’s verse could get him into trouble.\(^\text{173}\) Baudri mimics this tactic himself, repeatedly insisting on the innocent nature of the love depicted in his poems. That Ovid saw fit to include such protestations would at least imply that he was in violation of some social stricture, even if Baudri did not know all of the details. Although medieval readers ultimately possessed an imperfect grasp of Ovid’s historical context, they did attempt to understand it, as they saw historical context as an integral

\[^{173}\text{In fact, we know Baudri knew about the }\textit{carmen et error}\text{ because of his paired letters between the exiled Ovid and Ovid’s friend, Florus.}\]
factor in understanding Ovid’s poetic corpus. While I do not wish to suggest that there is an exact equivalence between Baudri’s circumstances and Ovid’s, or between Baudri’s use of elegy and Ovid’s, there is a substantive correspondence between the two, especially given the overall Ovidianism of Baudri’s corpus. Although I would stop short of claiming that Baudri chose to imitate Ovid because he knew about the marriage laws and saw the Gregorian Reforms as a medieval equivalent, I do think it is safe to say that Baudri saw in elegy a convenient means of engaging with the change and upheaval of his own times, in particular because Ovid and elegy link sexuality and power in much the same way as does the discourse of reform. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, an institutionalized discourse of sexuality served as the Church’s principal means of asserting and spreading its power; the analogous situation in Augustan Rome led to the creation of poetry which, although short-lived in its own time, presented itself as an apt medium for Baudri to respond to the discourse of the Gregorian Reforms.
Conclusion

Baudri’s adaption of Ovidian verse demonstrates his engagement with the issues of power and control that are so prevalent in the *Ars* and the *Amores*. Because they are written under his own persona, Baudri’s poems to boys and nuns depict a man using his position of authority to influence the behavior of his inferiors, mimicking the Ovidian praeceptor amoris and amator, both of whom use their privileged positions to manipulate lower-class courtesans to their own advantage. Though Baudri’s poems often proclaim the innocent nature of their discourse and pose as letters imparting legitimate spiritual counsel, their Ovidianism, sexualized language, and the questionable nature of the advice they contain ultimately undermine such claims. Baudri draws on Ovid’s characterization of the amator and praeceptor amoris of elegy as manipulative and self-interested, and by imitating elegy and linking his own persona to Ovid’s, Baudri portrays both his persona and his poetic discourse as problematic. By usurping Ovid’s already problematic verse in order to further complicate it in a new context, Baudri’s poems to boys and nuns simultaneously problematize and perpetuate an oppressive discourse.

In his letters to boys, Baudri also imitates classical pederastic poetry, in that Baudri praises his correspondents’ physical beauty but criticizes them for not paying adequate attention to him. Baudri thereby engages with contemporary anxieties about the sexual predation of young boys in the monastic context, using classical allusion to highlight the sexualized nature of his own verse. In addition, he sometimes threatens the boys with negative consequences if they disregard his wishes, which emphasizes the extent to which such poetry represents an abuse of his power as abbot. In his letter to Constance, Baudri uses Ovidian allusion to place his poem firmly in the context of the elegiac tradition, again problematizing his use of authority by likening his poetic game to the power struggle between the elegiac puella and amator. In her
reply, Constance plays along with Baudri’s game, following the Ovidian *praecceptor*’s instructions to women and thereby emphasizing Baudri’s characterization of her as an elegiac *puella*. Constance thereby demonstrates that she is constrained by Baudri’s poetic discourse; she plays along exactly as Baudri wishes, in the same way the elegiac *puella* must comply with the *amator*’s wishes because of her own financial needs. But Constance also destabilizes this discourse from within, in that her cooperation with Baudri’s game draws attention to the problems inherent in the discourse. When considered in relation to these poems, Baudri’s other poetry to women further highlights the problematic nature of Baudri’s exchange with Constance. These poems exhibit many of the same characteristics that undermine the legitimacy of his poem to Constance, thus adding to the overall problematic feel of Baudri’s collection. But because they do not venture as far into problematic territory as does his correspondence with Constance, they also highlight the irregularity of the latter.

Baudri’s problematic depiction of power and sexuality can be seen as a reaction to the highly sexualized discourse of the eleventh-century Gregorian reforms. Both the reform discourse and Baudri’s poems employ sexuality as a tool for addressing issues of power: the reformers express their anxieties about obedience and control in terms of monastic and clerical sexuality, and Baudri uses a depiction of inappropriate sexualized exchanges within a monastic context to engage with anxieties about the Church’s assertion of centralized control. In addition, Baudri’s poems to nuns engage with the particular inequality of women in the Church, as well as with the reformers’ use of women as rhetorical tools to achieve their greater goals. The link between sexuality and power in the institutionalized discourse of reform affords one explanation as to why the popularity of Ovid’s elegiac works grew so greatly in the late eleventh century. Ovid’s similar linking of power and sexuality would have resonated with medieval readers, and
furthermore, the imitation of Ovid’s poems represented a convenient means of engaging with and resisting the discourse of reform.

Baudri was not the only poet of his era to write sexualized poetry within a religious context. For example, his slightly older contemporary, Marbod of Rennes, also wrote erotic poetry, although unlike Baudri, Marbod sometimes takes care to note that his erotically-themed poems should be understood as written under an assumed persona. Of course, it could be argued that attaching such a defensive disclaimer to a poem actually functions, on one level, to draw attention to the inappropriateness inherent in a religious figure’s authorship of such a poem and makes the reader question whether, within the context of the poetic fiction, the speaker’s persona truly is separate from Marbod’s regular persona as archdeacon-poet. At any rate, Marbod also wrote several erotic poems in the first person for which he makes no such claim, and these, like many of Baudri’s poems, feature Marbod’s inappropriate coercion of his inferiors. Moreover, as mentioned briefly in Chapter 3, Marbod later renounced these works, which implies that Marbod’s contemporaries did indeed view such verse as problematic. Marbod’s erotic poems are less subtle than Baudri’s, often lacking the ambiguity that allows Baudri to proclaim his innocence. At the same time, they show the same engagement with classical sources, including Ovid, and thus fit with the larger trend of increased Ovidianism in the late eleventh century.

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1 Marbod became chancellor of Angers in 1069, and subsequently schoolmaster and archdeacon; in 1096, Urban II promoted him to bishop of Rennes. See Léon Ernault, Marbode, évêque de Rennes, sa vie et ses œuvres (Rennes: Caillière, 1890) for a thorough biography of Marbod.


3 See above, p. 167.
For example, Marbod writes several poems to an unspecified *puella*, and he includes in his collection one poem written by a girl. It is not clear whether or not the same girl is the focus of all of Marbod’s poems, but several of the poems which directly follow the girl’s poem are entitled *rescriptum* (reply), implying that at least that series involves the same girl. It remains uncertain, however, whether Marbod or someone else (be it the girl herself or another poet) wrote the girl’s poem. These poems are particularly reminiscent of the *Amores* because the *puella*, in her poem, complains that Marbod has promised her gifts but has not delivered:

\[\begin{align*}
\text{Gaudia nimpharum, violas floresque rosarum,} \\
\text{Lilia candoris miri quoque poma saporis} \\
\text{Parque columbarum, quibus addita mater earum,} \\
\text{Vestes purpureas, quibus exornata Napeas} \\
\text{Vincere tam possim cultu quam transeo vultu,} \\
\text{Insuper argentum, gemmas promittis et aurum.} \\
\text{Omnia promittis, sed nulla tamen mihi mittis.} \\
\text{Si me diligeres et que promittis haberes,} \\
\text{Res precessissent et verba secuta fuissent.} \\
\text{Ergo vel es fictus nescisque cupidinis ictus} \\
\text{Vel verbis vanis es diues, rebus inanis.} \\
\text{Quod si multarum sis plenus diuiciarum,} \\
\text{Rusticus es, qui me tua, non te credit amare. (vv.1-13)}
\end{align*}\n
You promise the delights of the nymphs, violets and rose blossoms,

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4 These are the poems edited by Walther Bulst; as Bulst notes, though most of Marbod’s poems are available through *Patrologia Latina* (a critical edition of all his works still does not exist), several poems were omitted in Beaugendre’s 1708 edition and thus also in Bourassé’s 1854 *PL* edition (*PL* 171, col. 1647-1686 and 1717-1736), which follows Beaugendre’s edition. The poems in question do appear, however, in the 1524 Rennes edition of Marbod’s poetry. See Bulst, “Liebesbriefgedichte,” in *Liber Floridus*, 287-88.

5 Constant Mews, noting that no medieval manuscript survives as the basis for the Rennes 1524 edition, argues that the poems still seem to represent an anthology of poetry assembled by Marbod himself. Mews further argues that since the girl’s poem also appears in a different anthology sent to Marbod, that particular poem is likely not his own composition. For my purposes here, the poem’s authorship matters less than the fact that Marbod opted to include it in his own anthology along with replies to the poem written under his own persona. See Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard: Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France*, trans. Neville Chiavaroli and Constant Mews, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 94-95.


7 Marbod, “Puella ad amicum munera promittentem” (Girl to her boyfriend who promises gifts), in Bulst, “Liebesbriefgedichte,” in *Liber Floridus*, 290.
Lilies of remarkable whiteness, and delicious apples,
And a pair of doves, along with their mother,
Purple clothes, adorned with which
I would be able to conquer the Nymphs in dress as much as I surpass them in appearance,
In addition to silver, jewels, and gold.
You promise all these things, but you send none of them to me.
If you loved me and you had the things which you promise,
The things would have come first, and the words would have followed.
Therefore either you are false, or you do not know the blows of desire,
Or you are rich in empty words, but devoid of property.
But if you are abounding in many riches,
You are rustic, since you believe that I love your things, not you.

Marbod’s reply to the girl’s complaint dodges the question of gifts entirely, focusing instead on how the girl’s letter pleases him because it makes him feel loved:

A te missa michi gaudens, carissima, legi,
Namque tenetur ibi me placuisse tibi.
Si scirem verum quod ais, pulcherrima rerum,
Quam si rex fierem, letior inde forem.
Non facerem tanti thesauros Octauian i
Quam placuisse tibi, sicut habetur ibi.
Littera me vicit, que dulcem me tibi dicit,
Basia que recitat, cor michi sollicitat.
Felices tabule, felix grafius que manusque
Et felix dextra littera facta tua. (vv. 1-10)⁸

I read what you sent me, dearest, rejoicing,
For there it says that I am pleasing to you.
If I knew that what you are saying were true, most beautiful of things,
Then I would be happier than if I were made king.
I would not value the treasure of Octavian as much
As I value being pleasing to you, as is contained there.
The letter has conquered me, the letter which says I am sweet to you,
Which recites kisses, which stirs my heart.
Happy tablets, happy stylus and hand
And happy letter made with your right hand.

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Marbod’s reply showcases both his self-centeredness and his debt to elegy. Ovid’s poems, as we have seen, focus extensively on how to avoid giving gifts. For example, the following instructions appear in the *Ars*:

promittas facito, quid enim promittere laedit?
   pollitcis diues quilibet esse potest.
Spes tenet in tempus, semel est si credata, longum;
   illa quidem fallax, sed tamen apta dea est.
si dederis aliquid, poteris ratione relinquui:
   praeteritum tulerit perdiderique nihil.
At quod non dederis, semper uidere daturus:
   sic dominum sterilis saepe felflit ager.
sic, ne perdiderit, non cessat perdere lusor,
   Et reuocat cupidas alea saepe manum.
hoc opus, hic labor est, primo sine munere iungi:
   ne dederit gratis quae dedit, usque dabat.  (*Ars* 1.443-454)

See to it that you make promises, for what can it hurt to promise?
   Anyone can be rich in promises.
Hope endures for a long time, if she has been trusted once;
   Indeed, she is a deceitful, but nevertheless suitable goddess.
If you give anything, you can be relinquished reasonably:
   She will have won what is past and lost nothing.
But what you do not give, always seem about to give:
   A sterile field has often deceived its master in this way.
Thus, lest he lose, a gambler does not cease losing,
   And he often calls the dice back to his greedy hands.
This is the work, this is the labor, to be joined first without a gift:
   Lest she have given for free what she has given, she will continue to give.

Marbod’s empty promises thus recall the analogous insincerity of the elegiac male. Moreover, as discussed in relation to Baudri in Chapters 2 and 3, the speaker in Ovid’s *Ars* and *Amores* also instructs women not to continually ask for gifts, because it makes them undesirable, and to flatter their male admirers, because this is the most important way to win their affection. Thus when the *puella* ends her poem with the assertion that she loves Marbod for his personality, not his

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9 See p. 158 for more on gifts; for flattery, see pp. 79-82.
10 On gifts see *Amores* 1.10.1-12, 63-4; on flattery, see *Amores* 1.8.103-4.
gifts, the Ovidianism of the exchange renders such a claim suspect. Marbod uses Ovidian allusion to depict himself manipulating a woman by extorting love with the promise of gifts he has no intention of giving. He also writes a threatening poem to a boy which is reminiscent of some of Baudri’s poems discussed in Chapter 3:

Si quid in urbe colis quod ames, quod perdere nolis,  
Idque colis pure, non sit tibi curia curae.  
Omnes rumpe moras; damnum tibi crescit in horas:  
Hoc autem damnum, quia non reparabile, magnum.  
Postpones omne quod te facit esse Calonne.  
Perdes in hac villa plusquam lucraris in illa:  
Namque quid tanti, quanti puer aequus amanti?  
Qui nunc est aequus, fiat mora, fiet iniquus.  
Blanditiis siquidem tentatur pluribus idem;  
Et qui tentatur, metus est ne decipiatur.  
Ergo redi propere, si vis quod amas retinere.  
Desine castellum, si vis retinere c[a]tellum.\(^{11}\) (vv.1-12)\(^{12}\)

If you cherish anything in this city which you love, which you do not want to lose,  
And if you cherish it purely, do not let court be a concern to you.  
Break all delays; your loss increases with each passing hour:  
Moreover, this loss, because it is irreparable, is great.  
Postpone everything which is causing you to be at Chalonnes.  
You will lose more in this city than you are gaining in that one:  
For what is worth as much as a boy who is just to his lover?  
He who is just now, if he delays, will become unjust.  
Since indeed, the same boy is being tempted with many enticements,  
And when someone is tempted, there is fear lest he be deceived.  
Therefore return quickly, if you want to retain what you love.  
Abandon the castle if you want to keep your puppy.

Like Baudri, Marbod depicts himself using his position of power to manipulate a boy’s behavior. In this case, Marbod’s threat of taking away the boy’s puppy is, if we imagine a child’s priorities, much more immediate than Baudri’s threat of lowered rank and loss of friendship. The poem is

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\(^{11}\) The \(PL\) edition, which I have otherwise followed (see citation in next note) prints \textit{citellum}, but I follow Thomas Stehling in emending to \textit{catellum}, which makes more sense (\textit{citellus} is a sort of rodent; see entry in Charles Du Fresne Du Cange, \textit{Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis}, revised by Johann Christoph Adelung, Pierre Carpentier, Leopold Favre, and G. A. Louis Henschel [Nior: Favre, 1883-1887]). For the emendation see Thomas Stehling, tr., \textit{Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship} (New York: Garland, 1984), 30.

\(^{12}\) Marbod, “Ad amicum absentem” (To an absent friend), in \textit{PL} 171, col. 1717 C.
evidently meant to be humorous on one level; the puppy at the end is unexpected and somewhat absurd. But the poem engages with more serious concerns about power in much the same way we have seen in Baudri’s verse.

Baudri and Marbod represent only two of several similarly-occupied contemporaries writing sexualized classicizing verse in northern France in the late eleventh century, and though the scope of this dissertation is deliberately narrow, there remains much work to be done on this subject. I have hinted at the similarities between Baudri’s and Marbod’s poetic projects, but a further consideration of not just the points of contact between Baudri, Marbod, and the other Loire poets, but also of the differences in their approaches, would shed light on the various ways in which their body of verse engages with their contemporary realities. The interplay between power and sexuality in the dominant social discourses of the reform era and the contemporaneous revival in interest in Ovid’s work are not unrelated. Baudri’s poems use Ovidian allusion to problematize not only his own poetic persona, but the discourse of reform as a whole, and represent a direct engagement with the issues of Reform. A consideration of his contemporaries’ poems in a similar light will enrich our understanding not only of their works but also of a distinct literary phenomenon of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.
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