

Chapter 5

Translating Friendship in the Circle of Marguerite de Navarre: Plato's *Lysis* and Lucian's *Toxaris*

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All who know what Friendship is say that it is nothing other than a mutual and voluntary accord contracted by virtue between two people to be united in charity and in a shared disposition towards all things, whatever they might be. It has this advantage over any degree of kinship or blood relation, namely that between kin there is usually not much friendship, indeed sometimes it is entirely banished therefrom, which it cannot be from between friends.²

An extensive corpus of translations of Latin and Greek works on friendship constituted one important vector for the dissemination of the classical heritage that informed the early modern rhetorics and rituals of friendship.³ The translators of these works not only made classical texts available to a wider reading public; they also often deployed the rhetoric of the friendship tradition itself when they dedicated their efforts to other men. Such is the case, for example, in three of the four published sixteenth-century French translations of Lucian's *Toxaris*. Familiar topoi about similarity and shared virtue embellish the dedications to these volumes, characterizing the relationship between translator and dedicatee as one

¹ I would like to thank the editors of this volume for preternaturally astute feedback, David Schalkwyk for inspiring discussions about friendship in Plato's *Lysis* and elsewhere, Constance Furey for helping me think theologically, and Lorenzo Calvelli for numerous suggestions.

² "Tous ceus qui sçavent que c'est qu'Amitié, disent, Que ce n'est autre chose qu'un accord mutuel & volontaire contracté par la vertu, entre deus personnes, pour être unis en charité en mesme affection en toutes choses quelles qu'elles soient: Elle a cét avantage par dessus tout degré de parantage & proximité, que le plus souvent entre parans n'y a pas beaucoup d'amitié, & en est quelquesfois du tout bânie; ce qu'elle ne peut être d'entre amis" (Antoine de Laval, *Desseins de professions nobles et publiques* [Paris: chez la veuve Abel L'Angelier, 1613], fol. 50v).

³ For a recent overview of the literature on friendship in early modernity as well as a rehearsal of relevant friendship commonplaces, see Daniel T. Lochman and Maritere López, "The Emergence of Discourses: Early Modern Friendship," the introduction to *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700*, ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere López, and Lorna Hutson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 1–26.

of ideal, reciprocal friendship.⁴ These translations thus both represented classical friendship discourse for contemporaries and constituted exemplary exercises in contemporary friendship practice.⁵

In this essay, I propose to consider a more anomalous situation: Renaissance translations of classical friendship texts that were dedicated to women. Given the near absence of women from the canonical Greco-Roman friendship tradition, that there were any such translations at all may come as a surprise. To my knowledge, there are exactly two, of which one was originally intended for a man. The first, a translation of Plato's *Lysis* by Bonaventure des Périers (c. 1501–1544) probably dating to 1541 and published posthumously by Jean de Tournes in 1544, was dedicated to Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549).⁶ The second, a translation of Lucian's *Toxaris* by Jacques de Rozières, bears a dedication to Marguerite de France, daughter of Francis I of France (1494–1547) and thus Marguerite de Navarre's niece. The dedication explains, however, that the translation had originally been prepared for Marguerite de France's brother, Charles d'Orléans, who died before the text could be presented to him. Never published, it exists in a single manuscript dating to 1545 or 1546.⁷

⁴ In 1553, Jehan Millet de Saint Amour dedicated his *Toxaris de Lucian* (Paris: Nicolas Chrestien) to his "meilleur amy" Claude Renaut, writing that the cord that bound them together was "la ressemblance de bonnes mœurs" (sig. A6v). A decade later, in an anomalous case, Claude du Puy dedicated his *Toxare ou De l'amitié* (Anvers: Imprimerie de Æ. Diest, 1563) to a superior, "Monseigneur Antoine Perenot, Cardinal, & Archevesque de Maline" (sig. A2r). Du Puy wanted the text to remind the Cardinal of the deceased Prince Wolfgangue Prantner, "un de voz singuliers amys" (sig. A2r), in whose service he had met Perenot. In 1579, Blaise de Vigenère published his *Trois dialogues de l'amitié* (Paris, Nicolas Chesneau), comprising a long dedicatory epistle and translations of Plato's *Lysis*, Cicero's *De amicitia* and Lucian's *Toxaris*. In the epistle, Vigenère describes how he and his friend Giovanni Andreossi shared "une Amitié ferme & indissoluble à jamais; comme estant établie sur la vertu, son principal & plus assuré fondement sur tous autres" (sig. †2v). Finally, in his *Dessseins de professions nobles et publiques*, first printed in 1605, Antoine de Laval dedicated a French *Toxaris* dating from the 1570s to his friend Loys Gilbert. The translation is preceded by a series of short essays on friendship rehearsing numerous commonplaces from the tradition.

⁵ For reflections on how published evocations of friendship between men could function either as social currency or as a form of advertising, see Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 54, and Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fiction of Women in Sixteenth Century England* (London and New York, NY: Routledge, 1994), 126. I owe these citations to Allison Johnson, "The 'Single Lyfe' of Isabella Whitney: Love, Friendship, and the Single Women Writer" in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700*, ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere López, and Lorna Hutson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 126.

⁶ The translation is the first work found in Bonaventure des Périers, *Recueil des œuvres de feu Bonaventure des Periers* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1544).

The manuscript, entitled *Dialogue de Lucian*, is housed at Harvard University's Houghton Library and can be found under the shelf mark MS Richardson 15. In *Lucien de Samosate et le lucianisme en France au XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1988), Christiane

Although the rarity and unconventionality of translations of friendship texts dedicated to women warrant caution in drawing conclusions based on similarities between the paratexts that accompany them, suggestive differences do emerge when they are compared to those found in works dedicated to men. Neither Des Périers nor De Rozières used the rhetoric of the male friendship tradition to assert that virtue and similarity bound (female) dedicatee and (male) translator in a reciprocal relationship. Indeed, they do not even claim their dedicatees as friends. Gender and greatly differing social status provide an obvious explanation for these absences. Perhaps more unexpectedly, at least given the classical tradition they are drawing from, both translations' paratexts depict relationships based not on conventional models of likeness or similarity but on proximity or consanguinity and on Christian faith. In an interpretive poem that functions as a commentary to his translation, Des Périers portrays an all-female divinely inspired community comprising neighbors, cousins, and sisters anticipating the "perfect friendship" (*parfaicte Amytié*) that is union with God while in a dedicatory epistle De Rozières invokes "the true and perfect friendship" (*la vraye et parfaicte amytie*) of Christian community and more particularly the love of Marguerite de France for her recently deceased brother, Charles d'Orléans. My analyses of these paratexts show how they challenge hegemonic proscriptions that police the borders of ideal friendship—elective friends rather than unchosen family, the pair over and against the many or even the few, male exclusivity rather than relationships between men and women or among women—while adapting classical works for a contemporary evangelical context.

The Translations in Context

A humanist best known today for a collection of novellas, *Nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis*, and as the likely author of the banned *Cymbalum mundi*—a satire that attracted the ire of the Sorbonne and may have led to his exile from Marguerite de Navarre's court—Des Périers probably translated the *Lysis* at the behest of the Queen, whom he served as a *valet de chambre*.⁸ As was common practice in France for the first half of the sixteenth century, he did not follow the original Greek but rather a Latin version, in this case that of Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499). Ficino's translation was first printed in the 1480s in his *Opera platonis* with the title *Lysis on Friendship* (*Lysis de Amicitia*) and an accompanying "Argumentum," which I will

Lavernat-Gagnière hypothesized that this translation might be the same as that found in ms. NAF 10371 at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (351). I have compared the two versions and they are in fact different.

⁸ On Marguerite de Navarre's patronage, see Barbara Stephenson, *The Power and Patronage of Marguerite de Navarre* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004). For a succinct overview of Des Périers's life and literary pursuits and an excellent bibliography, see Emily Thompson, "Bonaventure Des Périers," in *Sixteenth-Century French Writers*, ed. Megan Conway (Detroit, MI: Thomson-Gale, 2006), 113–22.

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refer to here as a commentary, dedicated to Pietro de' Medici.⁹ The French version, entitled *Le Discours de la queste d'amytié*, includes a title page announcing that it was “Sent to the Queen of Navarre” (Envoyé à la Roynne de Navarre). The accompanying interpretive poem—entitled like the translation “Queste d'amytie” and likewise dedicated to the Queen—follows immediately after.

De Rozières also based his translation on an earlier Latin version, that of Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536), but he went further than Des Périers, as we shall see below, by also adapting his model's dedication for its new addressee. Erasmus's *Toxaris* translation first appeared in a 1506 volume that resulted from collaboration with Thomas More. It included a selection of Lucian's works translated by one or the other of the men as well as several of their own treatises. The volume as a whole functions as a testament not only to the humanist project of recuperating antiquity, involving the Christian critique of some elements of the classical tradition and the assimilation of others, but also to the friendships of men of letters.¹⁰ The Latin *Toxaris* translation was preceded by a dedicatory epistle “to the Reverend Father and Lord Richard, Bishop of Winchester,” also known as Richard Foxe.¹¹ De Rozières dedicated his French version “To the Most High and most excellent Princess Madam Marguerite of France sole daughter of

⁹ See Abel Lefranc, “Le platonisme et la littérature en France à l'époque de la Renaissance [1500–1600],” in *Revue de l'histoire littéraire de la France* 3, no. 1 (1896): 1–44; at 11. I draw the Latin of Ficino's *Lysis* commentary and translation from Plato, *Omnia divini Platonis opera*, trans. Marsilio Ficino (Basel: In officina frobeniana, 1532), which I have compared with the *princeps*. In the later edition, the title of the dialogue is given as *Lysis, vel de Amicitia*. For a general overview of French translation practices in the period, see Glyn Norton, *The Ideology and Language of Translation in Renaissance France and their Humanist Antecedents* (Geneva: Droz, 1984). On translations of classical works in medieval and early modern France, see Paul Chavy, *Traducteurs d'autrefois moyen âge et renaissance: dictionnaire des traducteurs et de la littérature traduite en ancien et moyen français (842–1600)* (Paris: Champion; Geneva: Slatkine, 1988). Two more focused studies are Ruth Bunker, *A Bibliographical Study of the Greek Works and Translations Published in France during the Renaissance: The Decade 1540–1550* (Scottsdale, PA: Mennonite Publishing House, 1939), and Albert-Marie Schmidt, “Traducteurs français de Platon (1536–1550),” in *Études sur le XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1967), 17–44. Bunker observes that “[t]here is some question ... as to the adequacy of Des Périers's knowledge of the Greek tongue” (59). I demonstrate that Des Périers used Ficino's Latin below.

¹⁰ On Erasmus and friendship, see Dominic Baker-Smith, “Erasmus and More: A Friendship Revisited,” *Recusant History* 30, no. 1 (2010): 7–25; Kathy Eden, “‘between Friends all is Common’: The Erasmian Adage and Tradition,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59, no. 3 (1998): 405–19; and Yvonne Charlier, *Érasme et l'amitié: D'après sa correspondance* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1977).

¹¹ “Reverendo Patri ac Domino Ricardo Episcopo Wintoviensis” (Erasmus, 48). I quote the Latin of Erasmus's dedication to the *Toxaris* from *Saturnalia ... Toxaris ... De astrologia* (Basel: Johann Froben, 1521). As here, unless otherwise specified, original language quotations of translations and their paratexts in the notes accompanying English versions in the body of the chapter will be by translator's name and page or folio number. References to the Greek of Plato's *Lysis* will be by Stephanus number.

the King.”¹² A later addition in a different ink expanded the dedication to include the title “duchesse de Savoye,” which Marguerite would only receive upon her marriage to Emmanuel Philibert in 1559.¹³

Although the manuscript is undated, three details enable us to determine with some certainty that it was presented to Marguerite late in 1545 or early in 1546. First, De Rozières explains in the dedicatory epistle that he had originally intended to offer the translation to Marguerite de France’s brother, Charles d’Orléans, who had commissioned the work, before claiming that his death had made this impossible. (One could in fact dedicate a work to someone deceased.) Charles died on 9 September 1545, giving us the work’s *terminus a quo*. Second, two sheets containing the dedication to Marguerite are glued to narrow stubs left where the original leaves were carefully cut out, suggesting that the manuscript may very well have been ready for presentation to Charles at the time of his death. Third, the dedication identifies it as an “Estrene,” or a New Year’s gift (from Erasmus’s Latin “munuscula”).

Although the death of Charles d’Orléans may have entailed the finding of a new dedicatee for De Rozières’s *Toxaris* translation, it does not explain the choice of dedicatee. Several other factors help explain how these translations of classical friendship texts about relationships between men came to be dedicated to women. Perhaps most important was Marguerite de Navarre’s cultivation of evangelical humanist projects, including in particular the translation of Platonic and Neoplatonic texts about love.¹⁴ In 1543, Antoine Héroët published a verse paraphrase of the myth of the origin of desire from Aristophanes’ speech in Plato’s *Symposium*.¹⁵ Three years later, Jean de La Haye—like Des Périers a *valet de chambre* of Marguerite de Navarre—published a French version of Ficino’s entire *Symposium* commentary. Des Périers’s *Queste de l’amytié* was part of the same general project. Indeed, as I will argue below, the translation transforms the dialogue from a reflection on friendship into a meditation on love.

These works continued a process of Christian adaptation begun by earlier humanists, Ficino and Erasmus prominent among them. Just as Ficino’s better-known *De amore*, a commentary on the *Symposium*, construed Plato’s dialogue on love as a morally and theologically acceptable work, so too his *Lysis* commentary

¹² “A Treshaulte et tresexcellente princesse Madame Marguerite de France fille unique du Roy” (De Rozières, fol. 4v).

¹³ See Jérôme Pichon, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de feu M. le Baron Jérôme Pichon* (Paris: Libraire Techener, 1897), item no. 1115, which offers the most detailed description of the manuscript.

¹⁴ See Abel Lefranc, “Marguerite de Navarre et le platonisme de la Renaissance,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 58, no. 1 (1897): 259–92, and Jonathan A. Reid, *King’s Sister-Queen of Dissent: Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549) and her Evangelical Network*, 2 vols. (Leiden; Boston, MA: Brill, 2009).

¹⁵ While Héroët dedicated his “Androgyne de Platon” to François I, Marguerite de Navarre seems to have inspired the translation. See Lefranc, “Le platonisme,” 14, and Loris Petris, “‘L’amour divin par celluy de ce monde.’ Platonisme et Évangélisme dans l’*Androgyne* d’Antoine Héroët” in *Par élévation d’esprit: Antoine Héroët le poète, le prélat et son temps*, ed. A. Gendre and L. Petris (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2007), 179–208.

defended the worth of the work it glossed. He wrote in it that Plato “rebukes those who waste themselves in love and under the guise of friendship are enslaved to shameful desire” and found that in the dialogue’s discussion of the “first friend” “our Plato’s devotion to God and his great religious faith amazingly shine forth.”¹⁶ Although Erasmus does not claim that the *Toxaris* is itself a religious text, he does use it to make an argument about Christianity. He writes that the dialogue demonstrates how friendship, barely practiced in his own day, was venerated among ancient barbarians even though it is only in Christ that its perfection can be found: “A kind of communion of men with each other such as that of the limbs of the body among themselves.”¹⁷ Thus both dialogues had already undergone a process of “accreditation” for Christian audiences that would be continued in their new paratextual materials.

Another factor making these dialogues apt for their female dedicatees was probably the two texts’ eccentric relationship to the classical friendship canon they help form. Although women are almost entirely absent from them, neither text emphasizes the notion that ideal friendship can only exist between two (virtuous) men, as influential works by Aristotle and Cicero did. Moreover, the *Toxaris* is not a philosophical meditation and does not include highly developed and systematic accounts of friendship such as those found in the works of these other authors. Its influence (and pleasure) lies in its melodramatic stories of deeds and sacrifices inspired by friendship. The dialogue’s exemplary tales provide the occasion for two men who thought they were radically different—one a civilized Greek, the other an uncouth Scythian—to discover common ground in their peoples’ shared commitment to friendship. As for the *Lysis*, it is a philosophical dialogue, but many of the ideas it champions are difficult to reconcile with the commonplaces that would go on to form the core principles of the friendship canon. Ficino recognized this in his *Lysis* commentary, where he insisted that Plato was not proclaiming his own ideas in the dialogue—ideas Ficino takes to be entirely congruent with the later tradition—so much as responding to the theories of the Sophists. Two points in particular vexed Ficino: 1) Socrates’ general contention that like will not befriend like and 2) the more particular argument that the good man will not be friends with another good man because, being self-sufficient, he does not need a friend.¹⁸

A final detail deftly exploited by Des Périers was also crucial in adapting the *Lysis* for Marguerite de Navarre: Plato’s own provisional solution to the impasse produced by his insistence that “like does not like like.” Near the end of the dialogue, Socrates proposes a distinction between what is similar (ὁμοίος) and what is one’s own, proper to one, fitting, suitable (οἰκεῖος):

¹⁶ “eos qui amore abutuntur, & sub amicitiae specie turpi libidini serviunt, increpat” (Ficino, 119), “primum amicum” (Ficino, 127), “Platonis nostri pietas in deum, summaque religio mirifice fulget” (Ficino, 120). The “first friend” figures prominently in a crucial passage of the *Lysis*. I return to the concept and its treatment by Plato’s translators below.

¹⁷ “hominum inter ipsos talis quaedam communio, qualis est membrorum inter se corporis” (Erasmus, 48).

¹⁸ Aristotle responds at length to such concerns in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (IX.9). I address Ficino’s own rebuttal below.

O Lysis and Menexenus, if there is a difference between what we called Proper [Propre] and that which is Similar [Semblable], we have indeed discovered what it is to be a Friend. But if Proper and Similar are one and the same, consider that it is not a simple matter to reject and scour away the argument by which it was said that the Similar is useless to its Like: and that insofar as one is useless to another, can never be its friend.¹⁹

Des Périers's "Propre" and "Semblable" here render Ficino's "proprium" and "simile" which in turn translate Plato's "οἰκεῖος" and "ὄμοιος." The adjective "οἰκεῖος" has a wide semantic range. It can refer to household matters (as in "economics") or to people of the same household or family. It can express the possession of objects belonging to a house or family or intimately to oneself or describe a relationship to one's homeland. It can also mean more generally "fitting" or "suitable."

Despite Socrates' provisional turn to οἰκεῖος as a potential way out of the morass created by his assertion that like will not like like, the dialogue ultimately remains mired in aporias. Just when Socrates is about to seek an older interlocutor with whom he might pursue the discussion, the youths' pedagogues drunkenly announce that it is time for the boys to return home. The dialogue then abruptly ends with Socrates announcing how foolish the three friends—he includes himself with Lysis and Menexenus—are not to have been able to determine what a friend is. Nonetheless, the possibilities offered by what might be considered "Propre" rather than "Semblable" prove useful to Des Périers, who exploits the concept in his interpretive poem by advocating for a female spiritual friendship based on contiguity rather than similarity. Arguably, we find a similar dynamic in De Rozières's dedication of the *Toxaris* with its focus on Marguerite de France's recently deceased brother. These represent radical departures not only from the conventions of the general male friendship tradition, according to which the number of friends is severely restricted and relationships of blood are excluded because not chosen, but also from the immediate models offered by Ficino and Erasmus, as we shall shortly see.

The Quest for Friendship: Love, Grace and Female Community Mediated by God

In considering Des Périers's *Queste d'amytie* and its accompanying interpretive poem, I will focus on three major issues. The first concerns the translation itself. Des Périers reconfigures the *Lysis* so that a dialogue about friendship becomes one

¹⁹ "O Lysis, & Menexene, s'il y ha difference entre ce que nous disions Proper, & ce qui est Semblable, nous avons trouvé au vray que c'est qui est Amy. Mais si Proper et Semblable sont tous un, considerez que ce n'est chose aisee reierter & racler ce point par lequel il ha esté dict que le Pareil est inutile à son Semblable: & que en tant qu'il luy est inutile, iamais ne luy peult estre Amy" (39). For the Latin, see Ficino, 128. For the Greek and a less mediated English translation, see Plato, *Lysis, Symposium, Gorgias*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 222b.

about love, and more specifically about a theologically suggestive version of love that construes God as the source and object of desire. The second consists of the accompanying poem and its more explicit unfolding of the theology motivating the translation. The third involves the divergence of Des Périers's account of female love and community from the emphasis in Ficino's commentary on a pair of male friends. To varying degrees, all three show Des Périers assimilating the *Lysis* to Marguerite de Navarre's evangelical theology.²⁰

Although Des Périers based his *Lysis* translation on that of Ficino, he took certain liberties with the text. For example, he expands one line from Homer's *Odyssey* used by Plato to present the idea that similar things are attracted to one another into a short poem. Ficino's Latin version offers "God always leads like to like."²¹ In Des Périers's version, this becomes "God always leads and directs / the Like to his Similar kind, / from which after many caresses / eternal Friendship is born, / and indeed He is so supportive / that from among more than a million, / by His helpful goodness, / Robin finds Marion."²² As Ullrich Langer has noted, the mention of Robin and Marion updates the text for its sixteenth-century French audience by using characters familiar from the medieval literary tradition.²³ Furthermore, the poem reorients the dialogue by introducing a "heterosexual" pair of lovers into the homosocial world of the *Lysis*. It may also make an oblique reference to Aristophanes' myth of the origin of love from Plato's *Symposium*, a possibility whose potential implications I address below.

Two other programmatic translation choices have ramifications throughout the *Lysis*. One is Des Périers's coinage of the terms "Amyaymé" and "Amyamoureux," which I translate as "Beloved Friend" and "Loving Friend" respectively. Embodying an equivocation between friendship and love, these neologisms would not seem out of place in the spiritually inflected courtly literature of Marguerite de Navarre's circle. They are used by Des Périers to translate a range of Latin expressions for friendship and love. The other sustained choice is his use of the phrase "for the love and with the goal of" (*pour l'amour et à fin de*) to translate several different Latin terms, in this case ones employed by Ficino's Socrates to explain the reasons why a person becomes a friend to something or someone. Together, these choices allow Des Périers to insert love into the dialogue where there was none before. Ultimately, both are anchored by Socrates' concept of the "first friend," which Des Périers, like Ficino, takes to represent God, although with divergent results for their accounts of desire and friendship.

²⁰ For a sustained account of Marguerite de Navarre's theology, see Carol Thysell, *The Pleasure of Discernment: Marguerite de Navarre as Theologian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²¹ "Deus similem semper ducit ad similem" (Ficino, 125). For the Greek, see Homer, *Odyssey* 17.218. The expression also appears in Erasmus's *Adages* 1.2.22.

²² "Tousjours Dieu mène & adresse / Le Pareil à son Semblable, / Dont apres mainte caresse / Naist Amytié perdurable: / Et si est tant favorable, / Qu'entre plus d'un million, / Par sa bonté secourable, / Robin trouve Marion" (Des Périers, 22).

²³ Ullrich Langer, *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (Geneva: Droz, 1994), 133.

The words “Amyaymé” and “Amyamoureux” first appear in the following exchange where Socrates urges his adolescent interlocutor Hippothales to identify his favorite among the younger boys within the gymnasium:

“But still, which one,” I said, “seems to you the most beautiful of those inside? Tell me, I beseech you, who is this Beloved Friend [Amyaymé]?” When I saw that he said nothing, I followed up in this way: “O son of Hieronymus, Hippothales my friend, it is superfluous for you to tell me whether you are in Loving Friendship [vous estes Amyamoureux] with someone or not, because I am convinced not only that you love, but that you are already well advanced in love. In all other pursuits I am only too crude and ignorant, but in the case of love I actually have this gift from God, namely that on first sight I know those who love.” He did not respond at all....²⁴

Here, Des Périers’s French “Amyaymé” translates Ficino’s Latin “amatus” (beloved) while “vous estes Amyamoureux” translates “ames” (you love, in the subjunctive). The introduction of the neologisms in an explicitly erotic context is significant because subsequently the terms will mostly be used to translate words relating to friendship. In the Greek, the lexical shift away from love makes erotic desire a subcategory of friendship understood capaciously to relate to the attraction of things or people that are useful such as medicine, doctors, and knowledge.²⁵ As a result of the vocabulary chosen by Des Périers, however, in his translation the forms of attachment considered do not leave the realm of love, or perhaps better remain suspended between friendship and love.

The second crucial translation innovation appears in the following passage, which prepares the way for the eventual introduction of the concept of the “first friend”:

²⁴ “Mais encores lequel, dis ie, vous semble beau leans? Dicles moy ie vous prie, qui est ce bel Amyaymé. Quand ie veis qu’il ne sonnoit mot, ie luy dis en ceste maniere, O filz de Hieronyme, Hippothales mon amy, il n’est ia besoin que vois me disiez si vous estes Amyamoureux de quelcun, ou non: car ie suis assureé, que non seulement vous ayez, mais que vous estes bien avant en amours. En toutes autres besongnes ie ne suis que trop grossier & ignorant: mais en cas d’amour, i’ay bien ce don de Dieu, que de prime face ie congnois ceulx qui ayment. Il ne me respondit rien ...” (Des Périers, 2–3). This passage demonstrates that Des Périers based his translation on that of Ficino. For example, when he writes that Hippothales “ne sonnoit mot” and “ne me respondit rien” he follows Ficino’s “obticut” and “nihil respondit” (121) rather than the original Greek which has “he blushed” (204c; “ἠρυθρίασεν”) and then “he blushed even more” (“μᾶλλον ἠρυθρίασεν”). Another example: Des Périers’s “je congnois ceulx qui ayment” translates Ficino’s “amatores cognoscam” rather than the Greek “to be able to recognize the lover and the beloved” (“εἶναι γινῶναι ἐρωτῆτά τε καὶ ἐρώμενον”). On Ficino’s *Lysis* translation, see James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 313–14.

²⁵ This is facilitated by the wide semantic range of the Greek word *philos*. A classic discussion can be found in Émile Benveniste, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes. 1. économie, parenté, société* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969), 335–53.

[I asked] “if the friend is a friend of something, or not?” “Indeed it must be that he is the friend of something,” they replied. “Is it,” I said, “for the love and with the goal of nothing, or of something [pour l’amour et à fin de rien, ou de quelque chose]?” Menexenus: “For the love and with the goal of something [Pour l’amour & à fin de quelque chose].”²⁶

Des Périers’s translation subtly shifts the emphasis of this passage by identifying the motivation for becoming a friend, which the Latin characterizes through a series of words expressing causality and purpose (*gratia, propter, causa*), as a matter of love (*amour*). Furthermore, Des Périers collapses an important distinction that is present in the Latin (and in the Greek). In Ficino’s version, a friend is a friend for two reasons, “alicuius causa, & propter aliquid” (because of one thing and for the sake of something else). The Latin, like the original Greek, offers both a motivating cause and a motivating goal for being a friend. For example, the doctor is a friend because you are sick and you want to be healthy.²⁷ Des Périers’s formulation—“For the love and with the goal of something”—implies that the same “something” serves as both the motivation for and the goal in being a friend.

These carefully deployed translation choices come together in the discussion of the “first friend.” After establishing that any given “Beloved Friend” is such “for the love and with the goal of another Beloved Friend,” Socrates asks:

“Is it therefore necessary according to such reasoning that we come to some Goal and beginning [But & commencement] of Friendship, beyond which there is no other Beloved Friend, in such a way that every Friendship be related to a first and principal Friend [premier & principal Amy], for whose love and towards which goal all things that are Loved are Friends, and carry its name?” Lysis: “It is clearly so.” Socrates: “This is what I was talking about earlier when I said we must take care that the things that are Beloved Friends, for the love and sake of the true and only Loving Friend, do not deceive and delay us like phantoms and simulacra of it.”²⁸

²⁶ “[Je demandai] si l’amy est amy de quelque chose, ou non? Il faut bien, dirent ilz, qu’il soit amy de quelque chose. Est ce, dis je, pour l’amour et à fin de rien, ou de quelque chose? MENEX. Pour l’amour & à fin de quelque chose” (Des Périers, 32). For the Latin, see Ficino, 127.

²⁷ Gregory Vlastos offers a lucid explanation of the Greek: “When A loves B it is always for the sake of (ἐνεκά του) something, *x*, and because of something (διὰ τι), *y*, where *x* ranges over goods and *y* over ‘evils’ remedied by the appropriate values of *x*.” See “The Individual as an Object of Love in Plato,” in *Platonic Studies*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3–42; at 8n20.

²⁸ “Amyaymé,” “pour l’amour & à fin de quelque autre Amyaymé,” “Or est il besoin que par tel discours nous venions à quelque But & commencement d’Amytie, oultre lequel il n’y ayt point d’autre Amyaymé, de sorte que toute Amytie soit rapportee à un premier & principal Amy, pour l’amour & à fin duquel toutes choses Aymee sont Amyes, & en portent le Nom. LYS. Il est necessaire voirement. SOCR. Voyla à quoy je disois, n’aqueres, qu’il nous failloit prendre garde, à celle fin que les choses qui sont Amyesaymees, pour l’amour & à fin du vray & seul Amyaymé, ne nous abusent & retardent comme phantomes & semblances d’iceluy” (Des Périers, 34). For the Greek and Ficino’s Latin see 219c and 127, respectively.

Des Périers's phrase "premier & principal Amy" translates Ficino's Latin "primum amicum" which in turn renders Plato's Greek "πρῶτον φίλον." Although arguably Plato did not intend for his account to have metaphysical implications—the "first friend" might merely be the ultimate utilitarian reason for becoming a friend, the prime mover in a metonymic chain of motivations—Ficino certainly construed it in religious terms in his *Lysis* commentary, as noted above.²⁹ Even so, Ficino's translation closely tracks the Greek and does not itself function to gloss his understanding of the passage. Des Périers, however, does substantially revise the sense of his source text. His "But & commencement" (Goal and beginning), which translates the single Latin word "principium," introduces the same dual emphasis on telos and origin found in the lexeme "pour l'amour & à fin de." Moreover, whereas in Ficino's translation the "first friend" is merely the final motivation for friendship and the source of the name (he writes, "because of whom all other things that are called friends are friends"), Des Périers's version underscores the function of the "first friend" both as the ultimate goal and the fundamental origin of love and as the pattern for it.³⁰ Lying behind these alterations, I would submit, is a familiar Augustinian (and more broadly Neoplatonic) understanding of God as at once the source and the aim of love, and of the love of God as the model for other forms of desire.

Des Périers's Christian interpretation of the *Lysis*, which I have suggested is embedded in his translation, emerges with more clarity in the "Queste d'amitié." The poem begins with an invocation to Marguerite de Navarre who is figured as a muse, moves on to describe the search for friendship in a lightly glossed skeletal outline of the argument of the *Lysis*, and concludes with a triumphant account of spiritually inspired friendship on earth and the perfect friendship offered by God in the afterlife. The conclusion in particular is a remarkable departure from the *Lysis*. Rather than offering the transcendental account of friendship we find in the poem, Plato's dialogue ends precipitously having resolved nothing. Earlier moments in the "Queste d'amitié" also include some religiously inflected variations on its Platonic themes. It is to one of these that I now turn.

After rejecting a series of possible sites where "Friendship" might be found, including the relationships of men who are either entirely good or entirely bad, Des Périers—in a move that tracks the development of the *Lysis*—addresses the case of the man who is neither good nor bad, what he refers to as the "Third" (Tiers) man. Following the introduction of this category of man, he establishes that the Good is also Beautiful and, in a crucial expansion to the *Lysis*, adds that Beauty "cannot but be loved: for its flowing grace passes into every heart that perceives it."³¹ This incorporation of grace is the first step in a Christian revision of Socrates' rehearsal of the possibility—ultimately rejected—that the desire for something good on the

²⁹ On the significance of the "first friend" in the *Lysis*, see Vlastos, "Love in Plato," 36–7.

³⁰ "cuiusque gratia cætera omnia que sic dicuntur, sint amica" (Ficino, 127).

³¹ "Ne peult qu'aymee ne soit:/ Car sa grace,/ Coulant, passe/ En tout cuer qui l'apperceoit" (Stanza 23). As here, references to Des Périers's poem "Queste d'amitié" will be by stanza number.

part of a man who is neither good nor bad might itself be predicated on something bad. It is because of his recognition of external grace, Des Périers suggests, that “this Third man has always been a Friend of the Good given the filth and ugliness of Evil, his great Enemy.” The emphasis on the repugnancy of the “Evil” in question as well as its figuration as a “great Enemy” are further Christianizing elements, as is the specific remedy offered. In moving toward an explanation of this remedy, Des Périers first paraphrases Socrates’ mundane observations that the sick man desires a doctor because of his illness in order to become healthy (Stanza 25) and that the ignorant man desires knowledge in order to become wiser (Stanza 26). In the next stanza, however, he diverges from Plato when he explains that it is “beautiful, fertile writings” which offer their “Loving Friends” a cure to the error and pain of ignorance. The subsequent stanza confirms that these “writings” are Scripture: “But when man is asleep and idle with ignorance at the great gate he is so stunned that on the earth he is good for nothing but being a frightful warning.”³² In the “*Queste d’amytié*,” ignorance of the Bible amounts to a spiritually perilous state and grace is required for salvation. It is worth remarking that the potential role of works in facilitating salvation, about which many evangelical Christians were highly skeptical, goes unmentioned.³³

The poem’s account of salvation continues by describing the forms of love experienced as one moves toward the ultimate beloved and prime mover of friendship that is God. The discussion of the “*seul Amyaymé*” in Des Périers’s poem begins by establishing that the desire for this special friend is not dependent on loss (Stanza 31) and is “Not at all that so Cruel Desire of base men.” Instead, Des Périers introduces a different kind of desire through the personification “*Disette*” (Famine). Famine, Des Périers explains, “Always casts her eye to the Good that she had and she misses, Poor Thing, what she sees herself deprived of.”³⁴ Des Périers does not explicitly explain how this loss differs from that caused by the other kind of desire discussed earlier in the poem. P.H. Nurse has proposed that her sense of privation is a reference to “the Platonic theory of Reminiscence.”³⁵

³² “Ce Tiers, donques, / Ne fut oncques / Sans estre du Bien Amy: / Veu l’ordure, / Et laidure / Du mal son grand Ennemy” (Stanza 24), “beaulx escripts plantureux” (Stanza 27), “Mais quand l’homme / Dort & chomme / D’ignorance au grand portail, / Tant s’atterre, / Que sur terre / Ne ser que d’espouventail” (Stanza 28).

³³ On the dissemination of ideas about the importance of faith and doubts about the salvific potential of works, see Philip E. Hughes, *Lefèvre: Pioneer of Ecclesiastical Renewal in France* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.E. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984), 69–100.

³⁴ “Non point celle / Tant Cruelle / Envie qu’ont les chetifs” (Stanza 32), “Tousjours jette / L’œil vers le Bien qu’elle avoit: / Et regrette / La Povrette / Ce dont privée se voit” (Stanza 34).

³⁵ P.H. Nurse, “Christian Platonism in the Poetry of Bonaventure Des Périers,” *Bibliothèque d’Humanisme et Renaissance* 19 (1957): 234–44; at 235. For a broad overview of the sources found in Des Périers’s poetry, see Lionello Sozzi, “Remarques sur la poésie religieuse de Des Périers,” in *Études Seiziémistes: Offertes à Monsieur Le Professeur V.-L. Saulnier par plusieurs de ses anciens doctorants*, ed. Verdun L. Saulnier (Geneva: Droz, 1980), 205–22.

Given Des Périers's theological commitments in the "Queste d'amytié" and his practice of adapting classical concepts for a contemporary religious context, I would modify this suggestion and submit that it constitutes a Christian rescripting of the Platonic notion, now referring to the privation engendered by original sin and the fall of mankind.

Des Périers suggests in an apostrophe to his addressee—presumably Marguerite de Navarre—that Disette has the true friendship that is the goal of the quest described in the poem (35). But what exactly does she have? Des Périers explains that Disette "has no solace but in loving" and is so ardent and faithful in her love "that she fears to be weak or to love only half-way." The rare friendship she has and her unquenchable desire are coterminous; they will only be fully fulfilled after death in "perfect Friendship" with God. During her lifetime, however, the boundless desire for the "seul Amyaymé" inspires a loving community of women comprised of members determined by contiguity and consanguinity: "Her female neighbors, and female cousins, she holds very dear, so too her nearby full sisters who likewise love."³⁶ This confraternity—or, rather, consorority—must content Disette, at least provisionally, until her final union with God.

The account of desire and of the community it engenders offered at the conclusion to the "Queste d'amytié" differs strikingly from that elaborated in Ficino's *Lysis* commentary. Instead of emphasizing unending longing, Ficino writes that:

Plato actually considers friendship to be a kind of habit drawn from a love of long duration. Because of this, love is incipient friendship. Friendship is actually old love, in which there remains much more pleasure than desire. From which it follows that he who desired in the past now takes pleasure. Accordingly, the ardor of present desire is not necessary for the habit of friendship, but it does require delight.³⁷

In essence, Ficino claims that the desire that initially motivates friendship will eventually give way to enjoyment.³⁸ This claim is consonant with his earlier proclamation, replete with Neoplatonic spiritual vocabulary, that friendship's "goal is that from two souls a single one be purposefully made, from one will one life,

³⁶ "N'a reconfort que d'aymer" (Stanza 36), "Qu'elle ha craincte / D'estre Faincte, / Ou de n'aymer qu'a demy" (Stanza 37), "parfaicte Amytié" (Stanza 47), "Ses voisines, / Et cousines / Ha moult cheres, mesmement / Ses prochaines / Sœurs germaines, / Qui ayment pareillement" (Stanza 46).

³⁷ "Plato vero amicitiam habitum quendam esse vult ex amore diuturno contractum. Quo sit ut amor sit exoriens amicitia. Amicitia vero inveteratus amor, in quo multo plus voluptatis quam desiderii restat. Ex quo sequitur, ut qui cupierat, iam delectetur. Itaque amicitiae habitus non necessario desiderii praesentis ardorem: sed delectationem exigit" (Ficino, 120).

³⁸ This is a crucial part of Ficino's response to Socrates' argument (which Ficino thinks is actually only a Sophistic argument ventriloquized by Socrates) that the good man does not need friends. Ficino suggests that while the good man might not want for anything, and thus not experience desire predicated on lack, he can still enjoy the company of another.

and finally the enjoyment of the single Numen and of the same Idea.”³⁹ Whereas Des Périers explicitly rejects any link between the “Cruel Desire of base men” and Disette’s spiritual longing, describing instead a community of women mirroring God’s love during their lifetime and finding full satisfaction after death in union with the divine, in Ficino’s account, two men are initially drawn together by desire and subsequently take pleasure in spiritual ascent through mutual meditation.

I propose that both forms of community—Ficino’s pair of male lovers/friends and Des Périers’s “neighbors,” “cousins,” and “full sisters”—derive from the concept of οἰκεῖος discussed by Socrates near the conclusion to the *Lysis*, but in radically different ways. Because *oikeios* does not require similarity as it is understood in the friendship doctrine outlined by Aristotle and Cicero, it gives Des Périers license to address kinship and community in his interpretive poem. By contrast, in his commentary on the *Lysis* Ficino uses *oikeios* to evoke a specific kind of similarity. He refers to the concept with the word “cognatio,” which literally means “born together” and thus also might seem to partake of the kind of kinship found in Des Périers’s “Queste d’amytié,” but he denotes something more particular, perhaps even more technical by it.⁴⁰ According to Ficino, “*cognatio* means coming together in Idea, stars, genius, and a certain inclination of soul and body.”⁴¹ This definition is the key to Ficino’s response to Socrates’ claim that friendship cannot be based on similarity. Ficino writes that Plato “is not saying that similar things can in no way be made friends, but rather refuting the idea that simply any similarity you please would be sufficient to generate friendship.”⁴² What men must share rather than generic likeness is *cognatio*, a special kind of similarity lying at the origin of the desire for communion between them.⁴³

While Ficino harnessed the concept of *oikeios* to his account of friendship and love between two men, Des Périers instead proposed a model of Christian love—perhaps of *caritas*—extending well beyond the like-minded male couple,

³⁹ “finis est, ut è duobus animis unus voluntate fiat, ex una voluntate vita una, ac demum numinis unius eiusdemque ideæ fruitio” (Ficino, 119). Lying behind *fruitio* here may be Augustine’s distinction between enjoyment and use. See Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson (New York, NY: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), I.4.

⁴⁰ My suggestion that *cognatio* is meant to evoke οἰκεῖος is based in Ficino’s translation of the *Lysis*. Usually, he translates οἰκεῖος as “proprium.” In one crucial passage, however, Ficino’s translation also includes the word “cognatum” almost as a gloss to “proprium.” Socrates suggests to his interlocutors that it is that which belongs to one, that which is fitting or appropriate (221e; τοῦ οἰκεῖου) that might be the object of love, friendship and desire (221e; ὁ τε ἔρωσ καὶ ἡ φιλία καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία). In this instance, “τοῦ οἰκεῖου” becomes “Of that therefore which is proper and kindred” (128; “Eius igitur quod proprium, & cognatum est”).

⁴¹ “Cognatio convenientiam in idea: sydere: genio et quadam anime: corporisque affectione significat” (Ficino, 119).

⁴² “non dictum esse similia nullo modo amica fieri, imò negatum quod simpliciter quælibet similitudo ad amicitiam procreandam sufficiat” (Ficino, 120).

⁴³ “Principium quo communionis huius desiderium excitatur: cognatio est” (Ficino, 119).

although curiously limited by contiguity or proximity as well as gender. Indeed, in addition to not subscribing to the strictures of male friendship, Des Périers's language seems carefully calibrated to echo and implicitly refute the rhetoric of accounts of Christian marriage as well. It instead opens toward other, less exclusive forms of community. When he writes that "Her female neighbors and female cousins she holds very dear, so too her nearby full sisters who likewise love" before turning to the account of dyadic union with God, Des Périers may reference Juan Luis Vives's influential contemporary account of the great intimacy meant to be shared by a husband and wife: "Among citizens, our special friends are dearer to us; and among these, our kinsfolk are more beloved; and of those joined by blood, none is closer than the wife..."⁴⁴ Des Périers has, however, omitted marriage and indeed any kind of terrestrial dyadic union from his discussion. Similarly, Des Périers's expression "Sœurs germaines," or "full Sisters," may echo Augustine's description in *De bono coniugali* of marriage as "a true [germana] union of friendship."⁴⁵ The Latin adjective "germanus" refers to brothers and sisters with the same parents—in his 1544 *Dictionarium latinogallicum*, Robert Estienne first defines "germanus" as "Engendré de mesme germe" (Engendered by the same seed)—and by extension it can also mean genuine, real, true.⁴⁶ Whereas Augustine uses "germanus" figuratively to connote the closeness of marriage, Des Périers employs the French cognate to describe a relationship of consanguinity, namely sisterhood, although the relationship itself seems meant to be taken metaphorically. (Marguerite de Navarre did not have any sisters.) Crucially, he has also made the word plural. If in his celebration of dyadic friendship between men Ficino used *oikeios* to solve one problem (why like won't like like), Des Périers employed the concept to solve another problem, namely an overemphasis on desire or friendship in terrestrial couples, by extending the kinds of relationships named by friendship.

Des Périers's description of the final union with God also implicitly rejects singular human attachments. He writes "So, the Bell, seeing that she possesses but half [la moytié] of herself, is content to wait for her perfect Friendship."⁴⁷ This use of the expression "la moytié" may evoke the Aristophanic myth of the origin of

⁴⁴ Juan Luis Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 329. For an account of how Vives and some other contemporary humanists including Erasmus incorporated ideas about similitude and friendship into marriage, which Des Périers strikingly avoids, see Constance Furey, "Bound by Likeness: Vives and Erasmus on Friendship and Marriage," in *Discourses and Representations of Friendship in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1700*, ed. Daniel T. Lochman, Maritere López, and Lorna Hutson (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 29–43.

⁴⁵ "amicalis quædam et germana coniunctio" (Augustine, *De bono coniugali and De sanctu virginitate*, ed. P.G. Walsh [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], section I).

⁴⁶ Robert Estienne, *Dictionarium latinogallicum* (Paris: Robert Estienne, 1544), s.v. "germanus."

⁴⁷ "Or, la Belle, Voyant qu'elle / N'a de soy que la moytié, / Se contente, / Soubs l'attente / De sa parfaicte Amytié" (Stanza 47).

desire from Plato's *Symposium*.⁴⁸ The brief poem about Robin and Marion that Des Périers inserted into his *Lysis* translation discussed above may also have alluded to the myth by discussing the quest to find one's "semblable." It is also implicitly brought into play early in the translation when Hippothales asks Socrates to explain "how a Lover can acquire the good grace of his Beloved part [sa partie Aymee]."⁴⁹ Here, too, the reference is absent from the Latin, in which Hippothales asks "by what means can someone ... win over those he loves."⁵⁰ The move from Hippothales' mundane concern for erotic conquest to the spiritual conclusion of the "Queste d'amytié," perhaps linked by references to the *Symposium*, resonates with Marguerite de Navarre's critique of the ways in which earthly attachments can interfere with one's devotion to God in works such as *Le Dialogue en forme de vision nocturne*, *La Navire*, and *Les Prisons*.⁵¹ Socrates expresses a similar concern during his discussion of the "first friend" quoted above. Moreover, the "good grace," or consent, Hippothales would like to know how to win from his beloved is replaced in the "Queste d'amytié" by the "grace" present in every heart that recognizes it. This revision reminds the reader that God is the proper object of desire while perhaps subtly questioning the role of works in salvation—there is nothing fallen man can *do* to win God's grace. Once again, we find Plato's ideas revised in the service of a theological program.

As an ensemble, these variations offer a particular Christian vision in which grace and biblical inspiration are the keys to salvation and where singular earthly attachments must be attenuated. Whether by virtue of personal conviction or astute completion of his commission, Des Périers produced a French *Lysis* that sets forth a version of friendship closely attuned to the evangelical beliefs of Marguerite de Navarre. It is also a version of friendship that differs markedly from the canonical accounts according to which friends are always male, always alike, and only come in pairs.

De Rozières Rededicates Lucian's *Toxaris*

My analysis of De Rozières's *Toxaris* considers how he adapted for a new addressee the dedicatory epistle Erasmus penned for his own translation of the dialogue. The French version of the epistle mostly follows the Latin. De Rozières reproduces a discussion of gift-giving at the outset of the dedication as well as subsequent praise of the addressee's preference for letters over riches nearly word for word. Minor changes adapt these passages for their new addressee. For example, Erasmus's

⁴⁸ See, for example, Antoine Heroët's translation of the Aristophanic myth in his *La Parfaicte amyee ... Avec plusieurs aultres compositions dudict Autheur* (Lyon: Estienne Dolet, 1543), 70–79, in which we find repeated reference to "moytiés" seeking each other out.

⁴⁹ "comment un Amant peult acquerir la bonne grace de sa partie Aymee" (Des Périers, 7).

⁵⁰ "qua ratione quis ... conciliare sibi quos amet, possit" (Ficino, 123).

⁵¹ See Paula Sommers, *Celestial Ladders: Readings in Marguerite de Navarre's Poetry of Spiritual Ascent* (Geneva: Droz, 1989), 13–14.

description of the difficulty of choosing an appropriate gift to give “to such a patron [*patronum*], to so powerful a friend” becomes “To so exalted and magnanimous a Princess as yourself.”⁵² De Rozières does not name Marguerite his friend, which is not surprising, but he also avoids translating “patronum” (protector, defender, patron), perhaps because this was not in fact the relationship he had with her.

More substantial changes alter the implications of a discussion of Christian friendship in two ways, one with potential religious implications and the other attenuating the Latin letter’s evocations of reciprocity. De Rozières writes that “there is Nothing more Christian than the true and perfect friendship that is to live and die with god.”⁵³ While the first part of the phrase follows the Latin fairly closely, the final words differ suggestively from the original. Erasmus wrote that “there is nothing more Christian than true and perfect friendship, than to die with Christ, than to live in Christ.”⁵⁴ The reversion in Erasmus from dying with Christ to living in Christ points to the resurrection. The French avoids any such allusion by progressing instead from life to death. While this change might reflect scruples about the recent demise of Marguerite de France’s brother, it could also betray reformation doubts about the possibility of certainty in one’s justification. Moreover, replacing “Christ” with “God” avoids the potential allusion to *imitatio Christi*, perhaps in deference to evangelical scruples about not privileging works over faith. These changes therefore might reflect the evangelical religious climate around Marguerite de France although they are by no means conclusive.

The second change in the discussion of Christian friendship concerns how De Rozières embeds it in the epistle. In the original, Erasmus explains that he has decided to dedicate the *Toxaris* translation to the bishop because of the man’s love of letters before moving directly into an account of friendship in antiquity and under Christianity. He next observes that there is both pleasure and utility to be taken from Lucian’s representation of the different habits of speech in the two interlocutors in the *Toxaris*: while the Greek Mnesippus is “courteous, refined and pleasing,” the Scythian Toxaris is “plain, disordered, rough, persistent, uncultivated and aggressive.” De Rozières moves the Latin sentence introducing the discussion of the differences between the Scythian and the Greek so that it instead prefaces the account of friendship in the dialogue. He does not include the passage contrasting Mnesippus and Toxaris at all. While these alterations might reflect a change in emphasis away from the pleasures offered by erudition, they also undo one of the clever rhetorical devices Erasmus uses to bind himself to his august patron across a substantial difference in status. When Erasmus concludes the epistle by asking the “great Bishop” to accept the “new year’s gift of your poor client,” he subtly echoes his earlier description of the contrasting interlocutors

⁵² “ad tantum patronum, ad tam potentem amicum” (Erasmus, 48), “A tant haulte et magnanime princesse comme vous” (De Rozières, fol. 3v).

⁵³ “n’estre Rien plus chrestien que la vraye et parfaicte amytie comme vivre & mourir avec dieu” (De Rozières, fol. 4r).

⁵⁴ “nihil aliud sit Christianismus, quam vera perfectaue amicitia, quam cum mori Christo, quam vivere in Christo” (Erasmus, 48).

in the dialogue.⁵⁵ Rather than emphasizing that friendship brings together people who are entirely alike, the original letter anticipates the dialogue it introduces by figuring friendship as something that unites people across difference.⁵⁶

The French version concludes otherwise. Instead of calling attention to forms of reciprocity between translator and dedicatee, De Rozières invokes an intermediary when he asks Marguerite to accept the gift of the translation “for the love of the one who ordered me to compose it.”⁵⁷ And whereas Erasmus concludes by describing a final exchange—he asks his patron to accept the gift of the dialogue and expresses his hope that Richard will continue “to love, furnish and shelter” him—De Rozières states his wish that God keep Marguerite “in joyfull happiness and prosperous good fortune” and suggests that his gift should serve as a “perpetual witness of the service and good deeds I owe you for my entire life.”⁵⁸ In De Rozières’s letter, something—perhaps both social status and gender—prohibits the deployment of the power of friendship to bridge difference, while this is precisely the use Erasmus seeks to make of it in the original epistle.

While Erasmus does not deny the difference of status between himself and Bishop Richard Foxe, this difference does not keep him from naming the man his friend—as well as his patron. In contrast, De Rozières’s letter to Marguerite de France describes a non-reciprocal circuit of exchange: Charles d’Orléans requested the translation that De Rozières now presents to the Princess. Rather than asking for anything in return, he proclaims only his intent to continue to serve her. Furthermore, the appeal asking her to accept the gift mentions her deceased brother and more specifically her love for him. De Rozières’s reworking of Erasmus’s dedication to his *Toxaris* translation had replaced an emphasis on affinity or similarity with a focus on kinship. Rather than communities of men joined through friendship based on similarities of faith or of learning which overcome other forms of difference, as in the case of Erasmus’s dedicatory epistle, in De Rozières’s letter to Marguerite de France connection is ultimately a matter not of an elective affinity but of blood, not of chosen friendship but of familial love.

Conclusion

In the context of a discussion of Plato’s *Lysis*, Jacques Derrida writes—with some provisos—that “the central question” of his book *Politics of Friendship* “would be that of a friendship without hearth, of a *philia* without *oikeiôtês*.”⁵⁹ What the

⁵⁵ “comis, facetus, festius,” “simplex, incondita, aspera, sædula, fera, fortis,” “amplissime Præsul,” “clientuli tui strenulam” (Erasmus, 48).

⁵⁶ See Charlier, *Érasme et l’amitié*, 43–4.

⁵⁷ “pour lamour de celluy qui me lavoit commandé faire” (De Rozières, fol. 4v).

⁵⁸ “amare, ornare, juvare” (Erasmus, 48), “en felicite heureuse et prospere fortune,” “perpetuel tesmoing du service que vous doibtz et beaulx faire toute ma vie” (De Rozières, fol. 4v).

⁵⁹ Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London: Verso, 1997), 154–5.

paratextual matter to the translations dedicated to women discussed above offers is instead *oikeiôtês* without *homoiotês*, kinship (metaphoric or literal) without likeness. For Derrida, the turn from *oikeiôtês* would be a turn toward alterity and difference. Ficino's desire to constrain the meaning of *oikeiôtês* to a particular kind of similarity is instructive in this regard. For him, *oikeiôtês* is the kind of *homoiotês* that counts in friendship, affinity within likeness. Whether or not this use of *oikeiôtês* to circumvent Socrates' insistence that "the Similar is useless to its Like: and that insofar as one is useless to another, can never be its friend" is in the spirit of the *Lysis*, for Des Périers, *oikeiôtês* instead opened onto multiple ruptures in the friendship tradition: a community of many rather than the paradigmatic couple Ficino remained wedded to, one of women rather than men joined by contiguity and (metaphoric?) kinship instead of likeness. Intriguingly, these are some of the openings out from a sometimes claustrophobic friendship discourse most avidly sought by Derrida in *Politics of Friendship*. Another, perhaps the most crucial, would be friendship between men and women. Does the love between Marguerite de France and her deceased brother Charles d'Orléans—joined by yet another kind of *oikeiôtês*—count as such a friendship?

Ultimately, none of these relationships is adequate to the enticing promise of the radically hospitable friendship Derrida desires. For one thing, the models of friendship celebrated by Des Périers and De Rozières are explicitly Christian and draw on conventional accounts of communities joined in Christ or God. Nonetheless, that a modified set of exclusions governs them points to the malleability of a friendship discourse too often considered static and monolithic. We saw above not only classical texts mobilized in the service of Christian society but also—and more intriguingly—how the paratextual materials dedicated to women transformed both the ancient tradition and their much more proximate Christian precursors. Des Périers turned from the all-male homoerotic sphere of Plato's *Lysis* and from Ficino's couple of men together contemplating God to a group of women also triangulated by God and equally homosocial. His compound expressions "amyamoureux" and "amyaymé" trouble the distinction between friendship and love. Perhaps this ambivalence and a concern for propriety conditioned his exclusion of men from the consorority he described at the conclusion to the "Queste d'amytié," although Marguerite de Navarre did not herself hesitate to confront the problem of relationships between men and women directly in her *Heptaméron*. While sexual difference is accommodated by De Rozières's dedicatory epistle, instead of Des Périers's presumably metaphoric sisterhood he hails a literal relationship of brother and sister. Furthermore, this familial version of *oikeiôtês* has replaced the friendship by which Erasmus characterized (and perhaps cultivated) his relationship with Bishop Foxe across a substantial difference of status (and De Rozières is relegated to the position of a courtier). It is clear from the lives and letters of both Marguerite de Navarre and Marguerite de France that they understood their community of friends and interlocutors to extend more widely than the limited imagination of these paratextual materials, materials dedicated to them by men whose very attempts to curry favor also

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enacted restrictions.⁶⁰ But insofar as these restrictions do not always submit to the austere discipline of a limited range of proscriptive classical texts, they point to the flexibility of the friendship tradition and its ability to accommodate some of the exclusions at times said to be constitutive of it. Moreover, they show how some of the foundational texts of the tradition should, like friendship itself, not be viewed as unchanging Platonic ideals, but rather as susceptible to transformation through motivated interpretation, translation and glossing.

⁶⁰ In addition to the bibliography cited above, see Patricia Francis Cholakian and Rouben Charles Cholakian, *Marguerite de Navarre: Mother of the Renaissance* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006).