



Sodomy, Masculinity and Law in Medieval Literature: France and England, 1050-1230 (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature)

William E. Burgwinkle

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William Burgwinkle surveys poetry and letters, histories and literary fiction - including Grail romances - to offer a historical survey of attitudes towards same-sex love during the centuries that gave us the Plantagenet court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, courtly love, and Arthurian lore. Burgwinkle illustrates how 'sodomy' becomes a problematic feature of narratives of romance and knighthood. Most texts of the period denounce sodomy and use accusations of sodomitical practice as a way of maintaining a sacrificial climate in which masculine identity is set in opposition to the stigmatised other, for example the foreign, the feminine, and the heretical. What emerges from these readings, however, is that even the most homophobic, masculinist and normative texts of the period demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to separate the sodomitical from the orthodox. These blurred boundaries allow readers to glimpse alternative, even homoerotic, readings.

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