Social Change, Narrative Adaptation, and Homophobia:
Comparing Two Late-12th-Century Adaptations of *Ami and Amile* in Old French

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The legend of *Ami and Amile* enjoyed immense popularity throughout the Middle Ages, with adaptations and translations found in nearly every major Western European language between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries. This fact is virtually a cliché in existing scholarship on *Ami and Amile*. It is the opening remark of most articles and introductions to editions one can find. While it is true that this story was replicated and disseminated so much (which attests to the popularity of the work's subject matter), few scholars have slowed down to attempt a critical interpretation of how the story—through its near countless redactions—was rhetorically *used*. Especially as it pertains to different redactions of *Ami and Amile* within the same vernacular language—like Old French—the motivations and intentions behind redaction have not been investigated, except on the level of literary form or the technical process of translation/adaptation itself.[1] One reason for this may be that each version appears virtually equivalent. *Ami and Amile* is a story of perfect friendship between knights, a representation strewn with the tropes and expectations of older stories of ideal male friendship, both the medieval and the antique. No iteration of the story fundamentally alters this premise. Each revision or translation, however—as with the genesis of any distinct literary text—introduces a sea of subtler meanings and expressions. Individual details of the story may change, scenes might be deleted or inserted, individual verses might transform, and whole themes may be introduced. Each of these choices by a redactor or translator is the result of either conscious or unconscious beliefs. Especially in the rapidly developing intellectual and moralistic environment of twelfth-century Europe (to which the version of *Ami and Amile* I discuss in this thesis belong), those beliefs and choices constitute an agenda that informs and begets the

[1] See, for example, John Ford, *From* Poésie *to Poetry:* Remaniement *and Mediaeval Techniques of French-to-English Translation of Verse Romance*, PhD dissertation (University of Glasgow, 2000). One exception to this lack of work on the motivations and ideological intentions behind is Mathew Kuefler's paper "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France" discussed below, which inspired this thesis but itself only touches on *Ami and Amile* very briefly.

new version of the text. Consequently, any given work will deliberately express one thing and implicitly betray another. That is to say, any piece of literature is, despite itself, as complex as its creator(s) by virtue of its having originated from them.

I am concerned with two versions of the legend, both in Old French, and both belonging to the same historical period, dating to ca. 1200. These are the continental Old French *chanson de geste* called *Ami et Amile* (referred to as the OF) and the courtly romance *Ami e Amilun* in Anglo-Norman (or the AN). A detailed synopsis of the OF, with important variations of the AN in the form of notes, can be found as an appendix to this thesis. More briefly, Ami and Amile (named Amilun and Amis in the AN) are two identical men, knights in service of the same lord, who undergo two primary conflicts that roughly bisect the narrative: first, Ami must rescue Amile by assuming his identity and fighting a duel in his place, as well as committing bigamy by swearing to marry a maiden while he is still in Amile's guise. Ami is consequently stricken with leprosy. In the second half, Ami is cast out from his home and eventually enters the care of Amile. A heavenly messenger then explains how Ami can be healed if Amile kills his own sons and bathes Ami in their blood, which he does. The sons are then miraculously revived. The obvious themes involve sacrifice and selfless service, a mutual duty between intimate friends. This is of course not the only theme of the text, but it is the most basic and remarked upon.

The OF, as well as a later Middle English romance version (the ME), have received the most scholarship. There is comparatively very little discussing the AN and its themes, a deficiency I intend for this thesis to help address[2] I occasionally reference the *Vita Amici et Amelii*

[2] The few that do exist includes Micheline de Combarieu du Grès, "Une extrême amitié." in *Ami et Amile: Une chanson de geste de l'amitié*, edited by Peter F. Dembowski (Paris: Champion, 1987), 15–38, which is relatively outdated, and I believe misinterprets some of what the AN does with its subject. See also Susan Dannenbaum, "Insular Tradition in the Story of Amis and Amiloun," *Neophilologus* 67, no. 4 (1983), 611–22; Sarah Kay, "Seduction and Supression," *French Studies* 44, no. 2 (1990), 129–42; Daria Pertolongo, "Il compagnonnage nella leggenda di Ami et Amile: amicizia e amore nel Medioevo," *Medioevo romanzo* 18 (1993), 423–41.

carissimorum (*Life of the dear friends Amicus and Amelius*), a mid- or early-twelfth century "hagiographic"[3] Latin version of the text and the second-earliest version extant. It testifies to elements of the story present before the likely composition of the OF and AN, although whatever original poem the OF and AN are more directly based on is lost. The OF exists in one extant ms.: Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Français 860, dating to the thirteenth century. The AN exists in two mss.: London, British Library Royal 12. C. XII (L), dating to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 50 (K).[4] K is older than L: MacEdward Leach originally dated it to c. 1200, but it had been more recently placed in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.[5] K and L are virtually the same text with some variations, most of which have been enumerated by John Ford.[6] I cite Dembowski's edition the OF and Fukui's edition for the AN. I use *Ami and Amile* to refer to the overall legend rather than a single version. Also, note that the characters' names are inverted in the AN, in which Amilun fights the duel and contracts leprosy, saving Amis from the treacherous seneschal and winning him the hand of their lord's daughter. To assist with clarity when referring to the different versions of these characters, I include the nominative *-s* to differentiate the AN Amis from the OF Ami.

My analysis draws some strong influence from the work of literary historian Sarah Kay, especially her treatment of homosocial bonds in the *chansons de geste* and the romance, as well as

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[3] Its categorization as a quasi-hagiography applies to a whole strain of version of *Ami and Amile* based on their enhanced spiritual thematization and emphasis on the miraculous nature of the friends' relationship and burial. In this version, while they die together, they are not at first buried together; however, a miracle occurs in which their remains spontaneously join each other in the same tomb. See MacEdward Leach, intro. to *Amis and Amiloun* (London: Early English Text Society, 1937).

[4] There is another Anglo-Norman adaptation that Ford believes to be closely related to the Middle English. It is held in the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe, Germany and is given the abbreviation C. *C* comes from an older spelling of the name, *Carlsruhe*, and was in fact named before the Cambridge ms. hence the latter's being abbreviated as K. John Ford, intro. to *Anglo-Norman Amys e Amilioun: The Text of Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, MS. 345 (Olim Codex Durlac 38) in Parallel with London, British Library, MS Royal 12 C. XII* (Oxford: Medium Ævum Monographs XXVII, 2011), 11. When I reference the "AN" version, I am not including Karsruhe.

[5] Leach, intro. to *Amis and Amiloun*, ix; Hideka Fukui, intro. to *Amys e Amillyoun* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1990), 1.

[6] John Ford, intro. to *Amys e Amilioun*, 13–15.

her definitions and historical view of the two genres and their relationship to one another. In her 1995 book *The Chanson de Geste in the Age of Romance*, Kay observes that "Male friendship is a constant preoccupation of the *chanson de geste*."[7] The OF Ami and Amile are rightly among her prime examples of homosocial pairs in the *chansons de geste*. Their affectionate, non-blood relationships entail the "subordination of heterosexual love to male friendship," where women are treated either as threats to the coherence of male friendships or as resources to be exchanged, upon which male bonds can be concretized in political marriages.[8] However, women's agency is not, all told, erased in the *chansons*, creating a paradox that weakens "[the songs'] own apparent confidence in the capacity of male bonding to found a viable social order."[9] This contrasts with the genre of romance, whose plots of love and companionship—heterosexual and homosocial—result in "a new, masculine consensus," a "community" that paradoxically arises from an interest in individuals whose narratives are "exemplars of the same consensus."[10] The *chansons* foster "dominant-" and "counter-" narratives (the latter derived from women or masculine companions) that divide "the epic community."[11] While she discusses the OF at length, the AN does not figure in her argument despite its sure poignancy in the context of her project, as it is a romance adaptation of a *chanson de geste* that she already discusses.

While Kay confesses the difficulty of providing a strict definition of romance as a genre, she can more easily pin down the *chansons de geste*: the *chansons* share a verse structure—assonance or rhyme divided into *laisses*—and "a common content: they are representations of the conflictual character of French history" whose meaning is derived from both "expression and

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[7] Sarah Kay, *The Chanson de Geste in the Age of Romance: Political Fictions*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1995), 147.
[8] Ibid., 147–50.
[9] Ibid., 151–52.
[10] Ibid., 164–66.
[11] Ibid., 83.

content . . . The form of the *chansons de geste* is 'meaningful,' just as their content is 'formed' . . . by ideological structures."[12] In other words, the *chansons* recount visions of epic French history backed by ideology, and the verse forms and narrative structures are just as important to the story as the sequence of events it narrates. The OF fits this definition perfectly. The AN, for its part in the romance category, fits comfortably as at least a *nominal* romance under Kay's definition. It employs the standard verse form of the genre—octosyllabic couplets—and conforms in some notable ways to the ideological tendencies that Kay sees in the romance genre. The crux of her book is that both of these genres constitute "political fictions," as "their narratives are bounded by assumptions about the nature of the personal and the social, the licit and the illicit, the ethical and the unethical, the representable and the unrepresentable."[13] As I am concerned with the ways the medieval Church was exercising (or trying to exercise) an ever-growing influence on individual behavior in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—particularly as it pertains to medieval anxieties around sodomy—I sharply attune my analysis towards what is textually deemed "licit and illicit," "representable and unrepresentable."

Discussions of queer medieval history almost require that the author define their terms. "Homosexuality" as we understand it in our modern culture, as a facet of one's identity, is not definitionally applicable to anything medieval. This is an oft-cited observation (owed primarily to Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality*), and I prefer the solution to this issue employed by scholars like Richard Zeikowitz: retooling the denotations of terms like *homosexual*, *homoerotic*, and *same-sex sexuality* towards the acts and patterns of behavior they pertain to rather than any sense of identity or essential being—to "the 'sin' not the 'sinner.' "[14] I use the term *heterosexual* in this

[12] Ibid., 7–8.
[13] Ibid., 5
[14] Richard E. Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry: Discourses of Male Same-Sex Desire in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 8.

same way. I use the term *sodomy* when I wish to reference the polemic beliefs of the medieval authors who invented and used the word. While *sodomy* often did not refer to homoeroticism exclusively, it tended to include homoeroticism among its referents and, for some theologians by the end of the twelfth century, that was the core meaning of the word.[15] I also employ the term *homosocial* to describe the type of normative bond represented by Ami and Amile/Amilun and Amis. It is important to note that, while *homosocial* is definitionally distinct from *homoerotic*, it does not exclude erotic possibilities.[16]

John Boswell, Mark Jordan, William Burgwinkle, and others have described how the twelfth century saw a proliferation of anti-homoerotic polemics, identifying male-male sexual bonds with the sin of sodomy. Before this development, male homosocial bonds in literature and personal writings were characterized by profound emotional language and imagery that some today might call erotic, some of which seems to stem from classical motifs (or simply resembles them) while others might represent genuine homoerotic relationships.[17] However, these forms of expression seem to die off with the advent of sodomy as a popular object of reproach. These writings followed the church reforms of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries and propelled into attempts at reforming the behavior of lay people as well. Burgwinkle writes that homoeroticism "become more presentable . . . more fashionable in 1120 and later" as discursive objects in "homophobic discourse," which was "part of a larger move to gain or reassert power over the

[15] Hilary Rhodes, "Richard the Lionheart, Contested Queerness, and Crusading Memory," *Open Library of Humanities* 1, no. 1 (2023), 6–7.
[16] While this fact should not require a citation, I refer the reader to Richard Zeikowitz's approach to the matter. Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, ch. 1. Furthermore, it may be noted that the word *social* does not (or should not) exclude romantic or erotic forms of socialization.
[17] John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1980), ch. 9; Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, ch. 1.

individual within textual communities, as well as in the secular realm" in that century—the Church was at that time trying to expand and deepen its influence in the secular realm.[18]

Mathew Kuefler, reading courtly French literature of the late twelfth century, sees the efflorescent effect of a "suspicion of sodomy" on representations of friendship within that secular literature. According to him, the previously normative passionate expressions of intimacy in chivalric culture fell under suspicion for being too erotically suggestive, and religious writers and redactors of courtly texts shied away from depictions that could appear so suggestive.[19] Vocal criticism of sodomy also appears in French secular works, most notably in the *Roman d'Eneas*.[20] This "suspicion of sodomy" can also be seen briefly in the fabliaux of the thirteenth century and famously in the suppression of the Templars.[21] That last example demonstrates perhaps the most explicit problematization of male-male physical intimacy, as the accusations levied against the Templars depicted a series of kisses in a ritual reminiscent of vassalic homage.[22] The overall picture is that, from the middle of the twelfth century or so, homosexual relations—identified as "sodomy"—became an increasingly serious concern in both the Church and secular realms, and that this appears to have influenced literary representations of male homosocial bonds, "throwing

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[18] William Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050–1230* (Cambridge: Univ. of Cambridge, 2004), 21–32.
[19] Mathew Kuefler, "Male Friendship and the Suspicion of Sodomy in Twelfth-Century France," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. by Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2006), 179–82.
[20] Ibid., 184–86.
[21] The fabliau is *Le sot chevalier*, which involves a "stupid" knight who is mistaken for a sodomite by a group of knights visiting his castle. The ease with which these characters assume he is a sodomite hints at a cultural anxiety around the issue. It is a comic tale that appears to mock this anxiety as excessive, which implies the fabliau's author, Gautier le Leu, believed such fears were both widespread enough to lampoon and silly enough to base humor on. Gautier Le Leu, "Le sot chevalier," ed. by Corinne Pierreville and Gauthier Grüber (Published online by the ENS of Lyon in the Base de français medieval, Projet Fabliaux, 2023).
[22] Anne Gilmour-Bryson, "Sodomy and the Knights Templar," Journal of the History of Sexuality 7, no. 2 (1996): 165; two of the original Inquisition records of 1307 describing the accusations, one in Latin and one in Middle French, can be found in Sean L. Field, "Torture and Confession in the Templar Interrogations at Caen, 28-29 October 1307," Speculum 91, no. 2 (2016): 319–327.

suspicion on male friendships as breeding-grounds for sodomitical behavior," as Kuefler puts it.[23] Among other causes, Kufler also suggests a political use for this suspicion, "to weaken the bonds of male solidarity encouraged by military culture in favor of ties of obedience to church and state, a movement well recognized by historians and often called the 'taming' of the nobility."[24]

By reading the OF and the AN together, I have found that the AN conforms with these "reformist" tendencies. Kay appears ever more justified in saying that "epic poems provide a clue to the political unconscious of romance: many of the political conflicts and contradictions exposed by the *chansons de geste* are repressed, disguised, or otherwise 'mystified' by romance texts. . . . [Romances] practise a politics of evasion."[25] The AN belongs perhaps to the same period as *Enéas*, as well as Marie de France's *Lanval*, two texts which introduce "homophobic" discourse into the courtly context—if not contemporary with them, it came not long after. While those texts repress homoeroticism via loud condemnation—a condemnation partially hinged off of insinuating the emasculation of the man accused of this sin—the AN *Amis e Amilun* is symptomatic of the discursive trope, common by the end of the twelfth century, that sodomy is so vile as to be unmentionable. While this often functioned as more of a rhetorical gesture hyperbolically expressing the extent of sodomy's repugnance, it was also a very real sentiment in more public contexts.[26] Even in Alain de Lille's *De planctu naturae* (*The Plaint of Nature*), perhaps the most glaring example of this "unspeakability" as trope, the eponymous Nature must apologize for her unavoidable use of vulgar language in treating the subject.[27] The term *sodomy* itself is an infamous testament to this, as the

[23] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 179.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Kay, "Political Fictions," 6.
[26] Larry Scanlon, "Unspeakable Pleasures: Alain de Lille, Sexual Regulation and the Priesthood of Genius." *The Romanic Review* 86, no. 2 (1995), 218–22, 227–30.
[27] Alain de Lille, *De planctu naturae*, translated by David Rollo in *Medieval Writings on Sex between Men Peter Damian's The Book of Gomorrah and Alain de Lille's The Plaint of Nature* (Boston: Brill, 2022), 133.

act is euphemistically named after something associated with it, rather than after what it literally signifies.[28]

The AN falls onto the side of sodomy's being "unrepresentable." By avoiding elements of the OF that might be deemed too suggestive of the sodomitical (primarily seen through forms of physical, nigh erotic, intimacy), it betrays a fear not only of the sin itself but of anything that resembles or seems to point toward it. Concurrently, the AN diffuses thematic concentration away from the theme of "horizontal" homosociality (as opposed to "vertical" lord-vassal sociality) by removing elements of the story that predate it (like the vilification of female characters) and introducing a more overt promotion of vassalic and familial bonds. Both gestures are consistent with the Church's ideological projects in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to stigmatize homoeroticism and enforce a still-developing model of heteronormativity. The OF, on the other hand (perhaps in part due to its being a *chanson de geste*, a genre of an older time) preserves more traditional sensibilities on each of these fronts. Part 1 of this thesis explores the theme of physical intimacy. It bears an affinity for the OF in this regard, since that text cedes the most ground to an idolization of homosocial embraces and kisses. Part 2, then, bears an affinity for the AN, as it explores that text's relative decentering of male friendship as a function of its participation in the construction of heteronormativity. If Part 1 is about traditional, passionate forms of the homosocial in the OF, Part 2 is the inverse: the advent of prescriptive heteronormativity as displayed by the AN. I conclude by contemplating the significance of these texts' contemporaneous existence in spite of their competing visions.

1. KISS AND REJOICE: THE (DE)LEGITIMIZATION OF PHYSICAL INTIMACY

> Qui les veïst baisier et conjoïr,
> Dex ne fist home cui pitiés n'en preïst. (*Ami et Amile* ll. 185–56)

[28] Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1998), 7.

> [If one were to see them kiss and rejoice, God made no man who would not be moved by it.]

While not common knowledge per-se, the normativity of physical signs of affection between men is apparent in French medieval literature of the twelfth century. The word "love," *aimer*/*amer* or *amour*/*amur*, is also applied quite broadly: it not only refers to romantic love but any kind of strong emotional bond; it can mark the erotic, the romantic, the "heterosexual," just as much as it can mark a great friendship. The English word *friendship* is, in such cases, inadequate—one must borrow and apply to it the far stronger connotations found in the Old French *amistié* (friendship), *compaingnie*/*compaignage* (companionship), or *amour* (love, all words equally applicable to erotic, romantic sentiments).[29] The homosocial bond exemplified in *Ami and Amile* is as much about *amour* as it is about loyalty, acts of service, and political solidarity. This immense semantic overlap between the platonic and the erotic suggests that those two terms are not quite appropriate to distinguish the kinds of *amour* seen between Lancelot and Guinevere from the *amour* felt between Lancelot and Galehout, that between Amis and Florie from that between Amis and Amilun.[30] In a period subject to a growing "homosexual panic" of sorts, it would be surprising if this bleeding of separately gendered sentiments were not suspected by some of harboring something "sodomitical" between men.[31] Indeed, this is Kuefler's argument, and other work examining male friendships in literature has uncovered the "eroticism" (if one accepts to name it that) often

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[29] There is also, of course, the ambiguity of *ami*, the word for both "friend" and "lover."

[30] The medieval understanding of love distinguished the specific form connoted by the term based on context; given the dominance of heterosexual, gender-based sexual mores, it seems apparent that the core of that context was the perceived genders of the people involved. This might not be the case for the eleventh century or even in the twelfth among the common populace, but the more learned courts and clerically produced texts had, by the end of the twelfth century, produced an imperious account of heterosexuality's objectivity on the basis that any other relationship is "unnatural" because it would not produce offspring. This is the core rationale of Alain de Lille's *De plactu naturae*. As I note below, Alain's text includes an example of male-male love being expressed in passionate terms, but the lack of overt sexuality allows it to pass because the terms of love, by virtue of their being between men, cannot (in his mind) mean anything sexual. Scanlon, "Unspeakable Pleasures," 218, 227–29.

[31] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 181n6.

found therein.[32] Seen together, the OF and AN attest to a developing discomfort with men kissing one another so affectionately (paired with other expressions of physical intimacy), beyond the formality of legal or liturgical ritual, and so often.

The AN is less interested than the OF in confirming Amis and Amilun's affections via physical intimacy. This is at the expense of the kind of constant pathos achieved in the OF, which never fails to display the companions' mutual love. The importance of this display is apparent simply from its prevalence in the OF, but it also seems to harken back to the sentimental prescription for friendship outlined by the early-twelfth-century English theologian St. Aelred of Rievaulx, a student of the more famous St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and author of a notable Christian revamp of Cicero's *De amicitia*. Aelred's text, *De spirituali amicitia* (*On Spiritual Friendship*), transfers much of Cicero's classical sentiments into medieval words with a spiritual flair that complements his more unique monastic beliefs. According to Aelred, the only true friendship is a spiritual one, it can only exist between good, virtuous people, and these people must be similar in "life, morals, and pursuits."[33] Friendship also entails love, "the rendering of services with benevolence," and "affection, an inward pleasure that manifests itself exteriorly."[34] The very premise of *Ami and Amile* exploits this thinking by literalizing the idea that friendship requires similarities between friends, as Ami and Amile are identical in every way (as much in appearance as in inner virtue, as the events of the narrative make clear). The OF, as well as the *Vita* before it, appears to inherit something of Aelred's philosophy more than the AN, not only including weightier religious

[32] See, for example, Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden, NY: Brill, 1994); and Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*; Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*.
[33] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship,* trans. by Mary Eugenia Laker (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1977), I.46, qtd. in Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 31. See Zeikowitz pp. 27–35 for a more detailed description of Aelred and his sources on friendship.
[34] Aelred, *Spiritual Friendship*, III.51, qtd. in Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 32.

elements but—and excuse the repetition—by exalting physical intimacy as the proof and exercise of a sublime love.

Ami and Amile/Amilun and Amis are also knights, and their texts were aimed at a knightly and courtly audience, meaning their friendship also exists in the context of that cultural stratum. The specific kind of chivalric friendship represented in virtually every version of *Ami and Amile* is that of sworn *compaignie* or sworn brotherhood. This was a formal bond, "based on the reciprocal oath of knights, upon the faith of their body and their honour, to aid and succour one another in their every enterprise"; it was also a "personal bond" whose existence in most instances was owed to the knights' "mutual love."[35] This bond respects the same entreaty of Aelred that prescribes "the rendering of services" without forgetting that "the foundation and source of friendship is love."[36] The friendship in *Ami and Amile* is certainly such a formal bond. In the OF, when the two first meet, they "s'entr'afient compaingnie nouvelle" [swear between each other to a new companionship] (l. 200). In the introduction to the AN, they become "freres . . . par serement" [brothers by oath] (18). They are also bound by love. Amis of the AN, when approached by another who wishes to befriend him, declares that he can lover none other than Amilun : "Son quer me est abandoné, / E jeo ly aym e ameray" [His heart is surrendered to me, / And I love (now) and will love him] (134–35). Note that while this sounds much to the modern ear like a romantic or even erotic confession of love, it is not (as I note above) the case that "love," even love of the heart, implied "romantic" love. The heart is not here a site of erotic desire and would not be likely to provoke that assumption from a medieval reader. As Kuefler notes, such poetic expressions of love

[35] Maurice Keen, "Brotherhood-in-Arms," chap. 3 in *Nobles, Knights and Men-at-Arms in the Middle Ages* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2003), 43–44; Savannah Pine, " '*Comme Nostre Frere*': Knightly Ritual Brotherhood Reconsidered," *Cultural and Social History* 19, no. 3 (2022), 228–9.
[36] Aelred, *Spiritual Friendship*, III.51, III.2, qtd. in Zeikowitz, *Homoeroticism and Chivalry*, 32, 31.

survive the sodomitical suspicions developing in this period (perhaps because they belonged to a separate mental/psychological category?), being found even in the writings of Alain de Lille.[37]

The OF does not explain Ami's and Amile's love in words; instead, it outdoes the potential of words by *showing* their affections in the fashion of Aelred's model. Ami and Amile, newly dubbed as knights, depart from their respective homes in search of each other. It takes seven years for them to find one another. The *laisses* that precede their meeting generate a mounting excitement: they nearly pass by each other without meeting, but a kind pilgrim, and then a shepherd, point them towards each other. Finally, Ami sees Amile resting in a flowery meadow, and they at last unite:

> Le cheval broche [il] des esperons doréz,
> Isnellement est celle part aléz,
> Et cil le vit qui l'ot ja avisé.
> Vers lui se torne quant il l'ot ravisé,
> Par tel vertu se sont entr'acolé,
> Tant fort se baisent et estraingnent soef,
> A poi ne sont estaint et definé;
> Lor estrier rompent si sont cheü el pré.
> . . . . . .
> Qui les veïst baisier et conjoïr,
> Dex ne fist home cui pitiés n'en preïst. (175–86)

> [He pricked the horse with his golden spurs, quickly went to that place (where Amile sat), and he (Amile) sees him (Ami) who already spotted him. (Amile) turns toward him when he spotted him in turn. With great force they embraced each other, (they) passionately kiss and squeeze each other softly, (so powerfully they) nearly died; their stirrups break and (they) fell in the field. . . . If one were to see them kiss and rejoice, God made no man who would not be moved by it.]

[37] M. J. Ailes, "The Medieval Male Couple and the Language of Homosociality," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1999), 215–16; Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 183, 200–201.

Without even dismounting, the two hurl towards each other and embrace "par tel vertu," with great intensity, kissing and hugging "soef," pleasantly. The poet's approval of these manifestations is made clear in line 186: "God made no man who would not be moved by this." Line 181 elevates the intensity of the moment's affection, hyperbolically suggesting that they nearly squeeze each other to death. The poet also highlights their kissing, which not only receives the "tant fort" intensifier but is repeated in line 185, along with the poet's empathetic admiration. What comes out in these lines is an intense, almost hyperbolic expression of affection, and its primary mode of communication is passionate physical intimacy. Its emphatic energy sets the tone for the men's relationship, an expectation the text follows through with.

Kissing can entail several things in medieval texts, and it is not an essentially erotic gesture. Could kissing like in the above scene, (whose dramatic display of intimacy is partially repeated throughout the text) incite the "suspicion of sodomy"? Kissing was of course a feature of heterosexual romance in the Middle Ages much like it is today. Since, however, we are not dealing with romantic love, that expression of romance is not here applicable (though it is a potential comparison to be formed in the reader's mind). In his treatise on friendship, Aelred builds off of the liturgical kiss of peace of the Catholic mass in his exegesis of the kiss as a path to God "by way of friendship."[38] For him, the meaning of the kiss is very spiritual: since the breath one inhales and exhales is "given the name of breath[/spirit] (*spiritus*)" (II.22), a kiss entails the intermingling of one's spirit with another's. However, the "kiss of the flesh"—the physical act before any exchange of spirits can be had—can be abused and is only legitimate in certain contexts: "The kiss of the flesh is to be neither offered nor received, except for definite and honorable reasons—for example, as a sign of reconciliation, in place of words, when two people who had been mutual enemies

[38] Nicola James Perella, *The Kiss Sacred and Profane: An Interpretive History of Kiss Symbolism and Related Religio-Erotic Themes* (Los Angeles: U. of California Press, 1969), 58–59.

become friends . . . or as a sign of affection, such as is permitted to happen between a husband and wife, or such as is offered and accepted by friends who have long been apart" (II.22). The reunion of friends certainly describes the above passage from the OF. As seen below, however, the appropriate contexts in which Ami and Amile may kiss are widened by the OF's depiction, although it remains an expression of pure affection, which Aelred endorses (II.27).

The chivalric world has its own claim to the kiss as a sign of affection. It also a sign of formal agreement, seen in the sealing of an oath or peaceful contract as well as in the confirmation of a vassalic homage.[39] But the above passage, as well as the *laisse* that precedes it, does its own work to confirm the kiss as a feature of chivalry by surrounding the meeting with strong masculine imagery. M. J. Ailes notes that line 182 ("Lor estrier rompent si sont cheü el pré" [their stirrups break and (they) fell upon the field]) "uses a formula of the type normally used in battle scenes. Its application here as the friends meet for the first time may seem inappropriate, even parodic."[40] Its presence is not actually "parodic" or "inappropriate" at all, as it would naturally follow line 180–81s' expressive reference to mortality ("Tant fort se baisent et estraingnent soef, A poi ne sont estaint et definé" [(they) passionately kiss and squeeze each other softly, (so powerfully they) nearly died]). Lines 177–178, in which Amile sees his friend and turns to meet his advance, might do the same by evoking moments of battle in other songs when one warrior turns his horse to meet the charge of another. The allusion to battle scenes itself plays on the fact that both are mounted and meet in a field. But of course, this is an amicable meeting—they charge each other in order to embrace, not to strike, the field is full of flowers rather than blood and bodies, and they nearly "die" as a result of their affection, an intensity of emotion that matches the intense mortal rivalries

[39] Kiril Petkov, *The Kiss of Peace: Ritual, Self, and Society in the High and Late Medieval West* (Brill, 2003), 38–43; Marc Bloch, "Vassal Homage." Chap. 11 in *Feudal Society*, vol. 1, trans. by L. A. Manyon (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1968), 145–46.
[40] Ailes, Medieval Male Couple, 222.

seen in other *chansons*. This use of formula and "battle" imagery build on the threads of knighthood sewn into immediately preceding lines. This includes references to the "bonnes armes" [fine arms] (173) of Amile, the "esperons doréz" [golden spurs] (175) of Ami, and line 182 is careful to mention their stirrups. These are all among the trappings of knighthood, spurs especially, and their fine qualities (being "bonnes" and "doréz") are clearly meant to reflect the fine moral and chivalric qualities of the men who wear them. This imagery supports the allusions to battle scenes discussed above.

This all frames the moment of union and therefore constructs an expectation of that union's meaning. Lined up with the trappings of chivalry, both its tools (mount and *accoutrements*) and its behavior (battle and bonding), their intense hugging, kissing, and rejoicing are implicitly included among those trappings. Their belonging in the scene is proven by the narration's vocal approval (the acts are praised much like the quality of their arms), which is also devoid of any indication that the affection is unexpected. What is more is how the scene seems to borrow from the logic of the legal and feudal oath-sealing kiss. The scene concludes with Ami and Amile affirming "compaingnie nouvelle" [a new companionship] (200), and their bond is strongly established from the opening lines of the poem. Therefore, their union here sees both the swearing of a literal oath and the confirmation of a foreshadowed bond; as such, their kissing exploits the custom of the oath-sealing kiss. This sublimates the kiss into a passionate expression of a bond that is both emotional and "official," both chivalric and masculine. It is notable that this virility is likely a big reason that the OF's creators were not themselves suspicious of what Ami's and Amile's intimacy could imply. It has been demonstrated that the "suspicion of sodomy" clashed with traditional masculinity, and

that just as sodomy feminizes a man, a man who is unquestionably masculine cannot be so easily deemed a sodomite.[41]

In its own right, then, the OF does not intend for this intimacy to appear illicit. The same cannot be said for the AN, which appears far more conservative on the matter, far more restrictive about what is "representable." Not only is the great frequency of kissing and hugging seen in the OF absent in the AN, but the two instances that do occur have highly specific contexts. These showcase the conservative sentiment of Aelred's careful restrictions on when kissing is licit, to which the AN adds another apparent sense of utility.

I have not yet answered the question of whether such kissing had the potential to appear excessively erotic to a medieval moralist. Aelred's own reservations begin to answer this question, as he establishes that there is a limit to licit kisses. He also acknowledges a potential for immoral excess: "But just as many people abuse water, fire, iron, food, and air, which are naturally good, and convert them into a means of protecting their own cruelty and lust, so the base and perverse strive, after a fashion, to season their own disgraceful acts even with the kiss of the flesh, a good which natural law instituted as a sign of the good things I just mentioned."[42] Larry Scanlon in the late 1990's decried the idea that "medieval culture was disinterested in sex," a belief that mistakenly generalized the prescriptive nature of medieval spirituality.[43] In actuality, the twelfth century was the very period during which the "modern interest in sexuality" find its roots, a "barely

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[41] "This suspicion was also associated with the performance of male gender identity among the military aristocracy to the extent that to be a sodomite was to be no longer a man, linking the suspicion of sodomy with men's misogynistic fears of effeminacy." Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 181–82, 196; Ruth Mazo Karras, "Knighthood, Compulsory Heterosexuality, and Sodomy," in *The Boswell Thesis*, 274; Rhodes, "Richard the Lionheart," 3–9; Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*, 77–82. Rhodes and Burgwinkle narrow in on Richard the Lionheart's fluid sexuality and apparent accusations of homoeroticism, which brings out 1) that Richard, as a famously successful and passionate warrior, could not logically be decried an effeminate, and 2) that this posed an awkward problem for moralists, who had a more difficult time condemning men like Richard when one of their strongest weapons became so disarmed.
[42] Aelred of Rievaulx, *Aelred of Rievaulx's Spiritual Friendship,* trans. by Mark F. Williams (Scranton: U. of Scranton Press, 1997), II.25.
[43] Scanlon, "Unspeakable Pleasures," 215–17.

acknowledged continuity" that Scanlon's paper tries to uncover through a contemplation of Alain de Lille's writings and his figuration of the allegorical figure Genus.[44] The genesis of homophobia is a facet of this continuity.[45] Kuefler also sees the kind of passionate homosocial physicality the OF replicates (which is a very old tradition) as losing its "innocence" in the twelfth century in the minds of many moralists: "The erotic was no longer so 'innocent.' The praise of male friendship continued, but only when it insisted on its spiritual and not carnal nature."[46] Burgwinkle sees, this too, and adds that even the more austere (but still very affectionate) model of Aelred's treatise disappears in the thirteenth century in preference for an even more restrictive, "bridled, chaste, non-affective" model based on monastic communal bonds.[47] Megan McLaughlin also builds off of Kuefler by identifying that even as early as the eleventh century, some sources indicate that "Anxiety about the sexual implications of physical contact among men had apparently already begun to emerge."[48] It does appear, then, that among a growing contingent of clerical moral thought, same-sex physical contact was falling under suspicion of erotic implication and, consequently, were censured or censored.

The AN seems to fall on the side of censorship. The first of the AN's two moments of homosocial physical intimacy occurs within the first few hundred lines of the poem. Amilun must leave to inherit his father's land after his death and approaches Amis to say goodbye. Just before they part, we hear,

> Atant se sunt entrebeysés,
> Plurent e crient de pité.
> Suz cel n'ad home que la fust

[44] Ibid., 215–16.
[45] Ibid., 217. While I cite Scanlon's particular assertion of this fact, it is consistently observable in historical work from Boswell to Burgwinkle to medieval queer history work from the past few years.
[46] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 183.
[47] Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*, 38.
[48] Megan McLaughlin, "The Bishop in the Bedroom: Witnessing Episcopal Sexuality in an Age of Reform," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19, no. 1 (2010), 30.

> Qe dolur de la pité n'en eust.
> Paumez sunt chaeuz a terre;
> N'est home qi me vousist crere
> Si jeo deisse la moyté
> Del doel q'entre eus ount demené. (103–110)

> [Thereupon they kissed one another, cried and weeped sorrowfully. There is no man under heaven who would not (seeing this) feel painful sorrow. Having fainted, they fell to the ground; No man would believe me were I to describe half of the pain that remained between them.]

Note that in this version, the two have grown up together in the same court, so it seems that this is the first time they have ever significantly been apart. This brings the poet to lay a great emotional emphasis on this parting, unique in that no other scene of parting is given so much (or any) fanfare. Along with the expression of their pain inviting pity, which seems reminiscent of OF ll. 185–86, they kiss, weep, and faint. The similarities to the first *meeting* in the OF are apparent: they kiss, cry, fall to the ground together, and some similar language is used. But here, the emotions are justified not by the joy of union, but by the unprecedented pain of this first separation. The kiss therefore has the utility of confirming the friends' affections in the face of permanent separation; it is not a casual but exceptional and symbolically functional kiss.

The other instance of physicality in the AN comes roughly one thousand lines later, during the pair's final reunion. In the OF, this reunion involves Amile chasing after the cart on which the leprous Ami is being carried away, suspicious that the leper might be his friend because of the identical goblets they both have; when this is confirmed, Amile rejoices and kissing him. In the AN, the goblets still serve as a token of recognition, but Amilun (here the prosperous count) assumes that Amis (here the leper, unrecognizable) has stolen the cup. Enraged, he beats him viciously. Upon hearing that the leper is in fact his friend, Amilun displays severe guilt: he falls,

beats the ground, and curses his existence. In the spirit of correcting (adrescer) his "sin" (pecché) he immediately moves to care for his leprous friend:

> Ami s'est tot adrescé,
> Plus de cent foiz li ad beisé,
> Tot ensi com ert de tay levé.
> Entre ses braz li ad apporté,
> En sa chambre li ad couché.
> Bainer li fist e seigner,
> Con son corps li fist garder,
> Servir le fist tot a talent
> De viande e de boivre ensement. (ll. 1047–55)

> [Ami quickly corrected himself, kissed him (Amilun) more than a hundred times, all covered in mud though he (Amilun) was. He carried him in his arms, laid him down in his own bed chamber. (He) had him bathed and bled (as in bloodletting), watched/guarded him personally, delighted in serving him with meat and drink as well.]

Again we see physical affection in an exceptional context. Amilun is attempting to redress the horrible beating he has unwittingly given to his dear friend, and the physicality is accompanied by acts of service and Christian charity. The kisses are first among a list of exceptional favors, including a sumptuous service of food for the leprous friend who was begging for bread immediately before. So again, we have a moment of exception: the emotion is uniquely high as well as unique in nature (grief for a "sin"), and the utility of the kiss is as the first sign of affection and charity with which Amilun hopes to redress his "sin."

In the OF, kissing also has its appropriate context, but it is just as liberal with what contexts are adequate as the AN is conservative. All but two of the thirteen instances of homosocial kissing belong to moments of (re)union or of parting. This establishes a loose expectation for when and why Ami and Amile may kiss, but this is not a hard rule, as two other instances demonstrate. The first is seen with their reunion after the duel against Hardré. Ami has fought the duel in Amile's place, pretending to be him, and Amile has meanwhile assumed Ami's lordly and marital duties.

Here they reunite following the duel and each shares the news of what has happened in the other's absence. The scene resembles their original meeting, recalling that moment's themes: the two sit in a "pré" (field) and the text repeats verbatim the expression from lines 185–86. Ami then informs Amile of his success. Hearing this, Amile "mout joians en devint, / Lors s'entrecorrent baisier et conjoïr" [(Amile) was overjoyed, then they came together to kiss and rejoice] (1948–49). Amile then shares that he was not seduced by Ami's wife, keeping his word, and jokes that he is surprised Ami can stand her the company. Ami then laughs and replicates the previous physical exchange: "Ami l'entent, s'en a gieté un ris, / Lors se recorrent baisier et conjoïr" [Ami hears him, threw out a laugh, then they came again together to kiss and rejoice] (1955–56). The repetitiveness here serves to underscore the reciprocity of their friendship; they are informing each other of their mutually upheld fidelity (victory in combat/refrainment from adultery) and the same joyful reaction to the news occurs for both pieces of news. This therefore recalls the symbolic oath-sealing of their first meeting. With each confirmation that one has not betrayed the other, they feel compelled to (symbolically) re-seal their oath of companionship. Just as with that first meeting, though, this oath-sealing is not of primary but of secondary importance. More immediate is the emotional element. Amile "was overjoyed"; Ami "threw out a laugh." *Then* they kiss. The significance of their oath-keeping is first and foremost proof of their love, and so is the kiss.[49] This is all repeated near the end of the OF, when Amile has healed Ami from his leprosy by washing him in the blood of his own children. Seeing his friend healed, Amile embraces and kissing him, thanking God for the miracle (3089–90). Ami's healing is like a revival, a rebirth symbolized by the baptismal-font-like

[49] Ailes rather shallowly describes this and all of the other instances of kissing (which are all similar in language), writing, "The men customarily greet each other with a hug and a kiss," a deflated description of these passages that does not hold up to a close reading. The kiss echoes its "customary" forms, but its occurrence between Ami and Amile are extremely affective in quality. Ailes, "Medieval Male Couple," 222. Kissing is seen also between husband and wife and parent and child, examples which both emphasize the affectivity of the kiss and show that it is, of course, not a sign unique to the homosocial bond.

wash basin in which Amile washes him. The healing itself is a gesture that upholds their mutual expectations of devoted service.[50] Therefore, the kissing is both a reunion and reaffirmation, repeating their first meeting a well as their post-duel reunion.

The healing scene itself (and this is a big one) expands on the OF's care for physical intimacy. At the same time, it demonstrates what is apparently the most motivated deviation of the AN to downplay erotic potential. The OF has Amile washing Ami himself in a slow and deliberate scene meant to dwell on the tenderness of Amile's devotion. The washing is isolated in its own *laisse* and recounted in laborious detail. After slaying his sons and collecting their blood in a dish, Amile has Ami set inside of a large tub. Then, *laisse* 158 sings,

> Dou rouge sanc li a froté le front,
> Les iex, la bouche, les membres qu'el cors sont,
> Jambes et ventre et le cors contremont,
> Piés, cuisses, mains, les espaules amont.
> Dou sanc partout le touche. (3063–67)

> [With the red blood he scrubbed his forehead, his eyes, his mouth, the limbs that are on the body (i.e., his arms), legs and stomach and up on his chest, feet, thighs, hands, (and) high on his shoulders. With the blood (he) touches him everywhere.]

The next *laisse* also adds, "Leve dou sanc et la bouche et le vis," [Washes with the blood both his mouth and his face] (3070), before Amile witnesses the instant cure this brings. The careful attention to clarifying how Ami is washed *everywhere*, enumerated through repetitive syntax and an exhaustive list of every part of the body (except the groin) not only shows that he is naked but has a slowing effect on the narrative pace, even for so short a passage. Moreover, the action is warm and tender, seemingly forgetful of the macabre nature of the scenario, concentrating instead on this

[50] William Calin discusses the reciprocity of their sacrifice in the ME version, remarks which largely apply to the OF as well. Calin, *The French Tradition and the Literature of Medieval England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 487–88.

act of amity. Far from ironic, this is in fact the point of the scene: Amile's sacrifice is an otherwise abhorrent instance of infanticide, yet the goal of healing his friend is so virtuous that the poem can leave the imagery of sacrifice for the imagery of love. Finally, given the OF's consistently acute care for demonstrating the emotional component of the homosocial bond (often via the motif of physical intimacy) the scene's slow enumeration of where Amile washes his friend must be read not only as a way to build suspense before the effects of the miraculous healing are revealed—which it indeed accomplishes—but as the text's final performance of that revered male intimacy (which concludes with Amile's kiss just after, discussed above). These preoccupations apparently were enough for the OF's author(s) to not be disturbed by the proximity to erotic imagery. Its sole concession to formal modesty is to avoid mentioning Ami's genitalia.

The same scene as it appears in the AN is extraordinarily curt, reduced to two simple verses. In the available editions of the original text, these read, "E le sanc de eux ad quillé / E Amillioun dedeinz ad envolupé" [And (he) gathered the blood of both (of his sons) / And enveloped Amillioun therein] (1096–97) Compared to the OF, this is extraordinarily plain. All sentimentality of the action is stripped away in favor of a simpler, very utilitarian description of the action. This may be read as downplaying what, in the thematic agenda of the AN, would appear far too suggestive.

The possibility of this being a motivated choice, a negative reaction to the scene's erotic potential and an attempt at censorship, comes into sharp relief in the Cambridge ms. (K) manuscript of the AN, whose text has not appeared in any scholarly edition. K and L, the other ms. of the AN, are almost verbatim copies, which makes K's variation here stand out even more as intentional. When describing how Amis heals Amilun, in the place of what in L are lines 1096-97, K has, "En le saunc ad les dous lincheus moillé / E Amilun leinz envolupez" [(He) wetted the two

bedsheets in the blood / And wrapped Amilun therein].[51] Rather than an intimate bathing, we see Amis "enveloping" or "cloaking" Amilun in the children's bedsheets, which he has soaked in their blood. Here, then, the implicit nakedness of the OF is countered by an explicit act of *covering*. Where once the leprous friend was carefully bathed and intimately exposed, now he is body is hidden, and the healing occurs without any further work: "Sitost com le saunc senti, / De son grant mal est il garri" [As soon as (he) felt (or smelled?) the blood, / He is relieved of his great malady/suffering] (1098–99). If the OF embraced an affective, almost erotically close sensuality in this scene, the AN in K seems to distance itself as much as possible from that intimacy.

What is not made apparent when quoting these lines is that in K, the words "lincheus moillé" (wetted [the] bedsheets) appear awkwardly on the page. They only over-extend the octosyllabic meter as well as the physical space of the text column, so the word *lincheus* becomes slightly squeezed into tighter letters and the word *moillé* must be moved entirely and deposited just above the previous word. The detail of the bedsheets was apparently important enough that it was worth disrupting the visual flow of the page. K is older than L, and so this reading may be original. Some elements hint that K is not itself the originator of this reading: it does not, for one, appear to be a correction/emendation, as there are no signs of erasure and the ink and hand are identical to the surrounding lines. The diction in L might also hint that the bedsheets are original, as the word "envolupé" appears unusual (though admittedly not unheard of) for describing anointment with a free-running liquid.

As a final remark to this section, I want to note another dimension by which this scene, in its OF form, might appeared especially disconcerting to a late-twelfth-century Catholic moralist.

[51] The ms. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 50, f. 101ra. My emphasis. MS. Cambridge is identified as K, rather than C, because *C* was first designated to another manuscript, that of Karlsruhe (see n. 4 above), whose German named used to be spelled with a *C* as *Carlsruhe*. Scholars working with these mss. are forever cursed, as I am here, to clarify this oddity when referencing either one. Ford, introduction to *Amys e Amilioun*, 11.

As I discuss further in Part 2, a common theme (and, in fact, a primary justification for the stigmatization of sodomy) in polemics against homoeroticism is abhorrence to such acts' wasting of "seeds," the appropriation of the human sex organs for pleasure rather than procreation. This sometimes extended to a further deduction: that sodomy threatens to end humanity altogether if all men were to fall into its lure, whereby people would cease to procreate. This idea seems to bubble under the surface of Alain de Lille's text, and the ominous imagery of its closing lines may be meant to allude to this fear:

> . . . Then the wax lamps in the maidens' hands, which shone with a noonday radiance, were lowered to the ground with a certain contempt and seemed to fall into the sleep of extinction.
>
> With the mirror of this imagined vision removed, the sight of the previous mystic apparition left me awakened from my nightmare of ecstasy.[52]

Le Roman de la Rose also includes a sermon delivered by the allegorical Genius, a representation of creation, that expresses this belief without disguise: "Mout euvrent mal, et bien le samble, / car se tretuit li home ansamble / .lx. anz foïr les vouloient, / ja mes home n'angendreroient" [They work in vain, and it seems clear, for if all men together were inclined to this work (*foïr*, lit. "to dig," perhaps evoking a grave), (in) sixty years they would never produce offspring.] (ll. 19553–56). The rest of the passage makes it clear that what Genius speaks of is the extinction of humans. Given that this image of the extinction of humanity was in the moral consciousness of those opposed to sodomy, might the OF's near-erotic imagery seem to symbolism through the children's deaths, not the intended theme of sacrifice in honor of friendship, but the threat of extinction posed by "sodomites"? The OF's author(s) did not see this, but the AN's could have, and therefore worked to distance this scene from all implications of the sodomitical.

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[52] Alain de Lille, *De planctu naturae*, 173.

2. A Song of love: decentering homosocial pairing in the AN

> Qi voet oyr chaunzon d'amur,
> De leauté e de grant douçour—
> De troeffle ne voil jeo parler—
> En pees se tienge pur escoter! (ll. 1–4)

> [Whoever wants to hear a song of love, of loyalty and great sweetness—I do not wish to speak of trifles—should stay quiet and listen!]

These are the opening lines to the AN, and it should be noted how they do not specify *what kind* of love, or what kind of loyalty, it will sing about. This contrasts with the OF's opening, which promises to sing of a "barnaige," a group of barons, alluding more narrowly to the two barons Ami and Amile. The AN is less specific about this "love" because, unlike the OF, it is not a song about one type of love or loyalty, but three: "horizontal" homosocial love between knights, "vertical" homosocial love between lord and vassal, and heterosexual love. The AN noticeably shifts the thematic center of weight away from the theme of horizontal homosocial love by removing elements of story that predate it (vilification of female characters) and introducing a more overt promotion of vassalic and familial bonds. The AN does not completely decenter friendship, which is the story's very premise, but opposing themes are refreshed, rehabilitated, and elevated in esteem. This contrasts with the OF, which relegated the same themes to the background or depicted them in an explicitly negative light. the AN valorizes heterosexual love, almost entirely omits the OF's villainization of women, and inserts a conspicuous concern with vassalic attachments. This creates a story, a "chanzoun d'amur," whose subject is not just homosocial love but nearly every significant category of love in the feudal context.

Consistent with Part 1's discussion of its apparent discomfort with excessive intimacy, the AN consequently displays an affinity for the Church's institutional goals in stigmatizing homoeroticism. Kuefler attributes the problematization of homosocial intimacy (the emotional *and* the

physical), the cause for such a political project, to the "taming of the nobility": "Loyalty and intimacy between men . . . distracted men from what was being promoted as their primary responsibility to the family. Men's duties to lineage were an obsession of twelfth-century writers." What the Church thus promoted were men's "primary responsibility to the family," "duties to lineage . . . its perpetuation through the fathering of male heirs," and "devotion to women through the promotion of courtly love."[53]

This new institutional pattern of devotion was one of the medieval Church's techniques in instituting what, in hindsight, is perhaps the inception of what today is called "heteronormativity." Scanlon excellently details how Alain de Lille's *De planctu naturae* is witness and participant to "the radical change in sexuality the Church was beginning to effect" in the twelfth century, which entailed a revision of classical sexuality, which centered homoeroticism.[54] Alain's text tackles directly the prevalence of homoeroticism in Greek myths, ultimately delegitimizing them as "the insubstantial figments of poets," decrying poetry itself at the same time as the "prostitution" of falsehood in order to mislead people and poison their behavior.[55] Scanlon examines how *De planctu* is itself also a rehabilitation of poetry and its forms of expression (mainly allegory) in response to this very opinion, the text itself employing verse and allegory (and even classical gods as allegorical figures) to a great extent.[56] In parallel with this, one of *De planctu*'s most belabored assertions is that sodomy's sinfulness is mostly owed to its sterility, to its misuse of sexuality towards pleasure rather than towards reproduction. This simultaneously legitimizes heterosexuality *for* its reproductivity. As Scanlon therefore suggests, "The modern organization of sexuality

[53] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 181, 190, 191.
[54] Scanlon, "Unspeakable Pleasures," 223.
[55] Alain de Lille, *De planctu naturae*, 133–34.
[56] Scanlon, "Unspeakable Pleasures," 223–226.

around reproduction actually begins with medieval Christianity. . . . the principle of reproduction imposes a teleology on sexuality that makes heterosexual desire normative."[57]

The AN *Amis e Amilun* takes part in this rehabilitation of poetry and institution of "heteronormativity" through its attention to and exaltation of lordship, lineage, succession, reproduction, and heterosexual desire. It takes this principle of heterosexuality's objectivity and inserts it, through the popular vehicle of courtly love, into a model of lordship and inheritance that de-emphasizes the primacy of Amis and Amilun's friendship.

This is first accomplished via the text's figuration of vassalic loyalty and inheritance. Amis and Amilun are recast in the AN as vassals in the same court, perhaps even foster sons of their lord, an unnamed count, whose love for them is expressed as forcefully as their love for each other. Whereas the OF does not worry itself much with Ami's and Amile's love for their lord Charlemagne, the count in the AN bears emotional and model importance. The men's love and loyalty for him is among the first things the text enumerates, and their loyalty to him is in fact among the good qualities that define the pair, and the count loves them in return: "Leals furent envers lor seygnur, / Bien le portent a honour; / Si les amast mult tendrement, / Honur les fist a lour talent" [(They) were loyal to their lord, / Held him in great honor; / (He) loved them very fondly in return, / Did them honor, to their delight] (31–34). Then, before Amilun leaves court, the count tells him that he should seek his help if ever he is in need, expanding the terms of the two friends' sworn brotherhood to include their lord as well (61–65). This expansion of the oath's terms is reinforced immediately after when Amilun gives a warning to Amis (discussed further below), as he begins by remarking on their shared loyalty to him (75–76), and then adds at the end, "Amez bien vostre seignur, / Ne soffrez q'il eit deshonur! / Mout li devez amour e foy, / Car bien ad amé vous e moy"

[57] Ibid., 229.

[Love your lord well, / Do not tolerate it if he is dishonored! / You greatly owe him in love and faith, / For he has well loved you and I] (99–102). This is not to say that the OF disregards vassalic loyalty, but the AN goes out of its way to articulate it as an important theme.

This establishes a vertical chain of affection that then extends through Amis and Amilun and to their own offspring: for Amis, this is his biological sons, and for Amilun, it is his adoptive son Owein (nicknamed Amorant). First, Careful attention is given to how the men inherit their own lands, which is no longer through marriage alone but through inheritance via a father figure. Amilun leaves court and becomes a lord of his own city, not through the gift of a woman from another man as with the OF's Ami, but through inheritance of his father's holdings. The immediate need to claim this inheritance demonstrates the importance of this continuity of legitimate succession, which is so important that he accepts permanently leaving his friend and lord. The duty of lordship and imperative of peaceful inheritance trumps these other concerns. Then, once lord of his new land, he himself become the same model lord as the count was for him (157–169). Next, he takes a wife on the advice of his new vassals, inheriting even more land. Amis, too, inherits a significant amount of land when he marries the count's daughter, a fact the text is all too eager to share (771–776). Both men then produce progeny: Amis with his two sons, and Amilun with his adoptive son Owein. This latter relationship echoes the two men's relationship with the count who fostered them. This all constructs a standard model of lineage, not unique to *Amis e Amilun*, but nevertheless important to its "heteronormative" constructions. As will become more apparent with the discussion of heterosexual love below, lordship and loyalty is a part of this heteronormativity both as the system of secular authority it upholds and a vehicle through which matches are made (Amilun marries as a function of his lordship, Amis marries his lord's daughter with that lord's approval).

Next is romantic love. As a reminder, the two principal female characters in the OF and AN are Lubias and Belissant.[58] In the OF, Lubias is Hardré's niece. Hardré gives her hand in marriage to Ami after the former is caught in his villainous acts, for which he hopes to make amends and avoid punishment. In the AN, Lubias is the high-born woman whom Amilun marries when he claims his inheritance. In both, she mistreats her husband when he contracts leprosy, and Ami/Amilun punishes her in the end for this betrayal of martial duties. Belissant is the daughter of Charlemagne (named Mirabele but nicknamed Flore in the AN), with whom Amile (OF) or Amis (AN) is in a suggestive context, leading to the duel that represents the climax of the first half of the story. Afterwards, Amile/Amis marries her, and when the leprous friend comes for help, she takes part in his care. She is also the mother of the two children whose blood heals the leprous Ami/Amilun.

What characterizes women in the OF is an overwhelmingly negative sentiment, which stops only with Belissant and only *after* her legitimate marriage to Amile. Richard Hyatte describes it like this: "Although it presents one model of a model marriage [Belissant], [the OF] portrays love of women largely as a bitter experience for the two knights."[59] The homosocial and the heterosexual are, as such, competing forms of relationship: "The antagonism between knightly *amistié* [lit., "friendship"] and love of women is a central topic in the epic narrative."[60] One way this opposition is constructed is by presenting women's love and sexuality as a distraction and threat to the coherence of the homosocial bond. This begins with Lubias, whose characterization mainly consists of poisonous slander as she tries to convince Ami to forsake his companion (§§30, 50, 66, 100). Sarah Kay has eloquently demonstrated how in the OF both Lubias and Belissant

[58] Lubias is in fact unnamed in the AN, and Belissant is named Mirabele but referred to by the nickname Florie. For the sake of convenience, I retain the name Lubias when discussing the AN.
[59] Hyatte, *Arts of Friendship*, 91.
[60] Ibid.

constitute threats to the masculine social order, threats which are subsequently suppressed by that order's power, a masculine triumph over poisonous female desire.[61] Kay notes that Lubias's slander against Amile is unique to the OF and how her sexual advances during the identity swap are understood as a threat to the loyalty that binds the companions.[62] Kay also focuses on Charlemagne and how he represents the authority of the masculine order, but he does not ultimately have much influence over the story. I emphasize instead how the OF vilifies women, and even marriage itself to an extent, while accepting them as a necessary facet of society.

Lubias is not the only threat to the social order in the OF. Belissant is, too, even though she eventually portrays the acceptable behavior for a wife. Recall that Lubias is Hardré niece, meaning her villainy is associated with his. Belissant, too, is associated with Hardré. If Lubias is a reference to Hardré overt attempts at destroying Ami's and Amile's friendship, Belissant is a feminine refiguration of his threat as a seductive subject. While she is a passive and benign character early on, Belissant's danger arises at the beginning of the episode that brings about the duel against Hardré. After Ami has married Lubias and has had a son with her, he leaves her to be with Amile again; then, after seven years, he misses his family so much that he decides to return to them. He discusses this with Amile and, before parting, delivers a lengthy warning with the aim of safeguarding their friendship. First, he warns Amile against befriending Hardré:

> Mais une chose voz voil je bien monstrer,
> Que ne preingniéz compaingnie a Hardré.
> Tost voz avroit souduit et enchanté
> Et tel hontaige et tel blasme alevé
> Que ne seroit a nul jor amendé. (561–65)

> [But I wish to warn you of one thing: do not accept the company of Hardré. Before long he would seduce and charm you, and such shame and reproach would arise that it could never be remedied.]

[61] Kay, "Seduction and Suppression." (see n. 2 above).
[62] Ibid., 136–37

His description of Hardré's threat is somewhat vague, saying simply that he would "seduce" and "charm" him, and that asserting friendship with him regrettable. Hardré's villainy before this has been characterized by antagonism to Ami and Amile and treachery against Charlemagne (he is secretly allied with a Breton lord rebelling against the emperor). Ami knows not to trust him and warns against accepting his "compaingnie," which itself would be the source of "hontaige" and "blasme," shame and reproach. In the same breath, Ami cautions Amile against desire for Belissant, even though she has so-far done nothing to imply she is a threat:

> La fille Charle ne voz chaut a amer
> Ne embracier ses flans ne ses costéz,
> Car puis que fame fait home acuverter,
> Et pere et mere li fait entr'oublier,
> Couzins et freres et ses amis charnéz. (566–70)

> [You ought not love Charlemagne's daughter, nor embrace her flanks or her sides, for as soon as a woman makes a man submit (to her), (she/this) makes him forget his father and mother, cousins and brothers and his intimate friends.]

The reference to embracing her body proves that Ami understands Belissant as a seductive object, much like Hardré whose charismatic seduction could pull Amile into a false friendship. He also speaks abstractly of female companionship, how not jut Belissant but women generally who threaten to oppress a man in marriage, making him somehow forget his family and "amis charnéz," his intimate friends. This parallels the threat posed by Hardré, and indeed Ami's words fold the two together as equal threats. His treatment of Belissant is attached to that regarding Hardré without any semantic bridge like "and" or "in addition," and the entire warning is introduced by the phrase "*une chose* voz voil je bien monstrer," [But I wish to warn you of *one thing*]. These two concerns are actually one: a warning against anything that might threaten the men's relationship, against seductive alternatives that would distract from the more virtuous companionship that Ami's

and Amile's represents. The simultaneity of Hardré's and Belissant's threat is punctuated by Ami's reference comparable to the Fox and the Grapes, but with a different moral. Here, the fox is tempted by "les celises et le fruit" [the cherries and the fruit] which it cannot reach: "Elle n'en gouste, qu'elle n'i puet monter" [It does not them, for it cannot reach so high] (573, 574). Amile is the fox, Hardré and Belissant the fruits. The fruits are seductive, but their sweetness is unattainable, just as Hardré and Belissant are charming but ultimately a threat. In the logic of this analogy, Hardré's friendliness is only a ruse, and Belissant's beauty stands to pull Amile away, the sweetness of her charms only ephemeral.

Given that Ami is only leaving Amile in the first place because of his own marriage, Ami is speaking from experience. His new family has introduced a competing (but real) emotional tie that now pulls him away from his companion. Amile accepts his parting, saying, "Il est bien drois par sainte charité / Ques aillissiéz veoir et esgarder, / Car sa moillier doit on bien honorer" [It is very just, by divine charity, / That you go to see (them), / For one must highly honor one's wife] (553–55).[63] It might seem paradoxical that Ami warns Amile against marriage as he is leaving Amile to see his wife, but it is this exact tension that the OF is interested in—this is a feature, not a bug. In this scene, we see a pre-existing marriage that requires Ami—via genuine attachment and marital dues—to leave his friend; consequently, Ami warns Amile not to fall into the same predicament, which would only separate them further. This tension is underscored by the pathos of Amile's sole request of Ami, which he makes repeats twice, and which parallel's Ami's sentiment:

> "Mais une chose voz voil dire et conter,
> Sire compains, que voz ne m'oubliéz."
> . . . [Ami's warning, ll. 568–574] . . .
> "Si com voz commandéz.

[63] Note also Amile's invocation of marital duties here. As I state below, Lubias consistently fails to honor Ami her husband, and her failings as a wife are remarked upon by others. This turns Ami's and Lubias's marriage into a foil for Ami's and Amile's friendship since Amile is as faithful as Lubias is hateful.

> Mais encor proi por Deu de majestéz,
> Sire compains, que voz ne m'oubliéz." (556–77)
>
> ["But I wish to tell you one thing, dear companion, that you do not forget me." . . . "Just as you command. But again I ask for God's sake, dear companion, that you do not forget me."]

Each is worried about losing the other, and each refer to "forgetting" one's attachments. The source of that anxiety is in both cases a woman.

None of this tension between homosocial and heterosexual bonds exists in the AN. Lubias, for one, is not villainized until Amilun contracts leprosy, before which her marriage to him is presented in purely positive terms: "Une gentile femme esposat / . . . / Bien furent entre eux couplés / De parage e de beautez" [(He) married a noble woman / . . . / They were well suited for each other / In lineage and in beauty] (172, 179–80). In the OF she slanders Ami and Amile, but equivalent scenes in the AN omit this slander (OF, §50, 66; AN, ll. 465-80, 799-804). Any antagonism from her comes only after Amilun is stricken with leprosy, and the AN's omission of tension between this marriage and the homosocial bond mean that her antagonism but the above omissions mean this antagonism has no clear relation to homosocial themes; Lubias no longer presents a threat to that bond, therefore her marriage to Amilun is no longer problematized on those grounds. Simultaneously, this sheds another way marriage opposes homosociality in the OF. In that text, characters (including Ami himself) repeatedly note Lubias's failure to meet the duties and expectations of marriage, which provokes comparison with the contrastingly perfect fidelity between Ami and Amile.[64]

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[64] Charlie Samuelson discusses this in an excellent paper on the OF: "It is, for example, striking that the text should insist that 'maris et fame ce est toute une chars' [husband and wife are of one flesh], as it is rather Ami and Amile who appear to be 'flesh of one flesh.' Samuelson, " 'He wishes that everyone were leprous like him': Infectious Counternarratives in *Ami et Amile*," in *The Futures of Medieval French: Essays in Honour of Sarah Kay*, ed. by Jane Gilbert and Miranda Griffin (Boydell & Brewer, 2021), 76.

The AN's Florie similarly sheds the negative framing she received in the OF. This is first apparent in the warning Amilun gives to Amis as the former leaves court to inherit his father's lands, a scene equivalent to Ami's warning to Amile in the OF. Again, Amilun wishes to warn his friend of "one thing": "De une chose soiez garny: / Le counte ad seignz un seneschal / Qe mout est feloun e desleal" [Be warned of one thing: / The count has a seneschal in his house / Who is very wicked and disloyal] (78–80). However this time, it is indeed *one* thing, as the seneschal (equivalent to Hardré) is in fact the only thing Amilun warns his friend of. Instead of vilifying her, the AN promotes Florie to the position of a secondary protagonist in a legitimate romance plot.[65] Her advances should be identified somewhat with the (admittedly loose) model of courtly love. The text certainly borrows from the language of courtly love. Unlike in the OF, the AN's narration follows her as she falls in love with Amis, so we are able to witness the birth of her attraction: "Vers li ad getté s'amour; / Si forment comensa a amer / Q'ele ne pout boyvre ne manger" [(She) threw her love to him; / So fervently (did she) begin to love / That she could not drink or eat] (230–32) She experiences the typical pains of unrequited love, identifying this as courtly love and defining her position as a sincere and sympathetic one. This is a far cry from her subversive advances in the OF. Kay, too, note how all of this has "far more the flavour of courtship." Kay also notes that this plot point may be the purpose for the heroes' name inversion in the AN and ME: "The Ami of the romance versions is, furthermore, the hero of the sole love plot, whereas in the epic and hagiographical versions, the character with this name has the sacrificial role of fighting to save his companion's place in society . . . The name 'Ami' can therefore reasonably be glossed in the romance versions as 'lover', whereas in the epic versions the meaning can only be 'friend' or

[65] The romance is here "legitimate" in the sense that its portrayal is positive and typical. It remains "illegitimate" in the sense that Florie's love for Amis is initially unsanctioned by her father, but even this fact adds to the naturalness of the romance since it is a core feature of courtly love that the lovers confront some such obstacle.

'companion'."[66] This reappropriation of the pun in Amis's name indeed seems intentional, as he himself exploits the play-on-words when responds to Florie's advances. While he initially rejects her due to the improperness of an unsanctioned relationship with his lord's daughter, he soon relents, saying, "Damoisel, pur Deu mercy, / Vostre *amy* suy e serray" [Maiden, by God's grace, / I am and will be your friend/lover] (296–97).

While Amis does accept her advances, it is only after Florie threatens to accuse him of violating her if he does not accept her love. This is the one negative element around Belissant/Florie that the AN truly shares with the OF, and Amis is soon shown to reciprocate her love despite her extortion. When they meet secretly at an arranged time, they do so "od grant delit" [with great pleasure], and "Par grant duçour s'entrebeiserent, / De amour parlerent e juwerent" [With great sweetness (they) kissed, / Spoke of and played at love] (322, 333–34). The narrator approves of their love as well: "Ne croy pas q'il y avoit vilaynie" [(I) do not believe that there was anything wrong (in it)] (326). When they are married following the duel, Florie is shown to be a perfect wife, and as Amis rides to meet her, we hear, ". . . si s'en aloit / En son pays vers s'amye / Qe tant ama come sa vie" [. . . then (he) went off / In his land towards his beloved / Whom he loved as much as his own life] (768–70). Despite Florie's moment of antagonism, she is not outwardly characterized as an antagonist. The text cares more about the love between her and Amis, so much so, in fact, that it omits scenes between Amis and Amilun. The main example occurs just before the above citation following the duel. While in the OF it is a joyous moment between the two men (see discussion of OF, ll. 1948–49, 1955–56 above, pp. 18–19), the AN blows right past their reunion in order to narrate Amis's love and the inheritance gained through his marriage with Flore (767–76).

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[66] Kay, "Seduction and Suppression," 133.

Lastly, the AN alters the story's conclusion to uphold the men's ties to family and the land they have inherited rather than to each other. This is the one argument Kuefler makes about *Ami and Amile*, and the short passage on this in his paper is the only true exception I know of to the lack of critical thinking about the motivations behind redactions of *Ami and Amile* that I discuss above in my introduction. The OF, as well as the *Vita* before it, intentionally keep Ami and Amile together at the ends of their lives. In the OF, they abandon their families and renounce their holdings to go on pilgrimage together to Jerusalem before dying on the return journey. In the *Vita*, Ami and Amile leave their families to rejoin Charlemagne's army, dying in battle together. In the AN, however, Kuefler notes, "[Amis] remains with his wife and his resurrected sons, and [Amilun], who is now free of the pollution of leprosy, is able to rejoin his wife and son [actually, as discussed above, his "son" is adoptive and he punishes his disloyal wife with imprisonment]. In this version, notably, it is not the male bond that is reinforced by the divine intervention, but the family bond. The final episode of their death and burial together is entirely omitted."[67] They indeed remain apart in the AN, reuniting only after death: "[Amilun] En bone vie longtemps vesqui; / En bienfaitz se pena. / Aprés sa mort a Deu ala; / Amis, son frere, ensement" [(Amilun) lived a good life for a long time; / (He) put himself to good works. / After his death (he) went to God; / Amis, his brother, likewise] (1231–34). It is not a belabored point that they remain apart—Amis with his wife and sons, Amilun with his adoptive son Owein—but the AN subtly affirms these separate commitments as more important in the men's lives. Incidentally, their reunion after death once again reveals a care for utility (or perhaps *duty*) unique to the AN's emotional world. Despite their love for one another, their societal function as fathers (literal or symbolic) and lords is more important than

[67] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 193. Kuefler seems to somewhat conflate the OF and the AN in his description, but his account is accurate with the amendments I have made to the quotation.

their bond; once dead, though, they have completed their job. Then, and only then, may they return to each other in eternity.

Conclusion

It should hopefully be clear that the AN does not fundamentally disparage male friendship. While I have argued that it modifies friendship's "representability" according to an anti-homoerotic, heteronormative agenda, it does not alter the fundamental premise of its source material. Amilun and Amis are still dear friends, they still make sacrifices for one another, and they still exhibit an emotional bond defined as *amur*, love. For all the moral "suspicion" cast upon male friendships in the twelfth century, the fundamental importance of those friendships was too critical to European culture (and its patriarchy especially) to be, itself, displaced. The fact that the AN is an adaptation of *Ami and Amile* (rather than some other story) means the agenda behind it was nonetheless interested in horizontal homosocial bonds *as well as* vertical and heterosexual ones. This may appear obvious. My point is that adaptation and alteration, as literary procedures, belie a fundamental interest in the material being altered. The project of the AN *Amis e Amilun* was not the effacement or pure censorship of more traditional homosocial mores, but rather a motivated *rehabilitation* of homosociality meant to perpetuate a new model conforming with the moralistic inventions of the twelfth century. It might also be a rehabilitation of poetry. As Alain de Lille shows, moralists of the twelfth century sometimes blamed poetry and poets for promoting sin and debauchery. But Alain was himself a poet, and the AN is a poem. Their use of poetry and its forms in the service of moral reform thus entails a rehabilitation of poetry as an expressive platform, a reappropriation of its clearly influential popularity.

This can be taken further. The legitimization of heterosexual desire is a "rehabilitation" of the OF's highly misogynistic representations of women and their love. While that text contributed

to a shunning of women in favor of the company of men, the AN (without losing its own brand of misogyny) reshaped the legend's female characters into positive forms. Lubias is the exception to this, but only halfway, after Amilun's leprosy. When she shuns her husband, she is not alone in the action, however, as Amilun is also cast out by his vassals (ll. 817–22). This is unlike the OF, where she was alone in rejecting her husband. The result in the AN is that Lubias becomes a moral example of a bad wife; not, as in the OF, as a representation of marriage itself in conflict with homosocial bonds, but as a typification of the wife who neglects her husband and, I should add, fails to produce for him a son and heir. Amilun's lack of an heir brings us to another social structure the AN rehabilitates: the aristocratic institution of fostering, in which a nobleman's son is placed into the care and service of another lord as part of his personal development. Kuefler notes how fostering could be seen as a potential occasion for sodomitical relations, an idea partly inspired by the myth of Ganymede.[68] If this is true, then the AN rescues the institution of fostering from this fear by offering a moral model for it to follow. Amilun and Amis themselves were apparently fostered by the count, who acts like a father-figure. Their mutual love is shown to be pure and based on service and loyalty, indeed like a parent-child relationship. Then Amilun, lacking children, fosters Owein and declares him his heir near the end of the poem (1227–30). Fostering is thus shown to have the potential to raise good, moral men, and it is displayed as an alternative to biological heirs, a solution for whenever a man's wife does not provide him any. These rehabilitations uncovered the social and political utility of social structures previously under the scrutiny of anti-sodomitical writers. Perhaps we are witnessing a later stage in this moralistic discourse, one whose zeal has been checked and tempered over time.

[68] Kuefler, "Male Friendship," 188–90.

Remember, too, that the OF and the AN are roughly contemporary texts. Therefore, just as much as the AN is a testament to the new, the OF is a testament to the occasional persistence of the old. The OF belongs to a manuscript of *chansons de geste* that seem to have been selected for their strong homosocial themes, with *Ami et Amile* in the center of the collection. The literary historian Simon Gaunt calls it a "carefully executed manuscript," "a book about male bonding and treachery, about the elevation of male bonding as an absolute ideal on the one hand, and the threat to it on the other."[69] Perhaps, with such a "careful" collection, the OF in this sole thirteenth century attestation was part of one court's attempt to preserve the traditional models of homosociality common in the *chansons de geste*. As for the AN, its height of sodomitical anxiety might be a peculiarly English/Norman phenomenon, at least originally. It is written in the "French of England," for one, and some work has suggested that cultural discomfort with homosocial kissing and its homoerotic potential grew in the mid-thirteenth century in England before it did elsewhere.[70] Marie de France's *Lanval* and the *Roman d'Enéas*, noted above as two courtly works that uniquely decry sodomitical relations, are also Anglo-Norman. Early twelfth-century examples of noblemen accused of sodomy are found most heavily with Norman and Anglo-Norman writers, too, such as Orderic Vitalis. Finally, one of the earliest attempts in Europe to declare sodomy a sin came out of the Council of London of 1102, spearheaded by Anselm of Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury.[71] If England was indeed ahead of the curve in this way true, it would be an interesting but not ultimately too consequential observation. It would suggest something more inventive about English moral theology, perhaps, but England (though "insular") was not culturally isolated. The AN and

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[69] Simon Gaunt, "Monologic Masculinity: The Chanson de Geste," chap. 1 in *Gender and Genre in Medieval French Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1995), 44, 45.
[70] Russel J. Major, " 'Bastard Feudalism' and the Kiss: Changing Social Mores in Late Medieval and Early Modern France," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 17, no. 3 (Winter, 1987).
[71] Burgwinkle, *Sodomy, Masculinity, and Law*, 29.

its cultural milieu were still francophone, and the text could have been shared across the continent. While some of the moralists who decried sodomy were English, not all of them were. Alain de Lille, as a convenient example, was from the French city of Lille. Still, these ideas must have come from somewhere.

The OF *Ami et Amile* and the AN *Amis and Amilun* are therefore powerful testaments to the complexity and inconsistency latent to broad historical change. The old way lives on while the new way springs up; one place holds to tradition, rejects a new idea, favors an older model, while another accepts the new, disseminating and iterating on it. This inevitable unevenness is especially true in pre-modernity before the printing press accelerated the diffusion of ideas and allowed livelier discourses across great distances.

It can be difficult to properly conceive of and account for how a strong historical theory can, despite its merits, be "disproven" by some cases just as clearly as it is proven by others. *Ami et Amile* and *Amis e Amilun* are an example by which such historical complexities might be demonstrated; I hope I have also, in my analysis, demonstrated how a historian can indeed account for complexity, can identify where one thing is true and where, in another place, it is not. Doubtless, this complexity was far stronger than these two examples demonstrate. How many other versions of *Ami and Amile* existed, now lost, that would have revealed other beliefs and agendas through their redactions? There are, indeed, many more I have not examined. If we look forward to the fourteenth century, for example, at the Middle English *Amis and Amiloun* and the Middle French "Lille version" of the legend, we see an English text that recovers some of the thematic color of the OF, reviving hints of that version's traditional homosociality. By contrast, the Lille version (with apparent influence from the AN, including the main characters' names being swapped) reflects greater disinterest in the original homosocial themes and shows further progression of the

AN's heteronormative model. Note that the geographic attributes of these later versions have inverted: of the older texts, it was the English that was more heteronormative, and the continental that was more traditional. Clearly, there is more to be learned from interrogating the motivations behind redaction. *Ami and Amile*, with its many iterations from many historical moments and cultural milieus, remains under-exploited for the study of social and cultural history in medieval Europe. I hope the present thesis is a productive step towards addressing this oversight.

Appendix:

The Story of the continental *Ami et Amile*, with noted variations of the Anglo-Norman poem

In the time of Emperor Charlemagne, Ami and Amile are two men identical in every way, both conceived "by holy pronouncement" (l. 13) and destined, by God's will, to be linked by a loyal friendship.[1] They are conceived on the same day, born on the same day, and christened together by their godfather the pope. They grow up separately but hear of each other often. When they turn fourteen, they are dubbed knights and leave their families in search of one another. After seven years of searching, they find each other, swear faithful companionship, and enter together into the service of the emperor Charlemagne.[2]

Ami and Amile participate in one of the emperor's wars and prove their mettle by each capturing a rebelling baron. The emperor's seneschal, Hardré,[3] becomes jealous and tries to disenfranchise them, then to bring about their deaths; caught in his treachery and hoping to make amends, he gives the hand of his niece Lubias in marriage to Amile, who rejects the proposition and defers it to Ami. Ami marries Lubias and through this inherits the city of Blaive. He has a son there, but he soon returns to court to be with Amile when Lubias proves as disagreeable as her uncle.[4] After seven years in Paris, and Ami begins to miss his family and returns to Blaive, but not before a tearful goodbye and a choice warning for his companion Amile: Amile should not accept the friendship of Hardré in his absence, and he should not court the emperor's daughter lest he be brought to forget his friend.[5]

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[1] The AN omits any spiritual causality for their friendship, but it does say that they were "well worked by nature" in ms. K. MS. L has in that line's place "Li deus estoient de une nature," both were of one nature.
[2] The opening of the AN is far shorter and simpler. Amis and Amilun are introduced as adults in the same court serving an unnamed count, and their love and common oath of brotherhood is communicated as rapid exposition.
[3] Unnamed in the AN.
[4] In the AN, it is Amilun who leaves and gets married: in place of Hardré's treachery, Amilun's father passes away and he must claim his inheritance, marrying a kinder, unnamed noblewoman shortly thereafter.
[5] The AN omits the warning against the lord's daughter, which I discuss in Part 2 of the present thesis.

Hardré immediately approaches Amile to offer his friendship, which Amile rejects; he repeats his offer in a less committal form, which Amile accepts. Belissant, Charlemagne's daughter, attempts to court Amile, who rejects her. Belissant then sneaks naked into his bed one night, hoping to seduce him.[6] Hardré catches them together, accuses Amile of treachery by subverting the emperor's agency over his daughter's sexual-romantic relations. Technically in the wrong, Amile goes to Ami for help and the two swap places, assuming each other's identity. Ami wins the duel and swears to marry Belissant in Amile's place, for which an angel declares he will contract leprosy.[7] Amile sleeps in Ami's bed with a sword between him and Lubias to avoid betraying his friend. Ami returns to Blaive, reports his success to Amile, and the two undo their identity swap. Amile marries Belissant, inherits the town of Rivier, and has two sons.

Ami contracts leprosy as the angel had warned, and his wife becomes ever more hostile to him. Everyone but his own son neglects his care. Lubias eventually removes him from the city, and he is obliged to travel aimlessly begging with two loyal serfs as company.[8] They eventually come upon Amile's city after several years of wandering,[9] where Amile recognizes his leprous friend by token of the identical gold cups each carries.[10] Amile takes care of Ami, and one night an angel visits the latter and tells him that he may be healed if Amile bathes him in the blood of

[6] The AN has her (here named Mirabele but nicknamed Florie) approaching him with a sincere confession, being rejected, and threatening to accuse him of rape if he does not accept her. Afterwards the two meet secretly to "speak and play at love" (l. 324), at which point the seneschal sees them together.
[7] In the AN, it is a disembodied voice rather than an explicitly divine character. He also marries the daughter outright, rather than simply promising to do so.
[8] The AN has his adoptive son, Owein (nicknamed Amorant), instead of the serfs.
[9] The OF recounts much more of Ami's troubles, most notably his stay in Rome where he is taken care of by his godfather the pope, before he dies and Ami is obliged to leave Rome in the wake of a famine.
[10] In the AN, Amis (here the healthy one) believes Amilun to be a thief who has stolen the cup. He beats him ferociously before Amorant corrects him. Amilun then repents tearfully, cursing the "sin" that allowed him to not recognize his "brother."

his own two sons.[11] After much deliberation,[12] Amile kills his sons and bathes Ami in their blood.[13] Ami is completely healed. Amile's sons are then found to be miraculously revived.

Ami returns to Blaive to punish his wife for having cast him out, although he ultimately takes pity and forgives her in the Christian manner.[14] He and Amile place all their possessions in the hands of their closest relatives (Ami to his son, Amile to his wife) then take the cross and go on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, but they die of sickness on the return trip and are entered together at Mortara in Lombardy.[15]

[11] Again, the AN has an unidentified voice, and it also expresses this revelation as a dream revealed to the healthy Amis rather than the leprous Amilun.
[12] He does not hesitate in the AN.
[13] The AN has a variation on the manner by which this is done that I discuss in section 2 of this thesis.
[14] Amilun, though, does not take pity on his wife.
[15] The pilgrimage and renunciation of possessions is entirely omitted in the AN, in which they simply continue their lives in peace before dying naturally. It also does not say that they were buried together or that any miracle brought their remains together. They simply "gisent en Lombardie," lie in Lombardy, and their bodies (apparently as saintly relics, the only whiff of hagiographic-ness anywhere in the AN) effect miracles for others.

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