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THE DATE, AUTHOR, AND CONTEXT OF THE *ROMAN DE SILENCE*: A REASSESSMENT

It is not unusual for medieval French texts to survive in a single manuscript.[1] Nottingham, University Library, MS WLC/LM/6 was discovered in a box labelled 'old papers – no value' in the archives of Wollaton Hall, Nottingham, in 1911.[2] Among WLC/LM/*6*'s contents is the only copy of the *Roman de Silence* (hereafter *Silence*), an entertaining verse text of 6,706 octosyllabic lines about a noble child born as a girl but raised as a boy. The text's recent discovery has perhaps played a more crucial part in its interpretation than many would acknowledge. The narrative of unearthing a hitherto unknown text finds itself surreptitiously woven into the hermeneutic dynamics of its academic readers. After the publication of its first complete edition in 1972 by Lewis Thorpe, scholarly interventions on the text have poured into journals and conferences. With little prior textual interpretation, *Silence* was ripe, on the one hand, to allow fresh readings unencumbered by tradition, and, on the other, to legitimize paradigm shifts affecting medieval literary studies (and the US–UK academy more generally), notably the poststructuralist focus on the ultimate self-referentiality of language and the rise of feminist and queer readings. Whereas the very same paradigm shifts occurred around the canonical works of medieval French literature, such as Chrétien de Troyes's romances and Marie de France's *Lais*, *Silence* stood apart insofar as language and gender were the *primary* analytical lenses through which the text was understood. More long-established interpretative frameworks considering the text's disturbing conservatism (its reversion to a misogynistic status quo at the end) and its preoccupation with the feudal politics of lineage would only come later. *Silence*'s perceived 'modernity', then, is partly a product of the manner of its insertion into the Anglo-American academic scene, an Anglocentrism perhaps linked to its textual and material connections to the British Isles (its ostensibly Cornish author figure, its fifteenth-century English owners, its post-medieval residence in Nottingham, its English-language edition, and its London-born editor).[3]

The romantic ideal of a text 'out of joint' with its time and only bestowing a fuller meaning in the present underlies the reception of *Silence* in the UK and USA. Its chance survival is implicitly taken by some as a sign that it was under-appreciated, maybe even ill understood, by at least a portion of its earliest

reader-listeners. However, there is no reason to assume so given the vagaries of twelfth- and thirteenth-century textual transmission. The most frequently accepted date of *Silence* is the second half of the thirteenth century. As we shall see, WLC/LM/6 has proven notoriously difficult to date. Yet the fact that scholars have recently favoured a dating of the manuscript to the first half of the thirteenth century means that a reassessment of *Silence* is of the essence. It will be clear, moreover, that the grounds on which Lewis Thorpe dated *Silence* are vulnerable to critique. Not only does *Silence* resemble early verse romances in many ways, but the manuscript itself situates *Silence* within a late twelfth-century and early thirteenth-century intertextual conversation. As the interval between *Silence*'s composition and the manuscript's production cannot be inferred from the material evidence, it is even possible that many of the texts transmitted by WLC/LM/6 were grouped together as part of an earlier collection. I will begin with the question of dating because it is fundamental to what will follow. From section two onwards, I will examine an intriguing reference to a 'romanus de Silentio' (found in a Latin *Historia* completed *c*.1206) that was not properly considered by Thorpe and has been neglected by scholars ever since. Although the modern title *Roman de Silence* was Thorpe's creation, I will maintain that a very coherent case for this Latin reference to be our *Silence* can be made. This hypothesis will have three consequences: the introduction of a new clerical author of *Silence*, Walterus Silens or Walter the Silent; the radical redating of the text's composition to between 1169 and 1206 (probably towards the end of this range); and the outline of an important context of production around the court of Guines and the politically volatile borderlands between France and Flanders as described by Lambert of Ardres, our understudied Latin source.

1. Dating Silence: the evidence

It is logical to begin with the physical evidence. *Silence* survives in a single manuscript, WLC/LM/6, a multi-text codex containing verse narratives of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. WLC/LM/6 consists of 351 folios, mostly written in two columns of 46–8 lines and copied by at least three different scribes. Its page dimensions are 297 mm by 197 mm (justification: 209 mm by 135 mm). There are '83 illustrations in the form of small framed miniatures in half a text column, of which 68 illustrate the characters and the actions in the various narratives and 15 are decorative panels containing hybrid motifs or birds'.[4] Taking the place of the first letter of the first word of a textual segment, these miniatures appear to have supplanted the historiated initials that were originally planned and/or that were present in WLC/LM/6's exemplar(s). The manuscript includes the following texts (with approximate dates of composition in brackets):

1. Benoît de Sainte-Maure, *Roman de Troie*, fols 1ra–156^{rb} (*c*.1165)
2. Gautier d'Arras, *Ille et Galeron*, fols 157ra–187va (before 1191)
3. *Silence*, fols 188ra–223^{rb}
4. Alexandre de Paris, *Fuerre de Gadres*, fols 224ra–243^{vb} (*c*.1185)
5. *Chanson d'Aspremont*, fols 244va–303^{vb} (before 1194)
6. Raoul de Houdenc, *La Vengeance Raguidel*, fols 304ra–335^{vb} (*c*.1200–*c*.1215)[5]
7. Gautier le Leu, *Fabliaux*, fols 336ra–345^{vb} (1239–1267?)[6]
8. Anonymous fabliaux *La Dame Escoillee* and *Les Putains et les Lecheors* (*c*.1200–50?), Raoul de Houdenc, *Li Borjois Borjon* (*c*.1200–*c*.1215), and Marie de France, *La Cugnie* (*c*.1167–89?), fols a^{ra}–f^{vb}

Keith Busby has made interesting remarks on the connections between the texts of the manuscript, noting 'a concern with demonstrating the cultural and political unity of Europe' (but also 'Celtic supremacy') and an emphasis on the theme of female silencing.[7] The language of the texts is mostly Picard, which would suggest a localization to north-eastern France or Flanders. Importantly, items 1–6 were originally composed before or shortly after 1200. Items 1–6 make up thirty quires of WLC/LM/6, while items 7–8 reside in two highly irregular final quires in a worse material condition than the rest of the manuscript. Item 8 was at an earlier stage (and is now) placed at the start of the collection. The recent re-evaluation of the hands identifiable in the manuscript by Massimiliano Gaggero and Serena Lunardi has suggested the following division of texts into quires, booklets, decorative styles (of the initials), and scribes (Table 2).[8]

Shared hands across booklets I to IV and a consistency in decorative styles and illumination indicate that the copies of items 1–6 were produced around the same time. However, as Gaggero and Lunardi and others have suggested, it appears that quires 31–2 (booklet V does not have quire signatures) were a later addition: they are written in a different hand (albeit one with similarities to those responsible for the other texts), the parchment is of noticeably poorer quality, space was left for rubrics that were not completed, and there are no decorated initials or miniatures.[9] While Gaggero and Lunardi thought it likely that each booklet had a separate existence before much later being assembled into the codex, it is also possible that booklets I to IV were gathered together shortly after copying, with booklet V (in a hand imitating the existing booklets) being added at some point afterwards at the request of a patron.[10]

There has been some debate about the dating of the manuscript. Thorpe dated the manuscript to the second half of the thirteenth century based on assessments of the script by Louis Brandin and others and Frederick Cowper's theory that the volume was intended as a gift for the occasion of Guy IX de Laval's marriage to Béatrix de Gavre in or shortly after 1286.[11] By contrast, Alison Stones has recently reaffirmed Terry Nixon's hypothesis that WLC/LM/6 is the

Table 1. Adapted version of a table from Gaggero and Lunardi's 'Lire en contexte' (p. 193), indicating the separation of booklets, quires, scribes, and texts in WLC/LM/6

Booklet	*Quire(s)*	*Folios*	*Scribe(s)*	*Decorative Style(s)*	*Text(s)*
I	1	1–12	y, 1	1	*Troie*
	2	13–24	1	1	*Troie*
	3	25–36	1, y, 2	1	*Troie*
	4–5	37–60	2	1 + x	*Troie*
	6–9	61–108	2	1	*Troie*
	10	109–20	b	1	*Troie*
	11–13	121–56	3	1	*Troie*
II	14	157–68	3	2	*Ille et Galeron*
	15	169–80	3, 1	2	*Ille et Galeron*
	16	181–87	1	2	*Ille et Galeron*
III	17–20	188–223	3	1	*Silence*
IV	21	224–35	3	1	*Fuerre*
	22	236–47	3	1	*Fuerre/Aspremont*
	23	248–59	3	2	*Aspremont*
	24	260–69	3, 1	2	*Aspremont*
	25–26	270–93	1	2	*Aspremont*
	27–30	294–335	1	2	*Aspremont/Vengeance*
V?	31	336–45	a	-	*fabliaux* (item 7)
	32	a–f	a	-	*fabliaux* (item 8)

'earliest fully illustrated romance collection', most likely produced in the first quarter of the thirteenth century.[12] Stones contextualizes the unique illustrative and decorative features of WLC/LM/6 with a cluster of psalters produced in the late twelfth century near the border of the Artois and Flanders, notably the Fécamp Psalter (The Hague, KB, MS 76 F 13) and the Saint-Bertin Psalter (The Hague, KB, MS 76 F 5).[13] Gilles Roussineau, who uses WLC/LM/6 as the base manuscript in his edition of *La Vengeance Raguidel*, contends that the style of the miniatures and the clothes represented would prohibit a date after the mid-thirteenth century.[14] It is true that in terms of visual style the illuminations of WLC/LM/6 are highly distinctive in relation to vernacular book illustration of the thirteenth century. Iconographically, too, WLC/LM/6's illustrations (notably of the *Troie, Fuerre*, and *Aspremont*) often bear little resemblance to those in other manuscripts in their respective manuscript traditions.[15] Whether this is because

WLC/LM/6 marks a visual beginning for some or all of these texts cannot be known for certain. Palaeographical arguments in favour of a pre-1250 date for WLC/LM/6 are provided by the first line of text being copied above the top line as well as a confluence of 'archaic' graphical features in the script (according to Gaggero and Lunardi, these are the use of accents, an uncrossed Tironian nota, an uppercase 'R' at the end of certain words, and a monogram 'd').[16] Of course, these 'archaisms' may be intended as such by conservative scribes, but in the first instance they should be treated as reliable chronological indices. On palaeographical grounds, I am inclined to follow the judgement of Ian Short, who dates the hand responsible for *Silence* and a portion of the *Aspremont* to the first third of the thirteenth century.[17]

If we are to accept the arguments for an earlier dating of booklets I to IV of WLC/LM/6, then the dating of *Silence* to the second half of the thirteenth century must be revised. This revision is especially important given the potential circularity of using *Silence*'s dating to sustain a later dating of the manuscript. First comprehensively articulated by Lewis Thorpe, *Silence*'s dating has gone virtually unchallenged until now.[18] There is, however, only one piece of evidence that directly supports this position: a close intertextual connection with the so-called 'Grisandole' episode of the *Suite Vulgate du Merlin* (the *Vulgate Merlin Continuation*), the second part of the more commonly referenced *Estoire Merlin*, most likely composed *c.*1230–40.[19] The relevant section of *Silence* is the final one (lines 5778–6704) and narrates Silence's capture of Merlin, who, after enigmatically laughing at a number of truths hidden to the humans inhabiting the story, reveals the protagonist's 'natural state' (Silence's sex assigned at birth) as well as Queen Eufeme's adultery (with a man disguised as a nun), leading to the latter's execution and the former's marriage to King Ebain.[20] Thorpe demonstrates that the relevant episodes in the *Suite* and *Silence* are much closer to each other than to earlier textual instances of revelatory sardonic laughter, notably the *Vita Merlini* (*c.*1150), contentiously attributed to Geoffrey of Monmouth, and versions of the eastern legend of *Solomon and Asmodeus*.[21] There cannot be any doubt that the narratives are related, both incorporating a cross-dressing knight in the king's service, a wayward queen/empress, a wildman Merlin who is lured with cooked meat, a series of moments of sardonic laughter, their subsequent explanations, the queen/empress's execution, and the central character's marriage to the king/emperor. At the same time, there are significant differences in terms of narrative causality, ordering, and what triggers Merlin's laughter.

In his review of Thorpe's edition, Félix Lecoy reacted against the judgement that *Silence* must have drawn direct inspiration from the *Estoire Merlin*.[22] Lecoy referenced Lucy Allen Paton's 1907 article which posited the existence of a common 'source x' from which the Grisandole episode and a wider set of more modern stories (notably Breton folk tales) both derived.[23] Paton's article came too

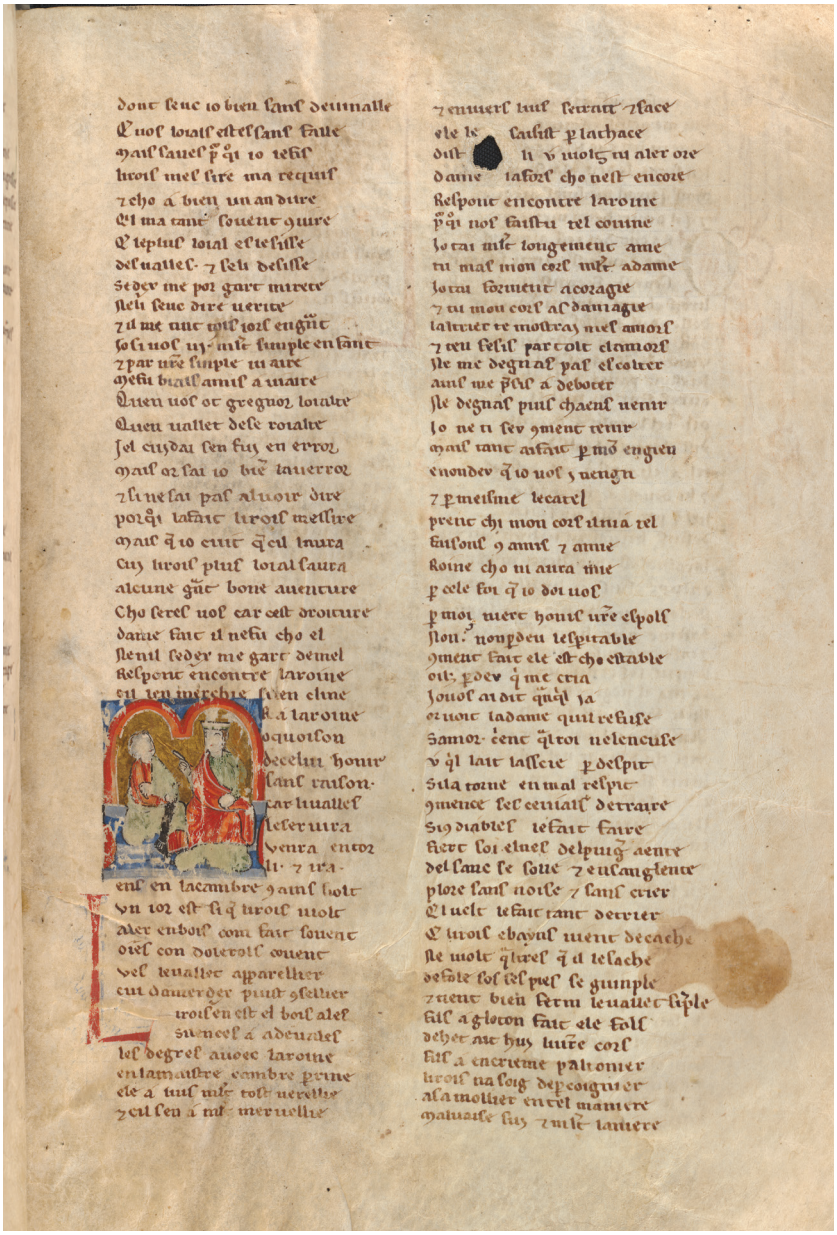

Plate 1. *Silence*, Nottingham, University Library, MS WLC/LM/6, fol. 209r. Reproduced with permission from University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections.

early to take stock of *Silence*'s version of the story, but Lecoy, like Heinrich Gelzer before him, saw in *Silence* further confirmation of the hypothesis.[24] *Silence*, for one thing, presents a more rational scenario in which the eponymous character must seek out Merlin. Unlike Grisandole in the *Suite*, Silence is ordered to do so by the king following a suggestion from the repulsed queen, an instantiation of the Potiphar's wife motif. This is consistent with a number of tales in Paton's corpus. *Silence*, moreover, has Nature and Nurture debate Merlin's wild (and hence fallen) state (lines 5997–6087), which neatly complements and extends their debates about Silence's upbringing. The other source of doubt for Lecoy arose from how Merlin's laughs are distributed within the *Estoire Merlin*. In *Silence*, Merlin firstly laughs at a peasant carrying a new pair of shoes (the peasant would die before ever wearing them), secondly laughs at a group of mendicants (they were obliviously standing on buried treasure), and thirdly laughs at a burial service for a child (whose actual father is the priest not the mourning man). Lecoy pointed out that two of these vignettes appear not in the Grisandole episode of the *Suite*, but earlier in the *Prose Merlin* (supposedly based on the fragmentary verse *Merlin* attributed to Robert de Boron). Furthermore, in the *Suite* we find a cause of Merlin's laughter that has no parallel in *Silence*: at a site of hidden treasure, a squire strikes his master, a knight, three times, each of which symbolizes for Merlin a moral lesson (against pride, usury, and envy). Lecoy was surely right that this vignette is a later addition: not only is it less compelling and incongruous compared to the others in its moralism, it is also a crude repetition of the beggar scene's cause (undiscovered treasure) and, in contrast to *Silence*'s three vignettes, does not have an equivalent either in Paton's corpus of folklore or in the *Vita Merlini*. If Thorpe is correct, then the author of *Silence* united and reordered the moments of Merlin's laughter from the *Prose Merlin* and its continuation (some 260 pages apart in Sommer's edition), opting to discard the vignette of the squire striking his master.[25] Lecoy thought an alternative situation was more likely: the continuator of the *Prose Merlin*, drawing on Paton's 'source x', did not wish to repeat the vignettes of the shoes and the burial service in the *Suite*, and so left them out, choosing to add the extra vignette as a replacement. Table 2, adapted from a table in Thorpe's 1973 article, compares narrative events in *Silence*, the *Estoire Merlin*, the *Vita Merlini*, and *Solomon and Asmodeus*.[26]

The new perspectives on WLC/LM/6 outlined above would bolster Lecoy's defence of Paton's 'source x' hypothesis. As many have noted, Heldris de Cornualle, the putative authorial figure of *Silence*, repeatedly refers to a book from which he drew the story (e.g. 'Cho dist l'estorie u jo le truis', line 6678). This is, of course, a *topos* of twelfth- and thirteenth-century vernacular texts yet could still indicate the use of a written source like the *Estoire Merlin* or a version of Paton's 'source x'. There are no other intertextual references that

Table 2. Adapted version of the table in Thorpe's 1973 article 'Merlin's sardonic laughter' (p. 338). Narrative events in four different texts, *Silence*, the *Estoire Merlin*, the *Vita Merlini*, and *Solomon and Asmodeus* are compared and given line numbers from their respective editions

Narrative event	*Silence*	*Estoire Merlin* (ed. Sommer)		*Vita Merlini*	*Solomon and Asmodeus*
		Prose Merlin	*Suite*		
Setting	5779–872		282, 19–42	212–14	1–10
Soothsayer in first guise	5873–977		283, 1–284, 6		
Capture of soothsayer in second guise	5978–6136		284, 7–38		10–32
Reaction of soothsayer to captor	6137–60		284, 38–285, 3		
Laughter: shoes	6191–201	28, 32–36		495–97	40–1
Laughter: beggar(s)	6202–09		285, 7–14	491–94	41–2
Laughter: knight			285, 17–286, 16		
Laughter: burial service	6210–20	29, 22–6			
Laughter: queen/ empress	6228–64		287, 20–26	254–61	
Explanation: shoes	6314–23	28, 36–29, 11		515–22	49–50
Explanation: beggar(s)	6329–37		289, 17–22	508–14	51–2
Explanation: knight			290, 8–29		
Explanation: burial service	6359–70	29, 26–43			
Explanation: queen/ empress	6471–552		288, 14–32	285–93	
Explanation: reaction of soothsayer	6534–07		289, 13–17		
Fate of queen/empress	6651–63		288, 32–42	342–46	
Outcome	6664–83		291, 4–15		

can be assuredly identified from the thirteenth century. Comparisons to Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (*c.*1270), notably in its taste for allegorical figures, the manner of Nature's fashioning, and its misogynistic diatribes, have been suggested, but may equally be explained by shared recourse to Alain de Lille's *De planctu naturae* (*c.*1160–70).[27] Otherwise, rather conventional references can be found to the Tristan legend (lines 3700f.), Alexander the Great (line 5518),

and Duke Aymon of Dordone (line 5892). The cries of 'monjoie' (line 5555) recall the Roland story. Eufemie's healing of Cador following his vanquishing a dragon is a clear, potentially parodic, nod to Thomas's *Tristan*. Two early Breton lays are mentioned, 'Gueron' (line 2762) and 'Mabon' (line 2765).[28] Influence may be inferred from Marie de France's *Lanval*, which presents the Potiphar's wife motif (*Silence*, lines 3705–8) accompanied by accusations of homosexuality against the protagonist.[29] The author was demonstrably familiar with Arthurian legend, appearing to know Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (completed 1138) and/or Wace's *Roman de Brut* (completed 1155) and referring to Arthur's conception through Merlin's sorcery and Utherpendragon's deceit (lines 6144–54), which is also recounted in the *Prose Merlin* (*c*.1200–10). The figure of the female warrior, it has been argued, was inspired by Camilla in the *Roman d'Eneas* or Penthesilea in the *Roman de Troie* (illustrated on fol. 121^{vb} of WLC/LM/6). A passing reference to the 'petite oquoison' (line 149) that triggered King Ebain's war with the King of Norway might be a hint at the 'small cause' that gave rise to Benoît de Sainte-Maure's Trojan war.[30] Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligès* (*c*.1176) perhaps inspired the two-part narrative structure of *Silence* (recounting Cador's adventures until line 1650 before switching to Silence), while his *Perceval* (before 1191), a text that similarly explores the conflict between Nature and Nurture, may be subtly evoked in the narrator's claim that *Silence*'s is the best account of a child raised in the woods (lines 2354f.).[31] Finally, the *Vie de Saint Alexis* (before 1123) seems to have provided a parental name: Silence's mother Eufemie symmetrically recalls Alexis's father Eufemiien.[32]

On the basis of these intertexts, *Silence* seems to resemble more the early verse Arthurian romances explored by Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann than later prose romance (like the *Estoire Merlin*).[33] At 6,706 lines, its length, too, is more consistent with the works of Gautier d'Arras, Chrétien, and writers following in his wake (consider *L'Atre Périlleux*, *Le Bel Inconnu, Fergus*, and *La Vengeance Raguidel*) than the texts of the Vulgate Cycle or later thirteenth-century verse romance (like *Le Châtelain de Coucy* or *Flamenca*). Obviously there are no lyric insertions (for instance those in *Guillaume de Dole*) that increasingly characterize thirteenth-century verse narratives, and formally *Silence* is far closer to Chrétien than the 'chantefable' *Aucassin et Nicolette* with which it is often compared.

To summarize this opening section, there is no direct evidence to suggest that *Silence* was composed in the second half of the thirteenth century. Thorpe's case rests on a strong intertextual connection to the Grisandole episode of the *Suite Vulgate du Merlin*, most likely produced *c*.1230–40. However, as we have seen, Thorpe does not prove directionality of influence nor does he eliminate the possibility of a shared source (a hypothesis maintained by Patton, Gelzer, and Lecoy). Indeed, the broader set of intertextual references, both in terms of *Silence* itself and the manuscript context, seems to situate *Silence* amongst works

of the second half of the twelfth century. Added to the fact that booklets I to IV of WLC/LM/6 can be confidently dated to the first half of the thirteenth century this makes Thorpe's position practically untenable. A pre-1230 dating of the manuscript and Paton's 'source x' hypothesis are mutually supportive positions and radically reset the *terminus a quo* for the composition of *Silence* to a date in the second half of the twelfth century (in what I follows I will suggest 1169). With an earlier date now to be envisioned, the next section focuses on a hitherto neglected reference made around 1206 to a 'romanus de Silentio'.

2. The 'Romanus de Silentio' and the court of Guines

Between 1194 and 1198, the chaplain Lambert of Ardres begins writing his *History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* (*Historia comitum Ghisnensium et Ardensium dominorum*) for his lord Arnold II of Guines and V of Ardres (d. 1220). Lambert's *Historia* is fascinating, first of all, for the vivid picture it paints of aristocratic life in the twelfth century, concerning itself less with the great political events of kings and dukes and more with the local struggles, shifting attitudes, and changing fortunes of a cluster of noble families. Georges Duby, famously, returned to the text time and time again to evidence his theories of medieval marriage and social order, notably the idea of *juventus*.[34] Yet it remains crucial to recognize that Lambert's *Historia* is also an intensely self-conscious and 'literary' artefact: the text is replete with classical and textual references, is written in highly ornate Latin, and interpolates verse passages at various junctures. Most remarkably, Lambert incorporates a shift in narratorial perspective: just as his account of the counts of Guines draws to a close, Lambert introduces Walter of Le Clud, an illegitimate son of Baldwin of Ardres (d. 1147), who wrests control of the narrative to recount the history of the lords of Ardres. The *Historia*, therefore, seems to play with the conventions of historical, and especially genealogical, writing popular in northern France and Flanders in the twelfth century, mirroring the joining of two noble houses (Guines and Ardres) in the resulting textual product, a joining of two different, albeit equally authoritative, narrative voices. As the final two and a half chapters are missing, it is unclear when the work was completed. Leah Shopkow suggests that the death of Baldwin II of Guines in 1206 would have encouraged Lambert to present the *Historia* to Baldwin's son Arnold.[35]

Lambert's *Historia* is relevant here because it makes an explicit reference to a vernacular text called 'Silentium'/'Silentius' or the 'romanus de Silentio'. The context in which this text is mentioned is vital to our discussion, so we must proceed slowly. In chapter 80 of the *Historia*, Lambert panegyrically relates the wisdom of Count Baldwin II of Guines (d. 1206) in an accumulation of superlatives and hyperbolic descriptions.[36] On the one hand, Baldwin's lack of

Latin learning is immediately foregrounded (he is 'laicus' and 'illiteratus'), as is his tendency to debate with learned men ('contra artium doctores disputabat') despite his being ignorant of the arts ('omnino ignarus artium'). On the other, he is portrayed as an avid pupil of many different forms of knowledge, including theology, history, and rhetoric. Keeping clerics and masters around him ('secum clericos et magistros retinebat'), Baldwin's court is represented by the *Historia* as a space of lively exchange between the lay and clerical spheres, with Baldwin recounting to his learned companions 'popular trifles' ('gentilium nenias') that he himself heard from storytellers ('quas a fabulatoribus accepit').[37] In the following chapter, Lambert lists a number of French translations of Latin works that were completed during Baldwin's rule (it is unclear how many were directly his commissions).[38] These include the *Song of Songs,* the Gospels, a life of Saint Anthony, Aristotle's *Physics*, and a scientific treatise by Solinus.[39] Lambert also mentions the copying and ornamentation ('scribi fecit et parari') of holy books ('divinos … libros') that Baldwin placed in various chapels across his dominion. Thus enriched with so many different books ('Tot et tantorum ditatus est copia librorum'), Baldwin, Lambert writes, could be considered the equal ('equiparare putaretur') of Augustine in theology, Dionysius the Areopagite in philosophy, Thales of Miletus in 'popular trifles' ('in neniis gentilium'), and the most renowned *jongleurs* ('ioculatores … nominatissimos') in his knowledge of the *chansons de geste* ('in cantilenis gestoriis'), whether these *chansons* recount the *aventures* of the noble ('in eventuris nobilium') or the *fabliaux* of the unnoble ('in fabellis ignobilium').[40] Baldwin's library, Lambert recounts, was looked after by a 'complete layman' ('omnino laicum') called Hasard of Aldehem, who, in a 'completely lay manner' ('modo omnino laico'), learnt letters ('litteras didicisse') and so could both read and understand all the books translated from Latin into French ('omnes eius libros de Latino in Romanam linguam interpretatos et legit et intelligit'). It is here that Lambert inserts a reference to a romance called *Silence*:

> Quid amplius? Ipso quoque preceptore et monitore magister Walterus Silens sive Silenticus nominatus, dum Ardee dominaretur et in Ardea forum causarum et mercatorum ghilleolam nuper edificasset et plumbeo tabulatu contexisset, librum, quem ab agnominatione sue proprietatis *Silentium* sive romanum *De Silentio* nominavit, tractavit, composuit et exornavit. Pro quo ei comes equos et vestes et multa contulit remunerationis munuscula.[41]
>
> (What more? Also under the instruction and stewardship of Baldwin's rule,[42] when he governed Ardres and had just built the law court and guildhall building and covered it with a lead roof, Master Walter the Silent drew up, composed, and adorned the book he called *Silentium/Silentius* [*Silence*], or the *roman de Silence*, after himself. The count gave him horses and garments for this and many little gifts in recompense.)[43]

Situating this passage in context demonstrates, firstly, the rich literary vein, especially in terms of vernacular textuality, running through the court of Guines, and, secondly, the reciprocal relationship between lay and clerical cultures. As the chapter progresses, attention turns away from authoritative Latin originals towards vernacular translations and compositions. This 'romanus de Silentio' makes its appearance at the pinnacle of the vernacular literary culture established around the figure of Baldwin. This is an original composition in French that owes its existence to Baldwin's rule. As *preceptor* and *monitor*, Baldwin's rule, Lambert writes, provided both the material conditions (a library full of vernacular texts, necessary funds for clerical upkeep, personal safety, perhaps also an active scriptorium) and the intellectual climate (a symbiosis of Latin learning and vernacular entertainment) in which Walterus Silens could author his work.

In contrast to Thorpe and Martin Aurell, who dismiss any connection here to the French romance (but do so without further explanation), I would argue that this being our *Silence* is, in fact, highly plausible.[44] First of all, the rare Latin word *romanus* here is a calque of the French *romans*, a term used in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries for titles of French verse narratives of at least a few thousand lines which are not sung.[45] Although the modern title *Roman de Silence* is Thorpe's invention (the text is untitled in the manuscript), there is no real alternative appellation. If *Silence*'s two-part narrative structure and its length (6706 *vs* 6664 lines) can be likened to Chrétien's *Cligès* (*c*.1176), then titles in surviving manuscripts of this latter text, such as 'li romans de Cliges' (Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 794, fol. 79^{rc}) and 'li romanz de Cliges' (Paris, BnF, MS f. fr. 12560, fol. 83va), suggest a similar situation for the former. Moreover, *Silence* refers to its protagonist in Latin as 'Scilenscius' or 'Scilentius' (lines 2074, 2126, 2530, 2532, 2533, 2537, 2542, 6666), which, because of the cases in Lambert's text, could be the nominative form of accusative 'Silentium' and ablative 'Silentio'. It seems improbable that in the late twelfth century an author would compose a French verse treatise on the theme of silence (*silentium*); not least because this, unless diplomatically carried out, would doubtless displease Baldwin, whom Lambert describes as never holding back his tongue ('non refrenans linguam suam aut cohibens').[46] While no medieval French treatise about silence has survived to us today, Jody Enders identifies a reference to our *Silence* in the sixteenth-century *Farce de Folconduit* as the 'Livre de Silence', the term incidentally used to translate 'romanus de Silentio' in an anonymous translation of Lambert's *Historia* made around 1500.[47]

Since there is no further mention of a Walterus Silens, otherwise known as Silenticus or Silentius (a manuscript variant), in the historical record, we cannot be sure that he was the 'bailli d'Ardres', as Henri Malo contends.[48] All the passage tells us is that during, and thanks to, Baldwin's rule (1169–1206), he authored a text, a *roman de Silence*, which he gave an adnomination of his surname. There

has been much ink spilt on the importance of naming in *Silence*, especially in terms of the opposition between the gender-neutral French 'Silence' and the gendered Latin 'Scilentius' or 'Scilentia'.[49] Walterus' gesture to insert his own surname into the narrative would, in one respect, be in keeping with the text's self-conscious linguistic play. Yet, the connection to Walterus' surname would also complexify the discussion. Does the choice of the name 'Silence' double in a local context as an assertion of Walterus' authorial ownership of the story, given, as we shall see below, the prologue's preoccupation with (the failure to reward) literary service? What might the exemplary portrayal of Silence say about Walterus' own sense of the gendered or genderless values of his 'defining' (that is, identifying) characteristic? How are we, then, to situate Walterus in relation to Ebain's claim that the main role of women is to be silent ('Sens de feme gist en taisir', line 6398)?[50] Even in the absence of a hypothesis presenting an alternative historical author, it has long been presumed that the named author figure in *Silence*, Heldris de Cornualle, was a pseudonymized creation. As Heinrich Gelzer first noted, there is a 'Cheldricus', a Saxon leader defeated by Cador (the Duke of Cornwall and Silence's father), in the *Historia Regum Britanniae*.[51] The authorial name 'Heldris' has not been identified elsewhere in medieval literature and there are no known medieval authors writing in French and working on the Continent who emanated out of Cornwall.[52] A Cornish narrator allows the author to root his narrative further in its ostensible place of genesis (akin to how Master Walter Map is the projected author of the *Queste del Saint Graal*) and perhaps to establish some distance between his personal views and the misogynistic ones expressed through Heldris's voice at the end (bearing in mind that any such distance could be a literary conceit).[53] There is seemingly minimal influence of Anglo-Norman French on rhyme words in *Silence* in WLC/LM/6, whose Picard language is, Thorpe argues, likely very close to what the author would have originally written.[54] Of course, the author sharing the name of the main protagonist would have been as good a reason as any to opt for a pseudonym. Thorpe concedes that there are few biographical clues as to the identity of the figure behind Heldris.[55] Female authorship has been suggested yet has always remained highly speculative.[56] A *magister* seems more likely than a lay trouvère to have authored *Silence* given the references to Latinity, the taste for sophisticated allegory and *disputatio* (inspired perhaps in this case by Alain de Lille), the mixed representation of minstrels in the text, and the magisterial title given to Heldris.[57] Indeed, Venetia Bridges has recently explored the clerical and scholastic influences on *Silence* in terms of how the text stages, but also at times problematizes, intellectual debate.[58] If Walterus Silens did compose *Silence*, then repeated references that Heldris wants to tell the story without fuss and bother, literally noiselessly, 'sans noise faire et sans tenchier' (line 106) and 'sans noise faire et estriver' (line 1656), are laced with irony for

those familiar with the author, as is the comment that he must not silence the truth, 'Car la verté ne doi taisir' (line 1669). It might also be pointed out that the notion of a silent *magister* itself contains an irony: as recorded in the rule of St Benedict, 'Speaking and teaching are the master's tasks; the disciple is to be silent and listen'.[59]

Further connection to *Silence* is implied in the statement that Count Baldwin greatly rewarded Walterus Silens for his text. While Lambert goes to great lengths to stress Baldwin's (and Arnold's) *largesse* throughout his *Historia*, such as in an extensive description of a banquet thrown in honour of Archbishop William of Reims, none of Baldwin's other writers are recorded as receiving a reward for their literary service. It is possible, however, that Lambert adds this line (whether or not Baldwin actually gave generous gifts to Walterus) as a reaction to the prologue in *Silence* (lines 1–106). This prologue has been described as an 'anti-prologue' written by an 'anti-narrator' as it reverses the convention of heaping praise on the text's patron.[60] Instead, Heldris rails against the avaricious and stingy, claiming that certain lords welcome minstrels with great honour but fail to reward them financially (lines 24–30). He goes on to say that wretched people amassing wealth do not enjoy its benefits (lines 35–7) and hence are intoxicated with Avarice (line 39) and distanced from Honour (line 41). Heldris makes no attempt to hide his anger, claiming that he must *se desivrer*, literally 'dis-intoxicate himself' (line 80), in order to think clearly and let nothing spoil his story (line 83). Honest poverty is preferable to a thousand marks possessed without joy or festivity (lines 97f.), just as it is preferable to be gracious and frank than a stingy king of France (lines 99f.). Heldris wants recognition that literary composition is an arduous and skilled task, for a cleric may study for a long time to learn how to produce rhymes (lines 14f.). Imagining a circulation for his verses beyond those who possess them, he asks his audience not to distribute them to people who prize money over honour and who do not provide the appropriate reward ('gueredon') to the author responsible (lines 9–13). This is not to suggest necessarily that Walterus wrote these lines to extract payment from Baldwin; he may instead have sought to curry Baldwin's favour by differentiating his generous court from those of his rivals, such as the Count of Boulogne, Renaud de Dammartin, a renowned literary patron and 'the great enemy of the counts of Guines', or from the growing merchant households of northern France and Flanders.[61]

Seeing literary patronage as a reflection of aristocratic *largesse* and hence honour, the prologue of *Silence* speaks to the ideology of Baldwin's court, which, as Lambert's account makes clear, was self-aware of its literariness. This is true not only of Baldwin's commissions, but also of the shape of the *Historia* destined for Baldwin's son Arnold. Arnold, whose biography we shall explore more in the following section, had close ties to Count Philip of Flanders (d.

1191) at whose court he lived in the late 1170s. A background at Philip's court, with which Chrétien and Gautier d'Arras are connected, might have cemented the already strong literary culture inherited from his father. Arnold kept three senior knights (*milites*) around to instruct and guide him, notably by retelling tales:

> Senes autem et decrepitos, eo quod veterum eventuras et fabulas et historias ei narrarent et moralitatis seria narrationi sue continuarent et annecterent, venerabatur et secum detinebat. Proinde militem quendam veteranum Robertum dictum Constantinensem, qui de Romanis imperatoribus et de Karlomanno, de Rolando et Olivero et de Arthuro Britannie rege eum instruebat et aures eius demulcebat; et Philippum de Mongardinio, qui de terra Ierosolimorum et de obsidione Anthiochie et de Arabicis et Babilonicis et de ultramarinarum partium gestis ad aurium delectationem ei referebat; et cognatum suum Walterum de Clusa nominatum, qui de Anglorum gestis et fabulis, de Gormundo et Ysembardo, de Tristanno et Hisolda, de Merlino et Merchulfo et de Ardentium gestis et de prima Ardee constructione … diligenter edocebat[62]
>
> (But he (=Arnold) respected old men and even decrepit ones and kept them with him, because they told him the adventures, fables, and histories of the ancients and added serious matters of morality to their narrative and included them. For that reason, he kept these men with him as members of his household and as his cronies, and he willingly listened to them: a certain old soldier named Robert of Coutances, who instructed him and pleased his ears on the subject of the Roman emperors and on Charlemagne, on Roland and Oliver, and on King Arthur of Britain; and Philip of Montgardin, who told him to his ears' delight of the land of Jerusalem and of the siege of Antioch and of the Arabs and Babylonians and of the deeds done *outremer*; and his relative Walter of Le Clud, who diligently informed him of the deeds and fables of the English, of Gormond and Isembard, of Tristan and Isolde, of Merlin and Morolf, of the deeds of the family of Ardres, and of the first construction of Ardres …)[63]

Arnold's relationship to these three older French knights is reminiscent of Henry the Young King's relationship to William the Marshal.[64] One might also speculatively wonder whether the three heroic French knights incongruously inserted into *Silence*'s narrative of the battle against the rebellious Count of Chester (lines 5557–9) are avatars of Arnold's hardy companions. In any case, it is possible to propose texts or oral traditions evoked by Lambert here: a version of the *Sept Sages de Rome*, a *chanson de geste* about Charlemagne (maybe the *Chanson d'Aspremont*), the *Chanson de Roland*, the *Roman de Brut* and/or an Arthurian romance, the *Chanson d'Antioche* and/or other *chansons* of the Crusade Cycle, *Gormond et Isembart*, and a version of the Tristan legend.[65] The division of stories between the three speakers does not map onto the famous separation of the three *materes* of Bretagne, France, and Rome as articulated by Lambert's contemporary Jean Bodel (indeed all three belong to Robert of Coutances). Nor

is there a distinction to be made on formal grounds. Philip, perhaps a former crusader, seems to specialize in stories of *outremer*, while Walter claims narratives originating from the English (Isembard is exiled to England), as well as the family history of Ardres (which anticipates the metalepsis that Lambert introduces when Walter relates this family history over chapters 97 to 146 of his *Historia*). The reference to 'Merlin and Morolf' in Walter's 'English' repertoire should hold our attention. 'Merchulfus' has been identified as Solomon's *vilain* debate partner Morolf or Marcolf in the *Dialogus Salomonis et Marcolfi*, a popular Latin text that has the wise king engage with Morolf in an entertaining (and frequently scatological) exchange of proverbs and biblical quotations. The *Dialogus* was adapted into French most likely in the early thirteenth century (different versions survive in thirteenth-century manuscripts).[66] Scholars of Middle High German literature will recognize the character from the 'bridal quest epic' *Salman und Morolf*, whose date of production and origins are hotly debated.[67] In neither the *Dialogus* nor *Salman und Morolf* does the figure of Merlin feature, however. The fact that Merlin and Morolf are jointly introduced by the preposition *de* and that they precede two pairings of characters may suggest a now-lost text that put them together. This is interesting for two different reasons. Firstly, Morolf is sometimes considered to be a development of the Ashmedai character in eastern iterations of the Solomon textual tradition. According to some versions of the legend, this Ashmedai (or Asmodeus), a demon, has bursts of sardonic laughter (at shoes and at beggars) that are perhaps the source of Merlin's in the *Vita Merlini*.[68] Secondly, by contrast, Martin Aurell interprets Lambert's reference to 'Merchulfus' as 'Saint Marcoul' (a name derived from *Mark-Wulf*, wolf of the forest), a figure in medieval hagiography often represented as a hermit living among wild animals.[69] For Aurell, the pairing Merlin–Marcoul is thus perfectly coherent if we consider Merlin not to be Arthur's adviser (a topic that would come under the purview of Robert of Coutances anyway) but Merlinus Silvester, a wildman living in the woods. In either case, we find further connections between the literary environment at the court of Guines and the reference points of *Silence*.[70]

Finally, additional confirmation of the 'romanus de Silentio' being our *Silence* is offered by the geographical indications of the manuscript's *scripta* and decoration. Alison Stones located WLC/LM/6's place of production 'on the border of Artois and Flanders', tentatively suggesting Saint-Omer.[71] Guines is only 30 kilometres north-west of Saint-Omer as the bird flies. A possible connection to the Abbey of Saint-Bertin in Saint-Omer would also be plausible given the strong links the counts of Guines and the lords of Ardres enjoyed with this well-known centre of manuscript production.[72] Moreover, this is consistent with 'the strong picard flavour of the poem', which 'seems to be from the north-west part of the territory'.[73] Other texts of WLC/LM/6, such as *Ille et Galeron*

and the *Chanson d'Aspremont*, attest mostly Picard traits, with the presence of Picard-Walloon rather than Walloon traits perhaps indicating a scriptorium in the western parts of a Flemish-speaking area (like the county of Guines as signalled by the predominance of Flemish toponyms used in Lambert's text).[74]

This section has shown that a very plausible case can be made for Lambert's *Historia* referencing *Silence*, which must then have been written during Baldwin's rule (1169–1206). A date towards the end of this range is perhaps to be envisioned: the 'romanus de Silentio' is the last item mentioned of Baldwin's literary patronage and could have been added when Lambert finalized his *Historia*. Given possible connections to Chrétien's *Cligès* and *Perceval*, a date in the 1190s would appear most likely. This suggestion will be supported in the following section where I delve deeper into the socio-political context of the county of Guines in the late twelfth century. It is possible, I contend, to understand *Silence* as articulating a number of socio-political concerns shared with Lambert's *Historia*, notably around female inheritance, the dangers of feminine deception, consultative versus affective lordship, the status of the *juventus*, and the figure of the *virago*. If scholars have increasingly recognized the didactic potential of *Silence* and its exemplary protagonist, might we also see a young, and sometimes reckless, Arnold II of Guines, Lambert's patron, and perhaps also his bride, the 'famous and fearsome' Beatrice of Beaubourg, as its most immediate audience?

3. Morality, identity, and literature: between France and Flanders, 1169–1206

For modern critics, *Silence* is a text that explores the limits, constructedness, and stability of identities in the Middle Ages.[75] Is Silence the valiant warrior and feudal vassal, the wandering but accomplished jongleur, or the silent and obedient wife? Given the narrator's comments about the supposed gender-neutrality of minstrelsy (lines 2860–72), these mutable identities intersect with gender categories in such a way as to complicate the association of sex with gender. This mutability at once tests the solidity of the text's internal socio-political architecture and yet is also framed as the result of its weaknesses and ambiguities. All the drama is, to some extent, refracted through the lens of biopolitics: King Ebain's law forbidding female inheritance is what shapes Silence's upbringing, and this law was itself motivated by two counts killing each other over their contested claims to the inheritance of twin daughters (lines 278–307). That the abandonment of this law occurs precisely as Silence is about to marry Ebain is an emphatic reversion to the status quo: now that Silence can inherit the duchy of Cornwall, the narrative quickly forecloses that possibility and reinscribes the perfect 'performer' of aristocratic masculinity as a wealthy, noble heiress, the ultimate prize for a feudal lord.[76] As Sharon Kinoshita points out, Ebain is the incontestable 'winner' in this scenario, as he manages to replace Eufeme, who

'had become a double dynastic liability, threatening the continuation of Evan's lineage by both her adultery and her barrenness'.[77] Although the representation of Ebain contains a number of implicit criticisms, it is he who 'has the last laugh', standing to benefit doubly from Silence's exemplary military service against the rebellious Count of Chester and, prospectively, from Silence's reproductive service (by giving birth to a male heir). Behind the emancipatory potential of the story, then, lies a thinly veiled conservatism: while Nurture puts up a good fight, Nature eventually, inevitably, wins out.[78]

How exactly medieval audiences reacted to *Silence* will always remain unknowable. Responses would, of course, have been mixed. If the ending appeased those for whom the subversion of gender categories was too much, then others may have felt compelled to disagree with it. As Roberta L. Krueger demonstrates, *Silence*, in ostensibly seeking to silence female speakers, actually establishes a dialogic space in which female voices can be heard.[79] The more misogyny is vehemently imposed on the text by the narrator the more its role to naturalize female inferiority is made clear. By appealing to the 'bone feme' ('good woman') among his female audience (line 6696), Heldris, Krueger argues, 'singles out women here as potential critics of his work'.[80] Needless to say, *Silence*'s anticipation of its future reception and its convoluted relationship to didacticism make its lessons difficult to retrieve.

The lessons of *Silence* would have been similarly complex for another type of reader, the so-called *juventus* class ('youth') of unmarried, non-firstborn sons who, stripped of their inheritance because of a change from cognatic to agnatic kinship structures (the imposition of primogeniture), were compelled to seek fame, wealth, and 'honour' elsewhere. Robert R. Sturges argues that the *juventus* class induced a kind of 'category crisis' within the definition of nobility that was reflected in the motif of the cross-dressing knight.[81] *Silence*, whose protagonist has an equally fraught relationship with the right to inherit, would, in Sturges's view, constitute a sublimated response to the instability within this culturally influential social grouping. How military service is carried out and rewarded is a central preoccupation of the text, but in such a way that Silence's noble status is never under scrutiny. Indeed, Silence's 'transgression of class lines' when becoming a *jongleur*, as Kinoshita notes, 'is more threatening than her manipulation of gender'.[82] In the case of both the 'bone feme' and the male 'youth', there is no straightforward readerly identification with Silence; the text at once mirrors and disrupts the identificatory gaze of the medieval audience.[83]

It is clear, then, that *Silence* resists an interpretation that would see narrative events as mere reflections of contemporary politics, individuals, and practices. Nevertheless, the socio-political context is always present in literature, however much displaced and dissimulated. Difficulties arise, of course, when we attempt to discern a direct, causal relationship between the worlds 'outside' and 'within'

the story (which may be, from a modern perspective, mutually constitutive with a medieval past reconstructed through documents). In the final pages of this article, I would like to explore how *Silence* and Lambert's *Historia* can be read together to shed light on their respective representations of power and gender relations. If the *Historia* was written for Arnold and *Silence* circulated at his father Baldwin's court, then the world described by Lambert's text may present a 'reality' in which the ideological stakes of the romance were understood. As we have seen, Lambert articulates an idealized view of the function of courtly narrative (and indeed of his own *Historia*): to entertain and to instruct by elaborating on 'serious issues of morality' ('moralitatis seria').[84] How may *Silence* have instructed Arnold and why would he have required such instruction?

Let us start by considering where Lambert inserts this reference to the moralizing purpose of literature for Arnold (chapter 96). This chapter is rubricated as: 'Quomodo Arnoldus de Ghisnis a Viridonio reversus ad voluntatem patris se habuit et continuit' ('How Arnold of Guines behaved, after he returned from Verdun to his father's power').[85] The text hints here at a behavioural transformation brought about by the events of the previous three chapters: Arnold's disastrous love affair with Countess Ida of Boulogne (d. 1216). Ida was a rich, high-status heiress, widowed twice in 1183 and 1186 after the deaths of Count Gerard III of Ghelria and Duke Berthold IV of Zähringen respectively. In the late 1180s, Ida begins a courtship with Arnold of Guines, and Lambert describes their exchange of love tokens and implies the physical consummation of their mutual affections. Around the same time, Count Renaud of Dammartin (d. 1227) deserts his wife and pursues Ida's hand. Philip of Flanders, Ida's uncle, disapproves of the match with Renaud since it would bring Ida's lands into the French king's sphere of influence. Seeing the French as untrustworthy ('suspectos') and dangerous ('infestos'), Philip instead gives his blessing to his loyal vassal Arnold to marry Ida. Renaud, upon hearing this, swiftly abducts Ida and carries her off to Lorraine. Ida then writes to Arnold claiming she has been taken away against her will and implores him to rescue her, but Arnold and his followers are captured in Verdun as they approach Renaud's fortress. Arnold is imprisoned until his father's ally Archbishop William of Reims intervenes on his behalf. Throughout the episode, Lambert presents Ida as playing her two suitors off each other, sometimes out of calculated cunning and sometimes out of fickleness. He interjects with two laments, 'o feminee levitatis fidem, immo perfidiam!' ('Oh, the perfidy of female instability!') and 'o feminei machinationem doli!' ('Oh, the machinations of feminine treachery!').[86] At the root of Ida's actions, Lambert locates 'stupid female instability' ('feminee imbecillitatis levitate') and 'feminine frivolity and deception' ('feminea levitate et deceptione').[87] Given Lambert was writing his *Historia* for Arnold, the vehemence of these misogynistic outbursts may be connected to Arnold's subsequent view of the affair. Nevertheless, Lambert

still apportions some of the blame to Arnold: misfortune fell on him because he failed to join the Third Crusade in 1190 despite taking pilgrim's vows and because he failed to direct his (at times excessive) generosity to the poor and needy. Lambert's *Historia* therefore moralizes on Arnold's actions *to Arnold* just before discussing the moralistic function of courtly narrative. The instructional value of literature is, for Lambert, made clear by this episode. Chapter 96 thus begins, 'Postquam igitur Arnoldus de Ghisnis ad se ipsum reversus muliebrem deprehendit inconstantiam et fallaciam' ('And so when Arnold of Guines came to his right mind afterward, he understood the inconstancy and falsity of women').[88] Lambert's patron, the older and wiser Arnold, who must have had painful memories of the affair, is therefore presented with the narrativization of his own learning curve, of his development from reckless youth to mature count.

The *raptus* of Ida might have recalled for Lambert and his readers Helen of Troy (whose complicity in her abduction was debated in the Middle Ages) or the 'lovesome damsel' of Chrétien's *Le Chevalier de la Charrette*. Like Helen, Ida is at the centre of a broader political conflict between two mortal enemies. As well as being a kind of proxy war between the French king and the Count of Flanders, the affair once again pitted the counts of Guines against Renaud de Dammartin (in an earlier chapter Lambert references the Trojan war to analogize a battle between Baldwin and Renaud).[89] It is worth remembering that it is two counts duelling over female inheritance that set the events of *Silence* in motion. Figures like Eufeme in *Silence*, who is represented as calculating, deceptive, and fickle, and who makes untrue accusations of rape, may have shaped or provided inspiration for Lambert's portrayal of Ida, but, in circular fashion, could also have been conceived as to 'instruct' young male aristocrats on the perceived dangers of women like Ida.

Akin to the contrast set up in *Silence* between Ebain's two brides Eufeme and Silence, Lambert opposes Ida to Beatrice of Beaubourg, another wealthy heiress whom Arnold married in 1194.[90] Beatrice is portrayed extremely positively by Lambert. As Leah Shopkow notes, Beatrice 'never appears in his text unmodified by the word "noble"'.[91] Most strikingly, Lambert describes Beatrice as 'virago nobilis et prepotens matrona' (noble *virago* and powerful matron).[92] The word *virago* occurs only once elsewhere in the *Historia*, again positively, in Lambert's portrait of Emma of Tancarville, a woman who exerted a good influence on her husband, Count Manasses of Guines (d. 1137). It is the virile qualities of Beatrice and Emma that make them, in Lambert's eyes, worthy of praise. This is not the overbearing mother-in-law in the highly misogynistic *La Dame Escoillee* (present in WLC/LM/6) who must undergo a fake but violent castration in order to be reincorporated into the family unit.[93] Instead, Beatrice and Emma show restraint in their behaviour and act in the best interests of the patriarchal political entities

to which they belong. Like Beatrice, Silence is a *virago*, but one who, because of the strictures on inheritance that did not apply to late twelfth-century Flanders, must fully embody a male form. Lambert follows the epilogue of *Silence* to the letter: if he has greatly blamed Ida, he has praised Beatrice more ('Se j'ai Eufeme moult blasmee / Jo ai Silence plus loëe', lines 6697–98).

Lambert's *Historia* makes clear that the borderlands between territories loyal to the King of France and to the Count of Flanders were becoming increasingly volatile over the twelfth century. In this kind of unstable environment, anxieties around inheritance, the continuation of the family line, and the solidity of the lord–vassal relationship were at their most acute. Count Philip I of Flanders, for instance, died in 1191 without an heir. Just after Lambert describes what must have been a relief for Arnold, the birth of a son (Baldwin III of Guines) in 1198 after three daughters, he begins the following chapter by lamenting a rapidly worsening political situation, defined by growing violence and emboldened, unpredictable knights (*milites*).[94] Conflicts dominate the final chapters of the *Historia*, which thus place retrospective emphasis on the timeliness of Arnold's marriage to Beatrice, or rather on the strategic importance of the alliance with the castellany of Beaubourg that resulted from their union. *Silence* projects these omnipresent concerns around the sex of noble newborns, while at the same time playing out a form of wish-fulfilment for precarious aristocrats like Baldwin and Arnold; that is, the avoidance of unnecessary war and the stability of the relationships between overlords. As Heather Tanner points out, Ebain is frequently portrayed as a bad lord prone to anger and thus juxtaposed to Silence's calm patience.[95] The rage he displays against his innocent chancellor (who unknowingly sent a letter composed by Eufeme requesting Silence's execution to the King of France) recalls Lambert's account of Baldwin's anger towards his 'innocent person' ('in innocentiam nostram'). Akin to how Ebain 'rolle les iolx, crosle le cief' (line 4921, rolls his eyes, shakes his head) which makes the chancellor 'tols esmaris' (line 4935, completely troubled), Baldwin eyes light up like lightening ('fulmine oculorum') before he rebukes Lambert and leaves him astounded and stupefied ('attoniti et stupefacti').[96] Both *Silence* and the *Historia* criticize the misuse of elite power, such as the atrocious consequences of Ebain's war with Norway (lines 150–60), which occurred over a trivial matter ('petite oquoison'), or the impulsive execution of a rogue by Arnold II of Ardres (d. 1138), who looked at his victim 'with burning eyes' ('ardentibus ... oculis').[97] Affective, arbitrary lordship is contrasted in *Silence* to measured, consultative lordship, as reflected most prominently in the description of how the King of France took lengthy counsel from his vassals when faced with Eufeme's forged letter calling for Silence's death (lines 4493–878). They advise him to be patient and acquire all the relevant information before passing judgement (lines 4753–56), which stands in marked opposition to Eufeme's encouragement that Ebain execute

Silence without trial (lines 4147f.). Ebain is redeemed somewhat by his partial resistance to Eufeme's recommendations, even if his knee-jerk law-making, in the case of the laws firstly forbidding female inheritance and secondly minstrelsy, distance him from the ideal established by the French king.[98]

It would be tempting to see *Silence* as the work of a professional educator-poet who was commissioned by Baldwin around 1190 to compose a romance for his son Arnold, who had just suffered reputational damage after a catastrophic love affair with Ida of Boulogne. Such a possibility must, of course, remain hypothetical. Indeed, I do not intend to use this comparison between *Silence* and the events of Lambert's *Historia* to argue that Walterus Silens wrote his text in direct response to contemporary politics. Nor do I wish to suggest that *Silence* directly influenced the way in which Lambert described and interpreted what had happened and what was happening in the borderlands between France and Flanders. Rather I see both *Silence* and the *Historia* as arising from, and participating in, an ideological environment in which the stakes of inheritance, lord–vassal relations, and marriage alliances were at their highest. Both texts were strongly connected to a court where literature was assigned an important role in the instruction of young lords (and perhaps also ladies), a role that they carry out in different ways. Reading *Silence* and the *Historia* together shows that they present complementary perspectives on the effective arbitration of power and on gender relations while opting for different textual forms for their narratives.

4. Conclusion

This article has reassessed the date, author, and context of the *Roman de Silence* and put forward the hypothesis that the text was composed between 1169 and 1206 (probably towards the end of this range) at/for/near the court of Guines by an otherwise unknown cleric called Walterus Silens (Walter the Silent). Central to this hypothesis is a reference to a 'romanus de Silentio' recorded in Lambert of Ardres's *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium et Ardensium Dominorum* (completed *c*.1206). Yet, Lambert's *Historia* also presents a more specific context in which to read *Silence*, as the two texts share a set of socio-political preoccupations that are sublimated into cultural production. These concerns are echoed elsewhere in the texts of WLC/LM/6, the collective study of which lies beyond the scope of the present article. It will suffice, then, to outline two further questions. Is WLC/LM/6 made up of texts that were found in Baldwin's famous library? Is the manuscript a *summa* of some of the vernacular entertainments (which could be mixed with serious issues of morality) that defined Baldwin's and Arnold's approach to literature as described by Lambert?

The sheer accumulation of textual motifs in *Silence* (which Thorpe and others have noted) is explained partly by the flourishing literary environment at the court

of Guines. Like the *Historia* which Lambert loads with intertextual borrowings and literary references, *Silence* presupposes both an author and an audience intensely familiar with the principal currents of twelfth-century vernacular storytelling. Lambert's *Historia* is a strikingly local work, clearly the product of a certain place and time. It only survives in copies of the later Middle Ages, notably in a manuscript made for the bibliophile Louis of Bruges (d. 1492). Was *Silence* likewise a primarily local work, a product of a time and place, that only gained more universal appreciation later on, in our modern society? This question will now need renewed scholarly attention. Given the chronology proposed here, we cannot eliminate the possibility of its influence, however indirect, on texts like the *Roman de la Rose* or *Aucassin et Nicolette* (and other tales employing the cross-dressing knight motif). Indeed, the vigorous rubbing of figures in the illuminations of *Silence* in WLC/LM/6, whose material condition shows that the manuscript was frequently consulted, suggests that readers at some unspecified moment responded affectively to the narrative. In any case, *Silence*, since its rediscovery in 1911 and its first complete edition in 1972, has shown just how it can speak differently, but equally compellingly, to present and future audiences.

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NOTES

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[1] The manuscript database Arlima helpfully lists 634 medieval French texts that survive in a single manuscript. See https://arlima.net/no/13 (last accessed 29 June 2021, last updated 12 July 2015).

[2] Frederick A. G. Cowper, 'Origins and peregrinations of the Laval–Middleton Manuscript', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 3 (1959), 3–18 (p. 17).

[3] For an excellent account of the academic reception of *Silence*, see F. Regina Psaki, 'Un coup de foudre: la recherche anglo-saxonne sur le *Roman de Silence*', *Cahiers de Recherches Médiévales et Humanistes*, 13 (2006), 287–300. The relative lack of research from continental scholars is slowly being redressed. A new edition and French-language translation is being prepared by Danièle James-Raoul. A German-language edited collection has just been published, see *Der Ritter, der ein Mädchen war: Studien zum* Roman de Silence *von Heldris de Cornouailles*, ed. Inci Bozkaya, Britta Bußmann, and Katharina Philipowski (Göttingen, 2020).

[4] Alison Stones, 'Two French manuscripts: WLC/LM/6 and WLC/LM/7', in *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*, ed. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 41–56 (p. 41).

[5] Raoul de Houdenc, *La Vengeance Raguidel*, ed. Gilles Roussineau (Geneva, 2004), p. 30.

[6] As Massimiliano Gaggero and Serena Lunardi point out, these datings are in urgent need of reconsideration. See 'Lire en contexte: nouvelles recherches sur le ms. Nottingham, UL, WLC/LM/6', *Critica del testo*, 16 (2013), 155–205 (p. 197).

[7] See Keith Busby, 'Post-Chrétien verse romance: the manuscript context', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 14 (2007), 11–24 (pp. 14–18), and also his *Codex and Context: Reading Old French Verse Narrative in Manuscript*, vol. I (Amsterdam and New York, 2002), pp. 415–20.

[8] Gaggero and Lunardi, 'Lire en contexte', p. 193.

[9] Gaggero and Lunardi, 'Lire en contexte', p. 195; *La Vengeance Raguidel*, ed. Roussineau, p. 68; Charles H. Livingston, *Le Jongleur Gautier le Leu: étude sur les fabliaux* (Cambridge, Mass., 1951), pp. 13f.; Piero Andrea Martina, *Il romanzo francese in versi e la sua produzione manoscritta* (Strasbourg, 2021), pp. 188–90 (p. 189).

[10] Martina, *Il romanzo francese*, describes Gaggero and Lunardi's hypothesis as a 'soluzione ingegnosa ma difficile da dimostrare' (p. 190 n. 412, an ingenious solution but difficult to prove).

[11] *La Chanson d'Aspremont: chanson de geste du XII^e siècle, texte du manuscrit de Wollaton Hall*, ed. Louis M. Brandin, vol. I (Paris, 1924), pp. iii–xi. Cowper, 'Origins', pp. 3–18. This view is supported by Busby, *Codex and Context*, 1, 415–20, and Marc-René Jung, *La Légende de Troie en France au Moyen Âge: analyse des versions françaises et bibliographie raisonnée des manuscrits* (Basle and Tübingen, 1996), pp. 124–33.

[12] Stones, 'Two French manuscripts'; Terry. L. Nixon, 'The role of audience in the development of French vernacular literature in the twelfth and early thirteenth century: with a descriptive catalogue of manuscripts' (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of California Los Angeles, 1989), p. 447. The first proponents of an early thirteenth-century dating were W. H. Stevenson, *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton preserved at Wollaton Hall (Nottinghamshire)* (Hereford, 1911), pp. 221–34, and Henri Omont, 'Manuscrits de Lord Middleton conservés à Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, 73 (1912), 200–6.

[13] Stones, 'Two French manuscripts', p. 46: '[These psalters] are, of course, very much more copiously illustrated than the miscellany WLC/LM/6, but an early literary manuscript with illustrations is likely to have emanated from a cultural context in which distinguished devotional books were being produced for wealthy monastic and lay patrons.'

[14] *La Vengeance Raguidel*, ed. Roussineau, p. 68.

[15] Jung, *La Légende*, pp. 131f. See also D. J. A. Ross, *Illustrated Medieval Alexander Books in French Verse*, ed. Maud Pérez-Simon and Alison Stones (Turnhout, 2019), pp. 177–82, where the dating to the first quarter of the thirteenth century is repeated.

[16] Gaggero and Lunardi, 'Lire en contexte', pp. 171, 175, 186, 187. Martina, *Il romanzo francese*, dates the script and iconography of booklets I to IV to the middle decades of the first half of the thirteenth century, localizing them to the north-eastern area of the French-speaking territory (p. 190).

[17] Ian Short (personal communication, 4 February 2021): 'The only hesitation in the

dating, in my view, is the choice between XIII$^{1/4}$ and XIII$^{1/3}$. On the axiom that conservative hands can survive unchanged over several decades, it would, I think, be more cautious to opt for XIII$^{1/3}$.'

[18] A few paragraphs exploring an earlier dating of *Silence* can be found in Martina, *Il romanzo francese*, pp. 188–90. No reference is made, however, to the *Estoire Merlin*. Katie Keene cites private correspondence with Regina Psaki and Keith Busby favouring a dating of *Silence* to the first half of the thirteenth century. See '"Cherchez Eufeme": the evil queen in the *Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 14, 3–22 (2004) (p. 20 n. 29).

[19] *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances, Edited from Manuscripts in the British Museum. Volume II: Lestoire de Merlin*, ed. H. Oskar Sommer (Washington, DC, 1908). The Grisandole episode is found on pp. 281–91. Sommer's edition is based on London, British Library, MS Additional 10292, fols 76^{r}–214^{v}. For an account of the tradition and the two different versions of the *Suite Vulgate du Merlin*, see Richard Trachsler, 'Pour une nouvelle édition de la *Suite-Vulgate* du *Merlin*', *Vox romanica*, 60 (2001), 128–48.

[20] Subsequent line numbers refer to the editions of Lewis Thorpe (now out of print) and Sarah Roche-Mahdi. See *Le* Roman de Silence: *A Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse Romance by Heldris de Cornuälle*, ed. Lewis Thorpe (Cambridge, 1972), and *Silence: A Thirteenth-Century French Romance*, ed. and trans. Sarah Roche-Mahdi (East Lansing, Mich., 1992). Another English-language translation exists in Heldris de Cornuälle, *Le Roman de Silence*, trans. Regina Psaki (New York and London, 1991). For the Italian edition, see Heldris di Cornovaglia, *Il romanzo di Silence*, ed. Anna Airò (Rome, 2005).

[21] Lewis Thorpe, 'Merlin's sardonic laughter', in *Studies in Medieval Literature and Languages in Memory of Frederick Whitehead*, ed. William Rothwell et al. (Manchester, 1973), pp. 323–39.

[22] Félix Lecoy, 'Corrections: *Le Roman de Silence* d'Heldris de Cornualle', *Romania*, 99 (1978), 109–25, especially pp. 110f.

[23] Lucy Allen Paton, 'The story of Grisandole: a study in the legend of Merlin', *PMLA*, 22 (1907), 234–76.

[24] Heinrich Gelzer, 'Der *Silenceroman* von Heldris de Cornualle', *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*, 47 (1927), 87–99, p. 97: 'Es ist klar, daß keine der beiden Versionen G[risandole] und S[ilence] aus der anderen abgeleitet werden kann, vielmehr beide auf ältere Quellen zurückgehen müssen' ('It is clear that neither version G[risandole] nor S[ilence] can be derived from the other, but rather they must both go back to older sources').

[25] Thorpe notes in the introduction to *Le Roman de Silence* that there are three passages in *Silence* not derived from the *Estoire* (p. 29). He concedes: 'Here as elsewhere, Heldris permits himself great liberties with his source' (p. 32 n. 74). He also suggests a connection between the *Vita Merlini* and *Silence* for the enigmatic lines where a king called 'Ris' is introduced (lines 6198–201). It is worth acknowledging that a knight named 'Ris' also appears in *Ille et Galeron*, the text that immediately precedes *Silence* in WLC/LM/6.

[26] In addition to his own edition of *Silence* and Sommer's edition of the *Estoire Merlin*, Thorpe uses *The Vita Merlini*, ed. and trans. John Jay Parry (Urbana, Ill., 1925) and *The Legends of the Jews*, ed. Louis Ginzberg, vol. IV (Philadelphia, Pa, 1913), pp. 166–8.

[27] See, for instance, Suzanne Conklin Akbari, 'Nature's forge recast in the *Roman de Silence*', in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture: Selected Papers from the Seventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA,*

27 July–1 August, 1992, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 39–46. R. Howard Bloch, 'Silence and holes: the *Roman de Silence* and the art of the trouvère', *Yale French Studies*, 70 (1986), 81–99, p. 84: 'The *Roman de Silence* reads in many places like a vernacular version of Alain's *De Planctus* (sic) *Naturae*, which its author most certainly knew; Heldris's relation to Jean [de Meun] is, because of the uncertainty of the date of the manuscript, much less certain.' Cf. Simon Gaunt, 'The significance of Silence', *Paragraph*, 13 (1990), 202–26, p. 204: '[Heldris] seems to be inspired by the proverbial opposition between *nature* and *noureture*, rather than texts like the *Rose* or the *De planctu*'.

[28] According to Roche-Mahdi, *Silence*, p. 324, the former is the 'lai pitus d'amur' in Thomas's *Tristan* (lines 833–945).

[29] On this motif in relation to *Silence*, *Lanval*, and other medieval French texts, see chapter 5 'Seduction, maternity, and royal authority' of Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia, Pa, 1998), pp. 144–70.

[30] On Benoît's evocation of the 'small cause' of the Trojan War, see Douglas Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion*: *Description, Rewriting, and Authorship from Macrobius to Medieval Romance* (Leiden, Boston, Mass., and Cologne, 1999), pp. 160f.

[31] Peter Haidu, *The Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages* (Stanford, Calif., 2004), p. 240.

[32] On the influence of hagiography, see Lynne Dahmen, 'Sacred romance: *Silence* and the hagiographical tradition', *Arthuriana*, 12 (2002), 113–22. For a stimulating comparison with an Old French saint's life about female cross-dressing, see Emma Campbell, 'Translating gender in thirteenth-century French cross-dressing narratives: *Le Roman de Silence* and *La Vie de Sainte Euphrosine*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 49 (2019), 233–64.

[33] Beate Schmolke-Hasselman, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chrétien to Froissart*, trans. Margaret and Roger Middleton (Cambridge, 1998). Karen Pratt interprets *Silence* as playing on twelfth-century chivalric romance for comic effect. See 'Humour in the *Roman de Silence*', in *Comedy in Arthurian Literature*, ed. Keith Busby and Roger Dalrymple (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 87–103.

[34] See, for instance, the final chapter 'Les comtes de Guines' of Georges Duby, *Le Chevalier, la femme et le prêtre: le mariage dans la France féodale* (Paris, 1981), pp. 269–300.

[35] Lambert of Ardres, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres*, trans. Leah Shopkow (Philadelphia, Pa, 2007 [2001]), p. 3. See also Martin Aurell's French translation of key chapters 80 and 81 in 'La culture d'entre-deux de Baudouin II de Guînes (d. 1206) selon Lambert d'Ardres', in *Dans le secret des archives: justice, ville et culture au Moyen Âge*, ed. Maïté Billoré and Johan Picot (Rennes, 2014), pp. 359–70.

[36] The Latin text is taken from *Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium*, ed. Johann Heller, in *Monumenta Germaniae historica* (*MGH*), vol. 24 (Hannover, 1879), pp. 550–642. Subsequent references will appear in the notes as *MGH* followed by the page number, chapter number, and line number(s), and then cross-referenced to Shopkow's translation. *MGH,* p. 598, ch. 80, lines 1–20; *History*, trans. Shopkow, pp. 113f.

[37] The translation 'popular trifles' is Shopkow's (p. 113), but the Old French term *dit*, which had a wide semantic range, may be what Lambert had in mind.

[38] *MGH,* p. 598, ch. 81, lines 21–50; *History*, trans. Shopkow, pp. 114f.

[39] The translator of Solinus' text is named as Simon of Boulogne, Master of Guines, who has been speculatively identified as the 'Simon li clerc' who collaborated on the *Roman d'Alexandre.* See *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 229 n. 274.

[40] Shopkow's translation fails to acknowledge the specific categories of French textuality evoked here. Aurell, 'La culture', points out that Lambert is probably referencing the *Milesiae fabulae* of Aristides rather than Thales of Miletus.

[41] *MGH,* p. 598, ch. 81, lines 45–50.

[42] Both Aurell and Shopkow mistranslate this clause: the former misreads this as Walterus Silens being Baldwin's preceptor, while the latter misses the causal relation between Baldwin's rule and Walterus' literary output.

[43] I have modified Shopkow's translation (p. 115).

[44] Thorpe (*Le Roman de Silence*, p. 4) cites Henri Malo, *Un grand feudataire, Renaud de Dammartin, et la coalition de Bouvines* (Paris, 1898), p. 117, but states without justification that *Silence* 'seems to have no connection with' the *romanus de Silentio*.

[45] On the term *roman*, see Rita Copeland, 'Between Romans and Romantics', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 33 (1991), 215–24, especially pp. 215–19. This precise attestation of *romanus* is quoted in Du Cange's Medieval Latin dictionary under the following definition: 'Liber *Romane*, seu lingua vulgari Francica scriptus, quomodo fabulosas Historias vernacule conscriptas etiamnum *Romans* dicimus' ('A book in the *Roman* style, namely, written in the vulgar French tongue, in which fictional narratives in the vernacular are recorded, and which we still call *Romance*').

[46] The Latin 'tractavit' need not indicate the composition of a 'treatise', since medieval French writers often use the cognate verb 'traitier' to designate narrative composition (Gautier d'Arras, for instance, describes his twelfth-century *Eracle* as a 'traitié'). For more on the twelfth-century meaning of 'traitié', its development over time, and its difference from related Latin terms, see, Sylvie Lefèvre, 'Du tractatus au traité: transfert en langue vulgaire d'un genre scientifique?', in *Le Moyen Âge et la science*, ed. Bernard Ribémont (Paris, 1991), pp. 31–46.

[47] Jody Enders, 'The farce and folly of female authority in a sixteenth-century view of the *Roman de Silence*', *Romance Notes*, 33 (1993), 33–7. The pre-modern French translation is found in *Chronique de Guines et d'Ardres*, ed. Denis Charles Godefroy Ménilglaise (Paris, 1855), p. 174.

[48] Malo, *Un grand feudataire*, p. 117. This variant is found, for instance, in Saint-Omer, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 773, fol. 96^{v}.

[49] See, for instance, Jane Bliss, *Naming and Namelessness in Medieval Romance* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 134–41, and Erin F. Labbie, 'The specular image of the gender-neutral name: naming Silence in *Le Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 7 (1997), 63–77.

[50] The extent to which Ebain is a mouthpiece for Heldris has been debated. Labbie, 'The specular image', reads this as an affirmation of Silence's non-gender-specific exemplarity, modifying (with an uppercase 'S') Peter Allen's translation of line 6398 to 'women's sense lies in Silence' (pp. 68f.).

[51] Gelzer, 'Der *Silenceroman*', p. 99.

[52] For comments on the rare first name 'Heldris', perhaps the subject case of the Germanic 'Heldric' (*Heldricus*), see A. H. Diverres, 'Review: *Heldris de Cornuälle: Le Roman de Silence* by Lewis Thorpe', *MÆ*, 43 (1974), 71–4.

[53] For example: 'Maistre Heldris dist chi endroit / C'on doit plus bone feme amer / Que haïr malvaise u blasmer' (lines 6684–6). Regina Psaki writes: 'There is no coherence to the sequences of placating remarks which Heldris makes in backing his way out of his text … Ultimately we must look skeptically at the explicit assertions of a narrator who simplifies or reverses the complexities of his tale; and I would argue that the author of *Silence* intended us to read his ponderous narrator with more than a grain of salt' ('Introduction', *Le Roman de Silence*, trans. Psaki, pp. xxxi–xxxii).

[54] *Le Roman de Silence*, ed. Thorpe, p. 16.

[55] *Le Roman de Silence*, ed. Thorpe, pp. 12–17, p. 17: 'These few pages on the poet Heldris de Cornuälle contain little more than conjecture.'

[56] See, for instance, Akbari, 'Nature's forge', p. 45, or Lorraine Kochanske Stock, 'The importance of being gender "stable": masculinity and feminine empowerment in *Le Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 7 (1997), 7–34 (p. 28).

[57] Gautier d'Arras, the author of the text that immediately precedes *Silence* in WLC/LM/6, was a *magister*.

[58] Venetia Bridges, 'Silence in debate: the intellectual nature of the *Roman de Silence*', in *Medieval Romance, Arthurian Literature: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth Archibald*, ed. A. S. G. Edwards (Woodbridge, 2021), pp. 1–15. Bridges's closing comments about the porosity between the lay and clerical spheres resonate with my earlier mention of Baldwin's inclination to engage his scholarly companions in learned debate.

[59] Cited in Caroline A. Jewers, 'The non-existent knight: adventure in *Le Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 7 (1997), 87–110 (pp. 109f. n. 3).

[60] Obvious comparators would be Chrétien's praise of Marie de Champagne in *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* or Gautier d'Arras's praise of Beatrice of Burgundy in *Ille et Galeron*. In his earlier work *Eracle*, though, Gautier d'Arras contrasts the generosity of Thibaut de Blois with the stinginess of certain nobles, which is more in line with the prologue to *Silence*. Heather Tanner, 'Lords, wives, and vassals in the *Roman de Silence*', *Journal of Women's History*, 24 (2012), 138–59, instead sees the 'anti-prologue' as consistent with the central focus on lordship throughout *Silence* (p. 141).

[61] *History,* trans. Shopkow, p. 24. There are further calls to aristocratic liberality in *Silence*, e.g. lines 329–32 and 1222–4.

[62] *MGH,* p. 607, ch. 96, lines 12–23.

[63] *History*, trans. Shopkow, pp. 129f. (slightly modified).

[64] Henry the Young King is mentioned in chapter 92 of Lambert's *Historia* specifically in the context of having older knights advising young, powerful lords. *MGH,* p. 604, ch. 92, lines 33f.; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 125.

[65] Urban T. Holmes Jr, 'The Arthurian tradition in Lambert d'Ardres', *Speculum*, 25 (1950), 100–3, explores a potential connection between the description of the *donjon* at Ardres and the castle of the Fisher King in Chrétien's *Perceval.* He also examines the links between Arnold of Guines and the court of Philip of Flanders to argue, perhaps fancifully, that '[i]t is only right to assume that Robert de Coutances, Philippe de Montgardin, and Gautier l'Écluse [Walter of Le Clud] were close to Chrétien' (p. 102).

[66] See Tony Hunt, 'Solomon and Marcolf', in *Por le soie amisté: Essays in Honor of Norris J. Lacy*, ed. Keith Busby and Catherine M. Jones (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga, 2000), pp. 199–224.

[67] On the Middle High German text, see Sarah Bowden, *Bridal Quest-Epics in Medieval Germany: A Revisionary Approach* (London, 2012), pp. 70–101.
[68] Thorpe, 'Merlin's sardonic laughter', p. 331.
[69] Aurell, 'La culture', p. 369.
[70] Of course, it is not entirely beyond the realms of possibility that the *Historia*'s second narrator Walter of Le Clud is this very same Walterus Silens, an ironic surname given to an evidently garrulous individual.
[71] Stones, 'Two French manuscripts', pp. 45f.
[72] *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 28: 'The lordship of Ardres developed from the advocacy of the wealthy monastery of Saint-Bertin in the town of Saint-Omer.' In 1228, Baldwin III of Guines confirmed donations from his parents to the Abbey of Saint-Bertin.
[73] *Le Roman de Silence*, ed. Thorpe, p. 16 (but he then more specifically, and not convincingly, localizes the language to Tournai–Douai–Mons). Brandin in his edition of *La Chanson d'Aspremont* based on WLC/LM/6 detects Picard–Walloon and Picard–Norman traits (p. vii), while Frederick Cowper in his edition of *Ille et Galeron* notes Picard–Walloon and Picard traits (*Ille et Galeron par Gautier d'Arras*, ed. Frederick Cowper (Paris, 1956), p. xxiv). A recent study of the two scribes responsible for *La Chanson d'Aspremont* of WLC/LM/6 argues that these scribes, most likely from the north-east of the Picard region (certainly west of Liège), tended to preserve, albeit to differing extents, the lexicon of their exemplar from the north-west part of the territory, resulting in a hybrid *scripta*. See Laura Minervini, 'Due copisti al lavoro: il caso del manoscritto W della *Chanson d'Aspremont*', in *Innovazione linguistica e storia della tradizione: Casi di studio romanzi medievali*, ed. Stefano Resconi, Davide Battagliola, and Silvia De Santis (Milan and Udine, 2020), pp. 227–42.
[74] On the languages spoken in the environs of Guines, see *History,* trans. Shopkow, p. 33.
[75] For instance, the chapter devoted to *Silence* in Haidu, *The Subject Medieval/Modern,* is entitled 'Problematizing identity: *Silence*' (pp. 239–65).
[76] Christopher Callahan, 'Canon law, primogeniture, and the marriage of Ebain and Silence', *Romance Quarterly*, 49 (2002), 12–20, argues that this is the 'most logical consequence of Silence's position with regard to inheritance law' (p. 13).
[77] Sharon Kinoshita, 'Heldris de Cornuälle's *Roman de Silence* and the feudal politics of lineage', *PMLA*, 110 (1995), 397–409 (p. 406). See also her 'Male-order brides: marriage, patriarchy, and monarchy in the *Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 12 (2002), 64–75.
[78] Gaunt, 'The significance of Silence', p. 205: 'the outcome of the nature/nurture conflict is predetermined from the moment it is introduced'.
[79] Roberta L. Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge, 1993). See chapter 4 'Women readers and the politics of gender in *Le Roman de Silence*', pp. 101–27.
[80] Krueger, *Women Readers*, p. 125.
[81] Robert S. Sturges, 'The crossdresser and the *juventus*: category crisis in *Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 12 (2002), 37–49.
[82] Kinoshita, 'Heldris', p. 403.
[83] Kathy M. Krause, '"Li Mireor du monde": specularity in the *Roman de Silence*', *Arthuriana*, 12 (2002), 85–91, explores the implications of Silence being twice described as the 'mirror of the world' (lines 3063, 3116).
[84] See Stephen C. Jaeger's discussion of this passage in his *The Origins of Courtliness:*

Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210 (Philadelphia, Pa, 1985), pp. 232f.

[85] *MGH,* p. 607, ch. 96, lines 1f.; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 129.

[86] *MGH*, p. 605, ch. 94, lines 42, 44; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 127.

[87] *MGH*, p. 605, ch. 94, line 28; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 127. *MGH*, p. 605, ch. 93, line 8; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 126.

[88] *MGH*, p. 607, ch. 96, lines 3f.; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 129.

[89] *MGH*, p. 600, ch. 83, lines 2–7; *History*, trans. Shopkow, pp. 116–117.

[90] Leah Shopkow, 'The narrative constructions of the famous (or infamous) and fearsome virago, Beatrice of Beaubourg', *Réflexions historiques*, 30 (2004), 55–71, p. 63: 'Lambert creates a symmetrical narrative in which the portraits of Ida and Beatrice, the whore and the matron (the two categories of sexualized women), bracket a family history.'

[91] Shopkow, 'The narrative constructions', p. 59.

[92] *MGH* p. 639, ch. 150, line 26; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 188.

[93] On this text probably composed in the first half of the thirteenth century, see Serena Lunardi, *La Virago evirata*: La Dame escoillee (Milan, 2013).

[94] *MGH*, p. 639, ch. 151, lines 35–7; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 189.

[95] Tanner, 'Lords, wives, and vassals', pp. 142–4.

[96] *MGH*, p. 638, ch. 149, lines 14f.; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p.186.

[97] *MGH*, p. 622, ch. 124, line 33; *History*, trans. Shopkow, p. 157. For further analysis of this episode, see Leah Shopkow, 'Marvelous feats: humor, trickery, and violence in the *History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres* of Lambert of Ardres', in *Violence and the Writing of History in the Medieval Francophone World*, ed. Noah D. Guynn and Zrinka Stahuljak (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 71–82.

[98] Martina, *Il romanzo francese*, suggests that King Ebain may be a reflection of King John (reigned 1199–1216) as both are characterized as weak rulers (pp. 189f.).