

# Loving Friendship in Baudri of Bourgueil's Poetic Correspondence with the Women of Le Ronceray

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Let your special virtue always keep you near me  
May the law of living well make you immortal to me  
Whereas formerly, I had known only your reputation,  
Or rather, you are scarcely known for public discourse,  
Now you live not just as if you were any virgin,  
But like a maiden of distinguished title,  
Like a woman whom wisdom fosters with sweet honey  
So that now your nourishing milk flows forth.  
This fact has recently become clear to me while reading your poems,  
Which you so freely spiced with nectar.  
The swarm of your female pupils rallies around you,  
So that the bees might be replenished with the mother-bee's honey.  
If your order allowed male students  
I myself would like to be one of your pupils.  
Now at least, virgin, keep me under your loving friendship;  
As I have held you under my loving friendship.<sup>1</sup>

**D**URING THE LATE ELEVENTH CENTURY the churchman and poet Baudri of Bourgueil (1046-1130) composed these praise-worthy lines to a nun named Emma, one of his correspondents at the abbey Notre-Dame du Ronceray (hereafter Le Ronceray) in Angers.<sup>2</sup> They are particularly illustrative of themes that characterize Baudri's epistolary poems, including those exchanged with several women at Le Ronceray: loving friendship based on virtue, friendship maintained in absence, and the mutual intellectual and spiritual edification that friendship provides.

Baudri exchanged a number of epistolary poems with the well educated women at this convent, and his letter collection indicates that some of these women, like Emma, were poets themselves. In particular, these poems show that Baudri, writing in the midst of the church's attack on clerical marriage and an increasingly misogynistic atmosphere, believed

intimate spiritual friendship with women to be both possible and perfectly acceptable. He speaks of his female correspondents as his friends and refers specifically to the “bond of friendship [*foedus amicitiae*].”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, he calls himself their friend [*amicus*].<sup>4</sup> He also frequently refers to *amor*, meaning the loving friendship he believed he shared with his women correspondents.<sup>5</sup> Baudri the poet viewed his female correspondents as his inspiration, teachers, confidants, and friends.

These poems are unique because they articulate an ideology of loving friendship that incorporates the use of the Ovidian term *amor*, typically associated with the idea of romantic love. Baudri and his female correspondents blended the Ovidian concept of *amor* with the Christian idea of brotherly love, or *caritas*, and classical friendship, or *amicitia*. Indeed, Baudri and his correspondents, the young nun Constance in particular, did not view romantic and spiritual love as mutually exclusive, although they recognized the seemingly contradictory nature of the two. Thus, we must peel away the layers of these very clever epistolary poems to reveal their multifaceted meaning. While Baudri formulated this concept of loving friendship, his female correspondents at Le Ronceray were instrumental and active in helping to shape that concept through their participation in epistolary discourse.

Fulk III, count of Anjou, and his wife Hildegard founded the convent of Le Ronceray in 1028 and donated substantial property to the establishment. During the eleventh century it was the single female house in the area and attracted many women from the upper echelons of society, although women of lower status were also among Le Ronceray’s sisters. By the early twelfth century the convent’s population had risen from twenty-seven at its foundation to forty-four.<sup>6</sup> Le Ronceray thus appears as an important center of learning for women in the Loire Valley and a place where members of the nobility sent their daughters to receive a quality education. Baudri’s poems are evidence of an ongoing dialogue between the abbot, who acted as an external teacher, the educated nuns at Le Ronceray, and the convent’s young pupils.

Correspondence and friendship between men and women has a long history stretching back into antiquity. For example, St. Jerome wrote letters to women, and his friendships with the elite Roman women Paula and Marcella were well known, both during his lifetime and into

the Middle Ages. Jerome's deep love for these women is apparent in the letters he composed upon each of their deaths. In the *encomium* written after Paula's death in 410, Jerome explains that he had to dictate the document because he was too distraught to write it himself.<sup>7</sup> His relationships, particularly his friendship with Paula, provided a model of Christian friendship for men and women like Baudri and the Le Ronceray nuns and students.

John Chrysostom's (347-407) friendship with the Greek deaconess Olympias was likewise spiritually meaningful and important for both. Chrysostom expressed his concern for her welfare in a series of seventeen surviving letters composed during his exile from Constantinople in 404.<sup>8</sup> While in Constantinople, Olympias and Chrysostom lived near one another. J. N. D. Kelly describes their particular living arrangement in his biography of John: "Her convent was separated from his palace by a single wall, and he was the only outsider, man or woman, who had leave to cross the threshold. Indeed, he took over the spiritual direction of her community. . . . In return Olympias made herself responsible for taking care of his clothes and for preparing his simple meals."<sup>9</sup>

St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) also corresponded with women, forming bonds of friendship with those to whom he addressed his letters. For example, he discusses Christian love in his epistle to the Roman widow Proba, written ca. 411. This letter illustrates the idea that God is both the origin and goal of friendship, a belief that was central to Christian thought on the subject: "In him [God] we, of course, love ourselves if we love God, and by the other commandment we truly in that way love our neighbors as ourselves if we bring them, to the extent we can, to a similar love of God. We, therefore, love God on account of himself and love ourselves and our neighbors on account of him."<sup>10</sup> It is not insignificant that Augustine chose to discuss love of neighbors and friendship's spiritual purpose in a letter to a woman; in doing so he extended his own Christian friendship to her.

In the early Middle Ages, churchmen and religious women continued to pursue spiritual friendship. The bishop Venantius Fortunatus (ca. 530-ca. 610) exchanged friendly poetry with the Merovingian Queen Radegund (518-87) and a nun at her abbey at Poitiers called Agnes. In verse he describes the form left by Agnes's fingers when he thanks her

for butter she sent: "I observed the fingermarks over the milky gifts, and your hand remained imprinted here where you picked up the butter pat. Tell me, please, who encouraged your gentle fingers to fashion in that way?"<sup>11</sup> Fortunatus makes reference to a poem Radegund sent when he thanks her in verse and praises her technique noting, "you can create honey in the empty wax."<sup>12</sup> These lines addressed to the two women contain a slightly erotic tone, like Baudri's poems, and they are also verses of friendship. In this way, Fortunatus's poetry anticipates Baudri's verse, which is more overtly laden with sexual and romantic innuendo.

By the High Middle Ages men and women corresponded frequently and engaged in relationships of spiritual friendship, particularly in, but not limited to, the Anglo-Norman world and the Loire Valley. Anselm of Canterbury's correspondence contains numerous letters to or from women, and the *Life of Christina of Markyate*, written by an anonymous monk at St. Albans, is full of spiritual friendships between Christina and the various religious men with whom she interacted. Goscelin of St. Bertin's *Liber confortatorius* addresses his spiritual friendship with Eve of Wilton, and Hilary of Orléans wrote a poem praising Eve's syneisaktic friendship with the monk Hervé. Baudri's contemporary Hildebert of Lavardin also corresponded with women, and Robert of Arbrissel, for whom Baudri wrote a *Life*, was known for his close interactions with his women followers.<sup>13</sup> Baudri's epistolary poems, however, are unique because of the manner in which he uses Ovidian ideas to express what is ultimately spiritual friendship.

The study of such male-female spiritual friendships remains a somewhat unexplored topic. Many discussions of male-female friendships, including Baudri's friendships with women, appear within the context of larger studies of love (for friendship and love are intertwined) or studies of women's writing and the epistolary tradition.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, scholars studying the history of friendship have only begun to scratch the surface with regard to male-female relationships. The single monograph on the subject is Rosemary Rader's *Breaking Boundaries: Male/Female Friendship in Early Christian Communities*, published almost thirty years ago.<sup>15</sup> Brian Patrick McGuire's *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience* is primarily concerned with male-male friendships. For instance, his discussion of Baudri's letters does not consider the Le

Ronceray correspondence.<sup>16</sup> In the introduction to the recent reprint of McGuire's classic work, he briefly addresses scholarship on male-female friendship that has appeared since his monograph was published, specifically highlighting work dealing with the relationship between Abelard and Heloise.<sup>17</sup> Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge have recently addressed women and friendship, both male-female and exclusively female, and the need for more studies in this area in their introduction to *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age*, an edited volume containing several essays pertaining to women and friendship.<sup>18</sup>

Gerhart Ladner dismisses the pursuit of such studies arguing that there is a dearth of evidence for male-female friendships in the Middle Ages. Ladner suggested over forty years ago that medieval friendship "was essentially a monastic and male phenomenon."<sup>19</sup> Alan Bray echoed Ladner's sentiments in his 2003 monograph *The Friend* by asking, "Why are its [friendship's] terms so silent about women?"<sup>20</sup> A study of Baudri's correspondence proves Ladner's assertion untrue and Bray's question unnecessary. To be sure, male-female spiritual friendship, particularly during the high medieval period, is worthy of further exploration because it illuminates larger issues in the eleventh and twelfth centuries including shifting male attitudes toward women, women's spirituality, and women's religious authority, as the following analysis shows.

Although he generated a substantial body of work, including a multitude of poems, one of two *vitae* of Robert of Arbrissel, and a history of the First Crusade, we know relatively little about Baudri's background. He probably collected and organized his epistolary poems himself. The letters were composed between 1078 and 1107, when Baudri became the archbishop of Dol, and they are arranged in chronological order.<sup>21</sup> They survive in a lone manuscript dated to the twelfth century, and they were apparently not widely known during that time.<sup>22</sup> He was born in the village of Meung-sur-Loire near Orléans in approximately 1046 to a family of lesser means. He became a monk at nearby Bourgueil where he rose to the abbacy ca. 1078. The abbey at Bourgueil was wealthy, which allowed Baudri the leisure time and resources to compose his verse.<sup>23</sup>

Baudri's poem for Hubert, his teacher, indicates that, at the very least, he received a rudimentary education at Meung-sur-Loire. Yet Baudri must have been well educated in order to become an abbot, although

it is uncertain what further instruction he received. He clearly also had connections with the cathedral school at Angers, for he wrote a poem in honor of the school's master, Marbod of Rennes.<sup>24</sup> Baudri's poem to Marbod makes reference to their special friendship.<sup>25</sup> He also mentions Marbod in a poem to Le Ronceray's Emma, calling him a "remarkable star among poets [*uatam spectabile sidus*]."<sup>26</sup> It is unknown just how Baudri came to be associated with Le Ronceray beyond the fact that he had some link to Angers.

At Bourgueil, Baudri had access to a sizable library, which he praises in one of his poems.<sup>27</sup> During his free time, Baudri likely spent many hours engaged in reading and other scholarly pursuits.<sup>28</sup> He was well acquainted with ancient writers and mentions both Virgil and Homer in his verse. He also wrote six brief poems on Cicero, who authored a treatise on friendship that was well known in the Middle Ages.<sup>29</sup> Most apparent, however, is Baudri's familiarity with Ovid (43 BCE-ca. 17 CE). For instance, he notably wrote fictitious letter-poems from Paris and Helen to each other; these poems were modeled on similar verses from Ovid's *Heroides*.<sup>30</sup>

The friendship that Baudri describes in his poetry (to both men and women) is derived from Ovid's *amor* (romantic and erotic love), Cicero's *amicitia* (classical friendship based on virtue), and patristic notions of Christian friendship and brotherly love, or *caritas*. As a result of these influences, Baudri, working with the women of Le Ronceray, formulated his own interpretation of spiritual friendship. Baudri was clearly concerned with friendship's spiritual aspects, but in his verse the spiritual is intertwined with the secular. The romantic and the spiritual often complement one another when medieval writers describe spiritual love in romantic terms.<sup>31</sup>

Cicero's treatise *De amicitia*, written in 44 BCE, was an influential text on the subject of friendship in the medieval period. In this text Cicero developed and modified Platonic and Aristotelian ideas about friendship, a topic which he also addressed in his *De officiis*, composed soon after.<sup>32</sup> Early Christian authors interested in friendship, like John Cassian (ca. 360-435) in his *Collationes*, St. Ambrose (ca. 330-397) in his *De officiis*, and St. Augustine of Hippo in his letters and *Confessions*, Christianized Ciceronian friendship ideology. Thus, even if medieval men and women

did not have immediate access to Cicero's texts, they still had access to his ideas via early Christian writers.<sup>33</sup>

For Cicero, virtue (an inherently masculine trait) was an absolute must in order for individuals to form bonds of friendship. Friendship comes into existence, he says, when one recognizes another in whom he can identify "a sort of lamp of uprightness and virtues." He goes on to proclaim that nothing is "more lovable than virtue, nothing that allures us more to affection, since on account of their virtue and uprightness we feel a sort of affection even for those whom we have never seen."<sup>34</sup> Additionally, true friendship is altruistic. "Advantage" is no basis for friendship, he argues, although once individuals have entered into a friendship, they will certainly profit.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Cicero argues that it is "those who are most abundantly blessed with wealth and power, and especially with virtue," who cultivate true friendships.<sup>36</sup> He also writes that friendship survives even death because "tender recollection" and "deep longing" remain present. These attributes make friends worthy of admiration.<sup>37</sup> Thus, for Cicero, physical separation is not an obstacle to friendship, something that medieval writers, including Baudri, consistently reiterate. Christian writers like Baudri made use of Cicero's ideas, particularly the notion that virtue cements bonds of friendship. For Cicero those bonds existed between men only, but for medieval Christian authors women too could be virtuous. Certainly Baudri recognized the "lamp of uprightness and virtues" in the women to whom he wrote, as we shall discover.

Cicero believed that, at most, friendship could exist between "a few [*paucos*]." <sup>38</sup> In the early church *caritas*, meaning brotherly love or Christian charity, which was communal, often took precedence over individual friendships. Monastic communities generally practiced *caritas* because early Christians feared discord might arise as the result of individual relationships. Nevertheless, the term *caritas* is not simply a monastic ideal and might also apply to the Christian community of believers as a whole.<sup>39</sup> As John proclaimed, "God is love [*Deus caritas est*]." <sup>40</sup> Criticism of *amicitia* appears in the New Testament when James asks, "Adulterers, know you not that the friendship [*amicitia*] of this world is the enemy of God?" <sup>41</sup> Still, the classical (and pagan) term *amicitia* continued in use and was not necessarily always incompatible with *caritas*. *Amicitia* between

Christians came to be interpreted as something that ultimately was of the divine world, thus providing a way to circumvent James's attack. As Caroline White has argued, Christians, like Augustine, concluded that *caritas* was the stimulant behind *amicitia* so that the two were complementary rather than divergent forces.<sup>42</sup>

Ovid's discursive poetry also informed the style and substance of Baudri's compositions. Ovid was widely studied in eleventh-century schools, like Orléans, near Baudri's hometown, where his work was particularly popular.<sup>43</sup> Ovid's *Heroides*, a text which obviously influenced Baudri, is a series of epistolary love poems sent from infamous women in ancient literature and history to their romantic love interests; also included are a few of the men's replies. The love in these poems is *amor*.<sup>44</sup> They are characterized by a few similar themes including longing for the absent lover. For example, Penelope's poem to Ulysses begins, "This missive your Penelope sends to you, O Ulysses, slow of return that you are—yet write nothing back to me; yourself come!"<sup>45</sup> Similarly, Phyllis writes to Demophon, "I, your Phyllis, who welcomed you to Rhodope, Demophon, complain that the promised day is past, and you not here."<sup>46</sup> And Hypsipyle to Jason: "but a letter may be written, howe'er adverse the wind. Hypsipyle deserved the sending of a greeting."<sup>47</sup>

Because of their extended separation, many of these pseudo-women writers are concerned with fidelity, both their own and their lovers', and consistently refer to the "prayers" they offer up to bring their lovers back to them. For instance, Penelope writes, "Yet is he [Ulysses] bent by my faithfulness [*pietate*] and my chaste prayers [*precibusque pudicis*]." Phyllis writes to Demophon, "Oft, bending the knee in prayer that you fare well—ah, base, base man!—have I venerated the gods with prayer or with burning of holy incense" and refers to her "faithful love [*fidus amor*]."<sup>48</sup> Deianira also, in her letter-poem to Hercules, refers to herself as "busied with chaste prayers [*operata pudicis*]."<sup>49</sup> Phyllis expresses fear about other women: "Why entreat, unhappy that I am? It may be you are already won by another bride."<sup>50</sup> Medea's poem to Jason is characterized by resentment at having been betrayed for another, and she refers to him as a "faithless husband [*infido viro*]."<sup>51</sup>

Constant Mews points out that Baudri believed *amor* and *amicitia* were synonyms and that he articulates the belief that God inspires



*amor*.<sup>52</sup> Cicero provided a link between the two words in his treatise *De amicitia* when he noted, “For it is love [*amor*] from which the word ‘friendship’ [*amicitia*] is derived.”<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Cicero did not use the two words interchangeably, and he clearly recognized a distinction.

Baudri, however, goes beyond viewing *amor* and *amicitia* as synonymous. He takes Cicero’s point a step further. He fuses the two ideals, the Ovidian and the Ciceronian, giving the term *amor* a new meaning, “loving friendship,” and in doing so prefigures ideas found in the twelfth-century “lost love letters” attributed to Heloise and Abelard in which Ciceronian friendship and Ovidian love are similarly blended.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, medieval people often viewed friendship as a kind of love. When Ovid spoke of *amor*, however, he was referring to love accompanied by physical desire. Use of this terminology could thus prove problematic for Christian authors. Baudri conversely saw *amor* as divinely inspired and Christianized the term.

Jan M. Ziolkowski has investigated the impact of Ciceronian friendship doctrine during the late eleventh and twelfth centuries. He discusses the influence of the Loire poets, and although he mentions Baudri, he does not delve into a detailed discussion of his epistles. He concludes that these men and others “turned to Cicero’s friendship dialogue in a spirit of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*. The resultant new doctrine of friendship formulated by these medieval Latin authors was an essential constituent of what is now called courtly love. Indeed, courtly friendship, inspired by Cicero et alii, anticipated courtly love, inspired by Ovid et alii.”<sup>55</sup> Yet Baudri and the Le Ronceray nuns, especially his correspondent Constance, deserve recognition for their contribution to this phenomenon that Ziolkowski describes. They represent part of a process happening in the Loire Valley that contributed to significant intellectual and literary developments during the twelfth century.

Baudri’s fusion of these ideologies is most apparent in a fictitious letter-poem in which he assumes Ovid’s persona. Baudri writes, “God filled our [human] nature with love [*amoris*]; / Nature teaches us what he taught her.”<sup>56</sup> Thus, in Baudri’s verse the goddess Nature becomes the intermediary who transmits love from God to humankind. Human nature (not to be confused with the goddess Nature) is subsequently imbued with love. Baudri goes on to write, “God who gave me being,

granted me loving [*amare*].”<sup>57</sup> This idea of God as the originator of *amor*, which Baudri viewed as loving friendship, and Nature as the transmitter, follows Cicero’s belief that the goddess Nature was the origin of friendship. It is nature and “an inclination of the soul joined with a feeling of love” that gives birth to the bonds of friendship.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, for Cicero friendship was everlasting because nature was unchanging.<sup>59</sup> Augustine’s works Christianized this Ciceronian principle by arguing that God was friendship’s origin.<sup>60</sup>

This belief in God as the originator of loving friendship also appears in one of Baudri’s poems to his female friend Agnes, who was a novice at Le Ronceray. In this verse he refers to “loving friendship [*amor*] which is composed in Christ,” and he writes, “Loving friendship performed in the Lord elevates the lovers, / Since without God all love is uncertain.”<sup>61</sup> In these lines God appears as the agent of love, and God binds friends, just as Nature cements friendships in Cicero’s work. Moreover, Baudri’s *amor* is, to use C. Stephen Jaeger’s terminology, “ennobling love” because it is divinely inspired, and, as he explains, “elevates” those who participate in it.<sup>62</sup> Not only has Baudri Christianized lustful, pagan *amor*, but he has also fused the idea of Ciceronian *amicitia* with Ovidian *amor*.

Baudri’s correspondent Muriel, a Le Ronceray nun, was apparently a renowned female poet in the Loire Valley, although none of her compositions are extant.<sup>63</sup> She and Baudri must have corresponded in verse frequently because he writes, “you do not delay in returning your salutations for mine.”<sup>64</sup> Not only did Baudri praise her poetry, but so did Serlo of Wilton and Hildebert of Lavardin.<sup>65</sup> Baudri acknowledges the “rumor [*fama*]” of her “magnificence [*te magnificarat*]” and notes that he has heard her recite verse: “I drew in person with my eyes and also my ears.” He admires Muriel’s poetic talent: “O how pleasant are words coated in your sweet honey! / O how sweet your voice sounds when you recite!”<sup>66</sup> He goes on to praise her in a characteristically medieval way by telling her “Your words sound manly, while your voice is feminine.”<sup>67</sup> This masculine description praising female achievement signals his belief that women could overcome the physical. In other words, the bodily vessel was unimportant. Certainly, praising a woman as a man was a form of high praise.<sup>68</sup>

Baudri also acknowledges Muriel’s skill at composition: “The words’

pleasing arrangement and disciplined sequence / Places you now among illustrious, divine poets.”<sup>69</sup> Baudri likewise praises the education of women: “A great literary education has the habit of softening harsh girls, / A great literary education strengthens your mind.”<sup>70</sup> Our poet plays with gender norms in these lines; medieval culture viewed women as “soft” and equated the masculine with a “hard” or harsh quality.<sup>71</sup> Baudri reverses these conceptions in the above passage to suggest that education makes young women both more feminine and more masculine. In the first line masculine harshness is negative, while in the second, Baudri praises women for thinking like men. Women’s intellect was thus a key component in Baudri’s attraction to spiritual friendships with them. The value he places on women’s intellect is not surprising given that Baudri was acting as a teacher for the Le Ronceray nuns.

His language is based on both classical and early Christian concepts of friendship and love and the Ovidian love-letter. For example, in this poem addressed to Muriel, Baudri makes use of the traditional theme of the longing created by distance, a motif found in both Christian letters of friendship and love letters, when he writes, “O would that it come! Come, I beg, that moment, / When I win the chance to have another conversation with you!” Nevertheless, just as in other medieval letters of friendship, Baudri believes their epistolary poems keep the two friends linked: “All the while, let our shared verses entrust us to one another.”<sup>72</sup> Poetry thus maintains a kind of spiritual presence for Baudri even when he and Muriel are apart. He writes, “May you be the first person privy to my secrets, / May I be aware of your secrets even when we are apart.”<sup>73</sup> This quote implies that Baudri believed Muriel possessed, or could possess, knowledge of his inner life. He also acknowledges that the two maintain a spiritual connection in spite of distance. This belief that friends keep a spiritual link despite distance is a key component of spiritual friendship.<sup>74</sup> Muriel simultaneously provides inspiration. Writing that he has never before written to young women, Baudri credits Muriel with changing his mind: “But you will compel me to complete this unknown path.”<sup>75</sup> His friendship with Muriel is thus an ennobling relationship because he believes she can make him a better poet. He ends by asking that she have pity on him when correcting his verse just as he will have when he corrects hers.<sup>76</sup> These lines signal the existence

of mutual respect between Baudri and Muriel for one another's skill; this respect laid the foundation upon which they constructed their long-distance friendship.

Another of Baudri's correspondents, female friends, and a skilled poet is the Emma mentioned previously, who likely taught grammar at Le Ronceray.<sup>77</sup> She was definitely a teacher, for as we have seen, Baudri describes her as such in his poem: "The swarm of your female pupils rallies around you, / So that the bees might be replenished with the mother-bee's honey." He also describes her poetry as "nourishing milk [*ubera lacte*]," and he declares that if Le Ronceray accepted men, he would gladly be one of her students.<sup>78</sup> At the end of the poem he mentions two young girls, Godhild and Orieldis, who were probably Emma's pupils.<sup>79</sup> His above poem to Agnes also points to her being a young student at Angers because he encourages her to continue her studies in poetry.<sup>80</sup> He also addressed two poems to the young student Beatrice criticizing her silence and inadequate poetry.<sup>81</sup> Belle S. Tuten has persuasively noted, "These poems suggest a situation in which Emma and her young pupils—several of whom Baudri knew by name and wrote teasing poems to—carried on a sort of group relationship with Baudry [sic], possibly reading his poems out loud as part of their Latin lesson."<sup>82</sup> Perhaps Emma's students were even receiving instruction in letter-writing or Ovidian discourse via Baudri's correspondence.

He refers specifically to the type of relationship he and Emma share when he writes, "Now at least, virgin, keep me under your loving friendship [*amore*] / As I have held you under my loving friendship [*amore*]."<sup>83</sup> Like Muriel, Baudri knew Emma by reputation first because her participation in friendly discourse [*colloquio*] was rare.<sup>84</sup> *Colloquium* by definition was a type of public conversation or recitation, such as that described in Baudri's poem for Muriel. Bond has shown that for Baudri *colloquium* was "the culminating act of amor."<sup>85</sup> Yet their correspondence creates a kind of immediate *colloquium* for Baudri because, as in his poem to Muriel, the exchange of verse keeps friends present. Baudri writes that "greetings [*aeue*]" keep Emma "constantly near" to him [*te contiguet perpetuetque michi*], and "the law of living well" makes her "immortal" [*lex bene uiuendi te michi perpetuet*]. Moreover, Baudri specifies what aspect of Emma's character keeps her near: her "special virtue [*specialis*

*honestas*].”<sup>86</sup> Here Baudri articulates another Ciceronian idea: friendship is formed based on one’s virtue. Baudri admired Emma’s intellect, respected her as a poet and teacher, and venerated her as his friend.

Baudri’s two letter-poems to Constance, however, are the most notable of his poems of friendship addressed to women because they are lengthy and abundant in declarations of love and friendship. Constance also wrote poetry, and Baudri’s collection contains her reply to one of his letter-poems, providing a rare glimpse into the world and thoughts of a late eleventh-century female poet and religious woman. Constance had perhaps only recently taken vows at Le Ronceray. Lines from both Baudri’s poetry and Constance’s own verse suggest this conclusion. In Baudri’s first poem to Constance, he writes that she and God had made a pact, and, “You have dedicated your virginity to Him which you should release to Him.”<sup>87</sup>

These poems are particularly Ovidian in style and contain numerous declarations of friendship.<sup>88</sup> The second of Baudri’s poems addressed to Constance is also his most reactionary. He defends himself against accusations of inappropriate behavior, an act that signals that he may have come under fire over his correspondence and friendships with women in the wake of increasing clerical misogyny brought on by the crackdown on clerical marriage.

Baudri’s first poem to Constance contains effusive praise of her vow of virginity; this theme suggests a defensive undertone regarding his friendship with her. Most of this poem encourages Constance to live piously, and Baudri ends his verse by asking Constance to pass his greetings on to an anonymous nun with whom he also shares a friendship: “Having greeted the sister on my behalf, / Restore the bond of friendship [*foedus amicitiae*] between us.”<sup>89</sup> Baudri intentionally makes use of the term *foedus* in his poems of friendship because, as Bond has pointed out, “the word is fundamentally ambiguous.” Ovid used *foedus* in reference to sexual activity, but the term also had a political connotation. Baudri was certainly aware of the word’s multiple meanings and used it on purpose.<sup>90</sup> In fact, in his next poem addressed to Constance, Baudri uses the term to mean both the “bond of love” and “filthy love.”<sup>91</sup> Bond’s characterization of this word as ambiguous is correct; Baudri’s use of *foedus* to mean two different things proves that he was aware of

the word's ambiguity and played with its meaning, perhaps in homage to Ovid, but also simply because he probably enjoyed this poetic game. Peter Dronke has aptly described this letter as "the worldliest, wittiest celebration of the Christian ideal of spiritual friendship with an impish eye for all that such friendship is not."<sup>92</sup>

Finally, Baudri asks that Constance remember him, and he expresses a desire for her to share her feelings with him: "Thereafter, I beg do not forget me, / Make your heart and visceral emotions special for me. / If you wish to share something, commit it to tablets."<sup>93</sup> Baudri encourages Constance to keep up their correspondence, and he wants to take part in her inner life. His friendship with Constance, as well as his other educated female friends, appears to have had a strong intellectual component in addition to the spiritual.

Baudri's next poem addressed to Constance uses the concepts of romantic *amor* and classical *amicitia* interchangeably and begins with the following defense:

Read through this letter, and carefully clasp it once read,  
Lest malignant tongues harm my reputation.  
Read through my verse by yourself with careful hunting,  
Read through it, whatever it is; a friend's hand [*amica manus*]  
wrote it.  
A friend's hand [*amica manus*] wrote it, and the same friend  
[*amicus*] fashioned it;  
The same man who wrote these verses, composed them.  
What this letter speaks of is love [*amor*] and love poetry [*carmen*  
*amoris*].  
And yet no venom lies hidden in the letter's touch.  
My page is not smeared with the Gorgon's blood.  
Nor does Medea secretly accompany my work.<sup>94</sup>

Although he defends his honorable intentions, Baudri simultaneously emphasizes the physicality of the letter, thereby making it an erotic object. The above passage is reminiscent of the poem by Venantius Fortunatus in which the author admires the fingermarks his friend and correspondent Agnes left in the butter she sent to him. Instead of

butter, here the physical, tangible page is Baudri's gift to Constance. Like Agnes's hand on the butter pat, Baudri's hand has "fashioned" the epistle; he draws attention to the fact that he has physically touched the page when he points out that he has both written and composed the verses. The letter is thus a material gift, much like the butter, and Baudri instructs Constance to treasure it as such.

Between this poem and the previous, the criticism surrounding Baudri's relationship with Constance and others might have become more severe. These opening lines both defend his intentions and instruct Constance to persevere. Likewise, these instructions imply that Constance was already aware of the controversy. Baudri's reference to the poisonous Gorgon's blood emphasizes that lust does not characterize his work.

Baudri was in no way naïve and was definitely aware of the difficulties a churchman could encounter when interacting with women in ways which others might deem inappropriate. In fact, he was the author of one of Robert of Arbrissel's (ca. 1045-1116) *vitae*, which was written after his letters to Constance. In the *Life* he defends Robert's relations with religious women. Robert, who spent time as a wandering preacher in the late eleventh century, attracted a number of female followers with whom he ate and slept. In 1100 he founded the double monastery Fontevraud for his disciples. Both Marbod of Rennes and Geoffrey of Vendôme wrote extremely critical letters to Robert in which they attacked his relations with women.<sup>95</sup>

In light of this potentially scandalous atmosphere, Baudri further justifies his friendship with Constance, noting that their relationship is based on an intellectual connection rather than lust:

A filthy love [*foedus amor*] has never driven me to you.  
Neither lascivious love [*lasciuus amor*] nor a love of wanton love  
    [*amor petulantis amoris*]  
Stirs up the depths of my heart on account of you.  
Your learned writing [*tua littera*] has moved my feelings for you,  
And your Muse has joined me to you deep within.  
In short, so much eloquence lives in your tongue  
That you could be considered to be, a Sibyl, and are to me.<sup>96</sup>

As Baudri explains, Constance's literary talents have ignited their friendship. He notes that Constance's "Muse," who is both God and classical being, intimately links the two of them.<sup>97</sup> Again, as in his previous poem, Baudri carefully notes that God inspires their friendship while simultaneously and cleverly remaining true to his ancient influences. At the same time, it is almost as if the poet protests too much; Baudri appears to invite controversy because his protestations actually call attention to the amorous nature of his verse. He seems to be enjoying the game. Although Baudri implies a level of secrecy at the letter's beginning when he tells Constance to "carefully clasp it once read, / Lest malignant tongues harm my reputation," at the end of the epistle he tells her, "If you wish, display what I have written; hide it if you wish; / For fear is not the teacher for a good lady."<sup>98</sup> The implication of danger then is part of Baudri's poetic game, and it becomes difficult to determine if he indeed may have also really come under fire, although it is not improbable.

He protests even more when he writes that he does not want to be Constance's husband, and "Let mouth and heart confirm our friendship [*amiciciam*]." Here he uses the distinctly Ciceronian word for friendship, thus distancing himself from any ambiguity. He also refers to the classical and biblical notion that friends share one heart but two bodies when he writes, "Let our hearts be joined, but our bodies remain apart." Then he notes, "Let the shame be in the act, let the game be in the pen."<sup>99</sup> Later he echoes this sentiment when he says, "But if someone should blame us for having said playful things, / I am not a solemn man: whatever I do is a game." And finally, "But whatever I say, let my deeds retain modesty / Let my heart live in honor as pure, my mind as chaste."<sup>100</sup> Katherine Kong has commented on Baudri's verbal nod to his poetic game, which she points out highlights that "there is harm in doing, but not in writing."<sup>101</sup>

Baudri's "game" abounds with classical imagery and certainly reads like love poetry. Baudri writes, "Oh, if only you knew, as my heart knows, / How valuable you are to me, how much I make you mine," and goes on to explain that Constance is more valuable to him than any goddess, girl, or love. She means more to him than Helen to Paris, Juno to Jupiter, and Venus to Mars.<sup>102</sup> He defends the use of pagan texts as well: "Just as there are examples of old evils in books, / So too are good



deeds placed in them which you might do.”<sup>103</sup> Indeed, pagan authors encourage Baudri and Constance toward virtue: “Let us tread the path of virtues [*virtutum*], let us walk to the stars; / Even pagans advise us to hasten thus.”<sup>104</sup> These words serve as justification for his use of Ovid and Cicero to express feelings of spiritual friendship.<sup>105</sup> He cannot resist pagan authors because, as he writes in homage to Horace, “Captive Athens is now being captured at Bourgueil, / Barbaric Greece now serves Bourgueil. / Let the Latin tongue be enriched by enemy booty; Let the vanquished Greek and Hebrew serve. / Let us not miss reading’s lesson in any (of them); / Let everything that is, be book and text for us.”<sup>106</sup>

Baudri’s verse also illuminates his understanding of spiritual friendship as something special and rare:

Neither my flesh nor my heart itches for you;  
 But, nevertheless, I ardently love [*amo*] you without deceit.  
 I love [*amo*] you ardently, all of me will love [*amabo*] all of you,  
 You alone do I enfold within my heart.  
 Therefore, it is clearly visible that this kind of love [*amoris*]  
 Tastes of something not common, but special [*spetiale*].  
 It is a special love [*spetialis amor*], which neither the flesh accompanies  
 Secretly nor illicit desire wounds.<sup>107</sup>

In these lines Baudri specifically addresses the reasons why his friendship with Constance is special. Their friendship is based on purity of the heart, and these types of friendships are unique. Baudri obviously knew what kinds of relationships in which he was participating when he cultivated friendships with women. He was aware of the meanings of his vocabulary and purposefully used the language of both friendship and romantic love to create an unusual and unique blend: “loving friendship.” Kong notes that the *ars dictaminis* (art of composition) “invited experimentation; it provided a structure and vocabulary that required positioning the self in relation to others, yet rules invite play and transgression.”<sup>108</sup> Baudri’s correspondence, especially the poems to and from Constance, and this creation of “loving friendship,” are illustrative of the experimentation to which Kong refers.

As in his other letter-poems, Baudri both laments separation and

writes of the bond friends share in spite of distance. He notes that “true love [*uerus amor*]” and her “beauty [*forma*]” do not permit him to forget Constance wherever he is.<sup>109</sup> Nevertheless, he is afraid that Constance may forget him:

May you never be able so to forget me, Constance,  
That you dissolve the very bond of my love [*foedus amoris*].  
Oh, if only God and nature had bound us together  
So that neither should live forgetting the other.<sup>110</sup>

Baudri’s lament implies that friendship maintained over distance is always at risk of ending. He therefore wishes that friendship were innate because then it could never end. He hopes that God and nature work together to make the earthly friendship they have created everlasting. At the same time, however, Baudri believes that he and Constance share a mental connection because of their correspondence. She is distinctly aware of his inner life: “You are not ignorant of what I want: everything I wish, you know. / No vein of my heart could lie hidden from you; / I have written you everything that I want, that I have wanted.”<sup>111</sup>

Baudri’s fears were unfounded, for Constance’s reply mourns their separation, and she begs him to visit her. Her poem contains the same number of lines (178) as Baudri’s second poem for her, and her opening line mirrors his.<sup>112</sup> Constance must have been very educated; Baudri’s numerous allusions to Greek and Roman myth imply that he expected her to know his references. Her poem abounds with similar references, and she mentions Cicero, Aristotle, and Homer by name. She also models her epistolary poem on those attributed to ancient women in the *Heroides*. Constance’s reply bears striking similarities to poems credited to Penelope, Phyllis, Hypsipyle, and Deianira in Ovid’s *Heroides*, for she emphasizes the themes of longing and concern for fidelity.

While some scholars have suggested that Baudri wrote this letter-poem himself, other scholarship has argued against this theory. Peter Dronke calls this thesis “historically implausible” because of differences in style and tone. Kong also notes that Constance’s letter-poem is markedly different from Baudri’s verse, and she writes that “given the medieval practice of collecting and compiling actual correspondence, and

the absence of evidence to the contrary, there is no compelling reason to question Constance's authorship of Carmen 201." Kong's analysis of Constance's epistolary poem draws attention to distinct differences between her writing and Baudri's.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, many of the women with whom Baudri exchanged verse were poets or poets-in-training, and Le Ronceray seems to have been a center of learning for elite women in the Loire Valley, so there is no reason to believe that Constance was not both a real person and a poet herself.

Constance's verse is characterized by an extreme sense of longing and her obsession with Baudri's fidelity. Her poem reads much like a love letter, and it is pleading and frustrated in tone, unlike Baudri's. She repeatedly declares her faithfulness and expresses concern over his, a theme taken straight from the *Heroides*. For example, she writes that when she does not know where Baudri is, she fears he may have befriended another "girl." Moreover, she speaks specifically about the "pact" of friendship:

Indeed, no girl would be more fortunate than me  
If I had safe love and safe pacts [*tutus amore tutaque pacta*],  
Although firm fidelity [*fides*] affirms my friend [*amicum*] for me,  
I cannot believe that I am secure in his fidelity.  
And I do not doubt that there is anything to be feared about this in  
his fidelity,  
But I fear to lose what I violently love [*amo*].<sup>114</sup>

This passage is an interesting blend of the language of romantic love and the language of friendship. Like Baudri, Constance appears aware of her construction. In speaking about fidelity and "violent love" she conjures up images of a passionate romantic affair, in the Ovidian tradition, but she also refers to Baudri as her "friend [*amicum*]." Likewise, given Baudri's correspondence with the nuns and young pupils at Le Ronceray, Constance was probably aware of his friendships with other women and thus inserts these lines as playful jest. She is an active and powerful player in the "game" Baudri initiates.

Constance also laments distant friendship while also noting that their poetry maintains a kind of presence:

I see him in his verses, for I cannot (do) otherwise.  
 Alas that I cannot often see the one I love [*diligo*]  
 Miserable me! I cannot behold what I desire [*cupio*].  
 I am weakened by desire [*desiderio*] and by day-long prayers  
     [*precibus*];  
 In vain I pour out vows and prayers to God [*precesque deo*].  
 A year has gone by in which I could not see that man I seek;  
 But (now) I read his verses often.  
 Oh, what verses, how sweet, how beautiful;  
 He who is lost to me sent them to me yesterday.<sup>115</sup>

Like Baudri, Constance mixes religious imagery with the language of physical desire; desire is accompanied by prayer. “Prayer” also had a dual meaning and is an allusion to Ovid. Women writers in the *Heroides* often mention that they offer up prayers for their lovers. Although Constance and Baudri cannot share physical space, their exchange of poetry allows them to “see [*uideo*]” one another. Nevertheless, Constance remains unsatisfied, and she begs Baudri to find a way to visit her, even going so far as to provide him with possible excuses he can use to travel to Angers. Constance cannot leave the nunnery, but Baudri has the ways, means, and authority to travel:

I will come, if I am able; I would have come if I had been able;  
 But my mean step-mother disrupts my journey.  
 But you, who (as) a lord are not held by any guard,  
 Who step-mother herself fears because you can do many things,  
 Hasten your steps and be here to see me;  
 You have sufficient means and companions.<sup>116</sup>

Unlike Baudri, as Kong notes, Constance is “aggressive” in making a series of demands on her friend and teacher.<sup>117</sup> Her “violent love” erupts on the page. She is belligerent toward his implied resistance, and she knows that their friendship and discourse has made her powerful, for she turns their teacher-student, abbot-nun relationship on its head when she writes: “Fool! who am I teaching? You yourself should teach me.”<sup>118</sup> Each correspondent and friend thus learns from the other: Baudri

teaches Constance in his letters, and she, as she proclaims in her reply, instructs him. Constance ends the poem reiterating her desire to see Baudri, and she even suggests that if he does not appear, he does not love her. She cites her poem as evidence of their “contract [*federis*],” therefore implying that by not paying a visit to Le Ronceray, Baudri is breaking their bond of friendship.<sup>119</sup> Her use of *federis* is noteworthy given its association with the bond of marriage and even more so when we recall Baudri’s denial that he wants to be her husband in his own letter.

Constance, as in Baudri’s first poem addressed to her, also suggests that love begins with God:

The bride of God should love [*debet amare*] God’s servants.  
You are a servant of the bridegroom, you are brother and co-heir;  
You, too, are worthy by my bridegroom’s love [*amore*].  
The bride should respect the friends [*amicos*] of her bridegroom.  
Therefore, I respect you, I love [*amo*] you vigilantly.<sup>120</sup>

Thus, God not only inspires love and loving friendship, but Constance states that they are a Christian duty thereby justifying her relationship with Baudri. Indeed, she was certainly aware that scandal could arise should people get the wrong idea about their relationship. She writes that if Baudri were to visit her, his companions would have to stand around him and one of her sisters would also have to be present.<sup>121</sup> Constance deliberately titillates in jest; she knows that their relationship is innocent yet plays with the theme of romantic love and the reality of potential scandal. Like Baudri, she acknowledges that there is no shame in writing: “I shall turn to the wax, because wax knows no shame.” She also suggests that their poetic game is not really dangerous because they have chosen the religious life: “May a chaste life commend our games.”<sup>122</sup>

Baudri’s interest in friendship with women may have been influenced not only by the rising popularity of Ovidian literature in the schools but also by the Gregorian attack on nicolaitism (clerical marriage), which had been accepted, albeit begrudgingly, up to the eleventh century, although priests were to remain chaste within marriage.<sup>123</sup> Yet Gregorians launched a campaign that challenged the existing state of affairs.<sup>124</sup> As a result of their efforts the church officially nullified these marriages in 1123.<sup>125</sup> Jo Ann McNamara argues that these changes in

Europe's religious atmosphere caused "clerical misogyny" to come to "a crescendo between the mid-eleventh and the mid-twelfth centuries." Yet McNamara also acknowledges that "not all men accepted their roles as enforcers of the system" including Robert of Arbrissel, Anselm of Canterbury, and Christina of Markyate's male friends. She rightly points out that those men and women who interacted in positive ways were "not necessarily confined to the marginal world of the extreme ascetic."<sup>126</sup> One can add Baudri to this list of men who resisted the Gregorian status quo.

Indeed the Gregorian attack on clerical marriage led to shifting attitudes toward women and sexuality. These changes are apparent in writings, like Baudri's correspondence, produced in the wake of this Gregorian stance. For instance, Anne L. Barstow points out that erotic literature appeared that used sexual terms to describe "spiritual union."<sup>127</sup> At the same time, this intimacy also gained expression via spiritual friendship with women. Moreover, it is well documented that the cult of the Virgin Mary became increasingly popular in the high medieval period. Barstow argues that during the eleventh century the Virgin "represented the female principle in the lives of newly celibate clergy."<sup>128</sup> Female friends and correspondents may have filled the same role in the lives of their male religious friends.

Gregorian-inspired critical assaults on women during the period were meant to cast the female sex in a negative light so that such attacks led to the escalation of misogyny among clerics.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, a certain number of male religious figures, like Baudri, formed intimate spiritual friendships with women despite this widespread attack. Thus, while sensitivity to male-female interaction was on the upswing, this atmosphere also prompted religious men to cultivate relationships with women that emphasized virginity and celibacy, namely spiritual friendship. In calling attention to the potentially scandalous nature of their friendship and correspondence Baudri and Constance both acknowledge, and ultimately deny, their sexuality. Constance may appear as a desirable woman in Baudri's poems, but she also treats him as an object of desire. In the case of both sets of letters we ultimately discover that this desire is, in fact, spiritual rather than sexual.

Constance's extant letter-poem in Baudri's collection also tells us much about educated women in the High Middle Ages. If Constance's

poem is any indication, these women understood both the nuanced ideology and practice of spiritual friendship, and they were active participants in cultivating and maintaining these relationships. More significantly, women made new and unique contributions to the theory and practice of friendship. Kong points out that the “play” found in the correspondence between Constance and Baudri puts them “on equal footing, making them epistolary, if not social, partners.” She also suggests that correspondence provides women like Constance with “unexpected, if limited, agency.”<sup>130</sup> But spiritual friendship itself also provides women with agency because of the importance of virtue and its Divine origins. Constance was aware of the power of the pen and the power of friendship, for she commands action on Baudri’s part, and she writes that she is teaching him. Indeed friendship itself could have an equalizing nature. As St. Ambrose writes in his Ciceronian inspired *De officiis*, pride has no place in *amicitia*. Equality, he points out, allows friends to share their problems and provide one another with a sympathetic ear during times of distress.<sup>131</sup> Both gender and social distinctions therefore often become blurred in medieval friendship literature, including the Le Ronceray correspondence.

It is difficult to gauge how “real” Baudri’s feelings were for these women, or how “real” Constance’s feelings were for Baudri, given the highly stylized nature of the correspondence. Nevertheless, this stylization does not mean that Baudri was disingenuous or wrote without emotion. Kong has pointed out that “a repeated formula does not indicate lack of sincerity. . . . By claiming singularity of address, whether or not he writes truthfully, Baudri positions himself as a writer who understands that ardent assurances of singularity carry a certain value with an addressee and are part of the repertoire of gestures performed in amatory discourse.”<sup>132</sup> McGuire has also noted the difficulty scholars encounter when studying such formulaic sources, but also points out that “a commonplace word or phrase in a single letter can be a vehicle for conveying meaning and intent, as when biblical phrases are repeated in order to represent affective bonds. . . . What we find is both personal and individual, communal and impersonal.” He also writes that one can either “reduce all expressions of friendship to mere language” or pursue “a full understanding of motives and feelings. Somewhere between these

extremes lies the truth.”<sup>133</sup> While one cannot precisely identify Baudri’s level of emotional sincerity, one can glean meaning from his collection. The significance of studying friendship in Baudri’s correspondence lies not in his and his female correspondents’ sincerity, but in their contribution to the creation of a new friendship ideology that melded Ciceronian, Ovidian, and Christian ideals.

Working together, Baudri and the women of Le Ronceray formulated an ideology of loving friendship that drew on pre-existing Christian and classical ideas about love and friendship, but their formulation was also forward-thinking and parallels the rise of contemporary courtly love literature. As his poems prove, Baudri was mindful of the scandal his friendships with women might cause. Constance too was cognizant of this issue. Although Baudri and Constance draw upon the Ovidian tradition to express their loving friendship, they are both careful to clarify that this love is spiritual. They were obviously conscious of the problematic nature of using this classical source. The Le Ronceray correspondence is a product of both the Ovidian revival and the atmosphere created by the Gregorian Reform movement’s attitude toward women. Furthermore, this kind of correspondence, in which friendship took center stage, provided both religious men and women with spiritual and intellectual exercise, which helped them to grow closer to the Divine. Baudri’s poems, in which he is playfully amorous and distinctly spiritual, offered a chance to exercise his poetic skill. Constance also seems to have used her correspondence with Baudri as an opportunity to play with the themes of love and friendship in a creative and unique way. These letters, however, were not simply a means by which the writers were able to hone their literary skills. This correspondence served a multitude of purposes and fulfilled a variety of needs: intellectual, spiritual, and emotional. These epistolary poems are thusly reminders of a unique historical moment in the Middle Ages in which friendships between clerics and women were not uncommon and enriched the spiritual and intellectual lives of the participants. These verses show women as active agents of change and as informed and educated innovators who shaped intellectual discourse that was often the domain of men.

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1. Baudri of Bourgueil, Poem 139, lines 5-20, in Baudri de Bourgueil, *Poèmes*, ed. and trans. Jean-Yves Tilliette, 2 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1998-2002): “Te michi contiguet semper specialis honestas, / Lex bene uiuendi te michi perpetuet. / Aut olim fama michi tantum cognita sola, / Aut uix communi cognita colloquio, / Nunc mecum uiuis non tanquam uirgo gregalis, / Sed tanquam uirgo nominis egregii, / Vtpote quam proprio sic fouit melle sophia / Vt nunc emanent ubera lacte tua. / Quod nuper patuit michi carmina uestra legenti, / Quae tu gratuito nectare condieras. / Ad te concurrunt examina discipularum, / Vt recreentur apes melle parentis apis. / Quod si discipulos uester concederet ordo, / Vellem discipulus ipsemet esse tuus. / Nunc sub amore tuo saltim me collige, uirgo; / Collegi siquidem te sub amore meo.”

All subsequent Latin references come from this edition. Baudri’s poems were first published in Phyllis Abrahams, *Les Oeuvres poétiques de Baudri de Bourgueil (1046-1130)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1926). This edition, however, contains transcription errors. In addition to Tilliette’s French translation, the poems have also appeared in Italian: Manuela Samson, ed. and trans., *Lettere amoroze e galanti* (Rome: Carocci Editore, 2005), 38-150.

2. This nunnery appears under the names Notre-Dame de la Charite, Beatae Mariae Caritatis Andegavensis, and Ronceray d’Angers. Monastic Matrix, <http://monasticmatrix.usc.edu/monasticon/?function=detail&id=2015>, accessed August 18, 2012 (Monastic Matrix site relocated to Department of History, Ohio State University, <http://monasticmatrix.org/monasticon>). For the convent’s origins and place in the Angevin religious milieu see Belle S. Tuten, “Holy Litigants: the Nuns of Ronceray d’Angers and their Neighbors, 1028-1200” (PhD diss., Emory University, 1997), 17-23.

3. Baudri, Poem 142, line 44.

In Baudri’s poetry, the term *foedus* fuses Ovidian and Ciceronian ideas about love and friendship. Ovid used the term *foedus* in reference to sexual intercourse. I address this issue further below. For more on this topic see Gerald Bond, *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 65.

4. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 4-5.

5. Baudri, alongside Hildebert of Lavardin and Marbod of Rennes, also wrote many poems of friendship to men, some of which have been classified as “homoerotic.” See Tison Pugh, “Personae, Same-Sex Desire, and

Salvation in the Poetry of Marbod of Rennes, Baudri of Bourgueil, and Hildebert of Lavardin,” *Comitatus* 31 (2000): 57-86 and Thomas Stehling, trans., *Medieval Latin Poems of Male Love and Friendship* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984).

6. Tuten, “Holy Litigants,” 1-2, 37-46.

7. Jerome, *Ep.* 108.32: “Hunc tibi librum ad duas lucubratiunculas eodem, quem tu sustines, dolore dictaui. nam quotienscumque stilum figere uolui et opus exarare promissum, totiens obriguerunt digiti, cecidit manus, sensus elanguit. unde et inculta oratio uotum scribentis absque ulla elegancia et uerborum lepore testatur.” Latin from *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 55 (Vienna, 1866-).

8. Rosemary Rader, *Breaking Boundaries: Male/Female Friendship in Early Christian Communities* (Ithaca, NY: Paulist Press, 1983), 94-98.

9. J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 113.

10. Augustine, *Ep.* 130.7.14, in *Letters*, trans. Roland Teske and ed. Boniface Ramsey, 4 vols. (New York: New City Press, 2001-5): “In eo quippe nosmetipsos diligimus, si Deum diligimus: et ex alio praecepto proximos nostros sicut nosmetipsos ita vere diligimus, si eos ad Dei similem dilectionem, quantum in nobis est, perducamus. Deum igitur diligimus propter seipsum, et nos ac proximos propter ipsum.” Latin from *Patrologia Latina* (PL) 33: 499.

11. English translations come from Venantius Fortunatus, *Venantius Fortunatus: Personal and Political Poems*, trans. Judith George (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995). Numbers correspond to book numbers and numbers of the poems in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* (MGH AA).

Poem 11.14 MGH AA: “Aspexi digitos per lactea munera fixos, / et stat pieta manus hic ubi crama rapis. / die, rogo, quis teneros sic sculperre conpuit ungues?”

12. Appendix 31 MGH AA: “quae vacuis ceris reddere mella potes.”

13. Anselm of Canterbury, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. Walter Frölich, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990) and Anselm of Canterbury, *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt, vols. 3-6 (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946-61); C. H. Talbot, ed. and trans., *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Recluse* (1959; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); Stephanie Hollis, ed., with W. R. Barnes et al., *Writing the*

Wilton Women: *Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004) and C. H. Talbot, ed., "The *Liber confortatorius* of Goscelin of St. Bertin," *Analecta monastica: Textes et études sur la vie des moines au Moyen Age*, sér. 3, *Studia Anselmiana* 37, ed. M. M. Lebreton, Jean Leclercq, and C. H. Talbot (Rome: Pontifical Institute of St. Anselm, 1955); Hilary of Orléans, *Hilarii versus et ludi*, ed. John Bernard Fuller (New York: Henry Holt, 1929); Hildebert of Lavardin, *Hildebertus cenomannensis episcopus carmina minora*, ed. A. Brian Scott (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2001); Jacques Dalarun, et al., ed. and trans., *Les deux vies de Robert d'Arbrissel fondateur de Fontevraud: Légendes, écrits et témoignages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006).

14. Such studies of love include, in addition to Bond's *The Loving Subject*, Constant J. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters of Heloise and Abelard: Perceptions of Dialogue in Twelfth-Century France* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) and C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). Examples of poetic and/or epistolary studies that address Baudri's correspondence with the Le Ronceray women include Katherine Kong, *Lettering the Self in Medieval and Early Modern France* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2010), Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), and Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

15. Rader, *Breaking Boundaries*.

16. Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience, 350-1250* (1988; reprint Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 244-49. Other monographs on medieval friendship include Gerd Althoff, *Amicitiae und pacta. Bündnis, Einigung, Politik und Gebetsgedenken im beginnenden 10. Jahrhundert* (Hanover: Hahn, 1992), Gerd Althoff, *Family, Friends and Followers: Political and Social Bonds in Medieval Europe*, trans. Christopher Carroll (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), and Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1994). Collections of useful essays include Julian Haseldine, ed., *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1999), Almut Suerbaum and Annette Volting, eds., *Amicitia: Friendship in Medieval Culture: Papers in Honour of Nigel F. Palmer* (Oxford: Modern Humanities Research Centre, 2007), and Eva Österberg, *Friendship and Love, Ethics and Politics: Studies in Mediaeval and Early Modern History* (Budapest: Central European University

Press, 2010). McGuire's new introduction in *Friendship and Community* contains an excellent review of the scholarship on friendship; see especially pages lx-lxxi.

17. McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, lxvii-lxix.

18. Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge, eds. *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age : Explorations of a Fundamental Ethical Discourse*, Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture 6 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 47-48, 92-105.

19. Gerhart B. Ladner, introduction to *Friends and Friendship in the Monastic Tradition*, by Adele M. Fiske (Cuernavaca, Mexico: Centro Intercultural de Documentación 1970), 0/7.

20. Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 175.

21. For Baudri's role in the collection of his correspondence, the manuscript's arrangement, and dating of the letters see Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 34, Jean-Yves Tilliette, "Note sur le manuscrit des poèmes de Baudri de Bourgueil," *Scriptorium* 37 (1983): 241-45, and Gerald A. Bond, "Composing Yourself: Ovid's *Heroides*, Baudri of Bourgueil and the Problem of *Persona*," *Mediaevalia* 13 (1987): 83-117; 88-89.

22. Mews, *The Lost Love Letters*, 98. This manuscript is held in the Vatican library as MS Vat reg 1351.

23. Gerald A. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 46. Baudri, Poem 77, lines 159-60 (p. 75) and Poem 121, line 6.

24. Baudri, Poem 86. Some scholars assume that Baudri was educated at the cathedral school at Angers, but no definitive proof for this assertion exists. For example, see Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 216 and F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 337. Gerald Bond suggests that he was likely educated at the local abbey of Saint Liphard. See Gerald A. Bond, "Iocus Amoris': The Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture," *Traditio* 42 (1986): 143-93; 145 and Baudri, Poem 74. Kimberly LoPrete suggests that he could have studied at the cathedral school at Rheims because he praised the master Godfrey of Rheims in verse and had high regard for the school in general: Kimberly LoPrete, *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 191. LoPrete's conjecture is based on Baudri's Poem 99 to Godfrey in Tilliette's edition cited above.

25. Baudri, Poem 86, line 18: “Marbodum, quem me specialem testor habere.” / “Marbod, I vow to keep you special to me.” Tilliette has translated this line as “Marbode, pour qui je professe une amitié unique.”

26. Baudri, Poem 153, line 59.

27. Baudri, Poem 77, lines 158-59.

28. Baudri himself suggests that he had idle time which allowed him to engage in literary activities. Baudri, Poem 121, line 6: “Dum libet atque uacat, satiras scribamus et odas.”

29. M. Tullius Cicero, *De senectute, De amicitia, De diuinatione*, trans. William Armistead Falconer (1928; reprint, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959). All Latin text and English translations of *De amicitia* come from this edition.

30. Baudri, Poems 7 and 8. Cf. Ovid, *Heriodes*, trans. Grant Showerman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 16 and 17 (pp. 196-243).

31. For an extended discussion of this issue, see Joan M. Ferrante, “Earthly Love in a Spiritual Setting: The Language of Friendship among Religious” and “Spiritual Love in an Earthly Context: Religious Allusions in Courtly Love Texts,” in *Earthly Love, Spiritual Love, Love of the Saints*, ed. Susan J. Ridyard (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1999), 5-44.

32. Cicero refers to his *De amicitia* in *De officiis*, a text in which he reiterates his ideas about friendship and its defining characteristics. Cicero, *On Obligations (De officiis)*, trans. P. G. Walsh (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 64.

33. On this issue, see Jan M. Ziolkowski, “Twelfth-Century Understandings and Adaptations of Ancient Friendship,” in *Mediaeval Antiquity*, ed. Andries Welkenhuysen, Herman Braet, Werner Verbeke, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia; ser. 1, Studia 24 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1995), 63-64.

34. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 8.27-28 (pp. 138-39): “quod in eo quasi lumen aliquod probitatis et virtutis perspicere videamur. Nihil est enim virtute amabilius, nihil quod magis alliciat ad diligendum, quipped cum propter virtutem et probitatem etiam eos, quos numquam vidimus quodam modo diligamus.” Virtue’s significance appears again in *De officiis*. For instance, see 1.5 (p. 4) in P. G. Walsh’s translation, cited above.

35. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 9.32 (pp. 144-45): “Nam si utilitas conglutinet amicitias, eadem commutate dissolveret; sed quia natura mutari non potest idcirco verae amicitiae sempiternae sunt.”

36. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 14.51 (pp. 162-63): “Tantumque abest ut amicitiae propter indigentiam colantur, ut ei, qui opibus et copiis maximeque virtute.”

37. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 7.23 (pp. 132-33): “Quocirca et absentes adsunt et egentes abundant et imbecilli valent et, quod difficilius dictum est, mortui vivunt; tantus eos honos memoria desiderium prosequitur amicorum, ex quo illorum beata mors videtur, horum vita laudabilis.”

38. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 5.20 (pp. 128-29): “ut omnis caritas aut inter duos aut inter paucos iungeretur.”

39. David Konstan has addressed this difficulty in detail. See David Konstan, “Problems in the History of Christian Friendship,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 4 (1996): 87-113.

40. 1 John 4:8. Biblical translations and the Latin from the Vulgate available at the Catholic Encyclopedia, <http://www.newadvent.org/bible/index.html>, accessed August 18, 2012.

41. James 4:4: “Adulteri, nescitis quia amicitia hujus mundi inimica est Dei?”

42. Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 190.

43. Bond, “Iocus Amoris,” 181-82.

44. For examples of this vocabulary see Ovid, *Heriodes*, 1.12 (pp. 10-11) and 23 (pp. 12-13), 2.7, 10, and 21 (pp. 20-21), and 16.4 (pp. 196-97).

45. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 1.1-2 (pp. 10-11): “Hanc tua Penelope lento tibi mittit, Ulixee— / nil mihi rescribas tu tamen; ipse veni!”

46. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 2.1-2 (pp. 18-21): “Hospita, Demophon, tua te Rhodopeia Phyllis / ultra promissum tempus abesse queror.”

47. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 6.7-8 (pp. 68-69): “quamlibet adverso signetur epistula vento. / Hypsipyle missa digna salute fui.”

48. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 2.17-18 (pp. 20-21): “saepe deos supplex, ut tu, scelerate, valeres, / cum prece turicremis sum venerata sacris.”

49. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 9.35 (pp. 110-11).

50. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 2.103 (pp. 28-29): “Quid precor infelix? Te iam tenet altera coniunx.”

51. Ovid, *Heriodes*, 12.210 (pp. 158-59).

52. Mews, *Lost Love Letters*, 99-101.

53. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 7.26: “Amor enim, ex quo amicitia nominata est.”

54. For discussions of the letters exchanged between Heloise and Abelard and their use of Ciceronian and Ovidian ideals, see Jaeger, *Ennobling Love*, 160-73 and Mews, *Lost Love Letters*. Cf. Ziolkowski’s discussion of Raoul de

Tourte, another Loire poet: Ziolkowski. "Twelfth-Century Understandings," 73.

55. *Ibid.*, 70, 81.

56. Translation from Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 52. Baudri, Poem 97, lines 51-52: "Naturam nostrum plenam deus egit amoris; / Nos natura docet quod deus hanc docuit." This poem is written to Ovid from his male friend Florus.

57. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 52. Baudri, Poem 97, line 56: "Qui dedit esse deus prestart amare michi."

58. Cicero, *De amicitia*, 8.27 (pp. 138-39): "Quapropter a natura mihi videtur potius quam indigentia orta amicitia, applicatione magis animi cum quodam sensu amandi."

59. *Ibid.*, 9.32 (pp. 144-45): "sed quia natura mutari non potest idcirco verae amicitiae sempiternae sunt."

60. Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding and ed. John E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1997), 4.4-7 (p. 96). For more on the goddess Natura in medieval Christian literature, see George D. Economou, *The Goddess Natura in Medieval Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

61. Baudri, Poem 138, lines 6-8: "Qui tamen in Christo conficiatur amor. / In Domino confectus amor sublimat amantes, / Abseque Deo siquidem lubricat omnis amor."

62. According to Bond's assessment, in Baudri's poetry "*amor* is not inherently reprehensible but virtuous [*honestus*]:" Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 52.

63. Originally thought to have been a nun at Wilton, Muriel was more likely a nun at Le Ronceray. Gabriela Signori has argued for Muriel's identity as a nun at Le Ronceray based on the letter-poem that precedes Baudri's for Muriel. This verse is addressed to Cecilia, William the Conqueror's daughter, who was the abbess of La Trinité in Caen. In this poem Baudri asks Cecilia to greet a woman (presumably Muriel) who was originally from Bayeux but who had also spent time at Angers and whom he had seen before. Signori's argument is supported by the fact that Baudri says in his poem for Muriel that he has seen her recite poetry before. In addition, his poem to Muriel appears directly after his poem for Cecilia, which suggests that he placed it there in response to the previous letter-poem. Thus, the anonymous woman he mentions in his poem to Cecilia is likely Muriel. The poem addressed to Cecilia must have ignited a rich poetic correspondence between Muriel and Baudri. On Muriel's identity, see J. S. P. Tatlock, "Muriel: The Earliest English Poetess," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*

48 (1933): 317-21, André Boutemy, "Muriel: Note sur deux poèmes de Baudri de Bourgueil et de Serlon de Bayeux," *Le Moyen Âge* 45 (1935): 241-51; 250-25, and Gabriela Signori, "Muriel and the Others . . . or Poems as Pledges of Friendship," in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Julian Haseldine, 199-212; 200-201.

64. Baudri, Poem 137, line 30: "Moxque ualeto meo redde ualeto tuum."

65. Serlo's poem addressed to Muriel appears in *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1872), 233-41. Peter Dronke has also identified and translated poems that he suggests are Serlo's or at least "Serlonian" in style. These poems are also concerned with Ovidian *amor* and friendship. Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric*, vol. 2, 493-512. Hildebert of Lavardin, Poem 26 in *Hildebertus Cenomannensis episcopus carmina minora*, ed. A. Brian Scott.

66. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 1-8: "O quam mellito tua sunt lita uerba lepore! / O quam dulce sonat uox tua dum recitas!"

67. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 10: "Dicta sonant hominem, uox muliebris erat."

68. Joan Ferrante observes: "It may seem demeaning to compliment women by calling them 'manly,' but in a culture which assumes the male as the norm, to recognize maleness in a woman, particularly when encouraging her in a male role in the male world, can be a positive affirmation. Women strengthened each other with the same injunction." Ferrante, *To the Glory of Her Sex*, 15.

69. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 11-12: "Verborum positura decens seriesque modesta / Te iam praeclaris uatibus inseruit."

70. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 19-20: "Littera multa solet duras mollire puellas, / Praedurat pectus littera multa tuum."

71. Alcuin Blamires, *The Case For Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 82-85.

72. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 21-22: "O utinam ueniat! Ueniat, rogo, terminus ille, / Lucrer ut alterius commoda colloqui!" Ancient and early Christian writers were also concerned with the effect distance could have on friendship. Aristotle addressed this issue in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero in his *De amicitia*. For a discussion of distance and early Christian friendship, see Caroline White, "Friendship in Absence—Some Patristic Views," in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Julian Haseldine, 68-90.



73. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 27-28: "Tu secretorum sis conscia prima meorum, / Sim quoque secreti conscius ipse tui."

74. For other examples of this characteristic of spiritual friendship see *The Life of St. Margaret Queen of Scotland* in Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003), 162, 171; *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, 136-37 and 140-43; and Goscelin of St. Bertin, *Liber confortatorius*, trans. W. R. Barnes and Rebecca Hayward, in *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. Stephanie Hollis (p. 45) and 110 (p. 34). Parenthetical number citations refer to C. H. Talbot's Latin edition of the *Liber confortatorius*, cited above.

75. Baudri, Poem 137, line 41: "Sed tu me coges ignotum pergere callem."

76. Baudri, Poem 137, lines 45-46: "Attenues igitur, necnon michi compatiaris, / Attenuabo tuos compatiendo tibi."

77. Belle S. Tuten and others have verified the identities of Baudri's female correspondents as nuns at Le Ronceray through charter evidence. Belle S. Tuten, "Who was Lady Constance of Angers? Nuns as poets and correspondents at the monastery of Ronceray d'Angers in the early twelfth century," *Medieval Perspectives* 19 (2004): 255-68, 258. Baudri wrote two poems to Emma, Poem 139 and Poem 153.

78. Baudri, Poem 139, lines 17-18: "Quod si discipulos uester concederet ordo, / Vellem discipulus ipsemet esse tuus."

79. Baudri, Poem 139, lines 21-23.

80. Baudri, Poem 138, lines 31-38.

81. Baudri, Poems 140 and 141.

82. Tuten, "Who was Lady Constance of Angers?," 259.

83. Baudri, Poem 139, lines 19-20: "Nunc sub amore tuo saltim me collige, uirgo; / Collegi siquidem te sub amore meo."

84. Baudri, Poem 139, lines 7-8: "Aut olim fama michi tantum cognita sola, / Aut uix communi cognita colloquio."

85. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 53.

86. Baudri, Poem 139, lines 4-9.

87. Baudri, Poem 142, lines 13-17: "Quam sibi uouisti sibi soluas uirginitatem."

88. Katherine Kong notes that Baudri's letter to Constance, and her reply, both contain "eight-nine elegiac couplets, the classical meter of choice for amorous verse:" Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 16.

89. Baudri, Poem 142, lines 43-44: "Atque salutata nostra de parte sorore, / Inter nos refice foedus amicitiae."

90. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 65.

91. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 38 and 48: “In te me nunquam foedus adegit amor”; “A filthy love has never driven me to you.” Translation from Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173. This line appears twice in this poem. “Foedus” is both a noun meaning treaty, contract, or bond and an adjective meaning foul, filthy, or shameful. Baudri uses this terminology frequently. He also refers to the “bond of friendship [*fedus amicitiae*],” for instance, in a poem to his male friend Odo: Baudri, Poem 105, line 10.

92. Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua to Marguerite Porete* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 86.

93. Baudri, Poem 142, lines 45-47: “Praeterea, quaeso, non obliiscere nostri, / Fac speciale michi corque iecurque tuum. / Si mandare uelis aliquid, committe tabellis.”

94. Translations of this poem are from Bond, *The Loving Subject*, here at 171. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 1-10: “Perlege, perlectam caute complectere cartam, / Ne noceat famae lingua maligna meae; / Perlege sola meos uersus indagine cauta, / Perlege: quicquid id est, scripsit amica manus; / Scripsit amica manus et idem dictauit amicus, / Idem qui scripsit carmina composuit. / Quod sonat iste breuis, amor est et carmen amoris / Quod sonat iste breuis tactu nulla uenena latent; / Sanguine Gorgoneo non est lita pagina nostra. / Nec Medea meum subcomitatur opus.” I believe Bond’s translation of *amor* simply as “love” rather than “loving friendship” is more appropriate here because Baudri has very obviously modeled this poem on Ovid. The Gorgon is a female figure from Greek mythology (e.g. Medusa) who had hair of snakes and who could turn those at whom she looked to stone. Gorgon’s blood was believed to be poisonous. Baudri would have been familiar with this reference to Medea through his reading of Ovid, among other classical sources. See Ovid’s epistolary poem from Medea to Jason: Ovid, *Heriodes*, 12 (pp. 142-59).

95. Perhaps Baudri viewed Robert as a kindred spirit. See Baudri’s defense of Robert in *Historia magistri Roberti* in *Les deux vies de Robert d’Arbrissel fondateur de Fontevraud*, ed. and trans. Jacques Dalarun et al. (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 15.1-15.3 (pp. 158-61).

96. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 48-54: “In te me nunquam foedus adegit amor. / Nec lasciuus amor nec amor petulantis amoris / Pro te subuerit corque iecurque meum, / In te sed nostrum mouit tua littera sensum / Et penitus iunxit me tua musa tibi. / Denique tanta tuae

uiuut facundia linguae / Vt possis credi sisque Sibilla michi.” A Sibyl is a female prophet in Greek and Roman thought.

97. According to Greek myth and literature, the Muses are spirits who stimulated artistic production. Here the term has a dual meaning. Baudri is aware of the ancient meaning but applies the term to God.

98. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 171. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 1-2 and lines 177-178: “Perlege, perlectam caute complectere cartam, / Ne noceat famae lingua maligna meae.” Cf. “Si uis, ostendas, si uis, haec scripta recondas, / Nam pedagoga bonae non timor est dominae.”

99. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 42-46: “Iuro per omne quod est: nolo uir esse tibi; / Nolo uir esse tibi neque tu sis femina nobis, / Os et cor nostram firmet amicitiam, / Pectora iungantur, sed corpora semoueat, / Sit pudor in facto, sit iocus in calamo.” Cf. Acts 4:32 and Cicero, *De amicitia*, 7.27 (pp. 132-33).

100. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 179. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 143-44 and 147-48: “Quod si nos aliquis dixisse iocosa remordet, / Non sum durus homo, quicquid ago iocus est.” “Sed quicquid dicam, teneant mea facta pudorem, / Cor mundum uigeat mensque pudica michi.”

101. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 29.

102. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 171. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 15-16: “O uitiam nosces sicut mea uiscera norunt / Quanti sis mecum, quam mihi te facio.”

103. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 177. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 105-106: “Vt sunt in ueterum libris exempla malorum, / <S>ic bona quae facias sunt in eis posita.”

104. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 177. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 113-14: “Virtutum gradiamur iter, gradiamur ad astra: / Gentiles etiam sic properare monent.”

105. Bond points out that Baudri also wrote these lines to defend an earlier mythological poem he had written. Bond argues that Baudri’s source for this defense is Augustine’s *De doctrina Christiana*. Augustine urged Christians to co-opt works of philosophers and Platonic ideology that are harmonious with the Christian faith. See Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 2.40.60 and Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 57.

106. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 177. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 129-134: “Burgulii uicte nunc captiuantur Athenae, / Barbara nunc seruiat Grecia Burgulio. / Hostili preda ditetur lingua latina, / Grecus et Hebreus seruiat edomitus. / In nullis nobis desit doctrina legendi, / Lectio sit nobis et liber omne quod est.”

107. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 175. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 73-80: "Nec caro titillate pro te neque uiscera nostra, / Attamen absque dolo te uehementer amo. / Te uehementer amo, te totam totus amabo, / Te solam nostris implico uisceribus. / Ergo patet liquid quoniam genus istud amoris / Non commune aliquid, sed spetiale sapit. / Est spetialis amor, quem nec caro subcomitatur, / Nec desiderium sauciat illicitum."

108. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 10.

109. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 27 and 30.

110. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 173. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 33-36: "Inmemor esse mei nunquam, Constancia, possis, / Vt mihi persoluas foedus amoris idem. / Sic nos o utinam natura deusque ligasset / Vt neuter uiuat inmemor alterius!"

111. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 179. Baudri, Poem 200, lines 160-62: "Quod uolo non nescis, omne quod opto sapis. / Nulla mei cordis potuit te uena latere; / Omne tibi scripsi quod uolo, quod uolui."

112. Compare the first line of Baudri's poem with Constance's reply:

"Perlege, perlectam caute complectere cartam." Baudri, Poem 200, line 1.

"Perlegi uestram studiosa indagine cartam." Baudri, Poem 201, line 1.

113. Dronke, *Women Writers*, 84. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 17, 28, and 38-52. For the argument that Baudri wrote this poem see Otto Schumann, "Baudri von Bourgueil als Dichter," in *Studien zur lateinischen Dichtung des Mittelalters: Ehrengabe für Karl Strecker*, ed. Walter Stach and Hans Walther (Dresden: Wilhelm und Bertha v. Baensch Stiftung, 1931), 162 and Raby, *A History of Secular Latin Poetry*, 344n1.

A "Constance" appears in two of Le Ronceray's charters that date between 1110 and 1130; however, she may not be the same woman in Baudri's correspondence. His collection also contains an epitaph for a woman named Constance (Baudri, Poem 213). Since Baudri's poems were likely composed between 1095 and 1107, as Belle Tuten has argued, the Constance of the charters might not be the same Constance of the letter collection because the latter would have been dead when the charters were issued: Tuten, "Who was Lady Constance of Angers?" 257. For the dating of Baudri's correspondence see Leopold Delisle, "Notes sur les poésies de Baudri, Abbé de Bourgueil," *Romania* 1 (1872): 23-50 and Jean-Yves Tilliette, "Note sur le manuscrit des poèmes de Baudri de Bourgueil (Vatican, Reg. Lat. 1351)," *Scriptorium* 37 (1983): 241-45.

114. Translations of this poem are from Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 187. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 93-98: "Nulla quidem uirgo me fortunatior esset, / Si

mihī tutus amore tutaque pacta forent. / Firma fides nostrum quamuis mihī  
firmet amicum, / Credere non possum tuta sue fidei; / Nec fidei discredō  
suae (nichil inde timendum), / Perdere sed timeo quod uehementer amo.”

115. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 185-87. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 58-66:  
“Versibus hunc uideo, namque aliter nequeo. / Ve mihī, cum nequeam quem  
diligio sepe uidere; / Me miseram, nequeo cernere quod cupio. / Afficior  
desiderio precibusque diurnis, / Incassum fundo uota precesque deo. / Annus  
abit, ex quo quem quaro uidere nequīui, / Attamen ipsius carmina sepe lego:  
/ O quales uersus, quam dulces, quam spetiosos, / Ad me misit heri perditus  
ille mihī!”

116. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 191. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 157-162:  
“Venero si potero, uenisses si potuissem, / Sed disturbat iter seua nouerca  
meum. / At tu qui, dominus, nullo custode teneris, / Quem, quia multa  
potes, ipsa nouerca timet, / Maturato gradus et me uisurus adesto; / Sumptus  
et comites sufficienter habes.” The “step-mother” to whom Constance refers  
must be Le Ronceray’s abbess.

117. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 39-41.

118. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 191. Baudri, Poem 201, l. 167: “Demens,  
quem doceo? Me debes ipse docere.”

119. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 193. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 168-76: “Si tibi  
causa deest, negligis ut uenias. / Cura tibi de me non est nisi ueneris ad me,  
/ Nec tua uel modicus uiscera tangit amor. / Hoc argumentum posui mihī si  
pigritaris, / Hoc habeam certum federis inditium: / Visere me debes, nescis  
quo languet morbo, / Quo desiderio scilicet affitior. / Grande tibi crimen  
nisi paueris esurientem, / Oranti si non ipse satisfatias.”

120. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 189. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 116-20:  
“Seruos sponsa Dei debet amare sui. / Tu sponsi seruus, tu frater tuque  
coheres, / Tu quoque?, tu sponsi dignus amore mei. / Sponsa sui sponsi uen-  
erari debet amicos: / Ergo tu ueneror, te uigilanter amo.”

121. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 187. Baudri, Poem 201, lines 71-74: “At  
circumstarent comites mihī uel duo, uel tres, / Quamuis ipse suae sufficiat  
fidei; / Ne tamen ulla foret de suspitione querela, / Saltem nobiscum sit mea  
fida soror.”

122. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, 189. Baudri, Poem 201, line 103 and line  
122: “Aggrediar ceram, quia nescit cera pudorem” and “Commendet nostros  
uita pudica iocos.”

123. Dyan Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval  
Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 99. During the

Middle Ages “chastity” applied to a married person who participated in sexual intercourse exclusively with his or her spouse and only in order to reproduce. See Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 29. On the topic of clerical marriage during the eleventh and twelfth centuries see C. N. L. Brooke, “Reform in Action: Clerical Marriage in England, 1050-1200,” *Cambridge Historical Journal* 12 (1956): 1-21. A more recent treatment of the attack on clerical marriage is Megan McLaughlin, “The Bishop in the Bedroom: Witnessing Episcopal Sexuality in an Age of Reform,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19 (2010): 17-34. McLaughlin focuses on episcopal sexuality as it relates to reform.

124. Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage*, 99.

125. Jo Ann McNamara, “The *Herrenfrage*: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150,” in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 16.

126. *Ibid.*, 8, 11-14.

127. Anne L. Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates* (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 177-78.

128. *Ibid.*, 177.

129. *Ibid.*, 178-79.

130. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 12 and 42.

131. St. Ambrose, *De officiis*, ed. and trans. Ivor J. Davidson (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) 3: 129 (pp. 430-31).

132. Kong, *Lettering the Self*, 20.

133. McGuire, *Friendship and Community*, lvii and lxi.