Sex and Sexual Misbehaviours: The Portrayal of Sex in Clerical Writings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

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Abstract

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This thesis will argue that texts written by clerics in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries discussing sex heavily encouraged celibacy by warning people away from sexual misbehaviours and highlighting the negative consequences that could occur if one were to follow their lust. Although these texts were, for the most part, originally written with a clerical audience in mind, this research highlights the widening of an audience beyond Clerical, leading to different interpretations of these writings and on some occasions a disconnect in ideas about sex between the writings done by clerics and the lay audience that reads them. Firstly, I will argue that texts drawing inspiration from Greek and Roman authors highlight the tragic consequences that befall someone who allows love and lust to overpower their reason, strongly advising their readers to stay away from these feelings and to remain celibate. Fabliaux used humour to show their readers similar consequences of having affairs and committing sexual misbehaviours through characters such as the promiscuous priest and examples of couples having sex on holy grounds. Statutes and canon law are shown to have great concern for sexual sins such as fornication and adultery, discussing these sins in an obviously negative light, and confession manuals reinforce the consequences of priests and other figures not enforcing and respecting the goal of chastity. Finally, visitation reports and ecclesiastical court records show concerns for sexual sins, also depicting illicit and extramarital sex in a particularly negative manner, but also

highlight an important disconnect between these texts written by clerics and lay people's sexual practices, such as the frequency of lay people having sex outside of marriage, which shows a tendency to ignore the rules of chastity before marriage.

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Sex and Sexual Misbehaviours: The Portrayal of Sex in Clerical Writings of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

Introduction

I have heard of something growing in a corner,
swelling and standing up,
raising its covering.
At that boneless thing a proud-hearted bride
grasped with her hands;
a prince's daughter
covered that swelling thing with her robe.[1]

When thinking about discourses around sex and sexuality during the Medieval Period, texts like this tenth-century riddle do not often come to mind for the general public. Most people tend to associate the Middle Ages with the rise of the Christian church and the growth in power of clerical authorities, which came hand in hand with the preaching of chastity outside of marriage. The common assumption is thus that one has to look deeper to find medieval discourses about illicit and extramarital sex. However, as the example above demonstrates, texts from as early as the tenth century show that this was hardly the case. Discourses around sex and relationships came in genres just as varied as their content; from riddles like the one shown above that hint at sexual terms to conduct books that vehemently encourage chastity and virginity, sex was discussed by almost everyone throughout the Middle Ages. Like today, sex was a part of everyday life and the number of texts addressing the topic are only a small part of the evidence that demonstrates that the preconceived notion of the Middle Ages as a period in which discourses around sex were suppressed is a misconception.

[1] W.S. Mackie, editor. *The Exeter Book, Part II: Poems IX - XXXII.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 141.

Texts, both fiction and non-fiction, allow us to study the different discourses on sex and sexuality, as well as the overwhelming presence of this topic in writing. I will argue that throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries texts written by clerics focused on warning people away from sexual misbehaviour, and heavily encouraged celibacy outside of marriage through these warnings and by emphasizing the negative consequences of following lust and love. These texts, written by clerics, were originally meant for a clerical audience, but over time were also read or heard by lay people, and probably interpreted in different ways. Thus, in some cases, the origin of these texts as intended for a clerical audience, as well as the authors' clerical and ancient Roman influence created a disconnect between texts and lay audience's sexual behaviours and ideas on sexual misbehaviours.

Firstly, stories inspired by writings from the Greek and Roman periods, such as *The Art of Courtly Love,* a guide on courtly love, how to make it prosper and how to get over it by Andreas Capellanus, and The *Roman de la Rose,* a tale of a Lover's Quest for the Rose (his lady) by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun both demonstrate great concern for lust overpowering reason and strongly advise their readers to avoid sex and relationships. The *Fasciculus Morum,* a fourteenth-century preacher's handbook, also shows the influence of Greek and Roman writers on clerical writing of the fourteenth century, using similar ideas on the importance of restraint when it comes to sex to preach to a lay audience. Fabliaux written during the thirteenth century also discussed lust overpowering reason and laid out with a humorous twist the consequences of sexual misbehaviours, such as clerics having affairs with laywomen and having intercourse in sacred spaces. Statutes, canon law and confession manuals reinforced the concerns the previous authors explored, putting a lot of emphasis on fornication, adultery and clerical celibacy and demonstrating that illicit and extramarital sex could lead to important consequences, such as the

loss of clerical privileges, forced marriages and financial punishments. Finally, visitation reports and ecclesiastical court records from the late thirteenth century and the fourteenth century brought the church's point of view of lay people's sexual practices. These sources show, in accordance with the other textual sources explored, similar themes of discussing illicit and extramarital sex in a negative light, particularly fornication, adultery and clerical celibacy. However, they also demonstrate a disconnect between lay people's sexual practices and texts written by clerics that made their way to the laity through preaching and moral teachings. Court cases and visitation reports suggest a certain disregard by lay people for the message of chastity outside of marriage that the aforementioned texts put forward.

When approaching primary sources, I follow in the steps of John W. Baldwin, who defined literature as "those texts that are read more than once over time, and with pleasure."[2] In this thesis, stories inspired by the Roman and Greek periods, fabliaux, statutes and confession manuals are approached as texts that display a great concern over people's sexual behaviours. These texts were all written with different purposes in mind. Stories inspired by the Roman and Greek periods and fabliaux could be considered fiction, whose authors had entertainment in mind as part of their goal for writing these stories. These sources can be very useful for historians since they give "the most vivid examples of actual medieval life,"[3] or so it seems when understood in their context. Statutes and confession manuals were prescriptive, whose purpose was to regulate and shape behaviour, as well as accompany clerics in their work, rather than to entertain. All these texts, however, tell us a great deal about the prominence of sex in people's minds. They also allow us to better understand what about illicit and extramarital sex was so

[2] John W. Baldwin. *The Language of Sex: Five Voices From Northern France Around 1200.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), XXIV.
[3] Ruth Mazo Karras and Katherine E. Pierpont. *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others.* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 16.

concerning. The combined analysis of these different sources allows for a fuller picture of the topic, since "a [single] medieval text does not represent 'the medieval attitude' towards a given subject."[4] Analyzing these different texts together allows for a more defined idea of how omnipresent illicit and extramarital sex was in late medieval England, and what aspects of sex were the most concerning to late medieval authors. As Pierpont and Karras have stated, "It is not always easy to know exactly how to interpret what medieval people said when they talked about sex, but talk about it they did."[5]

Medieval Reading, Audience and Authorship

To grasp the impact of the textual discussion of sex, we need to clarify who had access to those texts, and therefore, to clarify medieval literacies. The Middle Ages, just like any historical period, had a distinct literary culture that is worthy of attention. This period saw important shifts and alterations in the conditions and experiences of reading,[6] with increasing accessibility and circulation of texts across Europe. In medieval England, people read or listened to texts such as French verses purely for enjoyment and pleasure, as well as copying and annotating texts in different languages at home.[7] Literacy was far from widespread in the Middle Ages and was seen as a "distinctive skill of ecclesiastics," with the term "lay" often carrying the same meaning as "illiterate."[8] The term literate meant different things at different times and referred to various degrees of literacy. Sometimes, literate simply meant cleric and in some cases, authors used *illiterati* as an insult to refer to people they disliked.[9] Degrees of literacy varied, with some

[4] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 16.
[5] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 15.
[6] Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin,"Introduction". In *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England*, Ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 5.
[7] Stephanie Downes. "Not For Profit: "'Amateur' Readers of French Poetry in Late Medieval England". In *Spaces for Reading in Later Medieval England,* ed. Mary C. Flannery and Carrie Griffin, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 76.
[8] Nicholas Orme. "Lay Literacy in England, 1100-1300". In *England and Germany in the High Middle Ages*, ed. Alfred Haverkamp and Hanna Vollrath, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 35.
[9] Orme, "Lay Literacy", 36.

people able to read but not write, some able to read only English while others could also read French and Latin. Gender and class highly influenced the chances of someone being literate, with boys having a higher chance to know how to read since they were often "intended to become clergy," and were therefore thought to read at least Latin, with French most likely being taught by the twelfth century when it became the preferred language for religious, recreational and administrative matters.[10] Most people during the Middle Ages only had a form of basic literacy that made them familiar "with the language on coins or seals, with masons' marks and notarial signs, the sign of the cross signifying an oath taken before God, and simple phrases", but not able to read.[11]

An increasing number of laypeople during this period owned books, suggesting an increase in laypeople's literacy, but this increase remained restricted to the aristocracy.[12] For most of Europe during the Middle Ages, "reading was reading aloud," and wealthy people had access to texts through other literate people reading them.[13] During the Middle Ages, most works were meant to be read aloud to an audience.[14] Therefore, the familiarity with literature and text often came orally, "relying heavily on recitation, memorization, and aural reception,"[15] making the ability to understand as well as hear in a way "the most critical form of literacy."[16] By the fourteenth century, "English society was collectively literate," with everyone knowing at least one literate person and the written word being a part of everyone's lives.[17] However, that literate

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[10] Orme, "Lay Literacy", 40, 42.
[11] Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz, David Sheffler. "Literacies". In a *Cultural History of Education, Volume 2,* ed. Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 147.
[12] M. T. Clanchy. "Parchment and Paper: Manuscript Culture 1100-1500". In *A Companion to the History of the Book,* ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 194, 203.
[13] Matthew Innes. "Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society". *Past and Present*, No. 158, February 1998, 4.
[14] Theodore L. Steinberg. *Reading the Middle Ages: An Introduction to Medieval Literature.* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2003), 14.
[15] Hoeppner Moran Cruz, Sheffler. "Literacies", 149.
[16] Malcolm Richardson. *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London*. (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 9.
[17] Orme, "Lay Literacy", 56.

person was often a member of the clergy, such as a priest, and only around ten to twenty-five percent of adult men could read by 1500.[18] For women, however, this percentage was much lower around the same period. Literacy by the fourteenth century was slowly spreading to mercantile and professional classes, making the demand for vernacular books rise, leading to authors multiplying in the following centuries.[19] The following period saw a noticeable switch from authors mostly copying and reworking existing texts and ideas to producing original work.[20]

During the Middle Ages, texts often passed through several scribal hands that altered them. Manuscripts were initially written by authors, who often remained anonymous, but sometimes went through rewritings by several scribes and copyists who changed the texts according to their own interpretations, giving us the versions we have access to today.[21] Texts constantly fluctuated, "their creation and recreation [depending] on the combined work poets, scribes, and performers."[22] Readers, authors and scribes often linked texts together, searching for commonalities between the poetry they read, law, philosophy and theology.[23] By copying, translating, rewriting, linking together and adapting previously existing texts, people were producing their own literary work.[24] With handwritten manuscripts, texts were particularly suited for readers to mark and comment on them. Marks of ownership often appeared in manuscripts by the owners, "reflecting the desire of owners and readers to lay claim to the material text."[25] After

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[18] Jo Ann Hoeppner Moran Cruz. "England: Education and Society". In *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages*, Ed. S.H. Rigby. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 466.
[19] Heather Blatt. *Participatory Reading in Late-Medieval England.* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 2.
[20] Blatt, *Participatory Reading,* 9.
[21] Sylvia Huot. *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 1-2.
[22] Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 2.
[23] Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 74.
[24] Huot, *The Romance of the Rose*, 333.
[25] Flannery and Griffin. "Introduction", 3.

the medieval period, the increase in literacy led to increased book production for schools, professionals, and wealthy laypeople.[26]

Texts during the thirteenth century in particular experienced an increase in circulation. In the later Middle Ages, surviving manuscripts show evidence that French books in particular could often be found written in English hands,[27] demonstrating that texts originally written in French circulated through England. In the thirteenth century, French grew as a language in England, becoming "a widely used language of record and administration," with a wider population learning how to read and write in French.[28] During this century, French became the second most commonly used language for texts coming from England and being exported to the rest of Europe.[29] The first language was Latin, which signified clerical dominance over books and culture, since in the early medieval period, "Latin literacy was most commonly found in monasteries and episcopal households."[30] During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, production of private record-keeping texts and letters in England was low, with merchant families most likely reading these documents themselves but leaving the writing to scribes.[31] The increase in the number of people reading not just for work but for pleasure slowly kept on during this period, as evidenced by the "increased production of texts in English."[32] By the fifteenth century "the literary authority of English" had been cemented.[33] This establishment of the

[26] Clanchy, "Parchment and Paper", 204.
[27] Downes "Not For Profit", 66.
[28] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne,Thelma Fenster, and Delbert W. Russell, ed. *Vernacular Literary Theory: From the French of Medieval England, Texts and Translations, c.1120- c.1450.* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), 402.
[29] Wogan-Browne, Fenster, and Russell, ed.*Vernacular Literary Theory,* 403.
[30] Hoeppner Moran Cruz, Sheffler. "Literacies", 146.
[31] Richardson. *Middle-Class Writing,* 105-106.
[32] Larry Scanlon. "Introduction". *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature, 1100-1500,* Ed. Larry Scanlon. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3.
[33] Scanlon, "Introduction"„ 4.

vernacular as the dominant written language "led to the outburst of document creation," with more of the mercantile and trading class learning to write out of interest and necessity.[34]

Amongst reading materials, fabliaux and romances became some of the most commonly read texts during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries amongst the elite. Fabliaux were humorous tales, often short, that used wit to entertain readers and audiences, while romances were stories that focused on themes of romantic love, and chivalry, and often followed a quest. In some cases, Middle English versions of French or Anglo-Norman romances were produced in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, reimagining these texts and adapting them to Middle English audiences and conditions.[35] During this period, "romance was the dominant non-devotional genre" of texts being read and produced,[36] with romance manuscripts found at court, in London workshops, and in monastic libraries alongside histories and hagiographies.[37] Romances, although mostly read for pleasure, were an important genre that influenced readers, dealing with major themes such as class, gender, sexuality and race, and adapting their stories and heroes to their audiences' realities.[38] Most romance authors were male and purposefully wrote for people from the aristocracy, of all genders.[39] Some of these authors directly addressed their noble audience in their texts, demonstrating that they were aware of whom they were writing for.[40] Many romances also mention women reading the genre, again attesting to the awareness romance authors had of their own audience.[41] Even outside of romance, writers often considered their audience as an

[34] Richardson. *Middle-Class Writing*, 3.
[35] Christine Chism. "Romances". In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature, 1100-1500,* ed. Larry Scanlon. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59.
[36] Chism, "Romances", 57.
[37] Chism, "Romances", 64.
[38] Chism, "Romances", 60.
[39] Baldwin. *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.
[40] Orme, "Lay Literacy", 45.
[41] Orme, "Lay Literacy", 47.

important part of their writing process. Readers had "the authority to change the text, turn a page, or move away from a work," making them an important part of the writing process.[42]

Fabliaux authors were, similarly to romance authors, apparently male, and often anonymous. They often addressed in their texts townspeople and the aristocracy, and included women in their audience.[43] Fabliaux are believed to be oral stories that were finally written down after decades of circulation.[44] These aristocratic audiences, therefore, were most likely already familiar with the stories that appear in the fabliaux we still have today. The orality of fabliaux continued on after they were written down; authors of these texts often refer to their audiences as listeners,[45] and it can thus be assumed that these stories were meant to be read aloud. The reading of fabliaux in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was, however, mostly restricted to the upper class that could read the French in which these stories were originally written.[46] They were only translated into English in the fifteenth century. We have no evidence that shows definitely that fabliaux circulated amongst the lower orders of society, and we thus cannot know whether these texts were read or heard by people outside of the elite. Although fabliaux are the main texts believed to have reached public audiences by being read out loud, this was likely true of most medieval literary texts.

From this relatively new habit of reading in the thirteenth century and from the diversity of texts written during this period comes a significant base of primary sources for historians to study. These written sources need to be analyzed with the background of the author in mind and historians need also to be mindful of the intended audience; indeed, "what a text seems to mean to a modern reader is often not the same thing it would have meant to its medieval audience,"

[42] Blatt, *Participatory Reading,* 2.
[43] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.
[44] Lewis,"The English Fabliau", 241; Sarah Melhado White. "Sexual Language and Human Conflict in Old French Fabliaux". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume 24, No. 3, (April 1982), 189.
[45] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 38
[46] Lewis, "The English Fabliau Tradition", 244-245

and understandings varied from one medieval person to another.[47] Texts, when studied properly, allow us to get a better idea of how people lived in the Middle Ages. Many of these texts were lost over the centuries, but the ones that persisted allow us to get a glimpse into the lives of people who lived before us.

Sex in the Middle Ages

In order to understand the discourses about sex that appear in textual evidence, it is important to clarify how sex was perceived, and general ideas about sex that circulated during the late medieval period. Medieval sexuality and attitudes to sex were wide and more diversified than some people might expect. The common assumption is that sex was scarcely discussed during this period, due in part to how religious the Middle Ages were.[48] However, medieval people without a doubt talked about sexuality in daily conversations, and "many different attitudes [about sexuality] coexisted."[49] This multiplicity can make it difficult to interpret what medieval people had to say about sex, and a multitude of sources need to be explored in order to piece together a somewhat complete picture, since as Karra and Pierpont comment, "no medieval text was written for the purpose of providing information to historians of sexuality hundreds of years later."[50] The Middle Ages are a period of significance for discussions about sexuality because it is during these centuries that the basic parameters of Christian thought and teachings about sex were set.[51] Many of these teachings still permeate attitudes about sexuality in today's Western secular world, although some important differences can be noted. In particular, medieval people understood sex as something someone did to someone else, instead of something two

[47] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 16.
[48] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 15.
[49] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 27, 3.
[50] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 16.
[51] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 29.

people did together.[52] This concept was particularly true when it came to penetrative sex. With this in mind, "medieval people understood men's and women's experience of sex acts as quite different."[53] Moral regulation also differentiated between men and women, with women bearing the brunt of these regulations due to their role in the formation of families and inheritance.[54]

In the Middle Ages, marriage was the norm and the expectation for most people.[55] However, other forms of sexual relationships, both long and short-term, existed during this period. Marriage being the default form of relationship, sex and reproduction were closely tied to matrimony.[56] Indeed, the validity of a marriage depended on the possibility of consummating it, meaning a marriage could be considered invalid if one of the spouses was impotent.[57] Reproduction, according to canonists and theologians, was one of the only means through which sex was not sinful; although sex might not always lead to reproduction, as long as couples had sex that led to the possibility of getting pregnant, they were not committing a sin.[58] More illicit sex, such as anal or oral sex, was less discussed or even obscure for a lot of people, and labelled as unnatural by canonists and theologians.[59] Some sexual practices that did not require penetration "were ignored, reinterpreted, or reconfigured as gender transgressions."[60] As we will see, although marital sex with the purpose of reproduction was the norm, extramarital and illicit sex was still discussed extensively in written sources during the Middle Ages.

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[52] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 5.
[53] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 6.
[54] Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras. "Women, Gender, and Medieval Historians". In *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett Ruth and Karras, Ruth. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 16.
[55] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 90.
[56] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 98.
[57] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 105.
[58] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 107.
[59] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 123, 107.
[60] Bennett and Karras, "Women, Gender and Medieval Historians", 20.

Sex in Texts in Thirteenth Century England

According to John W. Baldwin in his book *The Language of Sex: Five Voices From Northern France Around 1200*, the first time sexuality became a topic of written discussion in Europe during the Middle Ages was fairly early on, when churchmen and monastic writers started writing about virginity and marriage in biblical commentaries and monographs.[61] In order to understand the discourses about sex that appear in textual evidence during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is important to be aware of the discourses that circulated before. After the first breaching of the topic of sexuality by churchmen, Italian physicians in the second half of the eleventh century started translating ancient medieval treatises and Arabic texts, compiling them into epitomes that circulated in schools teaching medicine.[62] In the following century, Gratian picked up the topic of sexuality and entered his compendium of it into canon law.[63] The twelfth century saw clerics discussing sexuality when practicing grammar and learning Latin by writing poetry and plays that mimicked Ovid's style of writing.[64] Discourses on sexuality in the vernacular appeared for the first time in the French Chansons de Gestes, which circulated in the twelfth century and underwent a transformation when they were directed to a smaller audience that often included ladies, switching their focus from sexuality to themes of love.[65] Baldwin's history on the discourses of sexuality in France around 1200 argues that this period saw "a multiplicity of texts [appear] for the first time in which modern historians can read a variety of discourses talking about sexuality," leading to a diversity in audience with scholars writing these texts for clerics and other scholars, but also acknowledging the clergy as

[61] Baldwin. *The Language of Sex,* XVII.
[62] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.
[63] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVII.
[64] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.
[65] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.

their main audience, especially "addressing their treatises to the secular clergy,"[66] rather than to monks.

Chapter One

Tales Inspired from the Greats

Authors constantly draw inspiration from other people's writing. During the thirteenth century, authors were especially influenced by writings produced in ancient Greece and Rome. From romances to handbooks, many texts written in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries demonstrate obvious influences from some of the most popular Greek and Roman authors of the ancient period. Some authors simply use similar structures and prose, while others discuss major themes already explored in ancient texts. Romances, for example, drew great inspiration from Roman texts in circulation in the Middle Ages, going as far as writing "free reimaginings of their sources turned to the needs of new situations and audiences."[67] Out of the many Roman authors, Ovid (43 BC-17 AD) emerged as one of the most influential authors of the Middle Ages, inspiring others to write what would become their own influential works.

In antiquity, Ovid was regarded as "the last to compose Latin Love Elegy."[68] His writing was very popular with the general public in his own era, although it was never popular with heads of state.[69] Due to the sexual nature of many of his poems and their normalization of adulterous relationships, Ovid was exiled by Augustus in 8 CE to the shores of the Black Sea and passed away there a few years later.[70] Indeed, Ovid's work, from poems to epics, was mostly

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[66] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex,* XVIII.
[67] Christine Chism. "Romances". In *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature, 1100-1500,* ed. Larry Scanlon, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 59.
[68] Bonnie MacLachlan. *Women in Ancient Rome: A Sourcebook.* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 150.
[69] Kevin McGeough. *The Romans: An Introduction.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 267.
[70] MacLachlan, *Women in Ancient Rome*, 150.

focused on the themes of love and sex, and his use of myth "[gave] space for the exploration of a range of erotic loci, including married ones."[71] Some of his work, such as the *Ars Amatoria,* offers an interesting exploration of types of love that can be seen as alternatives to marriage.[72] During the Roman period, Ovid referred to himself as "the playboy of light-hearted love-poetry," and is still known today as "the unrivalled champion of erotic-elegiac poetry,"[73] a title gained due to the erotic content present in most of his work.

Ovid's works remained popular and they are still recognized as unique for the virtuosity of his verses and their reimagining of common myths. Ovid's texts were widely popular also throughout the medieval period, with his text *Metamorphoses* being the most popular amongst medieval audiences. His writings on love also sustained many translations and adaptations, some of them, such as the *Ovide Moralisé*, breathing new life into his writings and increasing readers' interest in Ovid.[74] Other medieval authors such as Andreas Capellanus, Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun drew clear inspiration from Ovid's writings.[75] The twelfth century in particular produced multiple translations of Ovid's work in the vernacular,[76] leading to wider audiences becoming familiar with his writings. Institutions aimed at training future clerics pushed the study of Ovid's texts as a way for students to learn how to write verses, and in Northern France in particular, students were encouraged to review and interpret writing from antiquity "to reveal deeper truths."[77] This trend of reading through classic texts to find moral or religious truths is

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[71] Alison Sharrock. "Gender and Sexuality". In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardy. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 105.
[72] Sharrock, "Gender and Sexuality", 105.
[73] Ingo Gildenhard and Andrew Zissos. *Ovid, Metamorphoses, 3.511-733: Latin Text with Introduction, Commentary, Glossary of Terms, Vocabulary Aid and Study Questions*. 1st ed. Vol. 5. (Open Book Publishers, 2016), 11.
[74] Jeremy Dimmick. "Ovid in the Middle Ages: Authority and Poetry". In *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardy. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 280.
[75] Suzanne Conklin Akbari. "Ovid and Ovidianism". In *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature: Volume 1: 800-1558*, ed. by Rita Copeland. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 187.
[76] Conklin Akbari, "Ovid and Ovidianism", 189.
[77] Conklin Akbari, "Ovid and Ovidianism", 197, 188.

also noticeable in notes made by medieval commentators directly in manuscripts.[78] However, Ovid was already being read by non-clerics in training as early as the eleventh century, and by the twelfth century he influenced poets such as Marie de France, who mentioned him in her *lai* "Guigemar."[79] His influence was felt throughout the Middle Ages, reaching for instance English writers such as Gower and Chaucer in the fourteenth century.[80] The constant "reading, claims, counter-appropriations, repudiations and retractions" of Ovid's texts ensured that this author's work "never ceased to thrive."[81] Ovid's popularity in the Middle Ages is indisputable, considering the number of texts produced in this period that either translated, adapted, or drew inspiration from Ovid's writings. In addition, around twenty-three Latin manuscripts from the thirteenth century of *Ars Amatoria* have survived,[82] a high number of manuscripts for a single text in this period.

The Art of Courtly Love

Amongst the many works inspired by Ovid is Andreas Capellanus' T*he Art of Courtly Love*, a handbook written in Latin in the twelfth century. Andreas' book drew clear inspiration from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* in both title and structure, although his main ideas about love and sex are a sharp contrast to Ovid's,[83] who wrote the *Ars Amatoria* as an exploration of the forms of love alternative to marriage.[84] We know very little about Andreas, besides the fact that he was most likely a chaplain.[85] Andreas' book, although written in the twelfth century, gained in popularity over the years, circulating widely in the thirteenth century in particular. Many

[78] Theodore L. Steinberg. *Reading the Middle Ages: An Introduction to Medieval Literature.* (Jefferson: McFarland and Company, 2003), 4.
[79] Dimmick, "Ovid in the Middle Ages", 265.
[80] Dimmick, "Ovid in the Middle Ages", 281-282.
[81] Dimmick, "Ovid in the Middle Ages", 286.
[82] Conklin Akbari, "Ovid and Ovidianism", 198.
[83] Dimmick, "Ovid in the Middle Ages", 271.
[84] Sharrock, "Gender and Sexuality", 105.
[85] Andreas Capellanus. *The Art of Courtly Love*. Trans. John Jay Parry. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), 18.

manuscripts of his writing were preserved and *The Art of Courtly Love* enjoyed numerous translations into the vernacular over the years,[86] although it was not fully translated into English until the twentieth century.[87] His book ostensibly had two different purposes: Andreas wanted to teach people who were in love "how their love may prosper", and people who were not loved by someone "how to get over their passion."[88] Although both goals are fulfilled by his writing, Andreas puts emphasis throughout his writing on the fact that accomplishing the second goal he outlines is preferable since love is the only sin "that defiles both body and soul."[89]

In *The Art of Courtly Love*, Andreas Capellanus uses a letter he received from his friend Walter as an introduction to writing his guide to courtly love, stating his desire to teach his friend about "the way in which a state of love between two lovers may be kept unharmed."[90] He starts by exploring in detail the process of love. He begins by defining love as "a certain inborn suffering" where one starts to "wish above all things the embraces of the other."[91] The first book in *The Art of Courtly Love* is focused on explaining the parameters of love, such as who can fall in love, how to acquire love, and how different love is according to who is falling in love. For example, the love of nuns should be "avoided just as though they were a pestilence of the soul,"[92] whereas if one desires the love of peasants, they should "puff them up with lots of praise and then, when you find a convenient place, do not hesitate to take what you seek and to embrace them by force."[93] The second book in *The Art of Courtly Love* starts with detailing how love might be kept once acquired, how love can increase with things like sex and public declarations,

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[86] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 22.
[87] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 24.
[88] Douglas Kelly. "Courtly Love in Perspective: The Hierarchy of Love in Andreas Capellanus". *Traditio*, vol. 24, (1968), 121. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27830847.
[89] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 189.
[90] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 27.
[91] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 28.
[92] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 143.
[93] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 149, 150.

how it can decrease with "an uncultured appearance or manner of walking,"[94] and how love can come to an end. After exploring these variables, Andreas Capellanus makes sure to lay out the signs pointing to love being returned, such as a woman "[turning] pale in the presence of her lover,"[95] and writes out the steps to take in a situation where one or both of the lovers are not being faithful. The author concludes this section by writing out the rule of courtly love, stating amongst other things that "when made public love rarely endures", and that "a man in love is always apprehensive".[96] The third book in *The Art of Courtly Love* ends this text on a bleaker note, with Andreas Capellanus stating that he did not write his text to Walter "because [he considers] it advisable for [him] or any other man to fall in love", since "any man who devotes his efforts to love loses all his usefulness."[97] By concluding with the topic of how to reject love, the author hopes to have convinced Walter (and his readers) "that no man ought to misspend his days in the pleasures of love."[98]

Andreas' book focuses mostly on extramarital love and sex, themes most likely more relatable to clerics, who could not marry, but were the main readership of Andreas' book. The ideas Andreas shared in his *Art of Courtly Love* were not uncommon. The third book of this guide, *Why Not Love Women*, in particular, reflects anxieties many churchmen shared about love and lust in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In his book, Andreas argued that love in general and particularly sexual love should be avoided because it "offends God, damages friendships, prompts violence and perjury and other crimes, is a form of enslavement, entails loss of public esteem, brings one under the devil's sway, and debilitates the body."[99] Andreas shared many of

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[94] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 154.
[95] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 158.
[96] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 185.
[97] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 187.
[98] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 211.
[99] Andreas Capellanus, *Why Not Love Women*. In *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, Ed. Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt and C.W. Marx. (New York: Clarendon Press, 1992),115.

his peers' anxieties that love can delude men from rational thoughts, stating that "another reason why I urge you not to love is because wisdom is dislodged from its role in a wise man by his love."[100] Many of his contemporaries reflected this idea in their own writing, showing a trend when it comes to thinking about love and lust and the impact these emotions can have on men in particular. Ending his book with a warning to stay away from love and lust also encouraged his readers, initially almost all fellow clerics, to lead a chaste life, since avoiding "the mandates of love" will make God "more favorably disposed toward you in every respect."[101]

The Art of Courtly Love also brings attention to important double standards between men and women when it comes to determining how sinful sex was in male clerics' minds in the thirteenth century. For example, clerics falling in love could be excused under the right circumstances but nuns falling in love was inexcusable.[102] In addition, a man cheating on his wife commits a lesser offence than a woman cheating on her husband,[103] and women committed a greater sin when falling in love than their male counterparts.[104] These ideas, as will be discussed in the second part of this essay, were heavily reflected in statutes and legislations passed in the same years Andreas' book was circulating.

The Roman de la Rose

Another popular text that circulated around the thirteenth century was Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun's *Roman de La Rose,* written in the authors' native French over the early thirteenth century. The text was started by Guillaume de Lorris around 1230 and circulated before it was finished by Jean de Meun in 1280, after the former's death.[105] The *Roman de la*

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[100] Capellanus, *Why Not Love Women*, 116.
[101] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 212, 211.
[102] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 124-125, 143.
[103] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 162.
[104] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 193.
[105] Stephen G. Nichols. "Codex as Critic: One Manuscript's dialogue with the *Romance of the Rose*". *Digital Philology: A journal of Medieval Cultures,* Vol. 6, No. 1, (Spring 2017), 94. https://doi.org/10.1353/dph.2017.0003.

Rose was spread widely, "with its three hundred-odd manuscripts produced over a period of more than two hundred years."[106] These manuscripts were produced throughout Europe, leading to the *Roman de la Rose* exercising influence not only in France but throughout the continent.[107] From the evidence found in translations and notes found in manuscripts, readers of the *Roman de la Rose* came from different backgrounds, with their perspectives influencing the way they approached certain parts of the poem differently.[108] Manuscripts of the *Roman de l*a *Rose* could be found in the fourteenth century in the libraries of royals, aristocrats, clergymen and bourgeois households, leading to "a considerable diversity" in readings of the text and "in the interpretation of its moral agenda," due to the different context and approaches to the text.[109] The poem was approached by readers as "romance, as art and critique of erotic love, [and] as a compendium of poetry and philosophy" leading to many different interpretations of the work's significance.[110] Annotations in manuscripts also hint to the fact that the *Roman de la Rose* was often read actively, with readers "singling out particular lines of passages" with annotations and illuminations.[111] This text seems to have attracted the attention of many educated readers such as university clerics, who paid particular attention to the influence and references to Latin thinkers like Ovid and searched the *Roman de la Rose* for moral lessons.[112] This text went through many rewritings by scribes and other poets, starting as early as the thirteenth century, leading to many versions of the story circulating.[113] The *Roman de la Rose* is a tremendously influential piece of

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[106] Nichols, "Codex as Critic", 92-94.
[107] Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot. "Introduction: Rethinking the *Rose*". In *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 1.
[108] Brownlee and Huot. "Introduction", 5.
[109] Sylvia Huot. *The Romance of the Rose and its Medieval Readers: Interpretation, Reception, Manuscript Transmission*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 10-11, 19.
[110] Huot. *The Romance of the Rose*, 239.
[111] Huot. *The Romance of the Rose*, 35.
[112] Huot. *The Romance of the Rose*, 47, 60.
[113] Huot. *The Romance of the Rose*, 2, 133.

medieval writing, which inspired many authors' work in the past and still today, and as Sylvia Huot contends, it can be considered "a matrix for subsequent French poetry."[114] Its influence as well as its diverse readership and circulation makes this poem a very interesting source for medieval thought on sexuality during the thirteenth century.

The book centers on the Lover's quest for the Rose (representing his Lady) from the moment he falls in love until he manages to overcome all obstacles placed on his path and take her virginity. The Lover encounters many characters, all named symbolically, and has to fight to reach the rose, defeating enemies like Danger and Shame with the help of allies such as Reason and Cupid. The tale is described as a dream, and the main protagonist wakes up once he has conquered the Rose. The first part of this work, written by Guillaume de Lorris, follows the pastoral and courtly lyrical style of the period[115] and is written as a romantic epic. However, when Jean de Meun takes over Guillaume de Lorris' work, the story turns more cynical and philosophical, adding debates on love and more explicit and scandalous ideas.[116] The *Roman de la Rose* created debates on its meaning and produced different interpretations as soon as it appeared, making it one of the first books in the medieval vernacular "to provoke an extended literary debate, thus figuring as the subject of literary critical essays."[117] One hundred and twenty-five years after the book started circulating, the first recorded woman reader of the Roman de la Rose, Christine de Pizan, believed "it deserved burning."[118] This book continues to be a source for debate and various interpretations today, with some viewing it as a work of

[114] Huot. *The Romance of the Rose*, 337.
[115] Nichols, "Codex as Critic", 94.
[116] Nichols, "Codex as Critic" , 94.
[117] Brownlee and Huot. "Introduction", 1.
[118] Heather Arden. "Women as Readers, Women as Text in the Roman de la Rose". In *Women, the Book and the Worldly*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 111.

philosophy, while others interpret the book as a satirical portrait of thirteenth century social and sexual life.[119]

Similarly to Andreas' writing, the *Roman de la Rose* was heavily inspired by Ovid and took some of the major arguments the Roman author made in the past and reworked them to make sense in the context of thirteenth century Europe. This work, particularly Jean de Meun's section, also draws from the writing of Virgil and Horace, in part due to the author's education.[120] Some researchers argue that these classical authors provided Jean de Meun's main intellectual tensions for this book.[121] Although that might not be the case, Jean de Meun clearly draws heavily on these author's main ideas throughout his story, with his first part relying on Ovid's first book of his *Ars Amatoria*.[122] Guillaume de Lorris also draws on Ovid and other classical authors in some of his main ideas, but does it in a more subtle way and incorporates fewer references to classical myths than his co-author. Jean de Meun, however, explicitly uses narratives from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* that readers familiar with Ovid's work will easily recognize, such as the myth of Narcissus and Echo, but reworks them in a way that maintains the main themes of the original text while carrying his intended message. For example, Jean de Meun uses the myths of Deucalion and Pygmalion, but works that myth to warn against "the dangers of feminine recalcitrance" instead of a warning against feminine seductive powers.[123]

One of the passages that shows the inspiration the *Roman de La Rose* drew from Ovid's is the dialogue of La Vieille. Portrayed as a bitter old woman, La Vieille gives younger women advice such as "Briefly, all men betray and deceive women; all are sensualists, taking their

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[119] Brownlee and Huot. "Introduction", 1.
[120] John V. Fleming. "Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets". In *Rethinking the Romance of the Rose: Text, Image, Reception*, ed. Kevin Brownlee and Sylvia Huot. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 83.
[121] Fleming, "Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets", 85.
[122] Fleming, "Jean de Meun and the Ancient Poets", 87.
[123] Sylvia Huot. "The Medusa Interpolation in the Romance of the Rose: Mythographic Program and Ovidian Intertext". *Speculum*, Vol. 62, No.4, (October 1987), 875. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2851784

pleasure anywhere. Therefore we should deceive them in return, not fix our hearts on one."[124] This part of La Vieille's speech draws on the first book of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, where he advises his readers to "delude women" "with impunity", and to "deceive deceivers."[125] Writing La Vieille as a character bent on deceiving men and advising other women to do the same demonstrates the common belief that women used their wiles to manipulate men into dropping everything to appease their lust. La Vieille's distortion of Ovid's writing also shows the common belief that women cannot be taught; they can read all the books they want, but their feminine nature can never be reined in by what they read.[126] They will always be ruled by their lust and feminine wiles.

A similar idea is communicated through the dialogue between Reason and the Lover early on. When Reason tries to persuade the Lover to discontinue his desperate quest for the Rose, the Lover admits that although he heard the preaching of Reason loud and clear, "Love prevented anything from being put into practice."[127] In other words, the main character admits that although he is aware of how love has overpowered his ability to think clearly and listen to reason, he is powerless to stop it. Through his action and his lack of rational thought, the Lover supports Reason's idea that love is "reason gone mad"[128] and "a sickness of thought",[129] where people in love are "so enraptured that [they think] of nothing else."[130] The Lover is a prime example of what seems to be a common anxiety authors express in their texts, both in classical tales and during the thirteenth century. They believed that men were likely to lose the ability to

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[124] Jean de Meun*, The Romance of the Rose*. In *Woman Defamed and Woman Defended: An Anthology of Medieval Texts*, Ed. Alcuin Blamires, Karen Pratt and C.W. Marx. (New York: Clarendon Press, 1992), 161.
[125] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*. Book 1, part XVI.
[126] Arden. "Women as Readers", 117.
[127] Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*. Trans. Charles Dahlberg. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 99 (4629).
[128] De Lorris and de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*, 94 (4293).
[129] De Lorris and de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*, 95 (4293).
[130] De Lorris and de Meun. *The Romance of the Rose*, 96 (4376).

think rationally when falling in love or simply lust after someone. The Lover was a symbol of why men should stay away from love, particularly sexual love, a warning that reflects what previous authors such as Andrea Capellanus had already written about in their own works. Overall, throughout the *Roman de la Rose*, classical texts and myths are adapted by both Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun to send some clear messages to their audience, communicating, for example, with warnings against the dangers of women[131] and against losing reason to love being a recurring theme. With the inclusion of many references to classical texts, "the *Rose* represents the high point of medieval intertextuality."[132]

The Fasciculus Morum

In addition to inspiring their clerical readers, many of whom were themselves authors of romances and other literary texts, classical tales and authors such as Ovid had a tremendous influence on religious writings. Classical authors, as mentioned earlier, were introduced to clerics early on in their education. By using Latin authors to learn prose, these men, many of whom would go on to work as priests, canonists and theologians, connected with classical literature in an important way. This influence is particularly noticeable in religious writings such as preachers' handbooks.

The *Fasciculus Morum*, edited and translated by Siegfried Wenzel, is a prime example of how classic retellings influenced religious writings, particularly when it came to sex and marriage. This fourteenth-century preacher's handbook shows the Franciscan friars' thoughts on how to discuss the seven deadly sins in preaching. The *Fasciculus Morum,* just like many preacher's handbooks, was written with other Franciscan friars as its intended readers, with the

[131] Huot, "The Medusa Interpolation", 874.
[132] Arden. "Women as Readers", 112.

author referring to each of his readers as "most beloved brother and companion."[133] In the century following its composition, the *Fasciculus Morum* was mostly read by clerics and clergymen, with manuscripts found in large religious communities, English universities, and in the personal libraries of some secular priests and chaplains.[134] The handbook was read all over England, with some copies making it into the rest of Europe later on during the fifteenth century.[135] With the content of the *Fasciculus Morum* being sermons, this material reached a wider audience through preaching by friars and priests alike. Some Fanciscan sermons were preached to academic congregations with an exclusively male audience.[136] However, most sermons in England during the Middle Ages were typically delivered to an audience of both men and women, with wide ranging social classes.[137] Rural parishes and urban assemblies in particular had an audience at sermons that comprised men and women "of different sorts and conditions."[138] The material of the *Fasciculus Morum* thus made its way to clerics who could read it first, before being heard by wide ranging audiences in the form of sermons.

The book covers all sins in hierarchical order from what the author sees as the sin deserving of the least attention, to the one that requires the most explanation; starting with Pride, followed by Wrath, Envy, Avarice, Sloth, Gluttony and ending with Lechery. Each part starts with describing the sin in detail, discussing the circumstances under which this sin can occur, what the sin entails, and how it can be described. The author then discusses associated sins that come with the major sin being discussed. For example, some of the branches of Lechery include

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[133] *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth Century Preacher's Handbook.* Ed. and Trans. Siegfried Wenzel. (London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 31.
[134] Siegfried Wenzel. *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus Morum and its Middle English Poems.* (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1978), 26.
[135] Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons*, 26.
[136] William H. Campbell. "Franciscan Preaching in Thirteenth-Century England: Sources, Problems and Possibilities". In *The friars in medieval Britain : proceedings of the 2007 Harlaxton Symposium,* ed. Harlaxton Symposium and Nicholas John Rogers. (Donington : Shaun Tyas, 2010), 25.
[137] H. Leith Spencer. *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 65.
[138] Spencer. *English Preaching,* 65.

fornication, violating a virgin, adultery, incest, and sodomy. The preacher ensures his audience's understanding by describing how the sin can harm many people. For instance, Lechery is harmful to God, angels, the people involved and their neighbours. Each section ends with the author exploring the virtues that can remedy the sin discussed, such as how chastity is the best practice to avoid committing Lechery, and the different ways these virtues can be practiced. References to classical tales and other literary texts can be found throughout this book, including the section on Lechery, in which the author references literary texts from antiquity and the Middle Ages. For example, he uses Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* to discuss beauty, and Lucius Annaeus Seneca to discuss sight's role in committing a sin like adultery.[139] The presence of classical authors is on some occasions just as prominent as the presence of the bible in the preacher's ideas, coming up multiple times in a single page. This gives the author some authority, implying that his arguments are grounded in history and supported by other thinkers outside of the medieval church. However, as we will see, the preacher often reinterprets other author's works in a way that supports his own moralistic arguments.

It seems that the author of the *Fasciculus Morum* was just as enthralled by Ovid as his counterparts outside the church. In the Lechery section of his handbook, the author uses Ovid's *Heroides* to highlight the dangers of losing reason to lust. Hero and Leander are some of the main characters in The *Heroides*. They were a young couple who met at a festival and fell in love. However, Hero was a priestess and their love was forbidden by her parents, who would never let them marry. In order to still see each other every night, Leander would swim across the Hellespont, guided by a light coming from Hero's tower. One night, the light was extinguished by the wind from a storm and Leander, with nothing to guide his swimming and stuck in strong currents, drowned in the Hellespont. When Hero saw his body, she threw herself from her tower

[139] *Fasciculus Morum*, 651-653.

and drowned, too. The story of Hero and Leander was well known for most educated men in the Middle Ages; classical texts were used throughout this period as a way to teach students proper Latin grammar,[140] and Ovid's work such as the Heroides "became core pedagogical texts."[141] It is thus not a surprise that the preacher would be familiar with this tale. The author of the *Fasciculus Morum* uses these two characters to illustrate the dangers of allowing lust to overpower rational thought. The way this preacher interprets this tale gives us insight into a common anxiety clerics were experiencing. Commonly, Hero was seen as a temptress and this story was often portrayed as a "warning against excessive love," or lack of balance in relationships.[142] However, in his handbook, the preacher sees Leander as "[standing] for the rational soul"[143] and Hero representing the body. The author uses this tale as a warning for what can happen to someone when the light of reason gets extinguished and they let the body control their behaviour. Similar to Capellanus' message in *The Art of Courtly Love*, this fourteenth century preacher re-uses this common idea that men can easily lose their reason when a pretty woman walks by, and this leads to men committing the sin of Lechery, as a way to entice the audience of his preachings to stay away from love and lust. Reason, in his opinion, is the only thing keeping "the fleshly appetite" under control.[144] This belief is reflected in his writing throughout his discussion of Lechery. From the beginning, the *Fasciculus Morum* describes Lechery as a lust that "rises beyond measure and against reason," and a thirst that "entirely plunders man's mind,"[145] leaving them unable to use reason to prevent them from committing this sin. After reading *The Art of Courtly Love* and *The Romance of the Rose,* it is clear that the friar was merely pointing out something that was already

[140] Jamie C. Fumo. "Commentary and Collaboration in the Medieval Allegorical Tradition". In *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*, Ed. John F. Miller and Caroline E. Newlands. (Malden: Wiley and Sons, 2014), 116.
[141] Marilynn Desmond. "Venus's Clerk: Ovid's Amatory Poetry in the Middle Ages". In *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*, Ed. John F. Miller and Caroline E. Newlands. (Malden: Wiley and Sons, 2014), 162.
[142] Brian Oliver Murdoch. *The Reception of the Legend of Hero and Leander.* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 58.
[143] *Fasciculus Morum,* 671.
[144] *Fasciculus Morum,* 703.
[145] *Fasciculus Morum,* 649.

obvious to authors writing a few decades before him to the lay audience that would receive his and his colleague's preaching.

Ovid and other classical authors greatly inspired many authors from the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but these authors from the Middle Ages were also motivated by the idea that their peers needed warning against the dangers of falling in love and lusting after women. Andreas' book warned men against falling in love and losing their wisdom when it came to women, arguing that "any man who devotes his efforts to love loses all his usefulness."[146]. Following a similar trend, the *Roman de la Rose* introduced Reason as a way to warn men against falling head over heels for a woman, because once they let lust overcome them, Reason had no way to reach them and prevent them from committing an important sin. The *Fasciculus Morum,* having taken these two works to heart, preaches to its lay audience to use virtues such as continence and chastity as ways to prevent them from succumbing to lust and losing their capacity to think rationally. Although these three works were written by clerics for different purposes, they all demonstrate to some extent a common anxiety that clerics, who were expected to be chaste, seemed to have about sex and love during the Middle Ages. These three texts also show a particular focus on extramarital and illicit sex when drawing from other sources. Although literary characters cannot be assumed to have represented the typical actions of people during the Middle Ages, it was easy to read into their behaviour and see a plausible life lesson.[147] Were these anxieties reflected by other texts during the same period, or was sex a topic reserved for stories that drew directly from Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece? Fabliaux, for instance,

[146] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 187.
[147] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 17.

will shed light on different ways extramarital and illicit sex were portrayed in writing by authors of the thirteenth century.

Chapter Two

The Fabliaux

Along with reading texts inspired by classic authors such as Ovid, Medieval English clerics read texts coming from all over Europe. From France in the thirteenth century came the fabliaux, which were widespread and read by many people in England during their period of dissemination, roughly from the second half of the twelfth century to the 1340s, with their popularity peaking during the thirteenth century.[148] Fabliaux were defined in 1895 by Joseph Bédier as "*Contes à rire en vers*" (humorous tales in verse).[149] However, this definition is commonly regarded as only "the beginning of a formal description,"[150] and debates over what makes a fabliau a fabliau are widespread and ongoing. An alternative definition, proposed by Peter Dronke, is "amusing stories of deception and outwitting, especially of a sexual kind."[151] This scholar also brings up the idea that one of the reasons why it is hard to decide which text is a fabliau and which one is not is because scholars have subjective readings of the tales, and the poetics of the stories make it difficult for everyone to read them the same way, making them difficult to classify.[152] For the sake of this essay, the fabliaux I will be using to make my argument will be texts typically classified as fabliaux by most scholars.

Fabliaux are hypothesized to have come from popular oral stories finally written down in the form of verse, and show influence coming from fables, folktales, Latin comedy, obscene jokes, local gossip, and even sermon literature.[153] They were not transcribed or recorded until the

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[148] Robert E. Lewis. "The English Fabliau Tradition and Chauncer's "Miller's Tale"". *Modern Philology*, Volume 79, No, 3, (February 1982), 242, 245.
[149] Joseph Bédier. *Les Fabliaux.* (Paris: Émile Bouillon, 1895), 28.
[150] Glenn Wright. "The Fabliau Ethos in the French and English Octavian Romances". *Modern Philology*, Volume 102, No. 4, (May 2005), 483.
[151] Peter Dronke. "The Rise of the Medieval Fabliau: Latin and Vernacular Evidence". *Romanische Forschungen*, 85, H. 3, (1973), 276.
[152] Dronke, "Latin and Vernacular Evidence", 297.
[153] Lewis,"The English Fabliau", 241; Sarah Melhado White. "Sexual Language and Human Conflict in Old French Fabliaux". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Volume 24, No. 3, (April 1982), 189.

end of the thirteenth century.[154] According to Per Nykrog, one of the most influential scholars writing on fabliaux, the genre started with aristocrats as its target audience but changed during the thirteenth century to appeal to people outside of the aristocracy.[155] The genre was often seen as "an amusing parody of courtly ideals."[156] Unfortunately, the authorship of fabliau is often anonymous, as is the case for most fabliaux that will be discussed in this chapter. Scholars agree that a good number of authors were clerics, whose education gave them the instruction necessary to write such stories.[157]

Fabliaux are always short, typically follow a standard plot and discuss similar themes: they traditionally follow "a conflict between rivals", where an odd but still logical chain of events take place in a way that allows the author to use humour in a domestic setting, with amorality as a main theme.[158] For example, many fabliaux discuss a love triangle between a husband, wife and lover, where they try to trick each other to get what they want, with the lover often being the winning party at the end.[159] Most fabliaux have a victim as one of their characters, but these texts are written in a way that encourages no sympathy from readers towards the main characters of the story, including the victim.[160] The characters are often portrayed as selfish, unlikable, and morally delinquent. About two-thirds of fabliaux have a serious or mock-serious moral they try to deliver to their audience, and a similar number of these texts have an erotic element to the tale (over one hundred out of the one hundred and fifty tales traditionally classified as fabliaux), making sex and obscenity one of the primary components of

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[154] John W. Baldwin. *The Language of Sex: Five Voices From Northern France Around 1200*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 36.
[155] Lewis, "The English Fabliau Tradition", 244.
[156] Dronke, "Latin and Vernacular Evidence", 277.
[157] Roy Pearcy. "Origins: From Fable to Fabliau Cele Qui se Fist Foutre sur la Fosse de son Mari". In *Logic and Humour in the Fabliaux: An Essay in Applied Narratology*, ed. Roy Pearcy. (Cambridge: Brewer, 2007), 27.
[158] White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict", 187; Wright, "The Fabliau Ethos", 483, 485.
[159] Dronke, "Latin and Vernacular Evidence", 275.
[160] White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict", 189.

these tales.[161] The sexual component of these texts was focused on "rivalrous interpersonal struggle," but fabliau authors often used sex and obscene language as metaphors for dominance, revenge, humiliation, power, etc., not strictly for erotic purposes.[162] Fabliaux as a genre was one of the first to use vulgar language as a way to deliver a moral to their readers, and this vulgar language was an important part of these texts' appeal to their audience.[163] In keeping with the assumption that most fabliaux were written by clerics, these stories were often sexist and derogatory in their commentary on women, with woman characters being used as representatives of their entire gender and heavily criticized for their moral failings.[164] However, just like any other literary genre, no generalization can be applied to *all* fabliaux. Even when discussing women, fabliaux authors shared many different views on this gender, and did not portray women the exact same way in every text.[165]

Fabliaux were read by the upper classes who were literate and fluent in French and were patronized in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by the aristocracy.[166] Not much is known about how or if people outside of the aristocracy came into contact with these stories. However, one of the main modes of transmission for these stories was oral,[167] making it possible for a wider audience to hear these stories. Authors of fabliaux often urged their audiences to listen, and evidence of written fabliaux only appeared when their popularity dimmed towards the end of the thirteenth century.[168] Additionally, written stories appear in different versions, which is "suggestive of oral transmission."[169] Initially, Joseph Bédier argued in his book, *Les Fabliaux*,

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[161] Lewis, "The English Fabliau Tradition", 242; Dronke, "Latin and Vernacular Evidence", 275.
[162] White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict", 185, 192.
[163] White,"Sexual Language and Human Conflict", 185, 190.
[164] Norris J. Lacy."Courtly Ideology and Women's Place in Medieval French Literature". *Romance Notes*, Vol 25, No. 3, (1985), 324.
[165] Lacy. "Courtly Ideology", 320.
[166] Lewis, "The English Fabliau Tradition", 244-245.
[167] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 38.
[168] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 38.
[169] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 38.

that these texts were written for the bourgeois population, while Per Nykrog, also in his book *Les Fabliaux*, argued they were written for a courtly audience. However, more recent studies on the fabliaux suggest a wider and "more mobile" audience for these stories.[170] These texts followed the traditional "accounts of eroticism and courtship" that were produced in France at the time.[171] Until Chauncer in the late-fourteenth century, there were few to no fabliaux written originally in English, although about twelve of the fabliaux we still have records of today were written in Anglo-Norman, suggesting they were written in England.[172] Fabliaux, like most literature that aimed only to entertain, were written for the elite, at least in the beginning, who commonly spoke French.[173]

The Promiscuous Priest

One of the most common characters present in fabliaux is that of the promiscuous priest. Priesthood was without a doubt a common career path for young men during the thirteenth century. The fact that they were often portrayed as promiscuous and lascivious might reflect a certain anxiety people had, with priests being some of the only men to interact one-on-one with women who were not their wives. After Canon 21 of the Fourth Lateran Council, which required adults to confess their sins once a year to their parish priests, was issued, private contact between women and priests occurred more often, and the possibility for inappropriate behaviour and gossip also increased.[174] This portrayal was not restricted to fabliaux; other sources portrayed them similarly. For example, in *Jewel of the Church*, written around the early thirteenth century, Gerald of Wales, an archdeacon himself, links "priests with sexual temptation [and] sexual

[170] Holly A. Crocker. "Introduction: the Provocative Body of the Fabliaux". In *Comic Provocations: Exposing the Corpus of the Old French Fabliaux.* Ed. Holly A. Crocker, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 12.
[171] White, "Sexual Language and Human Conflict", 185.
[172] Lewis, "The English Fabliau Tradition", 243-244.
[173] Lewis,"The English Fabliau Tradition", 245.
[174] Irven M. Resnick. "Learning from the Confessional in the Later Thirteenth Century: Contributions to Human Sexuality, Daily Life and a Science of Nature." *Church History*, 88:2, June 2019, 301.

disorder," describing in detail the consequences that often came from priests forming liaisons with women.[175] In Gerald of Wales' text, the lesson is aimed at the priests, who are warned against having affairs and committing sexual sins. In fabliaux, priests were typically portrayed as having affairs with married women, or even with young unmarried maidens. These stories' lesson or warning is similar to the one in *Jewels of the Church*, but is aimed at a different population: the laymen whose wives are portrayed as having affairs with clergymen. They are often urged to keep their wives away from priests, who are likely to give in to temptation and have sex with the women they meet.

These representations of priests being far from celibate come during a period where the policing of clerical celibacy was on the rise, following decades of debates on the subject. Starting in the eleventh century, the papal reform on clerical celibacy remained in constant shift until the thirteenth century and ecclesiastical legislations increasingly cracked down on priests' behaviour, focusing many of the new legislations on their celibacy and enforcing them through episcopal visitation.[176] Throughout the centuries, the push for clerical celibacy was part of an effort "to elevate and separate the clergy from the laity", with the idea of making celibacy "a normative value of priestly masculinity", defining manliness through the restraint required by celibacy instead of through sexual conquest.[177] Clerical celibacy in the eleventh century became a new requirement for priesthood. However, if these stories are to be taken as a source on people's lives, these legislations had little to no impact in preventing priests from having affairs with women, affairs that sometimes came at great cost for the priests in fabliaux, but also in real life, as will be discussed in chapter four. Portraying priests as a main character in fabliaux amplified

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[175] Jennifer D. Thibodeaux. *The Manly Priest: Clerical Celibacy, Masculinity, and Reform in England and Normandy, 1066-1300*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 1.
[176] Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*, 2. Jennifer D. Thibodeaux. "Man of the Church, or Man of the Village? Gender and the Parish Clergy in Medieval Normandy". *Gender and History,* Vol. 18, No. 3, (August 2006), 383.
[177] Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*, 4, 151.

the scandal of these stories due to this requirement of celibacy.[178] Lower clergy, particularly parish priests, were seen by clerics writing texts like fabliaux in the thirteenth century as unreformed and almost untouched by those legislations. For priests, following reform meant giving up on behaviours associated with manliness by the laity, and it is possible that they rebelled against these impositions to avoid being labelled as effeminate by other men of their parishes. By the thirteenth century, with increases in enforcement of reform, "virtually all the bishops in England and Normandy" followed these regulations by remaining celibate.[179]

A well-known fabliau that presents a great example of the promiscuous priest comes from *Du Prestre Crucifié* or *The Crucified Priest*. This fabliau tells the story of a husband who makes holy carvings for a living being cheated on by his wife, who sleeps with the local priest because she is "carried away by passion."[180] One day, the husband, suspicious about his wife's activities, sets up to catch her sleeping with the priest. He pretends to go to the market but comes back early. The wife and priest, wanting to avoid getting caught, decide that the best course of action is for the priest to hide amongst the husband's carvings, pretending to be one of them. The husband enacts his revenge by "[cutting] off the prelate's genitalia,"[181] pretending to his wife that he cannot let one of his carvings be so debauched. The story ends with the priest returning home after enduring a beating on his way back and having to pay a ransom for his return home to the men who hurt him. As in most fabliaux starring a priest, the clergyman is set up as the clear antagonist, and the fabliau pushes readers to have little to no compassion for this character. The fabliau ends with a lesson for its readers:

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[178] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 60.
[179] Thibodeaux, *The Manly Priest*, 14.
[180] "The Crucified Priest". In *The Fabliaux*. Edited by Nathaniel E. Dubin. (London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 74.
[181] "The Crucified Priest", 77.

This parable has demonstrated,
No matter who is implicated,
In no case should a clergyman
Mess with a wife of any man
Or hang around her.[182]

This ending puts a lot of emphasis on the idea that although it's wrong for any man to have an affair with a married woman, it is particularly wrong for a clergyman to do so. Priests were expected to remain celibate, and thus stay far away from sins such as adultery. However, this fabliaux suggests that their vow to renounce sin was not taken seriously by most priests. This fabliau seems to target priests themselves in its message, since the overall lesson to be drawn from this fabliau is that priests, like any other men, should not have sex with a married woman. This departs from many other fabliau starring priests, where the lesson is aimed at the married men instead, often warning them against trusting their wives when they are spending time with clergymen. Priests inciting wives to adultery was a common theme in fabliaux and thus seemed to be a common anxiety for the laity. Within the context of the reinforcement of clerical reform during the thirteenth century, "adultery provided an opportunity for sexual conquest" for priests, "who felt vulnerable to the accusations of effeminacy."[183] On top of painting priests as likely to mess with men's marriages by fooling around with their wives, fabliaux often depict them as cowardly. In *The Crucified Priest,* the priest would rather hide and get his penis cut off than confront the husband and be found out. The priest is portrayed as a person without morals and without pride, which is similar to what we come across in other fabliaux.

In some fabliaux, the priest is not portrayed as a main character in the story but instead is used as a trigger that propels the story forward. For example, in *The Peasant Doctor*, no priest is described as sleeping with the peasant's wife. However, the peasant is convinced that the village

[182] "The Crucified Priest", 78.
[183] Thibodeaux, "Man of the Church, or Man of the Village?", 390.

priest will come around his house while he is out working in the field. He states that "with that clergyman about my house both day in and day out, he'll steal my wife from me."[184] The threat of the priest possibly visiting his house while his wife is home alone convinces the peasant to start beating his wife as a way to prevent her from having an affair. She gets tired of his mistreatments and finds a way to force her husband to leave town to act as the king's physician, under the threat of frequent beatings by the king's entourage. The story ends in resolution, with the peasant going back home to his wife, no longer beating her, and acting as a physician whenever the king requested it.[185] The entire storyline depends on the peasant being threatened by the priest's presence and the fact that the churchman can easily have frequent access to his wife. Clergymen's jobs allowed them close proximity to women and provided them with an excuse to be alone with them if need be. This particular fabliau suggests men were acutely aware of this fact, and felt threatened by priests and other clergymen who were perceived as easily tempted by women.

Both *The Crucified Priest* and *The Peasant Doctor* demonstrate a clear trend in the portrayal of priests in fabliaux. They are portrayed as greedy, promiscuous, sinful and cowardly. These fabliaux warn married men that priests should not be trusted with their wives, and warn other priests that their actions can have major consequences for them, but also for the people involved in their affairs. These tales thus show the influence of previous texts that emphasized the importance of staying away from sexual misbehaviours and that encouraged celibacy, while turning these warnings into humorous tales directed towards a lay audience. Clerical celibacy comes out as a major theme in fabliaux, most likely due to the increase in legislation concerned with the same issue. Discourses around clerical celibacy were nothing new in the thirteenth

[184] "The Peasant Doctor". In *The Fabliaux*. Edited by Nathaniel E. Dubin. (London: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2013), 182.
[185] "The Peasant Doctor", 196.

century, but the increase in legislation on the topic suggests some concern for the lack of respect by priests for their vow of chastity. Fabliaux and other tales reflect this change in legislation, but also the anxiety that might have contributed to the support for clerical celibacy.

Sex in Sacred Spaces

Another somewhat common tale in the fabliaux discusses people having sex in places considered holy or sacred. This idea is not brought up only in fabliaux; it was also brought up during the twelfth century in biographies of saints, such as *The Life of Saint-Clitaucus*, the *Life of Saint-Guignerus*, and the even in a list of miracles performed by the Virgin Mary.[186] This century saw the rise of different forms of literature discussing this issue, possibly linked to the rise of ecclesiastical fears of pollution in churches.[187] Religious teachings spread the idea that "sex was a source of moral defilement, spiritual pollution, and ritual impurity."[188] Therefore, having sex in a sacred space constituted a form of pollution of the space with impurity and immoral thoughts.

Along with the anxiety over the pollution of sacred spaces, the thirteenth century saw the idea of the conjugal debt, or "the duty of each [spouse] to agree to sexual intercourse with the other when asked", rise in popularity and become widespread. Since the conjugal debt, also known as the marital debt or the natural debt, "took precedence over most other duties"[189] writers and other religious officials might have gotten the idea that spouses would exercise that right everywhere, including in holy spaces, regardless of the pollution sex created in sacred spaces. Canonists mostly agreed that in this situation, the person giving in to the conjugal debt was only

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[186] These occurrences of couples having sex in holy places and subsequently getting stuck together are listed in C. Grant Loomis. "Three Cases of Vaginism". In *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*. Ed. Joyce E. Salisbury. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 237-238.
[187] Dyan Elliott. "Sex In Holy Places: An Exploration of a Medieval Anxiety". *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (Fall 1994), 11.
[188] James A. Brundage. *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe.* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 6.
[189] Shannon McSheffrey. *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 23; Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 359.

performing their spousal duty, while the one requesting that the conjugal debt be upheld in a sacred place was the one committing the sin.[190] Although this situation sounds highly improbable, couples that searched for a place to have an extramarital relationship, or even married couples in search of privacy, might have seen the church as a relatively safe and comfortable place to have sex.[191] The idea of the conjugal debt led to some changes in the tales of people having sex in holy places; mainly, couples started being portrayed as husband and wife more often than not.[192] In fabliaux and other forms of literature, the story always comes to an end similarly, with an important moral or lesson guarding people against having intercourses in places considered sacred. On many occasions, the couple gets stuck together, and subsequently caught in the act by passersby.[193] In other tales, the lesson is that men should never trust women, who are cunning, prone to mood swings, and often push men towards sin.

One of the most popular and better-known examples of fabliaux discussing people having sex in holy places comes from William of Wadington's *Manuel des Pechiez*. The *Manuel des Pechiez* and particularly the fabliau discussing this phenomenon appears in many publications that compiled fabliaux from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, though the work as a whole is not usually considered a collection of fabliaux. This text is best known due to its translation in part in Robert Mannyng of Brunne's *Handlyng Synne,* a penitential manual that the author started writing in 1303. Robert Mannyng of Brunne's text translated William of Wadington's original story from Anglo-Norman to English, making it more accessible to lay readers or more likely lay listeners who were for the most part unfamiliar with Anglo-Norman French.[194] Additionally, lay

[190] Sara McDougall. "Women and Gender in Canon Law". In *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe.* Ed. Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 189-190.
[191] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 110.
[192] Dyan Elliott. "Sex In Holy Places", 13.
[193] Dyan Elliott. "Sex In Holy Places", 6.
[194] Anne M. Scott. "The Role of Exempla in Educating through Emotion: The Deadly Sin of 'lecherye' in Robert Mannyng's *Handlyng Synne* (1303-1317)". In *Authority, Gender and Emotions in Late Medieval and Early Modern England,* ed. Susan Broomhall. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 36.

people are likely to have heard sections of this text in sermons. Robert Mannyng of Brunne wrote *Handlyng Synne* as a confession manual, a guide for laymen to recognize their sins and, subsequently, to understand better what was worthy of confession.[195] Although it is unsure whom he managed to reach with his writings, the author of *Handlyng Synne* was ambitious with his intended audience. He intended his book to be read or heard by "al that toucheth dedly synne", but particularly by laymen who would rather listen to stories than sermons, including lower classes.[196] Robert Mannyng of Brunne wrote his text with extensive examples of sin, and some of the stories he uses to show how laymen commit sin fit the tentative definition of fabliau.

Most important for us, the *Manuel des Pechiez* and *Handlyng Synne*'s subsequent translation discuss the story of a husband and wife who get punished by God for having intercourse in a monastery. In *Handlyng Synne*, this story appears under the title "The Tale of the Sacrilegious Husband and Wife Who Stuck Together". After being chased by enemies, Rychere, the main protagonist of this story, finds refuge in an abbey. Rychere, joined by his wife and children, is given quarters there and arranges for his belongings to be brought to them. Eventually, during their time at the abbey, Rychere and his wife have sex but end up getting stuck together by the wrath of God as a result of having sex too close to a church. They have to call upon monks, who pray for them for quite some time, before finally getting free of each other. Although quite brief and lacking in some context, this story became widely popular and was used by many as a part of examples written in sermons[197] to deter people from having sex in holy places. Even though this tale does not seem humorous per se, this tale is fabliaux-like, with its

[195] D.W. Jr. Robertson. "The Cultural Tradition of Handlyng Synne". *Speculum,* Vol. 22, No. 2, (April 1947), 166.
[196] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne,* ed. Frederick J. Furnivall. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench,Trubner & Co.,1903), line 27; Jennifer Garrison, "Mediated Piety: Eucharistic Theology and Lay Devotion in Robert Mannyng' *Handlyng Synne*". Speculum, Vol. 85, No.4, (October 2010), 895-896.
[197] Elliott, "Sex In Holy Places", 13.

moralist twist that makes it suitable for preaching, and appeared in fabliaux compilations as well as other books such as *The Knight of La Tour Landry.*

The author's intent seems to have been to warn everyone against having sex in a place considered holy. "The Tale of the Sacrilegious Husband and Wife Who Stuck Together" ends with some important advice for readers:

> Thys chance fyl nat for hem allone,
> But for to warne us euerychone,
> That we shul euermore drede,
> Yn holy place to do that dede.[198]

In other words, the author mentions that the couple getting stuck together not only served as a lesson for them but also as a lesson for anyone considering having sex near or in a holy place. For the couple, there is obvious discomfort in getting stuck in their position, but the shame of having people see them stuck as such also served as a consequence of their action. The couple is used as an example for the other characters in the story, such as the spectators who wonder "that they did such 'folye'",[199] but also for the readers, who are urged by the author to avoid taking part in similar sin. "The Tale of the Sacrilegious Husband and Wife Who Stuck Together" adds to Robert Mannyng of Brunne's attempt at moral education by illustrating what might happen if his readers partake in sin, but also call upon his readers to apply moral judgment to similar situations. As mentioned, with the rise of the conjugal debt idea, authors such as William of Wadington, who must have been a priest, seem to have been increasingly anxious that people could enact their privilege by asking their spouse to perform their marital duties in or near churches. Readers of this fabliau are urged to consider the implications of acting on their spouses' request.

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[198] Robert Mannyng of Brunne, *Handlyng Synne*, Lines 8972-8976.
[199] Elizabeth Allen. *False Fables and Exemplary Truth in Later Middle English Literature.* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 3.

Another example of a fabliau that discusses people having sex in holy places comes from “She Who Was Fucked on Her Husband’s Grave”. Not much is known about this fabliau, other than the fact that it was written in the thirteenth century. The author of this story, like many authors of Fabliaux, is anonymous. Scholars believe that this fabliau drew inspiration from a well-known fable called “The Matron of Ephesus”, which was recorded for the first time around the first century.[200] This fabliau tells the story of a woman whose husband died. After burying him, the widow is inconsolable, and refuses to leave his burying grounds, even after her relatives beg her to come back to her house. Later on, a knight and his squire pass by the woman. The knight expresses compassion for the woman’s pain, but his squire argues that she’s not actually grieving and deserving of compassion, and bets with the knight that he can prove it to him by having sex with her on her late husband’s grave. After the knight agrees to this bet and hides in nearby bushes, the squire approaches the widow, who tells him that without her husband she does not wish to live. Seizing the opportunity the widow unknowingly gave him, the squire tells her he is also grieving the loss of his love, whom he killed during sex. The widow then tells him to try to kill her the same way he killed his wife, and the squire proceeds to have sex with her right there, while the knight watches from the bushes. Although this fabliau was clearly written for entertainment purposes, like most of them, it also ends with a lesson for its reader:

> That man’s a moron, I contend,
> Who puts much faith in woman’s nature,
> For woman is a weak-willed creature [...]
> Who trusts in woman must be mad![201]

In this fabliau, the couple doesn’t suffer physical or even social repercussions from their act. Instead, the consequence of the tale seems to be the death of the knight's faith in women. The tale serves as a warning for all men that women are not faithful; men cannot trust them, even

[200] Pearcy, “From Fable to Fabliau”, 16.
[201] *The Fabliaux*: *a new verse translation.* Ed. Nathaniel E. Dubin. (London, Liveright, 2013), 245.

when they seem to be in distress, because their mood changes abruptly. In this case, the narrator suggests that the widow ends up enjoying the intercourse, stating "Thus she, who was disconsolate, found consolation in the end,"[202] therefore proving to the knight, still hidden in the bushes, that women's moods are too fickle to encourage compassion. The lack of tangible consequences for having sex on a sacred site stands out from other fabliau, where traditionally something bad would happen to the couple: they would be struck dead or would end up stuck together until someone would find them in a compromising position. The story was not meant to be a warning against people having sex in holy places, yet this particular situation was chosen as a way to illustrate how inconstant women were. The choice of setting for the couple having sex might simply be from the author of this fabliau reading similar stories in other romances and fabliaux circulating during the thirteenth century. The setting does serve to condemn the women's actions further. Not only is she asking a stranger to sleep with her and ends up enjoying it, but she is doing so on her late husband's grave, which makes this sin worse.

Fabliaux, although mostly written as entertainment, reflects previous texts written by other clerics that often served as warnings for their readers. The common themes present in these texts, such as priests sleeping with married women and people having sex in inappropriate and holy spaces, give insight into the common topics of concern for clerics, who were most likely the writers of these tales. The many stories including a naughty priest sleeping with women of his parish give readers dual warnings: it condemns churchmen's lascivious behaviours by illustrating the often painful consequences that come with having affairs with women while advising husbands to keep their wives away from priests. Similar warnings come with tales of people having sex in holy places: the social shame that comes with being found out and the possibility

[202] *The Fabliaux*: *a new verse translation.* Ed. Nathaniel E. Dubin. (London, Liveright, 2013), 244.

of enduring god's wrath discourages readers from acting in a similar manner while warning men that women cannot be trusted to uphold moral behaviours and contain their desires in public. The humorous aspect of these tales as well as their suitability for oral transmission allowed clerical authors to rewrite their previous ideas on sexual misbehaviours into texts that would reach the laity. In the following section, I will turn my attention to the many statutes and legislation produced in the thirteenth century, as well as confession manuals, which show many similarities to the anxieties that came forward in the literature that was circulating during this period.

Chapter Three

By Clerics, For Clerics

When looking at sources written by clerics to give advice and guidance to other clerics, warnings against sexual misbehaviours come up as often as it does in literature of the thirteenth century. Ecclesiastical legislation and statutes written in the thirteenth century demonstrated great concern about topics of a sexual nature, such as fornication, adultery, the conjugal debt, and clerical celibacy. Similar concerns were shared in confession manuals and guides that offered clerics advice on what to preach, with these manuscripts showing an important focus on sins of a sexual nature. Fornication, adultery, and clerical celibacy were as omnipresent in those writings as they were in fabliaux, and the underlying warning against lust and love found in texts inspired by Greek and Roman authors shines through many of these texts.

Canon Law and Sex

Medieval law during the Middle Ages was split into many different legal systems that coexisted. Laws such as manorial, feudal, municipal, royal, maritime, merchant and canon law all had their own court systems,[203] and ruled over specific spheres of people's lives. Legal systems such as canon and civil law both complemented and competed with each other.[204] When it came to private life, however, canon law reigned over people's behaviours. Canon law, unlike most other legal systems, was used similarly in all of the Christian world in the middle ages and was applied equally to everyone in society, at least in theory.[205] Where canon law started and ended was a bit murky; clerics claimed that canon law ruled over all matters of immoral behaviours and unorthodox thoughts, encompassing all sinful behaviours such as crime.[206] By the

[203] James A. Brundage. *Medieval Canon Law*. (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1995), 2.
[204] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 97.
[205] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 3.
[206] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 71.

thirteenth century, the ecclesiastical courts of canon law gave rulings on sacramental concerns, such as marriage, and matters made by oaths, such as loans. These courts handled issues on marriage, sex, wills, burials, children's legitimacy, labour, servitude, poor relief, commerce, and more.[207] Marriage and sex were the main issues brought up in court during this period and took up a disproportionate amount of space in statutes and legislation written by canonists. In the end, "the influence of canon law permeated the entire medieval social order."[208]

Around 1140, monk and professor of law Gratian compiled the *Decretum,* a text meant to "reconcile differing canonical traditions and prescriptions into an intellectually consistent and unified system."[209] Gratian's *Decretum* became the foundational textbook on Canon law, with students all over Europe studying it in the classroom and using it as inspiration to create new laws. These new laws were produced throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in the form of decretals and only slowed down in production towards the end of the fourteenth century.[210] Starting in 1200, men could make a living out of teaching and practicing canon law, becoming a distinct professional class during the thirteenth century.[211] Canonists made their living by providing services to paying clients and were often appointed to various ecclesiastical positions, which contributed to their income.[212] The thirteenth century, therefore, saw a tremendous increase in legal writing by clerics and canonists, including ecclesiastical statutes and legislation that regulated people's private and public lives. Many of these legal writings were highly concerned with people's sexual behaviours, reflecting similar ideas on sex as other authors seen previously.

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[207] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 71.
[208] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 96.
[209] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 47.
[210] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law*, 55-56.
[211] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law,* 64.
[212] Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law,* 65.

Ecclesiastical legislation from the thirteenth century were aimed at clerics; they were meant to help them navigate their jobs while regulating their own behaviour. Ecclesiastical legislation can be grouped into two different aims. Some statutes were meant to regulate how clerics themselves should behave and were aimed directly at them. Other statutes regulated lay behaviour and were meant to tell clerics what rules they should enforce. In other words, these statutes told priests how to perform their duties as priests in their parishes. Clerics were meant to enforce all ecclesiastical legislation and to follow and respect these statutes themselves.

Ecclesiastical legislation directly regulating clerics' behaviour was often focused on their respect for clerical celibacy. In 1215, under the Fourth Lateran Council, Pope Innocent III published a decree declaring that "Clerics, especially those in sacred orders, shall live chastely and virtuously. Anyone suspended for incontinency who presumes to celebrate the divine mysteries shall be forever deposed."[213] As one might expect, this 14th canon of the Fourth Lateran Council received tremendous push-back from clerics, who rebelled against the idea of having to leave their wives or concubines, argued that this proclamation would increase the rate of adultery and fornication, and stated that this decree would harm their masculinity.[214] Indeed, this legislation had tremendous implications not only for the clerics it ruled over, but also for their wives, concubines, and children. Women would lose their status as wives of clerics and children would become illegitimate, on top of being barred from inheriting church offices.[215] With this canon, clerics saw their sex lives, which had been a topic of discussion for decades already, becoming officially restricted under the law, with important consequences being imposed if they did not live a chaste life. Ecclesiastical statutes were also concerned with clerics

[213] Henry Joseph Schroeder. *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*. (Saint-Louis: B. Herder Books Co., 1937), 255.
[214] Hugh M. Thomas. *The Secular Clergy in England, 1066-1216.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 154.
[215] Thomas, *The Secular Clergy,* 155.

committing adultery. According to the bishop Bernard of Pavia's treaties in his *Summa Decretalium*, if a cleric was found guilty of adultery, he was to be removed from his duties.[216] Since priests were expected to encourage their parishioners to avoid sin at all costs, it was important that they too demonstrate a willingness to follow ecclesiastical legislation. The issues with having clerics live a chaste life might also have contributed to the omnipresence of clerical celibacy as a major topic of ecclesiastical legislation.

In addition to having much legislation condemning priests and other clerics who were not following legislation on celibacy, many bodies of ecclesiastical statutes regulated their preachings on marriage and sex. These legislations stated more formally the rules and advice put forward in preaching manuals. A common theme that came out of these statutes was the idea that priests should heavily encourage marriage while discouraging sinful behaviour such as adultery. For example, the first synodal statute of Salisbury, written between 1217 and 1219, stated that priests should frequently remind their audiences in sermons and confessions that sex outside of marriage is a sin. If a priest was found not upholding this duty, "he should be punished in accordance with canon law like a fornicator."[217] In addition, priests were to "commend marriage as vigorously and in as many ways as is possible", using fornicators and adulterers as examples of bad behaviour in comparison.[218] Most ecclesiastical statutes that regulated preachings were focused on fornication.[219]

As part of their duties, clerics were expected to enforce ecclesiastical legislation ruling over laypeople's daily lives. With their role putting them in the heart of their parishes, clerics,

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[216] Bernard of Pavia. *Summa Decretalium: Ad Librorum Manuscriptorum Fidem Cum Aliis Eiusdem Scriptoris Anecdotis.* Ed. Ernst Adolph Theodor Laspeyres. (Graz : Akademische Druck- U. Verlagsanstalt, 1956), 229.
[217] Conor McCarthy, Ed. *Love, Sex and Marriage in the Middle Ages: A Sourcebook*. (New York: Routledge, 2022), 71. Translated from *Council and Synods, With Other Documents Relating to the English Church*. Ed. F.M. Powicke and C.R. Cheney. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964). 72.
[218] McCarthy, *Love, Sex and Marriage*, 71. From Powicke and Cheney, *Council and Synods,* 86-87.
[219] Mary E. O'Carroll. *A Thirteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook: Studies in MS Laud Misc. 511.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1997), 13.

especially priests, were responsible for following up on any known breaches of canon law, and ensuring that ecclesiastical legislation was respected. Much of the ecclesiastical legislation they had to enforce had to do with laypeople's sexual lives. Fornication was among the most common concerns for canonists. Although fornication was not a crime under civil law, "canonists maintained" that "simple fornication [...] was a canonical crime."[220] Since many clerics seem to have been anxious that men followed their lust anywhere without thinking of the consequences, passing legislation on fornication and adultery could be a way to prevent this from happening. For example, the first synodal statute of Winchester from 1224 ensured that if fornicators were caught together, they either had to pay a hefty fine or get married, with the man having to "pledge that he will always have her as a wife" and the woman having to make similar public promises.[221] Parties found guilty of fornication could also be threatened with excommunication as a way to get them to marry each other.[222] Forcing fornicators to get married could be a way to decrease the chances of fornication taking place; it might have encouraged people to think twice before following their lust since the consequences of such actions could impact them for the rest of their lives if their relationship came to light. However, considering that in rural courts such as the court of Cerisy in Normandy, fornication and adultery constituted around seventy percent of the cases received,[223] one might assume that the consequences were not severe or implemented enough for people to stop engaging in this sinful activity.

Ecclesiastical statutes were also concerned with laypeople and clerics alike committing bigamy and adultery. For example, a man found to have more than one wife was to be immediately excommunicated.[224] Canon law put in place legislation that ensured that lay people

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[220] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 381.
[221] McCarthy, *Love, Sex and Marriage*, 74. From Powicke and Cheney, *Council and Synods, 135*.
[222] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 384.
[223] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 460.
[224] Bernard of Pavia. *Summa Decretalium,* 230.

could not commit adultery in the hopes of maintaining a relationship with each other once their current spouse passed away. According to canon law, "a prior adulterous relationship constituted an impediment to subsequent marriage," and therefore adulterers could not marry the person they committed adultery with.[225] This regulation ensured that the couple committing adultery did not have a good reason to get rid of their respective spouses in order to be with each other. However, according to Robert Grosseteste's *Templum Dei*, a guide that educated parish priests, prior adultery was a condition under which contracts of marriage could be impeded, but not broken.[226] This meant that although a contract of marriage could not be created between two people who were known to have had a liaison if their affair came to light after a marriage was contracted between them, they were to remain married.

In addition to their concern with lay people committing carnal sins such as fornication and adultery, ecclesiastical legislation and canonists made sure to establish precise boundaries in which sex was allowed. The conjugal debt, which was mentioned often in Fabliaux, was established as the main condition under which sex was tolerated. In the first synodal statute of Coventry, written between 1224 and 1237, the rendering of the conjugal debt was said to be one of the only conditions in which emitting semen was not a mortal sin.[227] The conjugal debt was, therefore, a way for couples to have sex without performing a sin in the eyes of the church, with the canonist Rufinus stipulating that if a husband had to surrender his conjugal debt, he was not committing a sin by having sex.[228] The Italian canonist Huguccio took this idea a step further and declared that by refusing to surrender the conjugal debt the husband or wife would be

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[225] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 463, Bernard of Pavia. *Summa Decretalium,* 230.
[226] Robert Grosseteste. *Templum Dei*. In *Love, Marriage and Family in the Middle Ages*. Ed. Jacqueline Murray. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 214.
[227] McCarthy, *Love, Sex and Marriage*, 75. From Powicke and Cheney, *Council and Synods,* 222-223.
[228] John W. Baldwin. *The Language of Sex: Five Voices from Northern France Around 1200.* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 193.

committing a sin.[229] The statute of Coventry, mentioned earlier, supported this idea, stating that it was important for confessors to know "whether [the men confessing] use their own wives in accordance with the natural debt, otherwise they sin in marriage."[230] However, not all canonists were of the opinion that the conjugal debt made sex unsinful. John of Kent shared in his *Summa de penitentia* his belief that by requesting the conjugal debt, the sin of lechery is exacerbated for the spouse making the request, and by surrendering it, the other spouse still commits a sin, albeit minimized.[231] Additionally, priests were instructed that some conditions prevented spouses from requesting the rendering of the conjugal debt. For example, if the day was a solemn day, or if the wife was pregnant or on her period, the conjugal debt could not be sought.[232] In most discussions of the conjugal debt, the husband is seen as the spouse requesting the debt, and the wife as the spouse surrendering the conjugal debt to their partner. This might be due to the fact that in the eyes of clerics, "the husband's sexual demands take precedence over the wife's desire,"[233] and, thus, the husband is the one who can order the wife to have sex with him. The conjugal debt, and the discussion of the debt in ecclesiastical legislation, established parameters in which sex was allowed, and could serve as an example for preachers to use to contrast against sinful sexual behaviour such as fornication. Whether the idea that all sex outside of the conjugal debt was sinful was accepted by the laity or not is another story, but as we will explore in chapter four, it seems somewhat unlikely.

Whether ecclesiastical legislation regulated clerics' behaviours or laid out rules for them to enforce, these statutes were concerned about the way sex was perceived and discussed. As in

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[229] Baldwin, *The Language of Sex*, 193.
[230] McCarthy, Love, Sex and Marriage, 74. From Powicke and Cheney, *Council and Synods,* 222-223.
[231] Jacqueline Murray. "The Absent Penitent: The Cure of Women's Souls and Confessors' Manuals in Thirteenth-Century England". In *Women, the Book, and the Godly*. Ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor, (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 1995), 23.
[232] Grosseteste, *Templum Dei*, 214.
[233] Jacqueline Murray, "The Absent Penitent", 23.

classic tales and fabliaux, deadly sins were the main focus of ecclesiastical legislation, and sexual sins were by far the main topic of concern for canonists. The consequences of these sins were highlighted as tragic and dire, contrasting with the comical consequences laid out in Fabliaux, but reflecting the tragic endings of stories inspired by Ovid and his contemporaries. Canonists appear to have been just as concerned with fornication, adultery, and clerical celibacy as other authors of the thirteenth century were and had the same desire to promote chastity, or at least to encourage people to stay away from sexual misbehaviours. Outside of ecclesiastical statutes, canonists, theologians, and clerics shared their concerns about sex in other forms of writing. Confession manuals, in particular, reflected the canon law laid out in ecclesiastical statutes while giving parish priests the tool to advise their parishioners in which sex was meant to be discussed under clear boundaries.

Confession Manuals

In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council imposed mandatory annual confession for the laity under the *Omnis Utriusque Sexus* canon.[234] Before this decree, confession did exist and was practiced once in a while, but was not a sacrament. The new demand for mandatory annual confession was a way to help clerics apply the legislation passed during the thirteenth century at the parish level, by getting lay people to confess their sins directly to parish priests, who in turn were expected to assign proper penance to sinners who acted against ecclesiastical legislation. With this new decree came a new type of text: Confession manuals. Aimed at members of the parochial clergy, these manuals were written to help them with confession, providing "a minimal script" from which they were expected to "improvise in conversation with [their] penitents."[235]

[234] Alexander Murray. *Conscience and Authority in the Medieval Church.* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2015), 18.
[235] Alexander Murray. *Conscience and Authority in the Medieval Church,* 102.

They provided priests with a "simplified presentation of canon law and theology,"[236] and with the help of confession manuals and penitential books, priests were expected to "judge whether an act was sinful at all, how bad it was, the circumstances, and how far the penitent's contrition had excused him from an external act of penance."[237] Similarly to some statutes, confession manuals instructed parish priests on how they should educate their parishioners to avoid sin, and how they should encourage them to pursue a life of virtue.[238]

Like many other texts of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, "confessional manuals of the thirteenth century [were] disproportionately concerned with sexual sins in comparison with other types of offense."[239] This might be due to the fact that confession was one of the only private settings in which sexual sins could be discussed by priests without resulting in scandal.[240] It is also possible that confession manuals discussed sex intensively because of the complicated nature of the issue; priests might have required more guidance when it comes to discussing sex than when discussing other sins. Either way, it is clear that sex took up an important space in confession manuals. When studying five different confession manuals of the thirteenth century, Pierre J. Payer, one of the most influential historians on sex in confession manuals in the Middle Ages, found that four of the five manuals gave the sin of lechery more attention than other sins.[241]

Confession manuals like the 1289 text *Synod of Rodez* give important insight into how the subject of lechery was to be approached by confessors. They could ask wide-ranging

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[236] Jacqueline Murray, "The Absent Penitent", 14.
[237] Alexander Murray. *Conscience and Authority in the Medieval Church,* 90.
[238] Jacqueline Murray. "Individualism and Consensual Marriage: Some Evidence From Medieval England". In *Women, Marriage and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan, C.S.B.* Ed. Constance M. Rousseau and Joel T. Rosenthal, (Kalamazoo: The Medieval Institute, 1998), 129.
[239] Payer, "Sex and Confession in the Thirteenth Century", 129.
[240] Resnick. "Learning from the Confessional", 296.
[241] Pierre J. Payer. *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150-1300.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 197-199.

questions, such as whether confessants had committed adultery, incest, fornication, or deflowered virgins.[242] Confessors were advised to "proceed cautiously, lest you instruct [the confessant] to some degree in the manner."[243] If the confessants admitted to having committed a sin of lechery, the confessors were encouraged to ask for more details about this sin. According to the *Synod of Rodez*, they were meant to "[ask] whether [the penitent committed these sins] in a holy place or not holy, and whether on Sundays or feasts, and during Lent, and whether [with] one or many, and how often?"[244] These guiding questions were meant to help confessors navigate the confessing process, ensuring they would assign the confessant the right penance for their sins. The text *Debet Humiliter et Devote*, attributed to the thirteenth Century bishop William of Auvergne, also advised confessors to get details about the circumstances under which certain sins were committed, urging them to ask questions regarding "who, what, where, and the others mentioned previously."[245] For example, John Mirk, a priest of Shropshire, stated in his early fifteenth century confession manual *Instructions for Parish Priests* that in order to give good penance for the sin of lechery, the priest needed to ask the confessant the class of the person with whom they sinned, if they sinned in a holy place or on a holy day and how often the sin was done.[246]

Although confessors were urged to ask as many questions as possible to ensure the right penance would be assigned to each sinner, they were also expected to walk a fine line between getting straight answers on the manner in which lay people coming to confess had sinned, while refraining from giving them ideas on how to sin. William of Auvergne in *Debet Humiliter et Devote* advised them to "not explicitly ask about unknown sins, but ask wisely and from a

[242] *Synod of Rodez*, 211.
[243] *Synod of Rodez.* In Pierre J. Payer. *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150-1300.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 212.
[244] *Synod of Rodez*, 211.
[245] William of Auvergne, Debet Humiliter, 209.
[246] John Mirk. *Instructions for Parish Priests*. Ed. Edward Peacock (Millwood: Kraus Reprint, 1975), 45-46.

distance."[247] In other words, confessors were advised to get as many details as possible to assign the right penance to confessors, without pushing the subject too deeply in order to avoid giving people creative ideas on new ways to sin.[248] Giving people ideas also came in some cases with using sexual words, as these words were perceived as "[leading] to [...] sexual deeds."[249]

When it comes to advising confessants on when sex was allowed, the idea of the conjugal debt came up in many discussions in confession manuals. According to different confession manuals, most clerics agreed that the conjugal debt should be surrendered whenever one of the spouses demanded it. However, when it comes to the conjugal debt being demanded in holy spaces, or during holy times, clerics are clear on who is committing a sin in this situation. The recommendations on what to do if the situation arises are unclear: they agree that surrendering the conjugal debt in a holy place is sinful and unlawful, but also emphasize that the conjugal debt needs to be paid under all circumstances. For example, canonist John of Freiburg wrote in 1297 in his *Summa Confessorum* that if an alternative place to surrender the conjugal debt could be found, the couple was required to do so and have sex in a space not considered holy. However, if no other place could be found, the conjugal debt should be returned "with pain of heart."[250] His idea was built on the work of the two most important theologians of the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas and Albert the Great. Thomas Acquinas believed that "it is unlawful to ask for the debt" during holy times or in holy places,[251] but that "one is bound to pay the debt to the

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[247] William of Auvergne. *Debet Humiliter et Devote.* In Pierre J. Payer. *Sex and the New Medieval Literature of Confession, 1150-1300.* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 208.
[248] Pierre J. Payer. "Sex and Confession in the Thirteenth Century". In *Sex in the Middle Ages: A Book of Essays*. Ed. Joyce E. Salisbury. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991), 127.
[249] Carissa M. Harris. *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain.* (London: Cornell University press, 2018), 14.
[250] John of Freiburg. *Summa confessorum*. Latin translation from Elliott, Dyan. "Sex In Holy Places: An Exploration of a Medieval Anxiety". *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 6, No. 3, Fall 1994, 30. https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/dz871wk1396
[251] Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica.* Ed. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Benziger Bros, 1947), 3738.

other, at any season or hour."[252] Discussion of the conjugal debt in confession manuals like John of Freiburg's *Summa Confessorum* demonstrates that the topic was of great concern for the authors of these guides, who wanted to prepare parish priests on how to react when hearing lay people discuss sexual sins related to the conjugal debt.

The tendency of confession manuals to focus on lechery and sexual sins, in particular, is noticeable even after the thirteenth century. However, an important difference to note is that later confession manuals were more explicitly concerned with the parish priests' own sins. In John Mirk's *Instructions for a Parish Priest*, an early fifteenth century confession manual, the author addressed concerns over priests having affairs with women of their parishes, and thus tarnishing their reputation and respectability in the eyes of lay people. John Mirk warned priests against women from the beginning, advising them to "beware of women, and especially of shrews,"[253] who were considered overbearing and malicious blabbermouths. He combined his warnings with stating that "Preste, by self thow moste be chast,"[254] but did not hide his belief that some priests lived far from a chaste life. When discussing how laymen should confess to their parish priest, the author argued that a man could decide to confess to a different priest if the one in their parish had "lain with any of his parishioners."[255] Priests having sex with people from their parishes must have been frequent, or at least common enough to warrant mention in John Mirk's writing. This recommendation, paired with his warning against shrews, suggests that Mirk was all too aware of the reputation of priests as promiscuous, and advised them to at least stay away from women who could contribute to spreading rumours.

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[252] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* 3739
[253] Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests,* 3.
[254] Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests,* 2.
[255] Mirk, *Instructions for Parish Priests,* 23.

Since confession manuals were clearly written by clerics for other clerics, particularly parish priests, they give us an idea of what were most likely the biggest topics of concern for these authors. These texts demonstrate, in line with other texts of the thirteenth century, that sexual sins were particularly high on the list of clerics' concerns. Confession manuals discuss sex not only extensively, but as the primary subject of questioning during confession. These manuals advised confessors to give frequent warnings against committing the sin of lechery, to question confessants heavily on sexual sins including sins committed under the guise of surrendering the conjugal debt without giving them ideas of new sins to commit, and, in the late Medieval period, reinforced for the confessor himself the importance of following the rules of clerical celibacy, which was well established by the fifteenth century. Confession manuals and legislations show how warnings against sexual misbehaviours and encouragements towards celibacy established in texts of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries made their way into texts that would be transmitted to the laity through the confessant or through canon law itself.

Chapter Four

The Prosecution of Sexual Misbehaviour

The various texts from the thirteenth century and beyond brought forward during this discussion demonstrate that warning people against illicit and extramarital sex was a major topic across a broad range of textual genres written by clerics for an originally clerical audience, from fabliaux to confession manuals. Clerical authors warned their readers, mostly also clerics, against falling prey to lust, painting women as sources of evil who could make men forget everything and fall into carnal sins. These warnings were also given to parishioners, who heard them from sermons based on books such as the *Fasciculus Morum*. They discuss the consequences that come with following lust rather than reason, fornicating with priests, having sex in places considered sacred, and committing sins of the flesh such as adultery. Did lay audiences follow these warnings? Did they take them to heart, or did these texts highlight a certain disconnect between clerical writers and the lay audiences that would eventually come into contact with these texts?

I will pivot here from looking at how different kinds of texts represented illicit and extramarital sex to evidence that shows, at least partially, people's sexual behaviour outside of marriage. In the following final section, I will examine two early examples of records of prosecution of sexual misdemeanours in late Medieval English ecclesiastical forums. The evidence for such prosecutions became ever more numerous through the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as records survived in greater quantity. As scholars have noted, we cannot know how typical the behaviours highlighted in court cases and legal documents were.[256] However, these documents, particularly when paired with other sources, allow us to better understand not only court practices but other social aspects of the Middle Ages as well. James A. Brundage has

[256] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe,* 19.

argued that during the late thirteenth century, "sex and marriage cases accounted for nearly two-thirds of the actions" in the Archdeacon of Salisbury and about ninety percent of cases in Worcester's rural dean courts.[257] He found similar trends of high prosecution of marital and sexual misdemeanours during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but brings up more variation in data depending on the region in which the court sat.[258] Scholars such as Shannon McSheffrey have used legal documents to highlight "how people went about forming marital and sexual relationships" in fifteenth century London, and "how other people - parents, relatives, friends, neighbours, civic officials, parish priests, ecclesiastical judges-sought to influence, control, or prevent them."[259] Ecclesiastical court records of the sixteenth and seventeenth century focusing on the prosecution of marriage and sexual misbehaviours allowed Martin Ingram to understand the work of these courts, but also their impact on "the social mechanisms" that created unique patterns of marriage and sexuality in Late Elizabethan and early Stuart England.[260] Overall, looking at prosecution of marital and sexual misbehaviours has allowed historians to grasp the implications of prosecution trends on the social level, and gain a better understanding of the daily lives of people during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Visitation Reports

By the end of the thirteenth century, episcopal visitations to various dioceses of England were common. Those visitations allowed senior churchmen to make "itinerant investigation of lay and clerical offences" taking place in the diocese and often came about after reports of offences were written by local panels, composed primarily of "trustworthy men."[261] Out of those

[257] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 481.
[258] Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society,* 545.
[259] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex and Civic Culture,* 4.
[260] Martin Ingram. *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 18-20.
[261] Ian Forrest. "The Transformation of Visitation in Thirteenth-Century England". *Past & Present*, No. 221, (November 2013), 4.

visitations sometimes come reports of what the visitors were finding in the dioceses. From 1292 to 1294, the diocese of Canterbury was under a period of episcopal visitations from which records survived. These visits occurred in a wide variety of towns, and the visitors recorded summaries of what they found during those visitations. For the most part, the visitors made notes of the state in which the church was found, often commenting on the bad management they noticed. Some parishes showed misuse of resources, such as a vicar who "taketh a moiety of the tithe of the milk of beasts which are milked in the parish of the same vicar," or a failure to enforce the obligation of coming to church for parishioners like the lady of Crawethorne, or failure to maintain the shape of the church by letting the gutters and timber rot.[262] Most interesting for the purpose of this thesis, the visitors also listed accusations of fornication, adultery, and issues with marriages. These reports laid out thirty-three cases brought forward in the diocese of Canterbury during the episcopal visitation period of 1292 to 1294. The reported cases required lay people, clerics and priests to appear before the ecclesiastical court of the diocese of Canterbury. Out of these thirty-three cases, only two had little to do with illicit or extramarital sex: one of these cases deals with a marriage that was stopped from being contracted because the couple was found to be related, while the other deals with John Salkyn, a married man who stated he was unwilling to support his old wife.[263] Nine deal with problems enforcing clerical celibacy or with issues when ensuring that clerks performing sacred duties were chaste, all of which revealed long-term connections with women. Seven cases presented in this report dealt with fornication, seven with adultery, and eight cases accused men of having connections with or of knowing women of the parish: in other words, accusing them of having extramarital relationships with these women.

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[262] "Episcopal Visitation of a Diocese: Canterbury Diocese, 1292-4". In *English Historical Documents: 1189-1327.* Ed. Harry Rothwell. (New York: Routledge, 1995), 708, 715.
[263] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 719.

This compilation of cases from Canterbury demonstrates that just as in texts, extramarital and illicit sex was an important part of everyday life for English lay people. The fact that most of these cases were concerned with sexual sin suggests that crimes of a sexual nature were most likely the ones that appeared the most frequently before ecclesiastical disciplinary forums. It also suggests that committing sexual sin was somewhat frequent. The visitation reports show that the most common sexual behaviours brought to court reflect the ones most frequently mentioned in texts: adultery and fornication. In some cases, repeated offences of these sins are brought up. For instance, Hamo Corbyl and Basilea Forne were cited for adultery and were found "guilty and incorrigible" since Hamo "does not fear to repeat the offence."[264] Many of the cases of adultery and fornication involve long-term relationships, such as John, a chaplain who was accused of keeping "long ago and still keeps Agnes Hungerhern of Romney" in an extramarital relationship.[265]

These reports also give an idea of the most common consequence for committing fornication or adultery. Most end with the lay people involved getting whipped, or, if they failed to appear, getting excommunicated or suspended from the church until they were ready to renounce their sins. None of the cases brought up in the episcopal visitations of Canterbury attests to people having to get married, or even paying fines, which contrasts with the statutes passed during the thirteenth century discussed above where marriage and paying fines was the recommended penance for these sins. This suggests that these statutes were most likely changed and adapted to the circumstances of different dioceses. However, all cases in which clerics were involved show them being removed from their functions, at least in part, partially in accordance with the consequence recommended by the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215. In most mentions of

[264] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 710.
[265] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 712.

clerks performing duties for priests being married or living with a woman, the episcopal visitors ensured that the married clerks would "not minister about the altar."[266] These clerics lost their privileges because sexual activity was seen as polluting,[267] and, therefore, a clerk having a sexual relationship with a woman could pollute the altar he served.

In some cases, like at the chapel of Paddlesworth, the visitor lists members of the parish clergy being "excommunicated or suspended during the vacancy of the see."[268] Although we are not provided with reasons for these suspensions or excommunications, it would be fair to assume that some have to do with the lack of respect for the clerical celibacy requirements of the clergy, based on the number of times breaches to the rules of clerical celibacy are mentioned in primary sources. The obvious issue with enforcing clerical celibacy reflects the relationships between parish women and clerics that authors of fabliaux often portrayed in their stories. As mentioned, the episcopal visitations in the diocese of Canterbury conducted between 1292 and 1294 show that clerical celibacy was far from being respected by all clergymen, and how difficult it was to enforce this clerical obligation. They also show how clerks connected to the church often transgressed rules, keeping concubines and extramarital relationships, while serving their duties to the church. For example, the vicar of West Hythe, Aylward, is said to have entertained a relationship with a woman for many years, as well as beginning a relationship with a certain Chima Tukkyld, "whom he keeps openly"[269] after his previous partner died. During the visitation, Aylward doesn't deny that he had a long-term relationship with a woman with whom he had children but claims that this woman passed away a year ago and that he hadn't had sex with her for eight years before that. He denies having an affair with Chima, and Chima herself

[266] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 711.
[267] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 60.
[268] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 715.
[269] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 719.

"denies on oath the fact."[270] This case nonetheless resulted in Aylward being deprived of his benefice, and Chima renouncing her sins and being whipped.

The report of this visitation demonstrates that the ecclesiastical authorities struggled with enforcing clerical celibacy. This report also raises the fact that women could suffer more dire consequences for their affairs with clergymen than the men themselves, in a way reflecting Andreas Capellanus' thoughts that women always committed a greater sin than their male partners when it came to sex.[271] Aylward was deprived of his clerical office for living with a woman for years, having children with her during his long-term relationship, and possibly for the rumours of his affair with Chima. Chima, on the other hand, was still whipped three times around the market and three times around the church, only for having a relationship with Aylward. Not only was this punishment most likely painful, but the fact that it was conducted in public and highly frequented places would without a doubt taint her reputation. "Women's honour and virtue were primarily sexual" and thus, their extramarital or illicit sexual activities tainted their virtue, but also their family's honour, since women were seen as the "preservers of the family honour."[272] Ecclesiastical court records show that women like Chima were accused and found guilty of committing sexual infractions significantly more often than men, which made them more likely to suffer the consequences of having extramarital sex, and women were generally treated more harshly for committing the same sexual infraction as men.[273] By the later Middle Ages, people found guilty of sexual misdemeanours could pay a fine instead of having to be publicly humiliated through penance, but "women were less able than men to afford the

[270] "Episcopal visitation: Canterbury", 719.
[271] Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, 193.
[272] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 133.
[273] L.R. Poos. "Sex, Lies and the Church Courts of Pre-Reformation England". *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 25, Issue 4, (Spring 1995), 606; Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 133.

cost."[274] Visitation reports such as this give us a good idea of what was happening in dioceses in England during the thirteenth century. Illicit sex and extramarital relationships were just as omnipresent in these sources as in other texts, and show similar themes as other primary sources of this period.

The Canterbury visitation reports show that celibacy outside of marriage was heavily encouraged by courts and by the clerical authorities writing these reports, and the consequences emphasized in the texts explored previously were in some cases applied. However, the number of offences, the fact that some lay people did not shy away from repeating the same offence on multiple occasions, as well as the long-term nature of some relationships demonstrate a dichotomy between what was advised by clerics in text and what was taken to heart by lay people. This evidence suggests that even though many lay people came into contact with the messages clerics were trying to communicate in their texts, in many cases these pieces of advice were ignored.

The Fourteenth Century, and Beyond

The following century seems to have followed similar trends. Records for a fourteenth century consistory court in Rochester demonstrate that although canon law was always to be followed, the manner in which it was implemented in courts when it comes to sexual offences was slightly different than the recommendations laid out in canon law. Similarly to the evidence seen in the visitation reports of Canterbury, the records of the Rochester consistory court suggest that lay people did not shy away from having relationships outside of marriage. Ecclesiastical courts disproportionately dealt with sexual morality and cases of marriage. Looking at act books and visitation returns from this period in Rochester gives a window into "how canon legal

[274] Judith M. Bennett, Ruth Mazo Karras, and Janelle Werner. "No Romance Without Finance." *Speculum*, Vol. 99, No. 1, (January 2024), 84.

thought on [sexual morality] was implemented."[275] The consistory courts processed a high quantity of cases on sexual behaviour, but most likely did not process all occurrences of misbehaviours.[276] Most cases came from either a wounded party, reports from episcopal visitations, or through common knowledge.[277] Cases brought to the ecclesiastical courts through common knowledge most likely came from gossip and rumours, which was "an integral part of the regulation of sexuality in pre-modern England."[278] The Rochester consistory courts saw cases of scandal and immorality such as "incest, persistent recidivism, relations between masters and servants, blatant adultery, clandestine marriage or other infringements of canon law."[279]

During 1347 and 1348, the courts saw fifteen cases accusing priests of misdemeanours. Out of these fifteen cases, six managed to have their charges dismissed through purgation. The remaining nine cases that were accepted as valid accusations by the court had to do with these men forming long or short-term relationships with women, both married and single.[280] These cases demonstrate that even during the fourteenth century, requiring priests to be celibate was difficult to enforce, and many of them formed serious relationships with women. Contrary to what was required by the 1215 Fourth Lateran Council rule on clerical celibacy and apparently enforced by the earlier Canterbury visitations, most of these men were not removed from their clerical offices. Some were obligated to go on penitential pilgrimages, and all were prevented from seeing the women they had sinned with "through a system of abjurations,"[281] where the couple had to swear they would never see each other again. The frequency of this sin reflects how often clergymen having affairs with women was brought up both in visitation reports and in

[275] Andrew John Finch. "Sexual Morality and Canon Law: The Evidence of the Rochester Consistory Court". *Journal of Medieval History*, vol 20:3, DOI: 10.1016/0304-4181(94)90004-3. 263.
[276] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 264.
[277] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 264.
[278] Poos, "Sex, Lies and the Church Courts", 607.
[279] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 265.
[280] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 265.
[281] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 266.

texts like fabliaux, and shows a consistent issue of enforcing the requirement that priests remain celibate.

During this same period, fifty-four cases involving fornication of laypeople and priests were brought to court, making fornication the most frequent sexual misbehaviour committed. Most cases were brought to court by one of the parties concerned, or through the existence of common fame,[282] and some of the accused were able to get their cases dismissed by the court through purgation. According to L.R. Poos' study of ecclesiastical courts in pre-reformation England, people accused of offences "often found it necessary or desirable to clear themselves of suspicion through a system of compurgation - assembling a group of persons to swear to their good character."[283] This could lead to their cases being dismissed by the ecclesiastical courts, and could also contribute to re-establishing their good standing in their community, which was necessary for people being cited in court whose citation could harm their business and tarnish their good name.[284] For almost all couples accused of fornication, whose case could not be dismissed through purgation, penance was imposed, most of which included beatings around the church and abjurations to prevent the couples from seeing each other again.[285] The couples found guilty of fornicating did not have to pay a fine, but had to swear that if they had sex with each other again, they would have to get married. This condition was enforced in one case.[286] This penalty was common during the Middle Ages, possibly because fornication was sometimes seen as "a prelude to marriage."[287] As with the case of going against clerical celibacy, the penance prescribed to those found guilty of fornication seems light compared to the recommendation of earlier statutes from other dioceses. The statutes of Winchester from 1224, for example,

[282] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 264.
[283] Poos, "Sex, Lies and the Church Courts", 588.
[284] Poos, "Sex, Lies and the Church Courts", 590.
[285] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 267.
[286] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 269.
[287] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 146-147.

obligated couples found guilty of fornicating to pay a fine or get married.[288] The payment of a fine or the obligation to get married did not come up in the fifty-four cases of fornication brought to the Rochester consistory court, showing important differences between dioceses. It also suggests a difference between practice and application. The recommended penance for these crimes might have been impractical when applied to real cases brought to ecclesiastical courts. When it comes to adultery, the Rochester consistory court saw twenty-three cases of denunciation related to this sin.[289] In some cases, "individuals had up to three partners at any one time," and, similarly to cases of fornication, some people had relationships that lasted over years.[290]

Overall, this case study of fourteenth century Rochester demonstrates that although "both officials appear to have been adhering to general canon legal principles"[291]documents show that courts had a certain legroom when it came to deciding on penance for crimes of a sexual nature. This reflects what we learned from the visitation reports for the diocese of Canterbury from 1292 to 1294, where statutes were adapted to the crime and context of the diocese. The frequency of cases of sexual immorality as well as the focus on adultery, fornication and cases of clerics' promiscuity also highlights how out of touch the advice and messages of clerics in texts from this period were to lay people. The focus on extramarital and illicit sex seen in thirteenth, fourteenth and even fifteenth century texts did not prevent most laypeople from committing sexual misbehaviours and from forming relationships outside of marriage. Both the visitation reports and the ecclesiastical court records presented above show a tendency towards long-term relationships between men and women that was less obvious in other texts of thirteenth century

[288] McCarthy, *Love, Sex and Marriage*, 74.
[289] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 270.
[290] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 271, 273.
[291] Finch, "Sexual Morality", 273.

England. These sources give a glimpse into people's sexual habits outside of marriage, and how these cases of extramarital and illicit sex relate to the representations of extramarital sex in other texts.

Conclusion

Discussions of illicit and extramarital sex permeated many texts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although the aforementioned sources were not the only ones discussing sex and sexuality, they shed light on how clerics portrayed extramarital sex and illicit sex in a negative light as a way to encourage celibacy outside of marriage. These texts focused on warning people against committing sexual misbehaviour and forming extramarital relationships, often highlighting the consequences that can come from these behaviours. As the visitation reports from the diocese of Canterbury and the ecclesiastical court records from Rochester suggest, although these texts eventually make it to laypeople, these messages seem to have been interpreted differently or simply disregarded.

This research has focused on texts and evidence written from the point of view of clerics and has thus focused on what they perceived as the negative implications of sex during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, authors Judith M. Bennett, Ruth Mazo Karras, and Janelle Werner highlight that in some cases, women would use sex and courtship as a way to gain some power in a practice that often placed them at a disadvantage. Indeed, these authors argue in their article "No Romance Without Finance: Courtship in Late Medieval England" that "medieval courtship—whether aimed at marriage or not—was also an occasion for negotiation and benefit."[292] Single women in particular were given to poverty throughout the Middle Ages, and their marital status put them at an economic disadvantage. These women, in many cases, could use sex to reduce that disadvantage, by trading sex for gifts or money during or outside the practice of courtship. Other research focusing on the discussions of sex in sources written by women show that these discourses could create a positive impact on women's sexual lives. For

[292] Bennett, Karras, and Werner. "No Romance Without Finance", 74.

example, in *Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain*, Carissa M. Harris argues that women-authored pastourelles sometimes used lewd or obscene language as a way "to articulate [women's] desire, to shed light on inequality, and to teach audiences about rape's harms."[293] The surge of research on sex, sexuality and women's lives during the medieval period offers another point of view on sex during the Middle Ages that, without taking away from the discourse created by clerics during this period, helps us understand better the life of the masses in medieval England. These discussions in some ways reinforce the idea that clerical authors were perhaps out of touch with the reality of sex and relationships that most people lived through during the Middle Ages.

The significance of broader discourses around sex and sexuality in the Middle Ages that have come down to us through textual sources has in part to do with how much they still resonate with today's discourses on the same topic. As Karras and Pierpont have stated, "what is useful is the example of how a society in many ways like and in many ways unlike our own can interpret human behaviour and desire in ways that are at the same time so similar and so different."[294] When looking at sexuality in the Middle Ages, and particularly the various representations of illicit and extramarital sex in clerically authored texts, it is clear that this period was characterized by a wide diversity of attitudes and discourses about sex. This challenges the popular idea that the Middle Ages were a period where "sex was not much spoken of,"[295] and brings forward some similarities between discourses on sexuality in today's Western society, and the discourses present during the Medieval period. The Middle Ages gave roots to many ideas on sexuality, and those roots as well as the way modern concepts of sex and sexuality have evolved and changed give the study of sex in the Middle Ages significance, even centuries after.

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[293] Harris. *Obscene Pedagogies,* 103.
[294] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 246.
[295] Karras and Pierpont, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe*, 15.

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