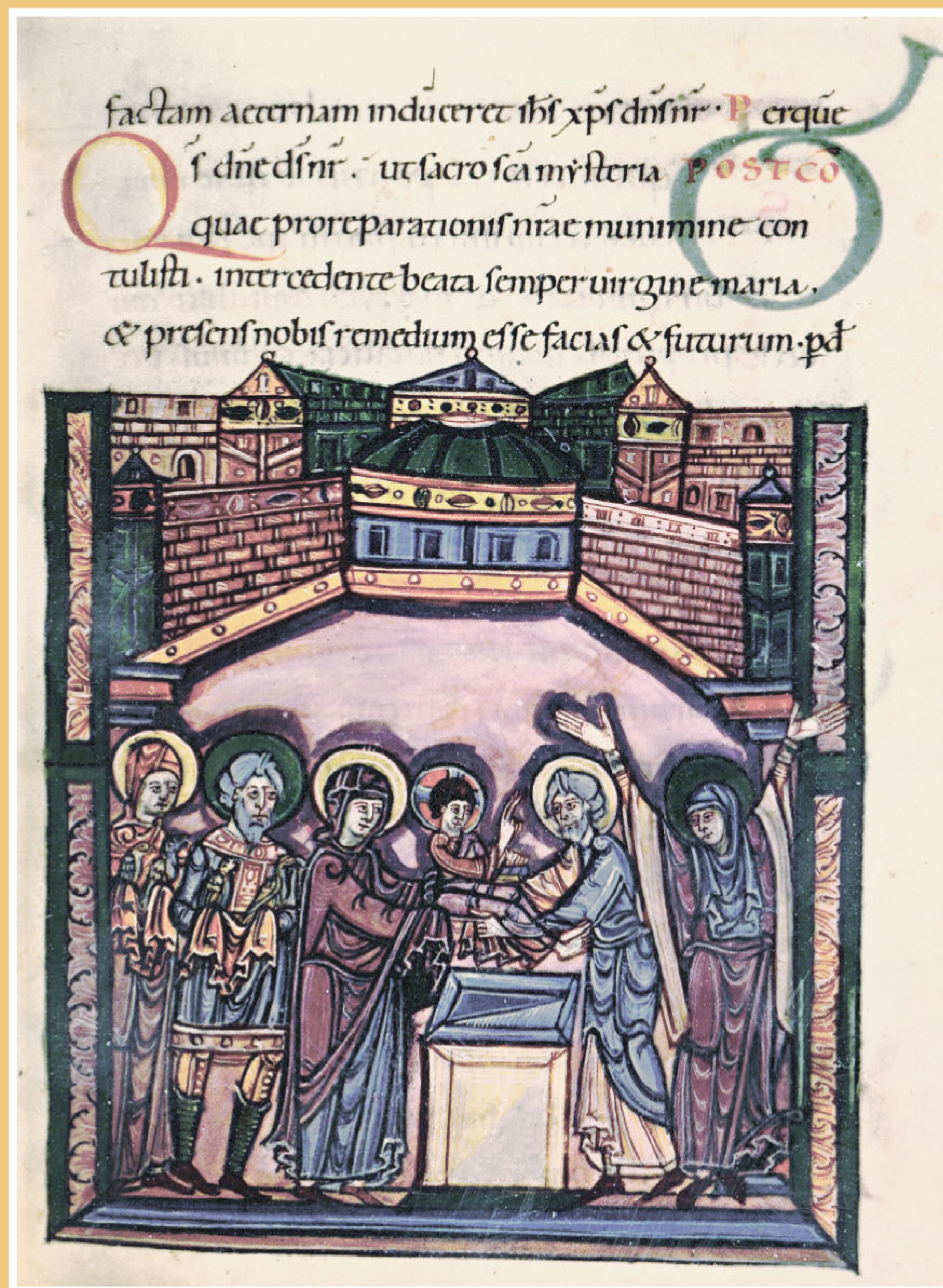
STUDIES IN THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS

Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe

Gender, Power, Patronage and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom



Edited by

Katherine Allen Smith & Scott Wells

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Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe

Studies in the History of Christian Traditions

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On the cover: *The Presentation of Christ at the Temple*. The Mont-Saint-Michel Sacramentary. New York, Morgan Library MS. M 641, fol. 18r. Photo: ©The Morgan Library, New York.

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For Penny

. . . quia verba tua accenderunt me
quasi flamma tetigisset cor meum
et prorupi in haec verba.

—Elisabeth of Schönau (*Liber visionum* III.20)
to Hildegard of Bingen.

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PREFACE

GENDER, POWER, AND PATRONAGE: THE IMPACT OF PENELOPE D. JOHNSON ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells

The essays in this collection are offered to Penelope D. Johnson by her students and colleagues on the occasion of her retirement from full-time teaching. For twenty-five years Penny has been a dedicated and popular teacher at New York University, where she served as a mentor to a generation of doctoral students including ourselves. Penny's own research interests, spanning medieval monasticism, gender issues, and violence, have resulted in a distinguished body of work that promises to have a lasting impact on medieval studies. The diversity of Penny's published scholarship is all the more remarkable considering how she has repeatedly reinvented herself as a scholar in order to follow her constantly evolving interests—first wading into the still relatively new field of women's studies in the 1980s, and turning in the 1990s to work on sanctity as well as violence. Penny's enthusiasm about the medieval past as a world populated with real women and men, scoundrels as well as saints, and her conviction that the voices of these people can be recovered from even the unlikeliest of sources, have left their mark on everyone who has ever shared a classroom or conference panel with her.

Most of the papers collected here had their inception in a series of three panels convened in Penny's honor at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, Michigan, in May of 2006.[1] The high quality of contributions, as well as the evident thematic connections between many of the papers, suggested the makings of a strong edited collection focused on the articulation of community and difference in medieval Latin Christendom. The essays' collective focus

[1] In addition to the organizers of the International Medieval Congress, and to the session participants whose papers are included here, we would like to extend our warmest thanks and gratitude to Jill Claster, Fiona Griffiths, Dawn Hayes, Ann Matter, Nancy Regalado, Pam Sheingorn and Timmie Vitz for their contributions to these original conference panels.

is particularly fitting since Penny has explored the themes of inclusion and exclusion from a number of angles in her own work on monastic communities, lay patronage, saintly cults, honor and violence. In particular, her book-length studies of the Benedictine abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme and of women's monasteries in Northern France have dealt with the delineation of lay and ecclesiastical spaces, the boundaries (real or imagined) between women's and men's spheres of action, and the power dynamics inherent in relationships between monastic women and men, lay patrons, and church authorities.

Penny's archival discoveries and interpretive insights transformed the study of women's public and institutional roles in the medieval church. Discovering complex and powerful networks of participatory engagement where earlier historians had found only exclusion, marginalization or irrelevance, Penny is a major figure among that handful of scholars (including Suzanne Wemple, Jo Ann McNamara, Gabriella Zarri, Anneke Mulder-Bakker, Caroline Bynum) whose publications of the 1980s and 1990s have made it impossible to discuss the history of Latin Christendom without incorporating women's roles into the mainstream of that narrative. Many of the essays in the present collection build on her foundation, providing a range of geographically and chronologically localized studies demonstrating a wide variety of ways in which women exercised ecclesiastical and spiritual authority by navigating the limitations and obstacles placed in their way by patriarchal (and frequently misogynist) medieval cultures.

But it is a testament to Penny's wide-ranging scholarly interests that the reader will find represented here not only the history of nuns and other religious women, but also subjects as diverse as medieval lay devotional practices, interfaith relations, noble patronage, and the negotiation of identity and power in male monastic communities. Several of the pieces in the collection are the contributions of Penny's colleagues, scholars who like her have been pioneers in the fields of monastic and gender history. All of these essays exemplify some aspect of Penny's own commitment to rigorous and creative historical scholarship, whether in uncovering new documentary sources as Elizabeth A.R. Brown has done in her piece on Blanche of Artois, reading traditionally utilized sources like charters in innovative ways as in Constance Berman's examination of noblewomen's patronage of Cistercian nunneries, or making use of previously ignored forms of evidence like the embroideries by medieval nuns that are the focus of Jane Schulenburg's contribution.

The remaining essays, all authored by Penny's former graduate students, reflect her emphasis as a scholar and teacher on close, carefully contextualized readings of medieval texts. While these pieces make use of a wide variety of types of medieval sources, including chronicles, poems, works of hagiography, charters, liturgical compositions, illuminated books of hours, and architecture, all of the authors' approaches to their evidence bear the mark of Penny's tutelage in their interpretation of sources as the products of particular individuals' or communities' concerns at specific historical moments. It is noteworthy in this regard that several of these essays focus on one or two texts, which are then used by the authors as a means of opening up larger questions about medieval attitudes or institutions. Diane Auslander's essay on the ninth-century *vita* of the Irish saint Darerca, Susan Wade's treatment of two competing accounts of a tenth-century act of monastic violence, Christina Roukis-Stern's close contextual reading of hagiographic prologues by Jacques de Vitry and Thomas de Cantimpré, Kathryn Smith's use of a single fourteenth-century devotional manuscript to indicate new ways of understanding how such books functioned to construct the "spiritual selves" of their owners, and Alexandra Cuffel's analysis of religious polemic in the Kabbalistic writings of Abraham Abulafia and Joseph Gikatilla are all reminiscent of Penny's own longstanding interest in recovering the voices of medieval individuals. Penny's concern with the tensions between theory and practice in both her scholarship and teaching is also apparent in several of the pieces, such as Anne Schuchman's examination of the thirteenth-century Italian tertiary Umiliana de' Cerchi, who defied kinsmen and church authorities in her quest for holiness, or Susan Valentine's reconstruction of how the practices of Abelard and Heloise as partners in spiritual reform were shaped by their shared discourse about the life and works of Mary Magdalene. The majority of these essays bear the unmistakable imprint of Penny's influence in their efforts to combine theoretical sophistication (derived from literary, sociological, aesthetic, and anthropological models) with a meticulous grounding in the methods for mining the wealth of data to be found in medieval sources.

Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe thus pays tribute not only to the historiographic significance of Penny's research, but also to her scholarly curiosity, critical acumen, and methodological rigor. All of the essays have benefited in small and large ways from the example of her scholarship and pedagogy, and from her constant admonitions to her students to hone their arguments, be precise in their writing,

and be bold in their conclusions. It is our hope that these essays reflect not only the transformative significance of her published work, but also the brilliance and inspiration of her teaching.

Katherine Allen Smith
Tacoma, Washington

Scott Wells
Los Angeles, California

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Diane Peters Auslander has recently received her Ph.D. in medieval history from the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her dissertation, a study of the Old Irish and Anglo-Norman *vitae* of the Irish abbess Saint Modwenna, has yielded several published essays involving aspects of gender, memory, and intercultural interaction as evidenced in the hagiography of Norman England and the medieval Celtic world.

Constance Hoffman Berman is Professor of History and Collegiate Fellow of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Iowa. Her books include *Medieval Agriculture, the Southern-French Countryside, and the Early Cistercians* (American Philosophical Society, 1986) and *The Cistercian Evolution: The Invention of a Religious Order in Twelfth-Century Europe* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000). She edited the recently-released anthology *Medieval Religion: New Approaches* (Routledge, 2005) and has published many articles on Cistercian nuns. She is currently completing *The White Nuns: Cistercian Abbeys for Women and their Property in Medieval Europe*.

Elizabeth A.R. Brown is Professor of History (*emerita*) at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, CUNY. An acknowledged authority on the history of France, she has published on a wide range of subjects, including the Capetian monarchy, medieval rituals related to death and burial, marriage, feudalism, and the French wars of religion. Many of her articles have been gathered and published in the two collections *Politics and Institutions in Capetian France* and *The Monarchy of Capetian France and Royal Ceremonial* (Variorum, 1991).

Alexandra Cuffel is Assistant Professor of History at Macalester College. Her research interests center around medieval interfaith relations and cultural exchanges, particularly in the realms of religious polemic, the history of medieval medicine, and gender. She has two books forthcoming, *Filthy Words/Filthy Bodies: Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (University of Notre Dame Press) and *Gender, Religion and Culture in the Pre-Modern World* (Palgrave Press).

Anne M. Schuchman is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Italian Studies at New York University, where she received her Ph.D. in 2004. Her research on political prophecy, models of sanctity, and gender in medieval and Renaissance Italy has appeared in journals such as *Magistra, Florilegium*, and *Essays in Medieval Studies*. She is currently at work on a study of the thirteenth-century Florentine noblewoman Umiliana dei Cerchi.

Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg is Professor of History in the Department of Liberal Studies, Division of Continuing Studies, Women's Studies, and Medieval Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She has published numerous articles on women's religious life in the Middle Ages, and is the author of *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (University of Chicago, 1998).

Katherine Allen Smith is Assistant Professor of History at the University of Puget Sound. She has published articles on medieval monastic communities and their saints, relics, and images, including most recently an essay entitled "Bodies of Unsurpassed Beauty: 'Living' Images of the Virgin in the High Middle Ages," in *Viator*. Her current project is a study of representations of war in monastic texts of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Kathryn A. Smith is Associate Professor in the Department of Fine Arts, New York University. Her articles, essays and reviews have appeared in *Gesta*, the *Oxford Art Journal, Speculum*, the *Art Bulletin*, and other scholarly publications. She is the author of *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours* (The British Library Publications and the University of Toronto Press, 2003). She is currently working on several projects concerning Gothic manuscript illumination, and art and piety in the early Christian and later medieval periods, including a book-length study of the Taymouth Hours.

Christina Roukis-Stern is Assistant Professor of History at the State University of New York at Rockland Community College. She received her Ph.D. in 2003 from New York University, with a doctoral thesis on the hagiographical writings of Jacques de Vitry and Thomas of Cantimpré. Her current research concerns the intersections between models of sanctity and conceptions of gender in later medieval Northern Europe.

Susan Valentine first met Penny Johnson as an undergraduate in Medieval and Renaissance Studies at NYU in the mid-1990s. After receiving an MLitt in Medieval History from the University of St Andrews in Scotland, she returned to NYU as a PhD student in 2002, in time to work again with Professor Johnson before her retirement. She is currently writing a dissertation entitled "'Because she hath loved much': Mary Magdalene and Religious Reform" under the direction of Fiona Griffths, along with Penny Johnson and Carolyn Dinshaw.

Susan Wade is an Adjunct Professor of History at Keene State College. Her dissertation focuses on early medieval miracles involving the restoration of eyesight, focusing on the rich miracle dossiers of the Flemish abbeys of Lobbes and Nivelles. Presently she is engaged in the initial research outlining the symbolism of the bed within medieval culture. This includes consideration of the bed's monastic meanings and also of the marriage and family bed, beds as luxury objects in wills, and the bed as a symbol of gender relationships.

Scott Wells is Assistant Professor of History at California State University, Los Angeles. His research focuses on intellectual and cultural production at German monastic communities during the Central Middle Ages. He is currently completing a book entitled *From Chronicling Monks to Prophesying Nuns: The Search for History's Design in Medieval Germany, ca. 970–1180*.

INTRODUCTION

PENELOPE D. JOHNSON, THE BOSWELL THESIS, AND *NEGOTIATING COMMUNITY AND DIFFERENCE IN MEDIEVAL EUROPE*

Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells

Members of any community—whether defined by geographic proximity or shared concepts, ambitions, and ideals—must participate in the common enterprise of maintaining and perpetuating that community economically, socially, and culturally. The thirteen essays in this volume explore the theme of collective identity and the related dynamics of communal inclusion and exclusion as articulated through and by religious institutions, ritual practices, and rhetoric in the world of medieval Latin Christendom. Several essays in *Negotiating Community and Difference* focus on the role played by monastic communities as centers of social integration. Others investigate religious activities and practices that served as sites for cooperative spirituality and community cohesion: saints' cults of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the devotional movements orbiting around pious laywomen in the Later Middle Ages, and the production of liturgical and devotional manuscripts. Additional contributions treat the rhetoric of exclusion as revealed in medieval texts, considering such topics as monks brought together in an act of conjoint violence against their abbot, the utilization of judicial violence by a fourteenth-century French king to dispose of his unwanted wife, and Jewish polemics associating religious exclusion with the uncontrolled, impure discharge of menstrual blood and semen.

Authored by students and colleagues of Penelope D. Johnson, all of these essays reflect and honor her commitment to women's, gender, institutional, and religious history as part of a larger project to investigate the history of community in medieval Europe. Johnson is best known for her books *Prayer, Patronage, and Power: The Abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme* and *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France*, which together reshaped the study of monastic life in the Middle Ages by interrogating the spiritual and the economic commitments that bound

the cloister to the larger society.[1] This pioneering research on female monastic houses as centers of cooperation between religious women, clerical men, noble female and male patrons, and humble lay donors also highlighted the specific ways in which monks and nuns shared precisely the same monastic profession, albeit in a broader context of widespread misogyny. Johnson's research into female monastic communities highlighted how in social practice the boundary between cloister and secular world was much more porous (and beneficially so for both monastics and laypersons) than the rhetoric of religious rules and spiritual literature might otherwise indicate. Johnson also demonstrated that research into the history of nuns must take seriously the wealth of documentation from the Central Middle Ages indicating that these monastic women acted and were perceived as equal to monastic men in their religious office and status. These realities existed alongside misogynist practices and ideologies affecting all women, nuns included, and it is precisely that tension which medieval nuns, bishops, patrons, and devotees had to negotiate, with the result—as Johnson noted—that nuns, abbesses, and their female patrons possessed much greater agency within their society than earlier histories of monasticism had recognized.

Johnson's more recent research has reflected a growing interest among medievalists in the role of violence (whether official/judicial or illegal/extra-judicial) as a means of articulating both social exclusion and social inclusion in the medieval period. This work, focusing on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century France, has included typological analysis of convicted criminals who applied for royal pardons, as well as an exploration of the same source material for data on suicide and its prevention in the Later Middle Ages. Her enquiry in this area has focused particularly on distinguishing between categories of permissible and illicit violence.[2] Violence controlled and contained in the form of games, spectacle, and ceremonial enabled medieval people (taverngoers as much as ruling authorities) to utilize displays of aggressive physicality, including verbal insults, to negotiate the boundaries of social

[1] *Prayer, Patronage, and Power: The Abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme* (New York: New York University Press, 1981); *Equal in Monastic Profession: Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[2] Representative of these new research directions are her two recent essays "Fighting Words and Wounded Honor in Late Fourteenth-Century France," in *Medieval Paradigms: Essays in Honor of Jeremy duQuesnay Adams*, 2 vols., ed. Stephanie Hayes-Healy (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2005), I: 139–152, and "Suicide and Its Prevention in Later Medieval France," *Proceedings of the Western Society for French Studies* 26 (2000): 184–91.

inclusivity. However, these acts co-existed with, and frequently blurred into, forms of violence conceptualized as assaults on the social order to be contained, eradicated, and/or healed for purposes of communal reintegration, with the difference between play and crime, between the culpable and the accidental, between guilt and innocence, determined as much by *post facto* interpretation as by the circumstances of the unfolding event itself. The royal pardon, for instance, highlighted the king's status as the ultimate authority in reading violence, even as those pardons showed how such interpretations were constrained by the actual conditions surrounding the violent act itself, as well as by the interpretive testimony offered by the act's recognized participants and witnesses.

Whether analyzing miracle-working *sanctae* and administratively-astute nuns, or despondent suicides and drunken brawlers, Johnson's research has sought to understand the people of the past not only as socially-constructed persons defined with reference to their position in a larger communal whole, but also as agents navigating their social worlds as singularly identifiable and recoverable individuals. Johnson's skills as an archival investigator and historical writer allow to leap from the pages of her books such dynamic individuals as Agnes of Burgundy, eleventh-century noblewoman and domineering patron of the monasteries and convents she founded; Alice of Rouen, a nun who managed to have an intimate relationship with a priest and bear three children, all the while continuing to reside in the convent, despite recurring reprimands and punishments from Archbishop Eudes Rigaud; and Prioress Lethoidis of Saint-Julien, who succeeded, with the support of the priory's male chaplain, in using her sacred authority and the general belief in the living power of saints' bones to successfully humble and correct a wicked viscount.[3] A particularly poignant example from *Equal in Monastic Profession* involves an attempted suicide that occurred in 1107.[4] A noblewoman, convinced by gossip and rumor that her husband had ceased to love her, became severely depressed. Fearing she would take her own life, her relatives brought her to the convent of Saint-Amand in Rouen to be placed in the care of the nuns and their patron saint.

[3] For Agnes of Burgundy, see Johnson, "Agnes of Burgundy: An Eleventh-Century Woman as Monastic Patron," *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989): 93–104; on Alice of Rouen and Prioress Lethoidis, see Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 121 and 237–39 respectively.

[4] Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession*, 239–43.

Although the suicidal woman was constantly guarded, on the night before a miraculous cure was to be attempted her assigned guardians fell asleep and she was able to hang herself in the church. One of the guards awoke later that night and, discovering the dangling body, cried out in horror. The nuns joined him in the church and began lamenting. The archdeacon responsible for the convent, informed of the incident, instructed that the body be immediately cast into some ditch. Instead of following official guidelines for the handling of a suicide, the nuns held vigil close to the body. As a result, one of them discovered the woman was still alive, and the nuns subsequently managed to restore her to physical and mental health. In its focus on how a particularized case is shaped, but not limited by, contemporary understandings of gender relations, monastic boundaries, and violence, this incident neatly encapsulates the major themes in Johnson's research: exploring how sub-communities such as monasteries were integrated into the larger medieval society, re-examining the assumption of women's marginal status in that society, drawing attention to the role of violence in articulating boundaries of belonging and exclusion, and emphasizing the need to highlight individual needs, desires, and agency as much as the shaping forces of cultural construction.

Medievalists widely acknowledge Penelope Johnson's place as a pivotal figure in the development of women's religious history and the gendered study of monasticism. The scholarly reception of her work, however, has not yet taken sufficient account of the broader interest in questions of religion and community, as well as community and violence, which have shaped her research and teaching. Significantly, the role played by John E. Boswell in her early academic career is almost always overlooked. Even a brief exploration of this role, however, leads to an expanded appreciation of the significance of her work (and his) in the evolution of medieval studies. Boswell served as Johnson's mentor and dissertation advisor at Yale University, and her subsequent research into the negotiation of community and difference in medieval Europe built upon and resonates with his own scholarly interests and insights. Awareness of this relationship deepens not only an appreciation of Johnson's contributions to medieval studies, but of Boswell's as well. The recent publication of a collection entitled *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, edited by Mathew Kuefler, demonstrates the continuing interest among medievalists in the complex questions raised by Boswell's work. The editors of that volume emphasized, almost exclusively, Boswell's place

as a founding figure of gay/queer historical studies. However, they also recognized Johnson's significance in pursuing the more foundational questions of religion and community solidarity at the heart of Boswell's work by including an essay by her on the life of Gerardesca of Pisa, a married thirteenth-century laywoman who had to contend with various obstacles—a worldly husband, local friars skeptical of her spiritual aspirations, and demonic temptations—in her struggle to gain acceptance as a celibate mystic.[5]

What Kuefler's *The Boswell Thesis* acknowledges tangentially, our own edited collection takes as its principal focus, illuminating in much greater depth and detail a central aspect of Boswell's legacy that has flowered in Johnson's scholarship and teaching and continues to bear fruit in the essays gathered here. Boswell will always be rightly identified as a trailblazer in the study of gay and queer histories, his insights into contested questions of integration and segregation in the religious culture of the Middle Ages extended well beyond the specific issues of same-sex sexuality and normative/non-normative carnal desire. His socially-engaged interest in and analysis of medieval Christianity addressed social tolerance, intolerance, and violence of all kinds. He is best known for his second and fourth books, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* and *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe*, which focus on the church's historical evolution from accommodation to exclusion of men who experienced and expressed same-sex erotic attachment.[6] Yet his first book explored the place of Muslims and Jews in the crown of Aragon, while his third argued that the not-uncommon practice of infant and child abandonment reflected, not the lack of attachment parents felt toward their young offspring, but instead the great value medieval Christian culture placed on offering charitable love towards unfortunate strangers.[7] When a destitute mother abandoned her infant,

[5] Johnson, "The Body of Gherardesca of Pisa Reclothed and Resexed," in *The Boswell Thesis: Essays on Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*, ed. Mathew Kuefler (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 287–300.

[6] *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); *Same-Sex Unions in Premodern Europe* (New York: Villard, 1994).

[7] *The Royal Treasure: Muslim Communities under the Crown of Aragon in the Fourteenth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977); *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988).

Boswell argued, she did so in the confidence that a more prosperous family or institution would willingly take the child in.

Boswell devoted his career as both an academic historian and a public intellectual to raising questions about the contested relationship between homosexual Christians and the larger Christian *ecclesia*. He was, however, equally committed to raising questions about the relationship between Christian faith and the toleration of social and human differences of all kinds.[8] His magnum opus, as its title indicates, addresses homosexuality, Christianity, and social tolerance. The parallels between this monograph and Johnson's *Equal in Monastic Profession*, to take each scholar's most widely-read book, are instructive in revealing a common enterprise. Each asks to what extent the Christian community tolerated diversity among its sub-communities and regarded diversity as compatible with equality in religious faith and profession. Each also argues that intolerant rhetoric (whether anti-gay or misogynist) did not in all times and places reflect actual social attitudes and practices, which for the most part were more accommodating of difference than the animus of the most vituperative members of the clergy would suggest. Each explicitly uses the proliferation of actual judicial violence (whether in the form of persecution or forced enclosure) rather than the rhetoric of intolerance as the crucial means of pinpointing the shift from a more open to a more exclusionary Christendom in the Central Middle Ages. Finally, like Johnson, Boswell sought to incorporate the particularities of individual agency and identity into his analysis of social processes and their transformation.[9]

As practitioners of this model of history, Boswell and Johnson have influenced the evolution of medieval studies in more significant ways than their conventional categorization as a gay historian and a historian of nuns would allow. Notably, in addressing the important themes and questions raised by the work of Johnson and Boswell, the essays in *Negotiating Community and Difference* also tackle issues that are at the forefront of current and developing trends in the research and teaching of the European Middle Ages. These include explorations of the topics of home and homelessness; of conflict and cooperation between

[8] Ralph Hexter, "John Boswell's Gay Science: Prolegomenon to a Re-Reading," in *The Boswell Thesis*, 35–56.

[9] For instance in his portrait of Anselm of Canterbury, which sparked a heated but productive debate with Richard Southern: see Bruce O'Brien, "R.W. Southern, John Boswell, and the Sexuality of Anselm," in *The Boswell Thesis*, 167–178.

the genders; of the partnerships between clergy and laity in religious reform; of the self as realized and exposed through public/communal performance; of the fallen body of the "other" as a site for articulating clerical, masculine or Christian privilege; of the saint's cult as a catalyst for the formation of new geographic or linguistic communities; and of the economic ties binding seemingly disparate groups or individuals in urban and rural contexts.[10] Combining the voices of established and emerging scholars, this collection draws attention to the links and cross-fertilizations that have shaped a broad intellectual movement to explore the multifaceted dynamics of negotiating community, difference, and identity in Latin Christendom, a development in which Johnson's specific refocusing and expansion of Boswell's influence has played a unique role.

The essays in this collection are organized into three sections, each focusing on a specific aspect of the book's broader theme of group identity. The five essays in Part I, "Shaping Identity through Sacred

[10] The literature here is vast and growing. A few very recent examples, however, would include Nicholas Howe, ed., *Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004); Alison I. Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Fiona J. Griffiths, *The Garden of Delights: Reform and Renaissance for Women in the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Diane J. Reilly, *The Art of Reform in Eleventh-Century Flanders: Gerard of Cambrai, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Saint-Vaast Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Thomas J. Heffernan and Thomas E. Burman, eds., *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Chris Wickham, *Courts and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Tuscany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Maureen C. Miller, "Why the Bishop of Florence Had to Get Married," *Speculum* 81 (2006): 1055–1091; Katherine C. Little, *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); David Gary Shaw, *Necessary Conjunctions: The Social Self in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); Robert Bartlett, *The Hanged Man: A Story of Miracle, Memory, and Colonialism in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Prinecton University Press, 2006); Wolfram Drews, *The Unknown Neighbour: The Jews in the Thought of Isidore of Seville* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Michael Frassetto, ed., *Heresy and the Persecuting Society in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Felice Lifshitz, *The Name of the Saint: The Martyrology of Jerome and Access to the Sacred in Francia, 627–827* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005); Mechthild Gretsch, *Aelfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2005); Wayne te Brake and Wim Klooster, eds., *Power and the City in the Netherlandic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); and Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The Reconquista and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Spaces and Texts," trace the articulation of personal and communal spaces within medieval texts, highlighting the power of landscapes or buildings to circumscribe parameters of identity for religious communities and holy individuals. These spaces might be strictly defined, actual places such as monastic enclosures or pilgrimage shrines, but they might also be defined only in the mind of an individual or community, as in a landscape seen in a dream or vision. In the first essay of the section, Diane Auslander explores the conflict between individual asceticism and the coenobitic monastic life as seen in the ninth-century *vita* of the Irish abbess Darerca, or Moninna. Her reading of this text uncovers the constantly evolving ideals of community that both influenced and resulted from reform movements like the Céli Dé, and emphasizes the important role played by hagiographical texts in promoting these new ideals. Christina Roukis-Stern examines the lives of several women saints within a different setting, the thirteenth-century diocese of Liège, proposing that these texts were intended by their male clerical authors to offer a portrait not only of their individual subjects but of a larger Christian community. By situating contemporary holy women in detailed local religious, social and geographical settings, these devotional texts offer an idealized representation of a microcosmic Christendom, free from heresy and civil strife. In another essay based on female hagiography, Anne Schuchman offers an analysis of a thirteenth-century saint, the Florentine noblewoman Umiliana de' Cerchi, who occupied an intermediary space between the traditional spheres of noblewomen, the household and the cloister. Without enclosing herself physically in a convent, Umiliana transformed her body into a metaphorical prison for her soul through strict asceticism, while still remaining a part of her parental household and the larger community of Florence. Schuchman's portrait of Umiliana demonstrates the flexibility of medieval constructions of female sanctity that allowed not only enclosed women but laywomen to achieve saintly status. In the fourth essay of the section Katherine Allen Smith considers how a symbolically charged cultic space, a crypt below the monastic church of Mont-Saint-Michel believed to be a copy of the Southern Italian shrine of Monte Gargano, became a metaphor for the communal historical identity of the abbey's monks. Focusing on the centuries-long process by which one monastic community constructed a powerful cultic genealogy for itself through the creation of sacred spaces and texts, Smith's essay stresses the importance of viewing monastic texts such as communal foundation narratives and works of hagiography as rhetorical by-products of particular political agendas.

Part I concludes with an essay by Jane Schulenburg which highlights the role of embroidery in providing a special visibility for female sanctity in the medieval Church. Holy queens, abbesses, nuns, and laywomen were singled out for their noteworthy skill and impressive achievements as needle artists. As acts of piety and devotion, their high-status works mainly took the form of ecclesiastical vestments and decorations for the altar and church. Thus, through their gender-specific role as embroiders, women contributed a pronounced feminine component to the most sacred spaces and rituals of the Church. Luxury needlework possessed high material and symbolic value, and Schulenburg demonstrates how carefully the identity and sanctity of embroidering women was preserved in ecclesiastical *memoria*.

The four essays in Part II, "Partnerships and Devotions across the Gender Divide," focus on cooperative relationships between medieval men and women—members of religious communities, monasteries and lay donors, affluent female patrons and the scribes and illuminators whose manuscripts they commissioned—and considers such relationships as instrumental in fostering a sense of group solidarity or belonging. Examining the history of textual production at the convent of Gandersheim during the ninth and tenth centuries, Scott Wells observes that the production both of historical works written by the canonesses and of charters issued for them by the royal chancery took place not continuously, but in two concentrated periods. Analyzing the political history of the Liudolfing/Ottonian family, he demonstrates that these two periods were precisely the ones in which the women of Gandersheim represented and performed a particularly useful type of familial identity for the leaders of the lineage, with these leaders in return lavishing the monastery with symbolic and economic rewards. The next essay by Constance Berman further expands on the themes of politics, monastic patronage, and cooperation through a consideration of French noblewomen's prominence as founders and patrons of Cistercian houses for women in the region around Sens. During the peak of crusading movements in the mid-thirteenth century, wives of French aristocrats who had taken the cross often found themselves, as widows or guardians of minor heirs, in control of substantial properties. Berman argues that the proliferation of Cistercian nunneries in these same decades should be read as evidence that noblewomen whose obligations might prevent them from joining a Cistercian community nonetheless desired to support the interests of women within the order who might serve as their spiritual surrogates. Turning from women's

patronage of religious institutions to women's experience of the monastic life, Susan Valentine's essay explores the frequent references to Mary Magdalene in the correspondence and liturgical compositions of the twelfth-century lovers-turned-monastics Abelard and Heloise, arguing that the Magdalene appears not in the guise of sexual sinner as one might expect, but is rather evoked as a model for religious women. In Valentine's reading, Heloise and Abelard used the relationship between the Magdalene and Christ described in the Gospels and glossed by later exegetes as a model of male-female spiritual friendship upon which to base their own future interactions. The final essay in this section by Kathryn A. Smith picks up the theme of modeling female behavior and piety, examining how prayer books like the early fourteenth-century Taymouth Hours (London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13) guided their owners through a series of spiritual practices, both meditative and physical, designed as a regimen for the construction and cultivation of a devotional self. Calling attention to the intimate relationships between such books and their owners, Smith shows how the prayers and accompanying imagery in the Taymouth Hours worked in conjunction to shape the interior devotional life as well as the outward spiritual comportment of its royal female patron.

In Part III, "Blood, Embodiment, and Defining Separation," the contributions turn from the solidification of communal ties to the experience of individuals and groups marginalized or isolated in some way through the use of rhetorical or actual violence. Susan Wade offers a reading of a violent attack by the monks of the Flemish abbey of Lobbes on their strict abbot, Erluin, that connects ritual disfigurement to the rejection of individuals from the life of the monastic community. Deprived of his eyes, so that he was prevented from visually meditating on devotional images or texts, and deprived of his tongue, with which he ordinarily recited the prayers of the liturgy, the saintly Erluin was not only physically maimed but in fact spiritually crippled by his rebellious monks. The following essay by Elizabeth A.R. Brown offers new insights into the fate of Blanche of Burgundy, who was imprisoned for life and her marriage to the French King Charles IV annulled in 1322 when Henry accused her of adultery. Brown's re-examination of the final years of this queen, who was discarded by her husband at the age of eighteen after failing to produce an heir, elucidates the power that allegations of adultery gave medieval aristocrats over their wives. In the final essay of this section, Alexandra Cuffel highlights the role of religion in determining the integration or exclusion of medieval men

and women from larger groups. Cuffel's work focuses on how medieval Jewish scholars responded to the heightened interest in doctrinal issues surrounding the Virgin Mary's body on the part of Christians, finding that Kabbalist writings of the Later Middle Ages associated the bodies of Christians, "bad" Jews, and Muslims to varying degrees with polluting bodily processes such as menstruation. This discourse represents an appropriation and redirection of anti-Jewish Christian rhetoric that claimed Jewish men menstruated and were thus bodily feminine as well as spiritually polluted, and Cuffel's analysis draws attention to the connections between discourses of sin, sexuality, and disease in medieval Europe.

While the essays in *Negotiating Community and Difference* range across such topics as Jewish-Christian relations, divorce, and the piety of middle- and upper-class laywomen, the majority concentrate on the monastery as a site privileged by medieval Europeans for the negotiating of community and difference (between heaven and earth, lay and ecclesiastical, male and female, powerful and powerless, center and periphery). For religious women and men, the negotiation of identity required a number of simultaneous balancing acts. While a medieval monk or nun was theoretically expected to renounce not only his or her wealth, worldly position, and family connections upon entering the cloister, such concerns continued to inform on the lives of many religious. While the walls surrounding monastic communities symbolized the privileged spiritual status of those within, such boundaries were in reality permeable; individuals, material goods, and ideas passed back and forth between the realms of the cloister and the world, and these realms were in many respects interdependent. This symbiotic relationship was not without its tensions, with patrons often expecting more from their beneficiaries than those monasteries were willing to give, but with cloisters likewise feeling that they had to remind their patrons to lavish the attention and consideration that the monastic community was due. Taken together, the essays by Roukis-Stern, Schuchman, Smith, Wells, Berman, and Wade provide a good indication of the multiple ways in which monasteries and convents, as well as less formal groupings of religious women, were compelled to define their identities in relation to expectations and pressures exerted by secular and ecclesiastical forces external to their community.

On another level, the monastic life was characterized by a tension between the self-definition of monks and nuns as individuals and their membership in a corporate group. Monastic rules dictated that the good

of the community must come before that of individual members, and the realities of monastic life necessitated near-constant participation in such common endeavors as the *opus Dei*, meditation, manual labor, and even eating and sleeping, and individuals who strove to distinguish themselves (by their asceticism, for example) risked the censure of their fellows as well as church authorities. At the same time, membership in a monastic *familia* bound religious women and men together as closely as the members of any blood family; monastics shared a single history as articulated in their house's chronicles, relied on common protectors, the saints venerated as the community's particular patrons, and were equally concerned with the promotion of their monastery's economic well-being and political interests. Here, a comparison of the essays by Auslander and Wade proves especially illuminating, and suggests a further context for reflecting upon the explorations of *familia* examined in the essays by Schuchman and Wells, and upon the articulation of monastic ideals in the very different contexts investigated by Roukis-Stern, Smith, and Valentine.

Finally, gender shaped medieval men's and women's experiences of the religious life in powerful ways. While both male and female religious were expected to live chastely, avoiding physical contact and emotional intimacy with members of *both* sexes as far as possible, church authorities regarded nuns as more vulnerable to carnal temptations than their male counterparts and therefore more in need of the protection afforded them by strict enclosure within the monastic complex. While women's supposed susceptibility to sin rendered their spiritual achievements especially praiseworthy, the male-dominated medieval Church simultaneously restricted their involvement in its sacramental life. As a result, even the most learned and capable medieval nuns, canonesses, female tertiaries, and pious laywomen were obliged to rely on male confessors, accept communion from male priests, and submit to the judgment of male bishops in important political and economic matters. While religious women may have viewed themselves as consecrated monastics first and as women second (as Johnson has argued), the church hierarchy under whose authority they lived rarely allowed them to forget that they were female. The essays by Auslander, Roukis-Stern, Schuchman, Schulenburg, Wells, Berman, and Valentine all focus on this issue. Together they demonstrate the continuing need to follow up on Johnson's insight that medieval misogyny must be neither ignored nor taken as a monolithic category of analysis, since the sources reveal a richly variegated range of religious partnerships between women and

men across the broad chronological and geographic spread of medieval Latin Christendom.

All communities face the challenge of negotiating difference. A community with a single uniform identity is a biological and historical (if not a conceptual) impossibility. Social bodies of any size or complexity must coordinate distinction and differentiation as well as sameness and identity. The most important contribution of the collection rests precisely in its assumption that exclusion and inclusion, violence and harmony, patriarchy and gender partnership are intertwined processes most fruitfully considered in conjunction with one another. A large number of recent monographs and edited collections have focused on one of these themes to the exclusion of the other: community *or* conflict, identity *or* difference, toleration *or* intolerance, understanding *or* oppression. The essays in this collection, taken together, make a vital point that is sure to stimulate scholarly debate: one cannot understand medieval processes of negotiating community without understanding concurrent processes of negotiating difference. The misogyny of the male clergy existed alongside their eager participation in productive exchanges as equals with religious and lay women. Anti-Christian and anti-Jewish polemic were communicated through a shared rhetoric on masculinity and femininity, and couched in anxiety over the perceived difficulty of actually differentiating between Jew and Christian in social practice. The formation of a communal cult around a saint frequently led to the eradication of the 'real' identity of that holy person even as her symbolic presence loomed large. A noblewoman's devotional life might be controlled and constrained by the very manuscript she herself had commissioned. The negotiation of community and difference were never-ending processes, by which the worlds of Latin Christendom large and small were continually made and remade.

PART I

SHAPING IDENTITY THROUGH SACRED SPACES AND TEXTS

CHAPTER ONE

LIVING WITH A SAINT: MONASTIC IDENTITY, COMMUNITY, AND THE IDEAL OF ASCETICISM IN THE LIFE OF AN IRISH SAINT

Diane Peters Auslander

> ...every day, because of her sanctity, many came to her with food and offerings, but, placing her trust in God, she kept none of this to herself, but gave it all, for Christ, to the poor who approached her...the sisters complained that she gave all for the use of the poor and kept nothing back...[1]

This quote from the ninth-century *Vita Darercae, seu Moninnae, abbatissae*, written in Ireland and celebrating an Irish saint, appears to describe a little rebellion on the part of the nuns against the extremes of saintly dedication to poverty and charity displayed by their abbess. It also portrays a tension between the very real physical needs of a monastic community and the otherworldly spiritual focus of their conversion-era saint and monastic foundress. Darerca may have been a particularly difficult saint to live with because, as her *vita* progresses, she becomes increasingly devoted to a rigorous and solitary form of asceticism that goes beyond the usual kinds of charitable self-denial represented in the above passage. Irish monasticism was characterized by this kind of individual asceticism, based on the eremitism of the desert fathers and mothers of the East. However, while most Irish saints confined themselves to eating grass, sleeping on rocks, and reciting the Psalms while standing in freezing water up to their armpits, Darerca's practice was unique and particularly harsh, especially for a woman who was

[1] "...omnibus extitit venerabilis in tantum quod alimentis ac muneribus a pluribus sue sanctitati collatis cotidie visitaretur; sed ex hiis omnibus nichil sibi reservans... cunctaque pauperibus ad se venientibus propter Christum erogobat. Cumque sorores murmurassent quod omnia in usus pauperum, nichil sibi reservando, largiretur..." *Vita S. Darercae, seu Moninnae, abbatissae*, ed. W.W. Heist in *Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae; ex codice olim Salmanticensi nunc Bruxellensi* (Brussels, 1965), 85. Translation from "The Life of St. Darerca, or Moninna, the Abbess," ed. and trans. Liam De Paor, *Saint Patrick's World* (Notre Dame, 1997), 283 (hereafter referred to as Darerca).

theoretically confined to a community in accordance with church doctrine. Darerca's ascetic practice is described in her life as follows:

> ...like a daughter of John the Baptist, or the prophet Elijah she waged war most strenuously in this desert place, clad in sack cloth like a stern hermit...she followed in the footsteps of the earlier hermits to such an extent that she dug the earth and sowed it with her own hand, she contained within her woman's body a manlike spirit.[2]

Irish monasticism was also dedicated to the ideal of *communitas* and, although asceticism came to characterize the unique spirituality of the Irish church, commitment to coenobitism would have been essential to the survival of monastic foundations. These two seemingly contradictory forms of Christian practice create a kind of schism in the ideology of Irish monastic identity. Darerca, whose identity was, like that of Irish monasticism, bound up in her reputation as an eremitic while at the same time being also identified as the abbess responsible for a community of nuns, can be seen as representative of this schism. This paper is a contextual study of this ninth-century life of St. Darerca that will explore the tension between eremitism and coenobitism and the manner in which the Irish reconciled it. I will start with a brief look at the ideology of Irish monastic identity and some pertinent aspects of Irish monastic foundations, then move on to the context in which the life was written and its possible influences on how Darereca is portrayed. I will conclude with an examination of relevant portions of the text which describe a steady development in her saintly career from her first faltering attempts to balance the characteristic actions of a saint with the needs of her community to her achievement of a successful balance between ascetic practices and communal life.[3]

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[2] "Johannis igitur Baptiste ac Helye prophete filia, asperis induta pannis, quasi fortis heremita...ita namque priorum heremitarum vestigia secuta fuit ut propero labore terram fodiens, eam seminesset; virilem enim animum in femineo gerebat corpore" Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 89. Trans. Darerca, 287–88.

[3] The conversion of Ireland and its aftermath have been studied in depth by many scholars. A recent and most thorough treatment of the subject is Thomas Charles-Edwards' *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000). Other studies include Liam and Maire de Paor, *Early Christian Ireland* (New York, 1958), Seán Duffy, *Ireland in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1997), Kathleen Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London, 1980), and articles such as Donnchad Ó Córráin's "Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland," *The Oxford History of Ireland*, ed. R.F. Foster (Oxford, 1992), 1–43, and Richard Sharpe's "Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland," *Peritia* 3 (1984): 230–70. With regard to Irish monasticism, the classic work is John Ryan's *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (Dublin, 1992), although it

We know that there were contradictory views on the role of ascetic practice in the monastery.[4] On one hand, asceticism defined Irish monastic identity. On the other hand, devotion to such ascetic practices was often seen as threatening to monastic communities. Some early Irish sources express concern that stringent asceticism rendered the individual too weak to help support his or her brothers or sisters not just in their pursuit of the communal monastic ideal, but in their efforts simply to survive. Monastic leaders ruled against inexperienced monastics attempting the solitary life. Nevertheless, many seem to have disobeyed. Irish texts emphasize the remoteness of Irish monastic institutions, claiming that such foundations were established in the desert, i.e. in a sparsely populated wilderness area with few resources ideal for a dedicated ascetic. Many monasteries, like Kildare, situated in the fertile plain of the Liffey and Clonmacnoise, on an important

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is outdated. The abovementioned general works on the early Irish church all provide good background on monasticism. A few other important articles are: Joseph T. Kelly, "The Irish Monks and the See of St. Peter," *Monastic Studies* 14 (1983): 207–23, and Máire Herbert, "The Legacy of Colum Cille and his Monastic Community," *The Culture of Europe: The Irish Contribution*, ed. J.P. Mackey (Belfast, 1992), 32–50. On this subject I would also mention Lisa Bitel, *Isle of the Saints, Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (Ithaca, 1990).

Irish hagiography has also received a good deal of scholarly attention. A recent collection of articles on the subject of Celtic hagiography in general is *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff, 2003). Important general articles include: Ludwig Bieler's "The Celtic Hagiographer," *Studia Patristica* 5 (1962): 243–65, and his "Hagiography and Romance in Medieval Ireland," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, new series 6 (1975): 13–24; Charles Doherty, "The Irish Hagiographer: Resources, Aims, Results," in *The Writer as Witness: Literature as Historical Evidence*, ed. Tom Dunne (Cork, 1987), 10–21; William W. Heist, "Irish Saints' Lives, Romance, and Cultural History," *Medievalia et Humanistica* new series 6 (1975): 25–40; and Richard Sharpe's book, *Medieval Irish Saints Lives: An Introduction to Vitae Sanctorum Hiberniae.* (Oxford, 1991). On the earliest lives that have survived, see the articles by Kim McCone, "Brigit in the Seventh Century: A Saint with Three Lives?" *Peritia* 1 (1982): 107–45, as well as his "An Introduction to Early Irish Saints' Lives," *Maynooth Review* 11 (1986): 26–59, and Richard Sharpe's "*Vitae sanctae Brigitae*: The Oldest Texts," *Peritia* 1 (1982): 81–106, all of which mainly address the problem of dating the *vitae*. There are very few studies devoted specifically to female Irish saints and their hagiography. In addition to Sharpe's paper on the *Vitae Sanctae Brigitae*, there are three articles by Dorothy Ann Bray: "The Image of St. Brigit in the Early Irish Church," *Etudes Celtiques* 24 (1984): 209–15; "Motival Derivations in the *Life of St. Samthann*," *Studia Celtica* 20/21 (1985/6): 77–86; and "The Manly Spirit of St Monenna," *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of The 10th International Congress of Celtic Studies*, ed. Ronald Black et al., 2 vols. (East Linton, 1999), 171–77. None of the above works serves as a model for the sort of contextual study the present paper purports to be; I have used Máire Herbert's *Iona, Kells and Derry, the History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba*. (Dublin, 1996) as a methodological model.

[4] Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 160–1.

riverway, do not fit this model, however, and would have been materially well off. Less fortunate monasteries, on the other hand, were often situated on marginal ground where they were more vulnerable to the many plagues, famines, droughts, and other disasters recorded in the sources. This was especially true for women's foundations. Those Irish female institutions that survived the first few years of eking out their existence in a hostile environment, faced the prospect of dissolution following the death of their founders, due to the fact that Irish laws required that land held by women revert to their families after death.[5] Consequently, most did not survive long enough or have the resources to produce the hagiography that may have helped bring some wealth and fame to their foundations. In fact, of all the many female saints spoken of in the Irish texts, we have *vitae* for only four. If the foundation was lucky, it had a saint whose power was well advertised and would attract gifts and contributions that would ease the hardships of an actual community. Often such power was made manifest through the saint's devotion to asceticism as well as though miracles. Nevertheless, it is easy to see why at least some abbots and abbesses would have been opposed to those in their charge adding personal asceticism to the prevalent natural hardships without sufficient training.[6]

Eremitism is associated with the conversion period in Ireland and with the very beginnings of Irish monasticism. The conversion and its importance to Irish Christian identity has been mediated and ideologized through the hagiography of the saints associated with it. In her *vita*, Darerca is portrayed as active in the conversion and associated with the most famous of conversion-era saints such as Brigid, Patrick, and Ibar. The participation of women in the conversion of Ireland may have been more extensive and innovative than orthodox church doctrine would allow or admit. According to Liam de Paor, it is possible that "the great Irish monastic movement, which was to dominate the ecclesiastical history of the country from the seventh century to the twelfth centuries, was pioneered by communities of women."[7] The earliest foundation was probably St. Brigid's Kildare, founded at the end of the fifth century. Both Kildare and Brigid feature prominently in the life of Darerca, who seems to have learned some of her skills as abbess

[5] Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin, 1995), 104–5 and 123.
[6] Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 161.
[7] de Paor, *Saint Patrick's World*, 49.

under Brigid's tutelage. Darerca herself would have been one of the earliest monastic foundresses. These early associations give her persona authority as a symbol and representative of Irish monasticism.

For the Irish, conversion was a process of enculturation requiring what Michael Richter calls an "unconscious sympathy" between the sensibilities of the new religion and those of the old.[8] In Ireland this sympathy between past and present was conscious, thorough, and essential to the assimilation of the new religion. As John Carey states, "The medieval Irish were themselves aware of the hybrid character of their heritage...they saw themselves as a nation of converts, their identity essentially determined by the marriage of two cultures."[9] That the Irish had an immediate affinity for a particularly harsh asceticism, the practice of which soon gave way to a more moderate Benedictine communalism in other parts of western Europe, indicates that asceticism may have been an important part of the spirituality of the pre-Christian Irish past, a familiar element facilitating the marriage of old and new. In the early medieval period, this asceticism marked Irish monasticism as uniquely and especially holy.

St. Patrick had considerable influence on Irish monastic identity and may be responsible for some of its uniqueness. He embraced the unorthodox view that that one could commit to the monastic ideal while remaining in the world. He particularly encouraged women to follow this path:

> Patrick perceives the monastic vocation to be one that may be lived by women in the world whatever their circumstances. There is no hint in his writings of the insistence by Benedict...or Cassian...that the road to a monastic life lay through the cenobitic community...Patrick was an enthusiastic—some would probably have said rash—encourager of vocations.[10]

Although female monastics in particular would eventually conform to living in communities separate from the world, Patrick's views, as expressed in his own writing, would have reinforced the natural Irish tendency to asceticism. Patrick's importance to the ideology of conversion is demonstrated by his position as apostle to the Irish and by

[8] Michael Richter, "Models of Conversion," in *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Doris Edel (Dublin, 1995), 122. Richter, *Models*, 123.

[9] John Carey, *King of Mysteries* (Dublin, 1998), 10.

[10] Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland*, 245.

his almost obligatory appearances in the lives of other Irish saints.[11] Although his appearance in the *Life of Darerca* is somewhat atypical, as shall be discussed below, it does conform to his unorthodox view of monasticism described in the above quotation.

The physical layout of Irish monasteries was also unorthodox and may give us a clue as to the way in which the Irish resolved the ideological contradiction between the devotion to both eremitism and coenobitism.[12] Each foundation would have had a tiny wooden church, a scattering of beehive huts made of stone or wattle just big enough for one or two nuns, and a somewhat larger building for communal gatherings. This complex would then have been enclosed by a series of walls. The juxtaposition of individual cells and communal meeting place within the womb of the monastic walls indicates that the Irish envisioned their monastic ideal as embracing the dichotomy of the solitary life of a hermit in her cell and the communal life of the monastery, a hybrid of the eremitic and the coenobitic symbolized in the architecture. In her *vita*, I believe Darerca and her community of Killeavy come to exemplify this same hybridity, a mirror of the ideology of the conversion itself as a hybrid of two cultural strands.

Killeavy near the west coast of Ireland, north of Dundalk, is the last and most famous of the several monasteries Darerca is said to have established. The community of Killeavy is remarkable for its longevity. Although it appears to have been a small and marginal monastery, it managed to survive until 1542, perhaps because of the great reputation of its saint as advertised in her hagiography which stresses her spiritual development, her connections to the conversion era and its powerful saints, and her asceticism. Darerca's ninth-century hagiographer, however, does not give a physical description of Killeavy nor does he boast of its power and importance, but merely says:

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[11] Before the coming of Patrick, a deacon of the church named Palladius was sent by Pope Celestine to minister to those small Christian communities already existing in Ireland. There is some evidence (Prosper, *Chronicle*, i. 431, ed. T. Mommsen in *Chronica Minora*, vol. 1 (= MGH AA 9), 473) that Palladius did some missionary work as well, but he has been all but obliterated from the record, as have those such as Ibar who claim to be pre-Patrician native missionaries, while Patrick has been given the honor of being called the apostle to the Irish. The propagandists of the monastic complex at Armagh, discussed below in this paper, may have been responsible for this.

[12] This description is taken from Kathleen Hughes, "From the Coming of Christianity to the end of the Viking Era," in *The Irish World*, ed. Barry Raftery (London, 1974), 69.

> ...in the end she crossed over to a certain place situated on the slope of the mountain of Culind, so that there she could listen to the sweet discourses of her Spouse without any earthly impediment. And there she laid the foundations of her church for the handmaids of Christ.[13]

It is at this point that we hear the description of Darerca's own unique form of spiritual asceticism quoted, in part, at the beginning of this paper. In the rest of the passage, we hear how her prayers drove away "the foul clouds of northern darkness" and "how great the battles in which she sweated to overcome demons."[14] The implements of her asceticism became her relics after her death:

> The hoe she used for digging was kept for many years after her death in her monastery in her honour. They also kept for a long tine, with great reverence, her badgerskin garment—more precious than gowns of silk-and the wooden comb with which once a year (on the Feast of the Lord) it was her custom to comb her hair.[15]

As it is at Killeavy, her most successful monastic community, that she attains the heights of intensity in her pursuit of the eastern eremitical ideal, it is my contention that Killeavy's importance and identity are equated with its saint's asceticism. The portrayal of this symbiotic relationship gives us another clue as to how the ascetic and communal ideals were reconciled, at least ideologically, in Irish monastic culture as a whole. Nevertheless it is not just her asceticism that is presented in this life. Depictions of Darerca chastising and advising her nuns show the need for the community to maintain discipline, to work together and support each other in order to conform to the rigors of monastic life.

The *Life of Darerca*, like the lives of most saints, was undoubtedly written after a period of crisis and was meant to re-establish the identity of the monastery with which the saint was associated as well

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[13] "Inde se transtulit ad quendam locum prope montem Culind positum, ut ibi dulcia sponsi sui colloquia sine impedimentum mondialium audiret. Ad huius quoque montis radices quamdam cellulam pro famulabus Christi construi fecit." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 89. Trans. Darerca, 287.

[14] Darerca, 287.

[15] "Eius enim sarculus fossoriumque in suo monasterio post eius obitum pluribus annis honore debito sunt reservata. Eius etiam pelliciam melotenque, olosericis vestibus preciosiora, et pectinem ligneum, quo semel in anno, in Cena videlicet Domini, nisi summa neccessitas infirmitatis compellaret, crines pectinare consueverat, cum magna veneratione longe tempore reservaverunt." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 89. Trans. Darerca, 288.

as to advertise that the saint had not only survived the crisis, but was still providing for the community so that it could continue fulfilling its spiritual function. The ninth century was particularly chaotic but, since we do not have a precise date for the composition of the life, it is difficult to say exactly what event or events would have impelled the anonymous hagiographer to put pen to parchment. The main crisis of the ninth century would have been the arrival of the Vikings whose raids wreaked havoc on Irish monasteries.[16] Although there is no evidence that Killeavy suffered at the hands of these raiders until the tenth century, the threat of violence from that quarter would have been ever present. There would have been excessive violence even without the Norse, however, as the network of alliances, treaties, pacts, and hostage-holding that had kept warring dynasties under some kind of control in the eighth century, was beginning to disintegrate by the beginning of the ninth. For example, it is probable that there was an eighth-century pact between the ambitious southern Uí Néill of southern Ulster, close to the territory around Killeavy, and the Uí Dunlainge of Leinster where Kildare is located.[17] This pact is mirrored by another that delineates the division between territory claimed by the monastery of Armagh and that claimed by Brigid's Kildare.[18] Both these agreement were falling apart by the end of the eighth century, a dissolution that may have owed a good deal to the Vikings. The southern Uí Néill, in particular, suffered from warring factions within its own territories as well as conflicts with Leinster and its cousins the northern Uí Néill.[19] The Vikings simply accelerated the preexisting political destabilization. The monastic world was tied to these secular factions. The ambitious propagandists of Armagh had laid claim, from the seventh century on, to St. Patrick as its patron and to an alliance with the powerful southern Uí Néill dynasty whereas Kildare was tied to the Uí Dunlainge. In pursuit of its goal, Armagh was taking advantage of the general chaos of the ninth century to gobble up small vulnerable monasteries shaken loose from their usual protectors by the increasing violence. Killeavy may have felt the hot breath of Armagh on its neck and decided to protect itself by producing a life that advertised as its protector a powerful saint with

[16] Charles Doherty, "The Viking Impact upon Ireland," in *The Vikings in Ireland*, ed. Anne-Christine Larsen (Roskilde, 2001), 29–35.

[17] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland* (London, 1995), 57.

[18] *The Patrician Texts in the Book of Armagh*, ed. Ludwig Bieler (Dublin, 1979), 191.

[19] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, 57.

an identity rooted in the conversion era and associations with Kildare that gave Killeavy another, perhaps less rapacious but certainly more distant, powerful monastery to look to for support.

Another influential force at work in the ninth century was the monastic reform movement of the Céli Dé. Like all monastic reforms, the Céli Dé attempted to disentangle the monastic from the secular by advocating a return to what was thought of as the purer Christianity of the conversion period. For the reformers, this involved both a return to a stringent asceticism and a strict compliance with the monastic rules that governed each community. Monastic rules in Ireland were based on custom and varied according to the dictates of individual abbots and abbesses as opposed to the legally binding Benedictine Rule widely used in Europe that was more comprehensive and less harsh than the Irish rules. According to John Ryan, "Benedictine life was hard enough, but it could not be compared in severity to discipline like the Irish, that preserved the harsher Egyptian tradition."[20] To the Céli Dé, this was the pure native Irish tradition of separation from the secular world to which they wished to return. This reform encouraged an increase of ecclesiastical literature written in the vernacular. Although the *Life of Darerca* was composed in Latin, her image as both an ascetic hermit and an abbess fit the Céli Dé ideal.

The life itself opens with St. Patrick directing Darerca "to come together with other virgins to whom she should teach the fear of God, so that—supported by their help and encouraged by their comfort—she could better bring to a conclusion the good work that she had undertaken."[21] Thus, at the very beginning, the hagiographer sets out the relationship between the saint and her community: she was to teach them, both literally and by her good example, and they were to encourage, support, and provide comfort for her. Although Patrick set her up in the monastic business, he does not confirm her in the faith or even place the veil on her head. Instead we are told that she had confirmed herself through her virginity. As this incident is her only encounter with Patrick, it is perhaps included to emphasize both her

[20] Carey, *King of Mysteries*, 14–15; Ryan, *Irish Monasticism*, 412.

[21] "Predictus ergo pontifex, salutaribus monitis eam in proposito incepto corroborans ac virginalis vite diniitatem collaudans, ei mandavit quod alias virgines sibi copulasset, quas Dei docuisset timorem, quarum etiam adiutorio suffulta, solatio letificata, bonum quod inceperat facilius perficere posset." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 83–4. Trans Darerca, 281–2.

ties to the earliest Christian period in Ireland and that the relationship between Darerca and Patrick, and therefore Killeavy and Armagh, was not one of indebtedness.

Darerca and her little group of eight virgins and one widow are turned over to a priest for instruction in the faith before setting up a community at her parent's house where they remain for an indeterminate period of time. Then we are told that

> ...since she could find no convents of nuns in her own country—although it had been converted to the Faith—she decided to leave her parents and relations and go away. In fact she did not wish to have her devout intentions vitiated through empty discussions and inept conversations with lay people or through frequent encounters with her parents.[22]

The sojourn with her parents conforms to Patrick's views on women leading a monastic life while still in the world, a model he absorbed from eastern tradition where in the beginnings of female monasticism young virgins often started their monastic life in private homes. Her motivation for leaving is representative of the typical monastic impulse, again originating in the East, to separate oneself from society in order to pursue communion with God away from secular concerns.

Upon leaving home, Darerca and her little *familia* travel all the way across Ireland to the Aran Islands to live under the tutelage of St. Ibar. Ibar is thought to have been a pre-patrician saint, a native Irish missionary who, according to one legend, criticized Patrick for being a foreigner.[23] Whether or not the emphasis on her association with Ibar was meant to distance Killeavy from Patrick's Armagh, it does help to situate the saint and her community squarely in the midst of the earliest Irish Christian traditions. Having remained with Ibar for what the hagiographer tells us was "a long time," they follow him all the way back across Ireland to Beg Eriu, an island in Wexford Harbor in the southwest. On the way, however, Darerca hears of the fame of St. Brigid and obtains permission from Ibar to visit her at

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[22] "...sed in sua gente, licet ad fidem conversa, nullas monialium mansiones aspiciens, suis parentibus atque cognatis relictis, abire cogitavit. Noluit etenim sue religionis propositum vanis secularium personarum colloquiis ineptisque confabulationibus, parentum frequentationibus, ut sepissime contingit, enervari." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 84. Trans. Darerca, 282.

[23] A fragment remains of what must have been a *vita* of St. Ibar. Mentions of him in other *vitae*, however, indicate that he was associated with Sts. Declan, Ailbhe, and Kieran and that his missionary activities took place in Leinster and Meath.

Kildare. Darerca's little flock enters Brigid's monastery, becoming a community within a community. Here Darerca displays such humility in the performance of her monastic duties that, "she is even reckoned second only to Brigid for holiness, for worthy practices and for her gift of virtue. Then in obedience to the regulations of the nuns, she was made keeper of the guesthouse, on the instructions of the abbess."[24] So far she has demonstrated all the important monastic virtues: virginity, humility, obedience, and charity. Having proven herself worthy of the title of *secunda Brigida*, she now develops the ability to heal and expel demons. This attracts the attention of the local people who "because of her sanctity... came to her with food and offerings, but, placing her trust in God, she kept none of this to herself, but gave it all, for Christ, to the poor who approached her."[25] It is at this point that the nuns lodge their complaint that Darerca is neglecting their needs. This occurs, then, when she is just beginning to acquire a reputation not only for her manner of living, but for the ability to perform miracles that marks her as a true saint. It is as though she has been serving an apprenticeship, first under Ibar and now under Brigid, and, just as her own saintly power is growing, her nuns sense that she is distancing herself from the physical plane and try to bring her back to earth. Apparently, and perhaps because she is still an apprentice, she has not yet learned how to balance her saintly ascetic devotion to poverty and charity with the needs of those in her care.

Darerca deals with the situation by chastising the nuns, reminding them that "Christ acts through His members and you blame me for what I have done every day; but He can, whenever He wishes, restore to you what you have condemned me for and alleviate the hunger and nakedness of my sisters."[26] After this, Darerca finds twelve new garments that have miraculously appeared on her bed. She brings them to Brigid for the nuns of Kildare, but Brigid gives them back, saying that Darerca's sisters had more need of them. This incident portrays a close relationship or alliance with Kildare that would strengthen Killeavy against the incursions of nearby Armagh. It is also one of several

[24] "... ut etiam post Brigidam vite sanctitate et morum honestate et virtutum gratia secunda putaretur. Omnibus igitur monasterialibus obediens iussionibus, iubente abbatissa, fit portaria hospitalis." Heist. *Vita S. Darercae*, 84. Trans. Darerca, 282–3.

[25] Darerca, 283. (see n. 1)

[26] "'Qui Christum firma fide, sorores mee, secum possident, victu vestituque contente, cuncta sufficienter habebunt.'" Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 85. Trans. Darerca, 283.

indications that Darerca's communities were more marginal and needy than foundations such as Kildare.

After this, Darerca and her nuns journey to Ibar at Wexford where she sets up the first monastery of which she alone is the head. As her reputation grows, so does her community. We are told that "there were many virgins and widows in the community there, as well as queens and noble matrons who gathered round her, to whom she was mistress, showing them by word and deed how to live well in all goodness."[27] Here we have a more orthodox image of an abbess and her community in which her eremitism plays no part. One of the many newcomers was a young girl sent to them by Ibar. Demonstrating her prophetic power, another saintly attribute, Darerca foresees that this girl will bring trouble, as indeed she does: "the same girl, when she arrived at the age of young womanhood, was inflamed by the fires of envy and persuaded by the devil, and she inspired her relations to hatred of St. Darerca."[28] Darerca decides to leave the monastery and everything in it to this girl and her relatives, telling her community that God will provide another place for them. This constant moving must have been difficult for the nuns, especially as their abbess would allow them to take nothing with them. Darerca leaves their physical care in God's hands, but she shows great concern for their spiritual welfare. As they leave this settlement, their way is blocked by a raging river that was ordinarily easily forded. Darerca exhorts her followers to examine their consciences for any sin that may have caused this obstacle to be placed in their path. One woman confesses to having taken a bunch of garlic from the monastery garden. This affords Darerca an opportunity to teach one of her favorite lessons: small sins are as important and detrimental to the soul as big ones and that they must all be vigilant against such seemingly minor indulgences.[29] It is in these types of exhortations that she is most frequently seen as fulfilling her abbatial duties.

[27] "…virginibus et viduis quampluribus inibi congegatis, nec non et reginis ac nobilibus matronis ad eam undique confluentibus, totius probitatis magistra tam verbis quam excemplis bene vivendi normam monstravit." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 85. Trans. Darerca, 283.

[28] "Quod effectus rei certissime probavit. Predicta namque puella, ad iuvenilem perveniens etatem, invidie facibus inflamata, suos consangineos diabolicis persuasionibus in odium sancta Darerce suscitavit." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 86. Trans. Darerca, 284.

[29] "'Si enim maiora ibi reliquimus, minora sine eorum apud quos sunt relicta licentia deferre non debuimus." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 86. Trans. Darerca, 284–5.

She then takes her nuns, fifty of them by now, back to Brigid where she stays for a while before returning to the territory where Darerca's relatives live. Here she establishes the foundation at Faughart, an area also associated with Brigid and situated four leagues from Kildare.[30] At Faughart, we hear an echo of the Céli Dé reformers' injunctions regarding the strict claustration of women when we are told that: "when the virgin of Christ lived here, she never looked at a man...if she had to leave her cell...she made her journey by night and it was her custom to keep her face veiled in case she might encounter someone on the way."[31] This seems out of place with the rest of the text which discusses her wanderings without reference to such severe restrictions, but consistent with the simultaneous themes of her desire for isolation on one hand and her role in the community on the other. One night at Faughart, Darerca hears the sounds of a wedding feast and she is so disturbed by this that she moves her community for the last time so that "she could listen to the sweet discourses of her Spouse without any earthly impediment."[32] So far, she has set up a community with her parents and founded three monasteries and moved on from each. We are not told why she leaves the foundation near Kildare, but she abandons the other three establishments due to problems with the local secular communities. She is searching for a place of solitude where, having served her apprenticeship and having been trained in sainthood, she can legitimately take up the eremitic life and commune with her god in solitude.

Not far from Faughart is the mountain of Guillion where she builds her church of Killeavy for her community that now comprises one hundred and fifty nuns. Here, at the end of her travels and after her long experience as an apprentice, as an abbess, and as a holy person, we are given the first description of her unique and rigorous ascetic practice that marks her not only as a saint, but as a particularly Irish saint, an exemplar of that harsh Egyptian tradition that, as we have seen, was the hallmark of Irish monastic identity. But, we have also

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[30] De Paor, *Saint Patrick's World*, 47–8.

[31] "Ibi igitur virgo Christi inhabitans, ut certissime fertur, nullum fuit intuita virum. Si quando vero neccessitas egrediendi cellam perurgebat, ut silicet infirmos visitaret aut vinctos prece vel precio e carcere solveret, nocturno tempore, ne ab hominibus videretur, iter agebat; et si quos in via obvios habebat, velata facie alloqui solebat." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 87. Trans. Darerca, 285.

[32] "...ut ibi dilcia sponsi sui colloquia sine impedimento mundialium audiret." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 89. Trans. Darerca, 287.

seen that coenobitism was essential to Irish monasticism which becomes a blend of the eremitic and the coenobitic, just as Irish Christianity is a hybrid of both pre-Christian and Christian Irish culture. In a sense, then, the Irish do not reconcile the tension between these contradictory elements, but embrace it instead. This same inclusive resolution is seen in the *Life of Darerca*. In the beginning of this paper, the quoted description of Darerca's ascetic practice left out one important phrase: "Like a daughter of John the Baptist, or the prophet Elijah, she waged war most strenuously in this desert place, clad in sack cloth like a stern hermit, while bound indissolubly to her sisters by their most steady love and support. . . ."[33] She is a hermit and yet not a hermit because she is "bound indissolubly to her sisters," who love and support her as she battles demons on the mountaintop to the greater spiritual benefit of all her followers. This relationship between Darerca and her community is the fulfillment of St. Patrick's directions given in the beginning of the life, except that here Darerca has transcended her earlier role of abbess as teacher and exemplar to embrace with vigor the Irish eremitic ideal of the heights of spiritual perfection while at the same time maintaining a disciplined, orderly monastic community of nuns who play their supporting role to perfection. Thus the seeming tension between the exigencies of ascetic poverty and the material needs of the nuns depicted at the beginning of the life appear to be resolved at the end by the depiction of this hybrid community that accommodates both the eremitic and the coenobitic ideals.

Although the chaotic forces at work in the ninth century that may have caused the life to be written in the first place render any straightforward interpretation of this material problematic, it seems to me that the manner in which the *vita* embraces the two disparate elements of the ascetic and the communal life is representative of the Irish monastic ideal. As John Carey tells us, the Irish had a "flexible appreciation of diversity, open to mysteries and tolerant of alternatives . . ."[34] The Irish awareness of themselves as a hybrid culture, combined with what Carey calls their "reckless inclusiveness," makes it easy to understand that they could embrace their pagan past and Christian present, eastern eremitism and western coenobitism, with equal vigor. Although the hagiographer

[33] "Johannis igitur Baptiste ac Helye prophete filia, asperis induta pannis, quod fortis heremita, cum suis consororibus tenacissimo caritatis glutino sibi invicem indissolubiliter coherentibus, in predicto deserto fortissimam fertur peregisse militiam." Heist, *Vita S. Darercae*, 89. Trans. Darerca, 287.

[34] Carey, *King of Mysteries*, 22.

does not put much emphasis on the actual monastery of Killeavy, it is not until the saint founds that community that she reveals the most characteristic and identifying feature of its patron saint and abbess: her unique ascetic practice. Portraying Darerca's intimate association with the great saints of the era of Irish conversion and binding together her asceticism with the community of Killeavy, presents the monastery's identity in the aftermath of crisis as not only resilient and strong, but as expressive of the most cherished ideals of the early Irish church. Perhaps this powerful image was instrumental in the survival of a vulnerable woman's foundation in a time of great stress.

The popularity of Darerca's image was such that her *vita* was rewritten three times between the ninth and the thirteenth centuries, always retaining and even enhancing the emphasis on her very Irish asceticism. In these later lives, Darerca, a symbol of the distinctly Irish form of monasticism, is depicted as converting and founding monasteries in northern England and Scotland.[35] These lives serve as reminders of the debt owed by many areas of the British Isles, originally converted by Irish missionaries, to this unique inclusiveness of Irish Christianity.

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[35] The second life, the *Vita Sanctae Moninnae*, was written by a man named Conchubranus in the tenth or eleventh century and names the saint as Moninna, which may have been Darerca's nickname. Conchubranus probably absorbed legends of Irish missionary saints who had taken the message of the new religion to other areas of the British Isles, as Moninna is depicted as making several journeys to Scotland and northern Britain where she founded numerous churches and monasteries including the abbey at Burton in the west Midlands. In the third life, written in England at Burton Abbey by the abbot Geoffrey in the twelfth century, she becomes Modwenna, legendary foundress of Burton, who may have been Anglo-Saxon or Welch. Geoffrey had received the *Life of Moninna* from a bishop in Dublin in response to letters he had sent asking for information on the saint whose bones he found in his abbey church and whose legend had long been lost. The similarity of the names may be all that was necessary to allow the conflation of the two saints, Moninna and Modwenna. The fourth life, written anonymously early in the thirteenth century probably at Burton, was composed in over 8,000 lines of Anglo-Norman verse and reflects the cultural milieu of that era while retaining the essence of the earlier life of Darerca. As mentioned above, all these lives emphasized the saint's Irish roots and her typically Irish asceticism.

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CHAPTER TWO

A TALE OF TWO DIOCESES: PROLOGUES AS LETTERS IN THE *VITAE* AUTHORED BY JACQUES DE VITRY AND THOMAS DE CANTIMPRÉ

Christina Roukis-Stern

Jacques de Vitry

In the prologue of the *Vita Mariae Oignacensis* (1215) author Jacques de Vitry introduced his readers not only to his saintly subject but also to her setting, the diocese of Liège. Jacques opened the *vita* with a description of Liège as a holy female wonderland, a place where saintly women levitated, jumped for joy, and performed a variety of saintly acts. Although much of the subsequent text focused more explicitly on the life and holy deeds of its subject, Marie d'Oignies (1177–1213), the *vita*'s prologue is intriguing for several reasons. Jacques, a prominent cleric in the Low Countries in the early thirteenth century,[1] used the opening section as an opportunity to sketch an appealing vista to showcase the virtues of his own region. Evoking language from the biblical Song of Songs, he effectively conjured an image of a lush, enchanted land wherein a visitor would encounter a holy female at seemingly every turn. His delineation of Liège as a holy region was pointed and intentional; Jacques not only dedicated the *vita* to a fellow churchman, Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, but also interspersed into the text a number

[1] The dates for Jacques de Vitry's life are circa 1160 (between 1160–70) to 1240. Jacques was a preacher of the Albigensian Crusade, as well as of crusades to the Holy Land (circa 1213–1216), and he was later involved directly in crusading causes in the Holy Land, both in Acre and Egypt. There are a number of works on the life of Jacques de Vitry. Ernest W. McDonnell's landmark and accessible study of the beguine movement offers a cogent overview of his life. See McDonnell, *The Beguines and Beghards in Medieval Culture, with special emphasis on the Belgian scene* (1954; repr., New York, 1969), 20–39. One of the primary sources for Jacques's life is Thomas's own supplement to Jacques's *Vita Mariae*, which will be discussed below. Its reliability, however, is in question. Other studies of Jacques's life include: Philipp Funk, *Jakob von Vitry: Leben und Werke* (1909; repr., Hildesheim, 1973), as well as Ursmer Berlière, "Les évêques auxiliaires de Liège," *Revue Bénédictine*, 29 (1912): 69–73.

of comments that were addressed specifically to Bishop Fulk. A sense of clerical rivalry characterizes Jacques's remarks, as Jacques drew a striking contrast between his own diocese, a flowering female holy land, and Fulk's Toulouse, portrayed as a dry heretical desert.

The dynamics of the prologue raise a host of questions about Jacques's own fundamental motivations for writing the *vita*, as well as broader questions about the roles of prologues in hagiographical materials. Did Jacques decide to write the *vita* of Marie primarily to record and publicize the good deeds of his saintly friend? Or did he write about Marie with the aim of spotlighting the spiritual reputation of his own ecclesiastic area? How should we understand the relation between the prologue and the subsequent text? Even more importantly, what were Jacques's intentions in dedicating the work to Bishop Fulk? Viewed as a whole, the prologue reads as a long letter from one well-known cleric to another. But this was a form of correspondence that was not private. Jacques's letter to Bishop Fulk would ultimately be seen by a large public consisting of various lay and clerical readers.[2] Thus, what was Jacques's purpose in constructing the prologue as he did? Moreover, how are we to make sense of Jacques's focus on place—his romanticized portrayal of Liège and his harsh public criticisms of Fulk's diocese of Toulouse?

Although Jacques's *vita* of Marie has received much scholarly attention in recent years, the mysteries of its prologue have yet to be fully explored. The same is true of the intriguing prologues of the many *vitae* written by Jacques's fellow churchman and protégé, Thomas de Cantimpré. Thomas and Jacques were both important clerics of the thirteenth century, active in crusading and reform efforts. Both men were not only vocal supporters of holy women but they also composed stunning hagiographic portraits of spiritual females in the dynamic, commercially active regions of Liège and Brabant in the eastern Low Countries. Their female-centered *vitae*, which include both Jacques's *vita* of Marie and Thomas's supplement to it (c. 1231), as well as Thomas's full-length *vitae* for Christina of Saint-Trond (c. 1232), Margaret of Ypres (c. 1240), and Lutgard of Aywières (c. 1246), constitute an important

[2] As noted by some scholars, the *vita* of Marie d'Oignies did indeed circulate widely, and the Latin version of Jacques's *vita* of Marie exists to this day in at least twenty-six manuscripts that can be located across Western Europe. See Jennifer Helen Carpenter, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: The *Vitae* of the *Mulieres Religiosae* of Liège" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1997), 27–8.

body of historical evidence for the urbanizing Low Countries of the Central Middle Ages. Both individually and as a set, the *vitae* of Jacques and Thomas offer a wealth of clues for analyzing networks of relationships—the relationships of male clerics with holy women as well as of male clerics with one another. The prologues of their *vitae* hint at clerical rivalries, social connections, and personal friendships, including Thomas's own profound and intense relationship with his mentor Jacques. Additionally, the *vitae* offer vantage points for understanding the psychology of male clerics during the pivotal era of the thirteenth century. Their written works attest not only to their own deep-seated fears about the lurking dangers of heresy—an anxiety they shared with many clerical leaders of the time—but also to their own inveterate tendencies to seek reassurance in the steadfast faith of their holy female peers. Tellingly, the two hagiographers, both advocates of crusading causes, envision their own local area of the Low Countries as a model of feminine holiness, an oasis sustained in part by the piety and compassion of its exceptional holy women.

For scholars of Europe's Central Middle Ages, hagiographical materials have proved vital not only for reconstructing a female-inclusive picture of the medieval era but also for examining the broader, dramatic, and even contradictory changes that defined Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[3] Jacques's *vita* of Marie d'Oignies, a lengthy and even monumental work, is an important hagiographic source, considered by some scholars as paradigmatic of thirteenth-century piety.[4] Marie d'Oignies was an uncloistered holy female, typical of the time, who moved freely around Nivelles, Oignies, and other towns in and

[3] The bibliography on holy women in the Middle Ages is extensive. Some major works on beguines and other uncloistered women include McDonnell's study, cited in footnote 1, as well as the following: Herbert Grundmann's seminal 1935 study, available in a modern edition, titled *Religious Movements in the Middle Ages: The Historical Links between Heresy, the Mendicant Orders, and the Women's Religious Movement in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century, with the Historical Foundations of German Mysticism*, trans. Steven Rowan with an introduction by Robert E. Lerner (Notre Dame and London, 1995). See also Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia, 2001). For more on medieval literature about holy women, including hagiographical sources, see: Catherine Mooney, ed., *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia, 1999); Elizabeth A. Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York and Oxford, 1994); and Ulrike Wiethaus, ed., *Flesh and Light: The Religious Experience of Medieval Women Mystics* (Syracuse, 1993).

[4] Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1992), 119–150.

around the diocese of Liège. At its most basic level Jacques's *vita* of her offers a sketch of a good Christian who performed many acts of penance, charity, and eucharistic devotion. Yet the *vita* also reveals a broader contextual picture, as Jacques traced Marie's movements as she visited churches, anchoritic cells, fields, orchards, and people's homes. He also showed Marie as interacting with a variety of regional individuals, including knights, dukes, monks, anchoresses, beguines, priests, nobles, and bishops.

The *Vita Mariae* was written in 1215, the same year in which the Fourth Lateran Council was held.[5] Although Jacques was a champion of holy women, including those living in the uncloistered beguine style, his reasons for defending them radiated out of a desire to reform and purify Christian society. Jacques, like many of his peers, supported an expanding Christendom, and he was troubled by the problem of heresy within its borders. As an ardent reformer who became Bishop of Acre in 1216, Jacques belonged to a centralizing clerical vanguard that saw the Church as righteous and triumphant and as the proper moral arbiter for his milieu. While telling the story of Marie's life, Jacques incorporated salient messages about penance, purgatory, and other doctrinal matters.

As noted above, the *vita* opens with a prologue that might be subtitled "A Tale of Two Dioceses." Jacques dedicated the work specifically to Bishop Fulk of Toulouse, who served as bishop from 1206 to 1225 and who was actively involved in the Albigensian Crusades against Christian heretics. (It should be noted that Fulk himself had an interesting life as a once-married troubadour turned cleric.)[6] In several passages Jacques praised his own diocese of Liège, noting that it was blessed with the presence of pious females and that it offered succor and refuge to clerics fleeing from the heresy-ridden territory of southern France. Invoking the Exodus story, Jacques addressed Bishop Fulk with the following:

[5] Carl Joseph Hefele, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, Nouvelle traduction française corrigée et augmentée par H. Leclercq, tome v, deuxième partie (Hildesheim & New York, 1973). See pages 1316–1398 for an overview of the history and significance of Fourth Lateran as well as for Latin texts of its canonical decrees. The Fourth Lateran Council is associated with the centralizing activities of thirteenth-century ecclesiastic authorities.

[6] For more on the life of Fulk (c. 1150–1231), see Nicole Morgan Schulman, "From Lover to Villain, From Sinner to Saint: The Varied Career of Folco, Troubadour, Monk, and Bishop of Toulouse (c. 1150–1231)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1998).

> You know, I repeat, that when you came to our country, it seemed to you that you were in the promised land, for I heard you say how you left Egypt in your own regions and, travelling through the desert, how you found *the promised land in the diocese of Liège*... Indeed, as you yourself said to me, you were filled with wonder by certain women who wept more for a single venial sin than did the men of your land over a thousand mortal sins...[7] (emphasis mine).

Not only did Jacques draw a nexus between women, tears, and holy verdant land but he also equated heresy with male callousness and dry desert. Incorporating imagery from the Song of Songs, Jacques accentuated the sheer number of holy women while stressing his own identification with Liège.

> When you came to our regions, you saw that it was exactly as you had heard. Indeed, you heard so much that you would hardly have believed it had you not known it by experience and with the clear-sighted eyes of faith. You saw many holy virgins in the lily gardens (cf. Song 6:1) of the Lord and you rejoiced. You saw crowds of them in different places where they scorned carnal enticements for Christ...[8]

Jacques then proceeded to introduce Marie, whom he described as "the sun among the stars,"[9] and to connect her firmly with the broader collectivity of holy females that comprised his diocese. Over the remaining course of the prologue he drew an impressionistic overview of the recent history of Liège, including the siege in 1212 by the forces of Duke Henry I of Brabant. He also introduced by deeds and descriptions,

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[7] English-language translations of some longer passages of the *Vita Mariae* follow those of Margot King, trans. with notes by Margot H. King and Miriam Marsolais, *The Life of Marie d'Oignies by Jacques de Vitry*, from the fourth edition of the *Two Lives of Marie d'Oignies* (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing Co., 1998, second printing 1999). The Peregrina Translations series has played a vital role to make the lives of holy women more accessible to a broad English-language audience. King, *The Life of Marie*, 41. Jacques de Vitry, *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis* from *Acta Sanctorum, Junius 5* [June 23] (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643): 636–666, hereinafter cited as *VMO*. *VMO, Prologus* [2], 636. "Te enim narrante audivi, quod reliqueras, Aegyptum in partibus tuis, & transiens per desertum, terram promissionis in partibus Leodii invenisti...imo (sicut mihi dixisti) quasdam mulieres magis pro uno veniali lugentes, quam homines in partibus tuis pro mille mortalibus, mirareris..."

[8] King, *The Life of Marie*, 41; *VMO, Prologus* [2–3], 636. "veniens ad partes nostras, sicut audivisti, sic vidisti, ut imo plusquam audivisti; itaque vix posses credere, nisi fide oculata per experientiam cognovisses. Vidisti enim (& gavisus es) in hortis liliorum Domini multas sanctarum Virginum in diversis locis catervas, quae spretis pro Christo carnalibus illecebris..."

[9] *VMO, Prologus* [9], 638. "tamquam sol inter stellas mirabiliter resplenduit"

though not by name, some of the area's most fervent women.[10] By using the first-person form at several junctures, combined with the language of wonder, Jacques conveyed his own awe at what he witnessed: women performing holy acts; women engaged in bodily rapture; women refreshed by the Paschal Lamb; even a woman who expressed her joy by jumping energetically. "Marvels followed more marvels," asserts Jacques as he takes the bishop—and the modern reader—on an eyewitness journey through his diocesan garden.[11] The relation of holy female bodies to the holy diocese is key, as Jacques depicted Liège as a fragrant land watered and nourished by the tears of its compassionate female residents. Jacques described holy women as "overflowing with works of mercy"[12] and portrayed their flowing tears as a mellifluous and even organic medium that linked their profound piety to the world around them. (Indeed, the prologue foreshadows later sections of the *vita* wherein whole passages were devoted to detailing Marie's tears as they gushed from her eyes, flowed down her cheeks, and soaked her veil or the ground.) In one section of the prologue, Jacques even juxtaposed the purity of the city's virgins with the sexual threat posed by Duke Henry I's rapacious soldiers. While recounting the 1212 attack on Liège, Jacques highlighted the moral fortitude of its female inhabitants. While some virgins fled to the churches, others "threw themselves into the river and chose to die rather than to incur harm to their chastity."[13]

The *Vita Mariae* may be a testament to Marie herself, but the prologue is a testament to Liège and its collectivity of good women. Even when it was besieged by corrupting forces, Liège stood strong, invigorated by the strength of its spiritually pure women. Jacques's tendency to configure his diocese as female, wondrous, and heresy-free (and to broadcast it as such to Bishop Fulk and a public audience) seems to parallel a dynamic found throughout the *vita*. In times of crisis or doubt, Jacques often looked to holy females for reassurance.[14] Even when he was in doubt

[10] *VMO, Prologus* [5–9], 637–638.

[11] *VMO, Prologus* [5], 637. "Mirandis plus miranda succedunt."

[12] *VMO, Prologus* [2], 636. "in operibus misericordiae abundantes"

[13] King, *The Life of Marie*, 44; *VMO, Prologus* [5], 637. "in fluvium se projiciebant, magis eligentes mori, quam damnum castitatis incurrere"

[14] *VMO*, Book II, features an assortment of vignettes involving various named clerics in the community while it focuses on the themes of fear and anxiety. Chapter 3 of this author's dissertation includes a complete discussion of Jacques's reliance on Marie's strength, particularly in times of tension. See Roukis-Stern, "At the Crossroads of Male Anxiety and Aspiration: Marvels, Movements, and Marginality in the *Vita* of

about his own priestly effectiveness, he sought consolation from the figure of Marie.[15] The psychological dimension of this dependency is intriguing. As a strict moralist and a crusading bishop, Jacques belonged to a male hierarchy intent not only on consolidating its authority but also willing to use forceful means to do so. Yet, at the same time, his writings attest not only to his great admiration for individual women like Marie but also to his appreciation for gentler, emotional, and, one might say, female forms of affective piety. For Jacques there was seemingly no contradiction between his esteem for female spirituality and his readiness to defend, expand, and reform Christianity with coercive and even military means if necessary. Indeed, these two perspectives may have complemented one another.

Thomas de Cantimpré

Thomas de Cantimpré, author of four female-centered *vitae*, also made active, if varied, use of his prologues, and his *vitae*'s opening sections are rich in historical clues. As noted above, Thomas, who lived from approximately 1201 to 1270, was a reforming cleric and a protégé of Jacques.[16] Thomas was also a prolific writer, whose works ranged from *Bonum Universale de Apibus* to the *Liber de Natura Rerum*. Yet his particular interest in writing *vitae* of holy women seems to have stemmed in part from his desire to emulate his older mentor. A close reading of Thomas's *vitae*, both individually and as a group, yields a panoply of clues for tracing local clerical relationships and for understanding the author's own attitudes towards female religiosity. His prologues are vital as repositories of historical information.

At two ends of the spectrum are Thomas's *vita* of Christina of Saint-Trond and his *vita* of Margaret of Ypres. The *Vita Christinae* was

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Christina *Mirabilis*, A Thirteenth-Century Holy Woman of Saint-Trond (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2003).

[15] *VMO*, Bk. II [86], 659.

[16] Major studies on the life of Thomas de Cantimpré include: Alexander Kaufmann, *Thomas von Chantimpr*é (Cologne, 1899); Paul Kirsch, *Des Thomas von Chantimpré Buch der Wunder und denkwürdigen Vorbilder* (Gleiwitz, 1875), and, more recently, Thomas W. Grzebien, III, "Penance, Purgatory, Mysticism and Miracles: The Life, Hagiography, and Spirituality of Thomas of Cantimpré (1200–1270)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1989).

Thomas's first full-length *vita*, written around 1232,[17] while the *Vita Margarete* was written around 1240,[18] when he was older and his clerical career was more fully established. Placed side by side, the differences between the *vitae*'s respective prologues are striking. The *Vita Christinae* focused on a woman called Christina *Mirabilis*, or the Marvelous. She was an unusual saintly subject—a woman of wonders—who died, was resurrected, walked on water, rolled in fire, levitated, and performed a variety of belief-defying miracles. In order to establish the *vita*'s authenticity, Thomas opened by invoking the name of his mentor Jacques three times in the short prologue.[19] Moreover, Thomas cited a passage from Jacques's *Vita Mariae*, a passage from its prologue in which Jacques had described an unnamed woman who "would turn herself around in fire" and "would linger in icy water."[20] Thomas maintained that this woman was Christina of Saint-Trond (1150–1224), the subject of his own *vita*. In opening the *Vita Christinae* in such a manner, Thomas harnessed the figure of the wondrous holy woman to connect his own legacy to that of Jacques. However, apart from those few mentions of his mentor, the prologue of the *Vita Christinae* lacks other references to the local clerical community.[21] This lack of "anchoring" seems to have reflected Thomas's own position at the time, as well as the freestanding status of his female subject. During her life Christina had no official affiliation with any particular order. Moreover, in 1232, neither did Thomas.

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[17] Thomas de Cantimpré, *Vita Christinae Mirabilis*. From *Acta Sanctorum, Julius 5* [July 24] (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643): 637–660, hereinafter cited in notes as *VCM*. The date of 1232 is generally accepted, based on Thomas's own comment that he wrote the *vita* not more than eight years after Christina's death in 1224. See *VCM, Prologus* [2], 650. The Latin *vita* is accessible in an English-language translation, published by Peregrina Publishing Co. See Margot H. King, *The Life of Christina the Astonishing by Thomas de Cantimpré*, translated with introduction and notes by Margot H. King, assisted by David Wiljer (Toronto, 1999; reprint, 2002).

[18] Thomas de Cantimpré, *Vita Margarete de Ypris*, ed. G. Meersseman, "Les frères prêcheurs et le mouvement dévôt en Flandre au XIIIe siècle," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 18 (1948), 106–130, cited hereafter in notes as *VMY*. For English-language translation, see *The Life of Margaret of Ypres*, translated with introduction and notes by Margot H. King (Toronto, 1990).

[19] *VCM, Prologus* [1–3], 650.

[20] See Jacques's *VMO, Prologus* [8], 638, which is cited in Thomas's *VCM, Prologus* [1], 650. With minor exceptions, Thomas's citation of the passage is essentially accurate. The Latin text of the *VCM* describes Christina in the following manner: "Unde longo tempore ita mirabiliter a Domino afflicta est; ut quandoque se volutaret in ignem; [&] quandoque in hyeme, in aqua glaciali diu moraretur..."

[21] The *vita*'s text contains references to some local figures and places, but the prologue itself is vague. With respect to affiliation, Christina lived in a local convent at various times during her long life, but it seems that she was not affiliated officially.

Thomas was in a transitional stage that year, as he moved from being an Augustinian canon to joining the Dominican Order.[22] Tellingly, his *vita* depicted its saintly subject as moving kinetically and miraculously across semi-mythicized terrain, free of conventional moorings or everyday constraints. The *vita* as a whole reads as an independent text with few ties to the local physical and social landscapes.

The *Vita Margarete*, by contrast, is a relatively staid and prosaic work but one that was grounded firmly within a regional network. Margaret was a quiet woman, and her life consisted of simple and straightforward acts of piety and penance. She was so solidly grounded that many of her actions were "contained" literally within the very walls of her family's home. Thomas used the prologue to dedicate the *vita* to Margaret's confessor, a Dominican preacher named Friar Zegher, whom Thomas called "my friend and brother in Christ, most beloved Friar Zegher."[23] By 1240 Thomas had been a Dominican for eight years, and he clearly saw himself and his subject through the filter of that experience. Thomas continued the dedication by exhorting Friar Zegher to send his greetings to a broader circle of people, including Margaret's relatives and Friar Jacques de Halle.[24] Both friars, Zegher and Jacques de Halle, were also spiritual advisors to the Countess Jeanne of Brabant (1202–1244), herself a key figure in the support of both the Dominican Order and regional beguine movements.[25] Thus, the prologue hints both explicitly and implicitly at a wider web of regional clerical and lay relationships. Moreover, the prologue's emphasis on Dominican friars and their patrons dovetails artfully with the *vita*'s concluding imagery. Thomas ended by describing a miracle in which the recently deceased Margaret appeared to a Dominican friar as he was preaching. She held out a holy book before the cleric as if to inspire and validate his sermon.[26] Viewed as a whole, the *Vita Margarete* both reflected and bolstered the aims of Thomas's own order, and it would appear that Thomas intended for the work to circulate within the regional community of Dominicans and their supporters. It

[22] See Grzebien, "Penance, Purgatory, Mysticism, and Miracles," 2–12, 39–40, for discussion of Thomas's life from childhood to his early thirties. Thomas professed as an Augustinian canon at age 16 or so and fifteen years later, at the age of thirty-one or two, joined the Dominican Order.

[23] *VMY, Prologus*, 106. "amico et fratri in Christo karissimo fratri Sigero"

[24] *VMY, Prologus*, 107.

[25] King, *The Life of Margaret of Ypres*, 26.

[26] *VMY*, Chapter 57, 130.

was a *vita* produced within and for the benefit of the local community. Yet, interestingly, its style lacks the daring and imaginative flair of the earlier, "freer" *vita* of Christina *Mirabilis*.

Thomas's Supplement to the *Vita Mariae* and his *Vita Lutgardis* are perhaps the most intriguing of Thomas's four female-centered *vitae* for what they reveal about the intricacies of the author's own personal relationships, both with fellow clergy and with holy women. The Supplement, additionally, raises a few provocative questions about Thomas's own friendship with Jacques. Thomas wrote the Supplement to Jacques's *vita* of Marie in 1231 to offer an addendum on the post-mortem miracles of Marie.[27] By writing the work Thomas was clearly attempting to link his reputation with that of Jacques, a pattern that would be re-affirmed a year later with his composition of Christina's *vita*. Thomas's Supplement contains some dramatic miracles and, to some extent, foreshadows the theatrics of the *Vita Christinae*. Thomas opened modestly with a dedication to Prior Giles of Oignies, explaining that he wished to add to Jacques's prodigious work. Thomas stated that he wished to relay the further good news about Marie's saintly legacy, including those miraculous events missing from Jacques's original piece.[28]

What is most striking about the prologue and subsequent text is how the figure of Jacques hovers in the shadows. Not only did Jacques feature as a character in some of the Supplement's vignettes but it also appears that many of Thomas's comments were addressed specifically to him. At the time of its composition, Jacques had been away from Liège for almost fifteen years, first as a bishop of Acre and then as a cardinal-bishop of Tusculanum. But, according to Thomas, Marie wanted Jacques to come back to his beloved diocese, and Thomas chronicled Marie's pleas for Jacques to return.[29] However, by 1231, Marie herself had been dead for about eighteen years, and it is clear that it was Thomas who so dearly wished for his mentor to come home. Yet—to add to the intrigue—it seems that Thomas himself may not have been able to admit to his feelings. Thus, there exists a disjuncture between his stated purpose and the resulting text, which reads as a clarion call

[27] Thomas de Cantimpré, *Vita Mariae Oigniacensis, Supplementum*. From *Acta Sanctorum, Iunius 5* [June 23] (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643): 666–677, cited hereafter as *VMO Supp*. An English-language translation is available from Peregrina. See Thomas de Cantimpré, *Supplement to Jacques de Vitry's Life of Marie d'Oignies*, translated by Hugh Feiss in *Two Lives of Marie d'Oignies* (Toronto, 1998), 213–261.

[28] *VMO Supp., Prologus* [1], 666 and Chapter 1 [3], 668.

[29] *VMO Supp.*, Chapter 4 [22–27], 674–676.

for Jacques's return. By the end of the Supplement, Thomas's remarks became insistent, even impassioned. Thomas finally expressed in his own voice his love for Jacques and his desire to spend time with him.

> So, I pray to you, holy father [meaning Jacques], and I ask with copious tears, do not be angry at me for saying these things . . . With what charity I love you, with what sincere love I embrace you, he who knows all things. When I was not yet fifteen years old and you were not a bishop, I heard you preaching in Lorraine. I loved you with such a veneration that I was happy just at the sound of your name. From then on a special love for you stayed with me . . .[30]

Viewed in its totality, Thomas's supplemental *vita* reads as a type of clerical correspondence, quite emotional in nature, by which one cleric "used" hagiographical writing about a specific female subject not simply to connect himself to his fellow hagiographer but also to send a series of urgent emotional messages. Although it is not clear if Thomas's articulated love for Jacques was of an erotic nature, it does seem to have been fervent and even obsessive. At this point, any discussion is necessarily speculative, but Thomas's language raises some interesting and, I would add, poignant questions.

The *Vita Lutgardis* (c. 1246 or so), which is considered by many to be the most polished of Thomas's work, offers yet another fascinating example of a thought-provoking *vita*.[31] Thomas not only followed Jacques in characterizing the region (in this case, nearby Brabant) as a garden of female purity but specifically spotlighted the holiness of the area's monastic communities.[32] Miracles and visions abounded in Lutgard's monastery, or so it would appear, and the figure of Lutgard herself beamed with an inner beauty and light so compelling that it transformed the hearts of those around her.[33] Like Jacques's *vita* of

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[30] *VMO Supp.*, Chapter 4 [27], 676. "Precor ergo te, Pater sancte, & profusis lacrymis rogo, ne indigneris mihi ista dicenti . . . Qua enim caritate vos diligam, quam sincero vos amore complectar, ipse novit, qui omnia novit. Nondum enim annorum quindecim aetatem attigeram, cum vos necdum Praesulem in Lotharingiae partibus praedicantem audiens, tanta veneratione dilexi, ut me solius nominis vestri laetificaret auditus: ex tunc mecum vestri amor individuus perseverat." The English-language translation follows that of Hugh Feiss, *Supplement to the Life of Marie d'Oignies*, 254–55.

[31] Thomas de Cantimpré, *Vita S. Lutgardis*. From *Acta Sanctorum, Iunius 3* [June 16] (Antwerp and Brussels, 1643): 234–263, hereinafter cited as *VLA*. For an English-language translation, see Margot H. King, *The Life of Lutgard of Aywières*, translated with notes by Margot H. King (Toronto, 1991).

[32] *VLA, Prologus*, 234.

[33] *VLA*, Bk. I, Chapter 1 [11], 239, and Book II, Chapter 2 [31], 250.

Marie, the *Vita Lutgardis* is a lengthy, detailed, and evocative work, and it contains references to a variety of lay and clerical individuals, including knights, dukes, abbots, abbesses, nuns, and even a pope. Although much of Lutgard's adult life was spent within the walls of her convent, her interactions with her peers were many and diverse. (Indeed, she seems to have received visions of clerics in the afterlife, and Thomas did not hesitate to supply names of clerics who were in heaven and who were in purgatory.[34] He seems to have expected that his readers would know who these individuals were.) Thomas clearly cherished Lutgard, who was both a spiritual advisor to him and a friend; and his relationship with her, as with Jacques, seems to have acquired an intensity that is reflected in the pages of Thomas's writing. Thomas's desire to stay connected to Lutgard, even after her death, seems to indicate that Thomas was an emotional and vulnerable man who pined greatly for human intimacy.

The prologue introduces several key themes. Thomas dedicated it to Hadewijch, the abbess of Lutgard's Cistercian convent in Aywières. Hadewich, who was the abbess from 1230–1248, is described by Thomas as a "lady reverenced and much loved in Christ."[35] Shortly thereafter, Thomas articulated his hope that the *vita* of the "righteous Lutgard" would come into the "possession" of "not only you yourselves but the assemblies of virgins in all the monasteries of Brabant."[36] In a later section Thomas finally disclosed his primary motive for writing the work. The *vita*, he explained, was part of a deal he made with the abbess. In return for a relic from Lutgard's body, Thomas agreed to produce a *vita*.[37]

In one of the more curious sections of the *vita*, Thomas shared his own private exchanges with the (then living) Lutgard. Although campaigns to obtain saintly relics were not unusual in the context of the thirteenth century, Thomas's telling of the event is unforgettable.

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[34] See *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 1 [2–3], 254 for vision involving Domican leader Jordan of Saxony (c. 1190–1237) and *VLA*, Bk. II, Chapter 1 [7], 245, for vision of Pope Innocent III (r. 1198–1216) undergoing purgation.

[35] *VLA, Prologus*, 234. "Dominae Reverendae, & in Christo plurimum diligendae Hawidi."

[36] *VLA, Prologus*, 234. "Ergo non solum vos, sed omnium monasteriorum Brabantiae coetus virginum. Vitam piae Lutgardis suscipiant; ut quae in fama virtutis notissima ómnibus fuit, ipsa brevi libelli hujus insinuatione plenius innotescat; augeatque legentibus virtutem & meritum, quipus preascriptorum aderit virtutis exemplum."

[37] *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 3 [19], 261.

Thomas noted that he had planned for years before Lutgard's death to obtain for himself a relic of her body. He had not only instructed the nuns and lay brothers of Aywières to amputate and preserve for him one of Lutgard's hands but he had also secured the consent of the abbess. At first, he kept his plans a secret from his friend. Gossiping nuns, however, necessitated a change of plans, and Lutgard eventually learned of his intentions. The conversation between the two, as reported by Thomas, is disarmingly frank.[38] Lutgard confronted him, saying "I have heard, dearest son, that you are already planning to cut off my hand after my death. What, I greatly wonder, are you thinking to do with my hand?"[39] After Thomas replied that he believed her hand would be beneficial for his soul and body, Lutgard responded with, "It will be enough for you if after my death you are able to have this finger."[40] Thomas was undaunted, and his next response is even more startling:

> Nothing from your whole body could be enough for me, mother, except that I had your hand or your head. Only those could then comfort me when I am utterly bereft.[41]

The contest for Lutgard's relics continued after her death. Lutgard's prediction that her clerical friend would receive one of her fingers not only came true but appears finally to have satisfied Thomas. Interestingly, Thomas also seemed to have felt the need to defend his actions as justifiable, as though he himself realized on some level that his desire for a relic was excessive and even improper.

Thomas's *Vita Lutgardis* may have been written to fulfill a contract with a headstrong abbess, but it is also a sublime work that offers many "windows" through which to view Thomas's relationships with male and female religious. Thomas gives readers an intimate, if indirect, glimpse at his own fragile self and his deep-seated need for human companionship. Thomas, like Jacques, was a man of principle and

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[38] *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 3 [19], 261.

[39] *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 3 [19], 261. "Audivi, fili carissime, quia manum mihi post mortem abscindere jam disponis: tu autem quid de manu mea facere cogites multum miror." The English language translation follows that of King, *The Life of Lutgard*, 108.

[40] *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 3 [19], 261; King, *The Life of Lutgard*, 108. "Satis, inquit, tibi sufficiet, cum istum digitum post mortem meam habere potueris."

[41] *VLA*, Bk. III, Chapter 3 [19], 261; King, *The Life of Lutgard*, 108. "Nihil, inquam mihi ex tuo, Mater, corpore sufficere poterit, nisi manum aut caput habeam, quo tunc relever te orbatus."

determination—a career churchman, an advocate of doctrinal orthodoxy, a preacher of penitential practices. Yet he seems also to have been a vulnerable individual, a flesh-and-blood man who was beset by anxieties and whose own sense of self was rooted within the local community. Thomas's intense desire for friendship, both with men and women, is moving, to say the least.

Conclusion

The *vitae* of Jacques and Thomas are prismatic works that teem with clues for understanding the changing culture and complexities of thirteenth-century spirituality. Although these *vitae* have received renewed scholarly attention in the past few decades, there is more fruitful exploration that needs to be done. The study here suggests new avenues of investigation, based on the premise that the *vitae*'s prologues attest to their social function and meanings within their given medieval contexts. Individually and as a set, these materials hold clues that are vital for tracing and understanding networks of relationships, including those of clerics with one another. Moreover, they may enable scholars to better understand the psychology of Christian leaders during an era of crusading and centralization. Underpinning the *vitae* of Thomas and Jacques was a genuine appreciation for holy women, both as ideal models of Christian sanctity and as real-life individuals and friends. Their conceptualizations of local space as holy, female, and wondrous attests to the profundity of their faith in women like Marie, Lutgard, Margaret, and Christina.

Additionally, the *vitae* allow readers a glimpse of the writers' own fears and insecurities. Modern scholars may never fully understand or "intuit" the sensibilities of men like Thomas or Jacques or the many other clerics who represented the authoritative and, at times, militaristic, church hierarchy during the thirteenth century. Nonetheless, the *vitae* provide some valuable materials for grappling with the challenges of doing so.

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CHAPTER THREE

"WITHIN THE WALLS OF PARADISE": SPACE AND COMMUNITY IN THE *VITA* OF UMILIANA DE' CERCHI (1219–1246)

Anne M. Schuchman

The Franciscan church of Santa Croce in Florence is nearly always packed with tourists, eager to glimpse the final resting places of some of the greatest figures of Italian civilization. Among the members of this "Florentine pantheon" is a thirteenth-century woman named Umiliana de' Cerchi. Her tomb is hardly given a second glance by the crowds, but Umiliana deserves a closer look because of how her life reveals the uses and depictions of the spaces of a quasi-religious laywoman.[1] All the accounts of Umiliana's life are related at least indirectly to one *vita* written shortly after her death in 1246 by Friar Vito da Cortona, which facilitates comparison with later *vitae* for evidence of change. The oldest redaction of this *vita*, found in a fourteenth-century manuscript at the

[1] On Umiliana, see especially Anna Benvenuti Papi, '*In castro poenitentiae*,' *Santità e società femminile nell'Italia medievale* (Rome, 1990), 58–98. See also Maria Romano Franco, *La Beata Umiliana de Cerchi* (Rome, 1977); Bernard Schlager, "Foundresses of the Franciscan Life: Umiliana Cerchi and Margaret of Cortona," *Viator* 29 (1998), 141–66; Anne M. Schuchman, "Literary Collaboration in the *Life of Umiliana dei Cerchi*," *Magistra* 7:2 (Winter 2001), 5–22; ibid. "Political Prophecy in the *vita* of Umiliana de' Cerchi," *Florilegium* 17 (2000), 101–14; ibid. "The *Lives* of Umiliana de' Cerchi: Representations of Female Sainthood in Late Medieval Florence," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 14 (1998); and Monica Cristina Storini, "Umiliana e il suo biografo: Costruzione di un'agiografia femminile fra XIII e XIV secolo," *Annali d'Italianistica* 13 (1995), 19–39; ibid. "Umiliana dei Cerchi: la tradizione della leggenda," *Veltro* 40:3–4 (May–Aug 1996), 298–303. In addition, the selections from the following works directly address Umiliana: Rudolph Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985), 84–113; John Coakley, *Women, Men, and Spiritual Power*, 13–14, 18, 179–180; Robert Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze* II, trans. Giovanni Battista Klein (Florence, 1972–73), 180–188; Carol Lansing, *The Florentine Magnates* (Princeton, 1991), 98–99, 109–142; Claudio Leonardi and Giovanni Pozzi, eds. *Scrittrici mistiche italiane* (Genoa, 1988), 80–93; Elizabeth Petroff, *Body and Soul: Essays on Medieval Women and Mysticism* (New York, 1994), 97–109, 110–136; Raniero Sciamannini, "Umiliana de' Cerchi," *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 3 (1963), coll. 1132–34; André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell. (Cambridge, 1997), 183–187, 207–212, 348–354, 369–372, 439–443; and Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom 1000–1700* (London, 1982), 220–238.

Biblioteca Laurenziana-Medicea in Florence, summarizes Umiliana's short life into three distinct states: virgin, wife, and widow, and their associated places: her father's house, her husband's house, and the Cerchi family towerhouse.[2] This paper is an analysis of Umiliana's spaces and their textual representations, focusing primarily on the space of her widowhood, the family towerhouse.[3] I argue that the earliest *vita* employed this structure as a substitute for the cloister. In addition, the tower rhetorically erased evidence of Umiliana's lack of virginity as well as her participation in a community of laywomen.

According to Vito da Cortona's account of her life, Umiliana experienced a conversion to a more intense religious devotion shortly after her marriage at age sixteen. This resulted in her participation in a group of devout laywomen who traversed Florence caring for the sick,

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[2] "Blessed Umiliana remained a virgin in purity and honesty in the house of her family for sixteen years. The sixteenth year she was handed over to a husband. Widowed after five years, she kept close to the perfect footsteps of Christ, serving God in the tower in her father's house, where a cell was prepared for her, in which, freely abandoned to God, she persisted in devotion for almost five years" (4.54). Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana-Medicea, *MS Laurenziano* 27 Dext. 11. This manuscript has been edited and published in Vito of Cortona, *Vita Humilianae, Acta Sanctorum*, Maii IV (Antwerp, 1685), 385–400. All quotations come from this manuscript and all translations are my own. I have retained the numbering from the *Acta Sanctorum* edition of the manuscript. The first number in the parentheses indicates the chapter and the second the paragraph.

[3] I am using "spaces" to differentiate from a modern, Newtonian idea of space. See Michael Camille, "Signs of the City: Place, Power, and Public Fantasy in Medieval Paris," in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Michael Kobialka (Minneapolis, 2000), 9; Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley, 1997), 103–15. On space and gender in medieval and renaissance Italy, see Robert C. Davis, "The Geography of Gender in the Renaissance," in *Gender and Society in Renaissance Italy*, ed. Judith C. Brown and Robert C. Davis (London, 1998), 19–38; Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, 1991); Charles Burroughs, "Spaces and Arbitration and the Organization of Space in Late Medieval Italian Cities," in Hanawalt and Kobialka, *Medieval Practices of Space*, 64–100; Samuel J. Cohn, Jr., *Women in the Streets. Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1996); George Dameron, "Conflitto rituale e ceto dirigente fiorentino alla fine del Duecento: L'ingresso solenne del vescovo Jacopo Rainucci nel 1286," *Ricerche storiche* 20:2–3 (May–Dec 1990), 263–86; *Florentine Tuscany: Structures of Practice and Power*, ed. William J. Connell and Andrea Zorzi (Cambridge, 2000); Adrian W.B. Randolph, *Engaging Symbols. Gender, Politics and Public Art in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (New Haven, 2002); *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto, 1997); Diana Webb, "Women and Home: The Domestic Setting of Late Medieval Spirituality," in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Sheils and Diana Wood (Oxford, 1990), 159–73. Although Osheim emphasizes Umiliana's seclusion, this chapter provides evidence that her retreat and isolation were far from complete: Duane J. Osheim, "The Place of Women in the Late Medieval Italian Church," in *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity*, ed. Lynda L. Coon, et al. (Charlottesville, 1990), 79–96.

giving alms to the poor, and seeking indulgences at holy places. The death of Umiliana's husband five years later opened a new dimension to her charity. She no longer had to leave her house to visit the poor, but could invite them inside. Her charity went unappreciated by her husband's family and after the prescribed period of mourning Umiliana returned to her father's house leaving her children with her husband's family. As a young widow, Umiliana was a good candidate for remarriage, which would have opened her to a new husband and the possibility of more children, but would also have threatened the continuation of her spiritual life as she had been living it. Because of her family's pressure, Umiliana "would have yielded" to a new husband "had she not [already] founded her own house upon the firm rock of Christ" (1.7). Thus Christ, her "true spouse," served as her fixed place, while Umiliana continued to visit "the holy places as before, not fearing the threats" from her family (1.9). At this time she begins to occupy the Cerchi family towerhouse, underscoring the tower's role as the home of her true spouse, Christ. Yet, connected as it was with her family's home, the tower was also the place of Umiliana's childhood. It thus served as a way for the hagiographer to reconstruct Umiliana's virginity, negating her five years as a married woman.

When he saw that Umiliana would never consent to remarriage, her father turned his sights on her dowry, which he obtained by tricking her into surrendering it to him. Despite this loss, Umiliana continued her charitable works, collecting money from wealthy Florentine women that she then donated to religious women living in enclosure. When these financial resources dwindled she sought entrance into the local Franciscan convent of Santa Maria de' Monticelli, but according to the *vita*, "God, who had decreed another path for her, did not permit it." He had other plans for her as "a marvelous foundress of a new life and of a holy spirituality" (2.11). The Franciscan hagiographer favorably compares Umiliana's life with that of the enclosed Poor Clares; her lack of enclosure is presented as a greater hardship than life in the convent, which, it is suggested, was itself permeable to both worldly thoughts and deeds:

> What did she lack in the monastic life, she who lived in continuous silence and in full observance? What less did she have than the holy hermits, she who found her solitude in the heart of a great city, and changed the nuptial bed into a prison? What minor hardships did she bear compared to the holy sisters of San Damiano, she who lived so soberly as far as food and drink? Others served the Lord after having abandoned worldly

> life and paternal household, fleeing into solitude; this one, taking solitude in her father's house, nobly fighting, conquered the world and vice in the middle of the world itself. (2.11)

Vito da Cortona calls Umiliana a model for all people, "so that no one from the smallest to the greatest would have any excuse why he could not serve God as much as possible in his own home and secular habit" (2.13).

Descriptions of Umiliana's daily practices during the first year in her father's house show a combination of intensive prayer and active charity similar to her practices in her husband's house (2.10). She reportedly used a different name when outside the tower (3.32), thus aligning the tower with her identity as one of the "Cerchi," and her movement in the world with an unmentioned alias. Although nuns typically took a different name when entering the convent, Umiliana's alias is more closely identifiable with her religious life outside rather than inside her cell. Umiliana is said to have proclaimed "God is everywhere and can be received everywhere" (3.32), and until a severe illness crippled her, she is described as leaving her cell on an almost daily basis.

As a quasi-religious laywoman, Umiliana was permitted a broad range of spaces—broader indeed than those permitted to either fully religious women or laywomen.[4] The *vita* offers a map of Umiliana's

[4] On enclosure and the Poor Clares, see Lezlie Knox, "Audacious Nuns: Institutionalizing the Order of Saint Clare," *Church History* 69:1 (March 2000), 41–62; *Chiara e il Secondo Ordine. Il fenomeno francescano femminile nel Salento*, ed. Giancarlo Andenna and Benedetto Vetere (Lecce, 1997); Luigi Pellegrini, "Conventi mendicanti e spazio urbano nell'Italia dei Secoli XIII–XIV," in *Chiesa e Città*, ed. Cosimo Damiano Fonseca and Cinzio Violante, (Galatina, 1990), 45–53; Marco Bartoli, *Chiara d'Assisi* (Rome, 1989); Rosalind B. Brooke and Christopher N.L. Brooke, "St. Clare," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1978) 275–88; Giuseppe Miligi, *Francescanesimo al femminile: Chiara d'Assisi ed Eustochia da Messina* (Messina, 1994); Patricia Ranft, "An Overturned Victory," *Journal of Medieval History* 17:2 (1991), 123–34; Benedetto Vetere, *Dalla Parte di Chiara* (Lecce, 1997); and Jeryldene Wood, *Women, Art, and Spirituality: The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1996), 20–23. Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg has studied the detrimental effects of enclosure on the vitality of female religious communities in the early Middle Ages: "Strict Active Enclosure and its Effects on the Female Monastic Experience (500–1100)," in *Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women* 1, ed. John A. Nichols, and Lillian Thomas Shank (Kalamazoo, 1984), 51–86, a theme that has been extended to the central Middle Ages in Penelope Johnson, "The Cloistering of Medieval Nuns: Release or Repression, Reality or Fantasy?" *Gendered Domains. Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History: Essays from the Seventh Berkshire Conference on the History of Women*, ed. Dorothy O. Helly and Susan M. Reverby (Ithaca, 1992), 27–39). Judith Brown has also argued that the enclosure of nuns in the early modern period was not as complete as previously believed in "Everyday Life, Longevity, and Nuns in Early Modern Florence," in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and

spaces, naming the places she visited along her path to sanctity, and was likely intended as an itinerary for women who wished not only to trace her steps to various places, but who also wanted to know what to do once they arrived in those places.[5] These places were often physically marginal to the city (lying along the circuit walls) and likewise held marginal people: the sick, the poor, lepers, recluses, enclosed religious, and prostitutes. Although sacred and enclosed spaces may have been "coded" feminine, women like Umiliana were permitted entry into secular and open (i.e. masculine) spaces because the women themselves were seen as sacred and enclosed.[6] Piety therefore afforded a certain freedom of movement, although a distinction should be made between Umiliana's location *in* various places and her movement *among* these places, which may have been more noticeable—and problematic.

Umiliana's tower itself is presented as a sort of marginal place despite its central location in Florence. It is a place that is very much "in the world," yet which allows for traditional eremitic ideals of isolation and contemplation. While it was not unusual for adult children in Florence to live in buildings attached to their father's house, the *vita* asserts that

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Simon Hunt (Philadelphia, 1999), 115–38. The thought-provoking essays in Gabriella Zarri's *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2000) also set the institution of enclosure within a wider historic framework. On the 1298 papal bull *Periculoso* and its effects see James A. Brundage and Elizabeth M. Makowski, "Enclosure of Nuns: The Decretal *Periculoso* and its Commentators," *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994), 143–55; Katherine J. Gill, "Open Monasteries for Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy: Two Roman Examples," in *The Crannied Wall: Women, Religion, and the Arts in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Craig A Monson (Ann Arbor, 1992), 15–47; ibid., "*Scandala*: Controversies Concerning Clausura and Women's Religious Communities in Late Medieval Italy," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000–1500*, ed. Scott Waugh and Peter Diehl (Cambridge, 1995), 177–203; Elizabeth M. Makowski, *Canon Law and Cloistered Women: Periculoso and its Commentators 1298–1545* (Washington, DC, 1997); ibid., *A Pernicious Sort of Woman, quasi-religious women and canon lawyers in the later Middle Ages* (Washington, DC, 2005); Giovanna Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio. Monacazioni forzata, clausura e proposte di vita religiosa femminile nell'età moderna* (Pordenone, 1996); Peter Biller, "The Common Woman in the Western Church in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries," in Sheils and Wood, *Women in the Church*, 127–57; Brenda Bolton, *Women in Medieval Society* (Philadelphia, 1976); Maria Consiglia De Matteis, "La donna e la vita quotidiana nell'Italia Tardo Medievale," in *Frau und Spätmittelalterlicher Alltag* (Vienna, 1986), 409–28; Eleanor McLaughlin, "Women, Power and the Pursuit of Holiness in medieval Christianity," in *Women of Spirit. Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York, 1979), 99–130; and Mario Sensi, *Storie di Bizzocche tra Umbria e Marche* (Rome, 1995).

[5] Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Randall (Berkeley, 1988), 120.

[6] Camille, "Signs," 27.

Umiliana remained in some way detached from her family (though it is worth noting that this disconnect extends only to the male members of her family). The tower is a common trope in the lives of saintly women (as well as in romances), but in Umiliana's case it was also a structure of great historic significance.[7] Familial towers represented power and prestige and were also military fortresses, useful for combat and more easily defended than smaller buildings. It is not surprising, therefore, that Umiliana's occupation of the towerhouse is described in militaristic terms. In one episode the devil tempted Umiliana to look outside her window to see the fighting between Guelphs and Ghibellines in the streets below, and the fires that threatened the tower itself (2.19). Since Umiliana refused to become involved in the violent events outside, the devil set out to remove her bodily, returning in the form of a serpent, a beast "of which, above all, women are afraid" (2.20).[8] Although terrified of the serpent, Umiliana took action only when she realized her prayer life was suffering due to its presence. When she ordered him to depart in the name of Jesus, the serpent obeyed, leaving behind a stench that Umiliana recognized as evidence of its satanic origins. Instantly the cell was filled instead with sweet perfume, "so that it seemed to be within the walls of Paradise" (2.20). It is striking that in this episode the devil seeks not only to interrupt Umiliana's spiritual life, but also to drive her physically from her cell (the stench was such "that it was not possible to remain in the cell," 2.20). Umiliana's domestic space is thus presented as a religious sanctuary.

A few days after this event another serpent appeared, this time a "corporeal" one. The physicality of this serpent threatened Umiliana's body in a way that was more immediate and clearly more sexual than

[7] Marvin Trachtenberg, *Dominion of the Eye: Urbanism, Art, and Power in Early Modern Florence* (Cambridge, 1997), 265. See also David Friedman, *Florentine New Towns: Urban Design in the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988). On the Cerchi palazzo, see Brenda Preyer, "Two Cerchi Palaces in Florence," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Craig Hugh Smyth II* (Florence, 1985), 613–25; and Enrica Neri Lausanna, "Interni fiorentini e pittura profana tra Duecento e Trecento: Cacce e giostre a Palazzo Cerchi," *Opere e giorni. Studi su mille anni di arte europea. Festschrift Max Seidel* (Venice, 2001), 123–30. On housing during this period in general see Charles De La Roncière, "Tuscan Notables on the Eve of the Renaissance," in *A History of Private Life. Vol. II: Revelations of the Medieval World*, ed. Georges Duby, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, 1988), 157–309; and Loris Macci and Valeria Orgera, *Architettura e civiltà delle torri: Torri e famiglie nella Firenze medievale* (Florence, 1994).

[8] On the dragon in medieval Italian women saints' *vitae*, see Petroff, *Body and Soul*, 97–109.

the first. Umiliana even took steps to guard against physical contact with the beast: "In fact, when she went to rest, she would always roll her clothes around her feet, and would tie a belt around them, so that the serpent could not enter from her feet, and touch her naked body in any way" (2.21). After enduring its presence for several days, Umiliana was finally moved to do something. Ordering the serpent to roll itself into a ball, she scooped it up and tossed it out the window, saying, "Go on your way and stay no more with me, because you are useless and fruitless" (2.21). Umiliana's lack of virginity, her "openness," may have made her seem particularly vulnerable to demonic sexual defilement.[9] Perhaps for this reason Umiliana is described as not only guarding passively against the risk of penetration, but also actively ridding the tower of the serpent. Although Umiliana's body remained open, it was depicted as a vessel filled with the Holy Spirit, and therefore the devil/serpent could find no place there. Since both the body and the tower are filled they can remain open.

According to her hagiographer, Umiliana's extreme self-regulation enabled the enclosure of the soul within the body, essential in a case like hers where the body itself was open to public view rather than cloistered. She is described as keeping her eyes half shut or kept to the ground and "since the sense of hearing does not have a natural obstacle...she tightly stuffed cotton in her ears to avoid the noises and vanities of the age" (4.35). Her cloister of flesh rather than stone permitted her to travel about the city fairly freely, frequenting mass, offering spiritual guidance, and aiding the poor and sick. Yet Umiliana is said to have described both her cell and her body as prisons (4.37), which extended to a fantasy of martyrdom:

> She used to say, "Oh if there were some *Podestà* in Florence, who would severely torment me with many injuries and torments for the name of Christ, and finally, severely whipped throughout the entire city, might punish me with decapitation!" (4.36)

The desire to be publicly tortured "throughout the entire city" reflects a longing to serve as a demonstration of God's authority over temporal rulers. But it is also a way of claiming urban spaces. An imaginary martyr might bloody the same city streets in which Umiliana was forbidden to walk unchaperoned to demonstrate her transcendence

[9] Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2003), 160.

of this space. As there was no such imperial power or tyrant in Florence at the time of her request, Umiliana had to content herself with becoming gravely ill instead.

Although the language of Umiliana's body (eyes closed; ears stopped up; sexual contact refused; food left untouched) suggests enclosure, the bodies of religious laywomen remained open to the possibility of both sexual activity and childbirth, unlike the bodies of nuns whose reserved status was further emphasized through physical enclosure.[10] Although Umiliana was praised precisely for not fleeing the world (2.11), her body was also described in many ways as being "off limits" and she herself was described as longing "to be in harsh mountains and in deserts and solitude, in inaccessible places" (4.37). The contradiction of her body as a place that was neither fully public nor fully private arises from the problem of Umiliana's lack of virginity. Her body had already been opened, first by her husband and then by her children. It should be remembered, too, that according to the *vita* Umiliana's "conversion" took place a month after her marriage, signifying a connection between the loss of virginity and her conscious reception of the religious life (the textual emphasis on her conversion eclipses the loss of virginity). Yet virginity implies a certain intactness that the body cannot regain. If Umiliana's cell could be likened to her body, as was often the case in texts that outlined a rule of life for chaste women, then the permeability of her body would logically follow. Instead, Umiliana's body was textually reconstructed as an enclosed system unto itself, through extreme ascetic practices, efforts that sought to re-close the body and restore its wholeness, and finally death.[11]

Although Umiliana is described as desiring to be walled up completely without "doorway or window" in the tower by her father, who had at times threatened to do just that (4.37), the possibility emphasizes what the hagiographer chose not to: Umiliana was *not* walled up. Despite the hagiographer's insistence on the sealing of Umiliana's body and tower, both remained open. The cell was a space that was open to both exits and entrance, and Umiliana is described leaving the cell nearly as often as she is described receiving others into it. Franciscan friars are described as routinely visiting her to offer spiritual guidance or, more

[10] As Roberta Gilchrist puts it, nuns "became private spaces inaccessible to others:" *Gender and Medieval Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women* (London, 1994), 19.

[11] Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 159.

commonly, receive it (2.13). Less emphasized, however, are the many laywomen who apparently used Umiliana's towerhouse as a meeting place for prayer. Umiliana is also always depicted in the company of other women when away from her cell. More than simply providing protection, their companionship served to construct a faith community without walls. Of the thirty-three witnesses to Umiliana's *vita*, thirty were women of a variety of social states (the remaining three were Franciscan friars). These women are described as remarkably similar to Umiliana: they performed the same works of charity and had similar visions, ecstatic experiences, and heavenly gifts. Yet their interaction is characterized more by collaboration than conformity. The circulation of charitable funds, for instance, exploited the ability of some women to move freely among a variety of spaces, enclosed and not, and the ability of others to provide financial sustenance. And Umiliana's three servants, constant companions in her "solitude," performed necessary tasks as mundane as fetching water (5.48), or, as an extension of Umiliana herself, reporting her prophetic warnings (4.39; 4.40).[12] Umiliana's supposed longing for a solitary existence "in inaccessible places" is contradicted by the numerous guests in her tower as well as her own visits to the sick, the poor, enclosed nuns, and other laywomen, some of whom were recluses who serve further to highlight Umiliana's own lack of enclosure. Therefore the *vita* and perhaps even more so the miracle accounts that follow it demonstrate the presence of a diverse female community that moved among the holy places of Florence, the Cerchi towerhouse being one of them.

Although one consequence of the enclosure of nuns may have been the development of a stronger sense of community among these women, it is important to consider that much of the literature about religious women was written by religious women themselves, while much of the literature about quasi-religious laywomen was written by religious men.[13] Therefore the lack of an expression of community among informal groups of laywomen could reflect not the women themselves, but the authors of their *vitae*. While eager to promote new models of lay sanctity, hagiographers sometimes had a difficult time reconciling old

[12] Jocelyn Wogan-Brown has noted the necessity of a maidservant in the daily life of a recluse: "Chaste Bodies: Frames and Experiences," in Kay and Rubin, *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester, 1994), 27.

[13] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1987), 26–27.

models of monastic or eremitic sanctity with a new more "worldly" model. These tensions can be seen in hagiographic texts, such as the *vita* of Umiliana, which include claims to both universal sanctity with its accompanying hallmarks, virginity and enclosure from the outside world, as well as particulars about the daily lives of lay individuals, including marriages, children, and active involvement in the city. Male clerical authors tend to emphasize solitude rather than sorority for laywomen perhaps because the hagiographers, hailing from organized and recognized communities themselves, failed to recognize these groups of laywomen *as* communities. A comparison of the hagiographic *vitae* of laywomen with their own writing, as in the case of Catherine of Siena, reveals that male hagiographers tend to situate a woman in a fixed place, while the women themselves tend to focus on spiritual activity, usually charity, and physical location, if mentioned at all, is incidental. Unfortunately, in Umiliana's case we lack any written testimony from her. The female witnesses of her life and post-mortem miracles can, however, serve as an additional source of information even while their voices are transmitted through Umiliana's hagiographer.

As described in the oldest account of Umiliana's life, the tower was a space that was primarily occupied by women, into which men were permitted entry only on occasion. The *vita* was therefore written from the outside and it was Vito da Cortona, and the other Franciscan advisors, who seem peripheral to Umiliana's life (although they became much more important after her death). Their marginality, however, does not indicate that Umiliana's space was a sort of feminist utopia.[14] The tactical space of the tower was shaped and occupied as a counter to the spaces that surrounded it, and infiltrated it, the male-dominated spaces of the Cerchi family, the city of Florence, and the church. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has argued that "[c]haste female spirituality is...located in bodies without histories, locked away both from outer event and physiological change.... This writing-out of women is part of a thematic preoccupation with their death in the literature of chastity."[15] Indeed the scene of Umiliana's death shows how her "body without history" helped to shape her cult.

[14] Elizabeth Grosz notes, "there has never been a space by and for women. Even women-only spaces (feminist or lesbian spaces) are set up in reaction or opposition to patriarchal cultural space" (*Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, 2001), 25).

[15] Wogan-Browne, "Chaste Bodies," 24.

In accordance with her final wishes Umiliana died without any of her male family members present. But her death was not a lonely one, as she was surrounded by devout laywomen (clergy are conspicuously absent), who served as comforters during her transit from the earthly life: reading scripture to her, illuminating her room with blessed candles, and even anointing her head with oils. Even on her deathbed, Umiliana was concerned with how and by whom her body might be seen and handled, and took care to cover her feet to avoid being touched by mortal hands (5.54). As was the case with many reclusive holy women, Umiliana's tower served, at least initially, as her tomb.[16] She was then buried at a widely attended funeral in Santa Croce. Less than three months later, her body was elevated to a spot under the pulpit in the same church, indicating that her saintly fame had spread. Once Umiliana died her body became part of a strategy, begun by the Franciscans of Santa Croce and continued by the Cerchi family, to recognize a way of life that persisted in opposition to those same promoters of her cult. Although Umiliana's body is presented as a text that did not want to be read, the *vita* itself was in fact an attempt to read (and write) wholeness and regularity on it.[17] It did not help that the space of the tower had become a memory, likely destroyed by 1248, when the Ghibellines seized control of the city.[18]

The contact of devout laywomen with Umiliana also did not stop with her death: within twenty-four hours they were receiving her in spirit rather than flesh, discussing her teachings, and telling others of her sanctity. One post-mortem apparition of Umiliana to "a religious woman" includes a lengthy description and elaborate interpretation of her heavenly dress. Surprisingly, here Umiliana appears adorned with both a crown of virginity, which, when questioned, Umiliana explains as having been given as a reward for "the anguish that [she] continuously bore in [her] heart for the virginity lost in marriage" (6.60). In

[16] Wogan-Browne, "Chaste Bodies," 24–25.

[17] See Walter Simons, "Reading a Saint's Body: Rapture and Bodily Movement in the *vitae* of Thirteenth-Century Beguines," in Kay and Rubin, *Framing Medieval Bodies*, 10–23, and Michael Camille, "The Image and the Self: Unwriting Late Medieval Bodies," in ibid., 62–99.

[18] In 1260 all towers were cut down to a more modest size by the Florentine republic in an effort to literally level the rivalry among warring clans. See Davidsohn, *Storia* II, 463; Berthold Stahl, *Adel und Volk in Florentiner Dugento* (Cologne, 1965), 150; and Benvenuti, 'In castro,' 87.

this way, Umiliana's loss of virginity in marriage was recompensed by her remorse and her chastity in widowhood.[19]

The centuries that followed Umiliana's death saw remarkable changes in the structures of religious devotion for women, as well as the physical spaces within which these structures were framed. Following the Council of Trent many communities of devout laywomen were faced with either regulation and enclosure or a purely lay life.[20] The self-contradiction of Umiliana's oldest *vita* enabled it to be used to argue for both the orthodoxy of an unenclosed, secular piety, as well as the enclosure of religious women. It was not so much a matter of changing details as it was of strategically selecting them. As the Third Order became more regularized, so too did the description of Umiliana's life. In subsequent redactions of her *vita*, she appeared less as a model for the "mixed life" and more a model for a regularized tertiary life.[21] By the end of the thirteenth century, living in community was only permitted to regularized tertiaries so informal living arrangements were best described in ways that diminished their communal and collaborative structures. While the oldest account of Umiliana's life described what looks like a community of women, later versions sharply limited the number of her female companions to one or two who were almost always referred to as recluses or nuns, isolated and enclosed like Umiliana herself.

The emphasis on the tower in Umiliana's hagiography also varied depending on the status of quasi-religious laywomen when the different hagiographers wrote. Accounts from the fifteenth and early

[19] Clarissa Atkinson argues that virginity traditionally had both a physical (no sexual contact) and spiritual (devotion to God) component and in the Later Middle Ages the spiritual began to outweigh the physical ("Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass': The Ideology of Virginity in the Later Middle Ages," *Journal of Family History* 8 (1983), 35–42). See also Atkinson, *The Oldest Vocation: Christian Motherhood in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1991); and Nancy Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42:2 (2000), 268–306; Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (Toronto, 1993); Dyan Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, 1993), 224; and Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Philadelphia, 1995), 19–45.

[20] Katherine Gill, *Penitents, Pinzochere and Mantellate: Varieties of Women's Religious Communities in Central Italy, c. 1300–1520* (Diss. Princeton University, 1994), 230.

[21] On the regularization of the Franciscan Third Order, see *Le terziarie francescane della Beata Angelina: origine e spiritualità*, ed. Enrico Menestò (Spoleto, 1996); *Legenda de' Beati del Terzo Ordine de Sancto Francisco*, ed. Lino Temperini (Rome, 1996); *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome, 1996); ibid., *Il Monachesimo femminile in Italia dall'Alto Medioevo al Secolo XVII. A confronto con l'oggi* (Negarine di San Pietro in Cariano, 1997).

sixteenth centuries, most of which were written by Franciscan historians, diminished the idea of the tower as a substitute for remarriage, emphasizing instead Umiliana's adherence to a Franciscan way of life. These accounts served to identify her with the friars of Santa Croce rather than her family. Post-tridentine accounts emphasized Umiliana's enclosure, however, resulting in the renewed highlighting of the family tower—not coincidentally, these *vitae* also mark the activity of the Cerchi family in the promotion of the cult. Thus a strong argument for female enclosure can be seen in much of Umiliana's later hagiography, juxtaposed uncomfortably with descriptions of motion and fluidity that came from the earliest *vita*. As enclosure became more strictly enforced for both religious and semi-religious women, Umiliana's mysticism and asceticism were highlighted while her charity and collaboration with other laywomen were diminished.

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CHAPTER FOUR

ARCHITECTURAL MIMESIS AND HISTORICAL MEMORY AT THE ABBEY OF MONT-SAINT-MICHEL

*Katherine Allen Smith**

During the reign of the Carolingian emperor Louis the Pious, an anonymous hagiographer at the Neustrian monastery of Mont-Saint-Michel set out to write the history of his community's foundation, an event he placed a little over a century earlier, in the years 708–09. The product of his efforts, the *Revelatio Ecclesiae Sancti Michaelis in Monte Tumba*,[1] remains our earliest extant source of information concerning the shrine's origins, and was to play a vital role in shaping the historical memory and corporate identity of the monastic community for many generations to come. A curious passage in the *Revelatio* describes how Mont-Saint-Michel's legendary founder, the saintly Bishop Aubert of Avranches, received explicit instructions concerning the future church from its patron, the archangel Michael, who appeared to the bishop

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[1] The *Revelatio Sancti Michaelis in Monte Tumba* has been edited a number of times: PL 96, cols. 1389–94; AASS VIII Sept., 76–78; Thomas Le Roy, *Les curieuses recherches du Mont-Sainct-Michel*, 2 vols., ed. Eugène de Robillard de Beaurepaire (Caen, 1878), I: 407–19. All references are taken from the PL edition. On the dating of the text, see Pierre Bouet, "La *Revelatio* et les origines du culte à saint Michel sur le Mont Tombe," in *Culte et pèlerinages à saint Michel en Occident: trois monts dédiées a l'archange*, ed. Pierre Bouet, Giorgio Otranto, and André Vauchez (Rome, 2003), 65–90. For in-depth treatments of the history, architecture, and the cult of Saint Michael at Mont-Saint-Michel, see the five-volume collection celebrating the one-thousandth anniversary of the abbey's Benedictine re-foundation, the *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel* (Paris, 1966–98). The recent collection of essays, *Le Mont-Saint-Michel, histoire et imaginaire*, ed. Maylis Baylé, Pierre Bouet, and Jean-Paul Brighelli (Paris, 1998) offers a more concise synthesis of the abbey's history, as well as updated bibliography.

in a series of three dream-visions. In accordance with the archangel's wishes, Aubert directed that the first oratory on the island be built not in any style then usual in Merovingian Francia, but on the model of Monte Gargano, a fifth-century grotto-church dedicated to Saint Michael in the faraway Apulia region of southeastern Italy. Monte Gargano was famed as a cave roughly hollowed out of a mountainside and consecrated by Saint Michael's own hands, and claimed the further distinction of possessing the only relics of the archangel known to exist on earth, in the form of his scarlet *pallium* and angelic footprints impressed into the grotto's floor. The Apulian grotto thus offered itself as a fitting archetype for a fledgling shrine dedicated to Saint Michael; by the time of the *Revelatio*'s composition, the story of Monte Gargano's miraculous foundation was a well known liturgical text throughout Francia, widely read on the feast of the shrine's dedication every May 8.[2] The anonymous author of the *Revelatio* tells us that, at the archangel's own instigation, Aubert sent a party of clerics to Southern Italy to bring back fragments of both of Monte Gargano's famed relics, which were duly installed in the Neustrian church upon its completion. The abbot of Monte Gargano was said to have given the relics to Aubert's delegates on the condition that, "as [the two shrines] had been united on account of an angelic revelation, they might always be connected by a bond of affection."[3]

According to the *Revelatio*, Bishop Aubert's church took the form of "a round crypt large enough to hold a hundred men," and was consciously intended "to equal (*exequare*) that church on Monte Gargano."

[2] There is an extensive literature on Monte Gargano. An excellent introduction to the site's history in the early Middle Ages is found in Giorgio Otranto and Carlo Carletti, eds., *Il sanctuario di San Michele Arcangelo sul Gargano dalle origini al X secolo* (Bari, 1990). The feast of Monte Gargano was included in the Carolingian martyrologies of Hrabanus Maurus, Ado of Vienne, and Usuard, as well as in Anglo-Saxon and Insular calendars as early as the seventh century. On the spread of the feast of Monte Gargano's dedication into Northern Europe, see Giorgio Otranto, "Il 'Liber de Apparitione' e il culto di S. Michele sul Gargano nella documentazione liturgica altomedievale," *Vetera Christianorum* 18 (1981): 423–42.

[3] *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*, col. 1393: "Hinc cum qua decebat ueneratione sumptis a loco pignoribus quo beatus archangelus sui memoria fidelis commendauerat, partem scilicet rubei pallioli, quod ipse memoratus archangelus in monte Gargano supra altare quod ipse manu sua construxerat posuit, et partem scilicet marmoris supra quod stetit, cuius ibidem usque nunc in eodem loco superextant uestigia, iam dictis fratribus usque ad sacrum locum referenda patrocinia contradidit, conditione interposita uidelicet ut quos una angelice reuelationis sociauerat causa una quoque aeternaliter necteret conexio caritatis."

The likeness between the Neustrian shrine and its Apulian archetype was further underscored by the rough, unfinished walls purposely left by Aubert's masons, which were intended to give visitors the impression of "a dwelling of broken-off rock made for mortals by angelic preparation."[4] The author of the *Revelatio* was undoubtedly familiar with the sixth- or seventh-century foundation legend of Monte Gargano, the *Apparitio Sancti Michaelis in Monte Gargano*, and modeled his description of Aubert's oratory on the account of Saint Michael's personal construction of the Apulian grotto as a space with strange angles and uneven walls made "not in the manner of walls erected by human craftsmanship, but that resembled roughed-out caves made uneven in many places by jutting crags."[5] At its foundation, then, Mont-Saint-Michel was intended as a memorial of another, earlier shrine, and early generations of the monastic community sought to express this relationship through shared architectural features and relics.

The architectural mimesis described in the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba* continued to shape the historical memory of the guardians of Mont-Saint-Michel in the centuries after the narrative's composition, as successive generations of the abbey's monks sought to articulate their shrine's relationship to Monte Gargano through architectural forms, works of hagiography, and liturgical performances. They did so, this essay will suggest, not because they viewed their community as an inferior "copy" of the ancient grotto, but because the act of mimesis described in Mont-Saint-Michel's foundation legend offered a powerful symbol around which the monks could construct and reaffirm their own corporate identity. By depicting Aubert's church as an angelically commissioned memorial of an ancient holy site, the *Revelatio* provided Mont-Saint-Michel with a venerable cultic genealogy and a vision of the shrine's past that could serve to unify its monks in the present and future. The need for such a text became particularly acute in the century

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[4] *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*, col. 1392: "Exstruxit itaque fabricam non culmine sublimitatis celsam, sed in modum cryptae rotundam, centum (ut aestimatur) hominum capacem, illius in monte Gargani volens exaequare formam, in modum praerupti silicis angelico apparatu facta terrigenis ad laudem et gloriam Dei habitatione...."

[5] *Apparitio in Monte Gargano*, MGH SserLangob, 540–43 (at 543): "Erat autem ipsa domus angulosa, non in morem operis humani parietibus erectis, sed instar speluncae preruptis et sepius eminentibus asperata scopulis, culmine quoque petroso diversae altitudinis, quod hic vertice tangi, alibi manu vix posset adtingi...." For a summary of scholarship concerning the authorship and dating of this text, see the recent article by Nicholas Everett, "The *Liber de apparitione S. Michaelis in Monte Gargano* and the Hagiography of Dispossession," *Analecta Bollandiana* 120 (2002): 364–91.

or so after 966, when the stability of monastic life at the abbey was repeatedly undermined by internal tensions and external threats.

Architectural Mimesis at Mont-Saint-Michel

While it seems clear that the self-representation of Mont-Saint-Michel's earliest monastic community was bound up in the shrine's mimetic relationship to Monte Gargano, the question of whether the Neustrian monks viewed their church as a "copy" of Monte Gargano is more difficult to answer. The notion of the copy, after all, postdates the age of printing, and as such would have possessed little meaning for medieval builders or those who directed their work.[6] However, we have just seen that the *Revelatio*'s author insisted the first church on the site "equaled" Monte Gargano in its overall layout and details, and it is well known that medieval lay patrons and monastic builders sought to replicate architectural exemplars such as the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem or the Palatine Chapel at Aachen in newly built churches all over Christendom in this period. Furthermore, we know that for medieval Christians sensitive to symbolic meaning a single well-chosen architectural element could serve to evoke a complete building; for example, a columned rotunda could signify the Holy Sepulcher, regardless of whether it replicated the exact proportions of the original Anastasis at Jerusalem.[7] This sort of architectural synecdoche was certainly a familiar concept to the eleventh-century reformer and *custos* of Mont-Saint-Michel William of Volpiano (d. 1031), who famously supervised the reconstruction of the abbey church of Saint-Bénigne

[6] This observation is made by Colin Morris in the most recent survey of medieval replicas of the Holy Sepulchre, *The Sepulchre of Christ and the Medieval West* (Oxford, 2005), 61–62.

[7] In a now classic article, the art historian Richard Krautheimer defined what he saw as the key differences between medieval and modern copy-aesthetics. See "Introduction to an 'Iconography of Mediaeval Architecture,'" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 1–33. For important reassessments of Krautheimer's conception of the medieval "copy," see Paul Crossley, "Medieval Architecture and Meaning: The Limits of Iconography," *Burlington Magazine* 130 (1988): 116–21, and Hans J. Böker, "The Bishop's Chapel of Hereford Cathedral and the Question of Architectural Copies in the Middle Ages," *Gesta* 37 (1998): 44–54. Linda Seidel has made a fascinating comparison between the Romanesque church of Saint-Lazare at Autun and early pilgrims' descriptions of the resurrected Lazarus' tomb-pilgrimage site in Bethany in her *Legends in Limestone: Lazarus, Gislebertus, and the Cathedral of Autun* (Chicago, 1999).

at Dijon on the model of the Holy Sepulcher.[8] We can infer that the incorporation of a few well-chosen stylistic elements—a subterranean location, self-conscious roughness or asymmetry—into the first church at Mont-Saint-Michel enabled its guardians to see it as a replica of Monte Gargano. Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the perception of a genealogical relationship between Monte Gargano and Mont-Saint-Michel continued to be a matter of great importance to the Norman monks, the spaces, objects, and texts they associated with Aubert's oratory stood as tangible reminders of this connection. While the question of medieval "architectural copies" has long been a matter of interest to architectural historians, few historians of medieval monasticism have concerned themselves with the role of such mimetic relationships in shaping the corporate identities of particular monastic groups. Building on recent work by historians on monastic memory and historiography,[9] this essay will consider how one medieval community's perceived mimetic relationship with another influenced its members' understanding of themselves as an historical and cultic community over several centuries.

The story of how the archangel commanded Aubert to model his oratory on Monte Gargano was kept alive in the memories of Mont-Saint-Michel's later guardians in a number of ways. Group mnemonic activities such as liturgical recitations of the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*

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[8] William of Volpiano came to Normandy in 1001 at the behest of Duke Richard I to superintend the reform of religious life in the duchy, and took over the rule of the abbey of Fécamp in that year. William gradually extended his influence over many of the monastic communities in the archdiocese of Rouen, and served as *custos* of Mont-Saint-Michel from around 1009 until his death in 1031. William's leading role in the reform of monasticism in the Norman duchy is described in detail by Neithard Bulst, "La réforme monastique en Normandie: étude prosopographique sur la diffusion et l'implantation de la réforme de Guillaume de Dijon," in *Les mutations socio-culturelles au tourant des XIe–XIIe siècles*, ed. Raymonde Foreville (Paris, 1984), 317–30. The first phase of work on the new Romanesque church at the mount coincided with William's tenure as *custos*. On William's career as a builder, see Monique Jannet and Christian Sapin, eds. *Guillaume de Volpiano et l'architecture des rotondes: Actes du colloque de Dijon, Musée archéologique, 23–25 septembre 1993* (Dijon, 1996). Given that William took an active role in shaping the liturgical life of Mont-Saint-Michel (and of the other Norman monasteries under his jurisdiction) it seems likely that he would have interested himself in the important matter of rebuilding the abbatial church. On William's influence on the liturgy of the mass at Mont-Saint-Michel, see R. Le Roux, "Guillaume de Volpiano, son cursus liturgique au Mont Saint-Michel et dans les abbayes normandes," *Millénaire monastique* I: 417–72.

[9] For an orientation to recent scholarship on these themes, see the recent collection of essays on *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory, Historiography*, ed. Gerd Althoff, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary (Washington, D.C., 2002).

helped reinforce a strong, unifying sense of place in the minds of the abbey's medieval monks.[10] Similarly, the ritual commemoration of figures and landmarks associated with the foundation of Mont-Saint-Michel impressed the miraculous narrative onto the space of the shrine itself and provided the monastic community with what Patrick Geary has termed a "usable past" that served the purposes of the monks in the present.[11] While the question of whether the original sanctuary at Mont-Saint-Michel actually *was* modeled on the plan of Monte Gargano is now impossible to answer (due to successive building campaigns at the former site),[12] there is ample evidence that the medieval monks of the abbey *believed* that it was, and that this belief powerfully shaped their corporate identity. Nor was the perception of a special relationship between the two sanctuaries of the archangel confined to the monks of the Norman abbey; by the eleventh century the feast of Mont-Saint-Michel's dedication had spread to Norman-ruled Southern Italy, and its inclusion on the calendar of a missal connected with the scriptorium of Monte Gargano suggests that the Apulian monks, like their Norman counterparts, valued the historical connection between the two shrines.[13]

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[10] On places as the creations of groups that inhabit or identify with them, see Philip Sheldrake, "A Sense of Place," in *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (Baltimore, 2001). For an in-depth exploration of the historical functions of liturgy within a medieval monastic context, see Susan Boynton's remarkable study, *Shaping a Monastic Identity: Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

[11] Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), 115. On the vital importance of foundation legends in shaping historical awareness and "imaginative memory," see Amy G. Remensnyder's study *Remembering Kings Past: Monastic Foundation Legends in Medieval Southern France* (Ithaca, NY, 1995).

[12] Nearly continuous building campaigns over the course of the eleventh through fifteenth centuries transformed Mont-Saint-Michel from a modest hilltop monastery to the architectural wonder visitors encounter today, and in-depth architectural studies of the site have proliferated over the past century. Paul Gout's classic *Le Mont Saint Michel*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1910), is supplemented in important ways by Germain Bazin's *Le Mont St. Michel*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York, 1978), and more recent findings are summarized in the collection of essays comprising the fifth volume of the *Millénaire monastique*, "Études archéologiques," ed. Michel Nortier (Paris, 1993). For the building of the Gothic "Merveille," see Lindy Grant, *Architecture and Society in Normandy, 1120–1270* (New Haven, 2005), 161–68.

[13] See the modern edition of the Beneventan Missal by Klaus Gamber in *Missale Beneventanum von Canosa (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, MS W6)*, ed. Sieghild Rehle (Regensburg, 1972). The introduction (16–17) discusses the dating and origins of the manuscript; for the calendar of the Beneventan missal, which has survived intact, see 30–47. The October 16 feast is described as "Inventio sci michahelis in periculo maris (44)." It is interesting to note that the dedications of both Monte Gargano (37) and

We know very little about Mont-Saint-Michel's history before 966, the year a group of Benedictine monks was sent to "reform" the abbey at the behest of the Norman Duke Richard I (r. 942–96).[14] The shrine's new occupants became the guardians of the site and its store of historical memory, as preserved in the Carolingian foundation legend, the relics imported from Monte Gargano, and the architectural fabric of the shrine itself. While the monks declared their predecessors to have been unworthy servants of the archangel's cult, they eagerly embraced the vision of the shrine's early history described in the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*. Under the supervision of the Benedictines, new works of hagiography and liturgy were produced that commemorated the monastery's ties to Monte Gargano, and extensive restorations were carried out on the oldest structure on the mount, a Carolingian crypt now known as Notre-Dame-sous-Terre. Modern archaeological surveys have shed much light on this space, which the abbey's medieval monks equated with the original oratory built by Bishop Aubert on the model of Monte Gargano.[15]

Mont-Saint-Michel are described as *inventiones*, suggesting a connection between the two feasts—and perhaps the two shrines—in the mind of the Beneventan liturgist.

[14] On the Benedictine reform of the abbey, see Cassandra Potts, "Resisting the Tide at Mont-Saint-Michel, in *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997); K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, "L'histoire secrète d'un sanctuaire célèbre: la réforme du Mont-Saint-Michel d'après l'analyse de son cartulaire et de ses nécrologes," in *Culte et pèlerinage à saint Michel*, 139–59. By the mid-eleventh century, the monks of the abbey had produced a history of the monastery, dubbed the *Introductio monachorum* by modern scholars, that presented 966 as a pivotal year in which a community of strictly observant Benedictines replaced a dissolute group of "canons" (a term sometimes invoked in this period to describe non-Benedictine monks). Potts and Keats-Rohan have challenged the account of the abbey's re-foundation described in the medieval records of Mont-Saint-Michel, and argue that the Benedictines who arrived in 966 coexisted with members of the previous religious community at the shrine, who were likely monks (even Benedictines) rather than canons.

[15] The strength of these associations is demonstrated by the declaration of the abbey's seventeenth-century sacristan and historian Jean Huynes, who declared that "on voit encore aujourd'huy dans la chapelle Notre-Dame sous terre, qui est dessous la nef, l'autel quuy qu'à demy demoly, sur lequel ce sainct [i.e., Aubert] celebra [messe]." See *Histoire générale de l'abbaye du Mont-St-Michel au péril de la mer*, 2 vols., ed. Eugène de Robillard de Beaurepaire (Rouen, 1872–73), I: 37. From the initial rediscovery of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre by Paul Gout in 1907 through the successive examinations and restorations of the structure in the course of the twentieth century by Yves-Marie Froidevaux, scholars have disagreed about various aspects of the crypt's plan and dating. A review of earlier scholarship on the structure (through the 1970s) is provided by Bazin, *Le Mont Saint-Michel*, xxiii–xxix. Relevant bibliographies on Notre-Dame-sous-Terre may be found in Jean-Vallery Radot, "Le Mont Saint-Michel: travaux et découvertes," *Millénaire monastique* V: 32–52, and Anne-Marie Flambard Hericher,

In its current state, the crypt bears little resemblance to the circular oratory described in the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*. The remnants of ninth-century walls preserved in the east end of the sanctuary, however, prove that the present structure is at least the second (and perhaps the third) church on the site.[16] Various stylistic elements of the structure—such as its arches of alternating brick and quarried stone, supported by heavy rectangular columns—suggest a date of construction in the second half of the tenth century, probably soon after the arrival of Duke Richard's Benedictine delegation in 966.[17] That the monastic community was willing to invest a portion of its then meager resources in this rebuilding project demonstrates they viewed the crypt as a key historical and liturgical space. The resulting structure, which survives in an excellent state of preservation, is a small, somewhat irregular space of approximately eleven by thirteen meters, with masonry walls of such great thickness that scholars have speculated the crypt may have served a defensive as well as cultic function.[18] A heavy arcaded wall divides Notre-Dame-sous-Terre into two naves, each of which terminates in a small apse with a modest niche in the east end where an altar or relics could be housed. Indeed, it is likely that tenth-century pilgrims would have descended into Notre-Dame-sous-Terre to view the elaborate double reliquary in which the relics from Monte Gargano were kept, as most monastic communities preferred to house important relics in crypts in this period.[19] The structure's unusual double-nave plan has

"L'apport de l'archéologie a la connaissance du Mont-Saint-Michel," in *Culte et pèlerinage à saint Michel*, 467–79 (at 468–71).

[16] Yves-Marie Froidevaux, "L'église Notre-Dame-sous-Terre de l'abbaye du Mont-Saint-Michel," *Monuments historiques de la France* 7 (1961): 163–65.

[17] Widely ranging dates have been proposed for the structure: Michel de Boüard held the crypt to be Carolingian, while Paul Gout believed its construction had taken place in the early tenth century before the arrival of the Benedictines. More recent assessments have pushed the date forward to the last three decades of the tenth century (with later eleventh-century additions). For a summary of previous scholarship on this issue and a convincing argument in favor of a late tenth-century date of construction, see Maylis Baylé, "Les constructions préromane et romane," in *Le Mont-Saint-Michel, histoire et imaginaire*, 102–14.

[18] Eric Gustav Carlson, "Religious Architecture in Normandy, 911–1000," *Gesta* 5 (1966): 27–33 (at 28).

[19] This was in large part a practical consideration, as such an arrangement minimized the number of lay visitors seeking to gain access to the east end of abbatial churches and thus enabled monks and nuns to perform the offices in peace. See Jean Hubert, "La place faite aux laïcs dans les églises monastiques et dans les cathédrales aux XIe et XIIe siècles," in *I laici nella* 'societas Christiana' *dei secoli XI e XII* (Milan, 1968), 470–87 (esp. 477–81).

been much remarked on by students of the abbey as a possible parallel with the grotto at Monte Gargano, the plan of which also centers on two altars placed within hollowed out apses.[20] Whether or not this division of the space was an intentional reference to Monte Gargano, Notre-Dame-sous-Terre is certainly not a typical pre-Romanesque church, and has no immediate parallels in extant structures of this period anywhere in Francia.[21]

In 992, less than three decades after the Benedictine monks' arrival at Mont-Saint-Michel, a great fire devastated the monastic complex.[22] In the wake of this disaster, the monks quickly spread the word that their most important links to the abbey's past had survived; the precious relics from Monte Gargano had been miraculously preserved from harm, while the crypt of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre had escaped nearly unscathed, losing only its wooden roof to the flames.[23] In the years immediately following the fire, the crypt likely served as the monastic community's primary place of worship, and the value the Benedictines' placed on Notre-Dame-sous-Terre as an important cultic space in its own right is evidenced by the care with which they subsequently incorporated the crypt into the plan of the new Romanesque church begun in 1023. Continued access to the crypt was assured by the construction of twin stairways leading down from the fifth bay of the Romanesque nave, which would have eased the flow of pilgrim traffic on major feast days, as well as allowed for the easy entrance and exit of monastic processions.[24] While the construction of the new Romanesque church transformed Notre-Dame-sous-Terre into an architectural relic of sorts,

[20] These altars were dedicated to the Virgin and the Trinity, both common dedications in Carolingian Francia. See Pierre Bouet, "Le premier millénaire," in *Mont-Saint-Michel: histoire et imaginaire*, 21–26 (at 26). For a comparison of the plans of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre and Monte Gargano, see Froidevaux, "L'église de Notre-Dame-sous-Terre," 147 ff. This question of parallel architectural plans has recently been taken up again by Marco Trotta and Antonio Renzulli, "La grotta garganica: rapporti con Mont-Saint-Michel e interventi Longobardi," in *Culte et pèlerinage à saint Michel*, 426–48.

[21] Carlson, "Religious Architecture in Normandy," 30.

[22] The chronicler Raoul Glaber mentions this event in his *Historiarum libri quinque* of ca. 1030. See *Rodulfus Glaber Opera*, ed. John France, Neithard Bulst, and Paul Reynolds (Oxford, 1989), 110; Laporte, "L'abbaye aux XIe et XIe siècles," 64.

[23] The third chapter in the abbey's eleventh-century miracle collection is dedicated to the relics' miraculous preservation from the flames; see *Miracula S. Michaelis in periculo maris*, ed. Beaurepaire as an appendix to Le Roy, *Les curieuses recherches*, I: 864–98 (at 877).

[24] Baylé, "Les constructions préromanes," 105. See also the plan of the Romanesque church showing the position of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre beneath the nave in Froidevaux, "L'église Notre-Dame-sous-Terre," 161.

the crypt remained the historical core of Mont-Saint-Michel, the part of the shrine where its early history resonated most powerfully.

Cultic Genealogy and Historical Memory

While the reconstruction of Aubert's crypt created a space that resonated with Mont-Saint-Michel's miraculous early history, a concurrent project entailing what Julia M. H. Smith has termed "textual *aedificatio*"[25] aimed to ground the historical memory and identity of the abbey's monks in a carefully selected body of texts. The promotion of the cult of Bishop Aubert through new works of hagiography played an important role in this conceptual project, which, like contemporary building campaigns at the abbey, allowed the Benedictine community to claim the early history of the shrine as their own legendary patrimony. Although Aubert's relics had disappeared in mysterious circumstances shortly before the Benedictines' arrival, during the abbacy of Hildebert I (1007–19) they were rediscovered in a vessel hidden under the eaves of a house that had belonged to one of the canons.[26] This miraculous *inventio* could not have come at a more opportune time; unable to raise the funds to rebuild their church as they wished, the monks were obliged to use the roofless, fire-damaged building, in which the high altar was covered with a makeshift wooden canopy.[27] The abbey's precarious location on the constantly shifting Norman-Breton border compounded the community's difficulties, as the eleventh century was marked by conflicts between the ambitious Norman dukes and the counts of Brittany in which the abbots of Mont-Saint-Michel found it difficult to remain neutral.[28]

[25] Julia M.H. Smith, "*Aedificatio Sancti Loci*: The Making of a Ninth-Century Holy Place," in *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Mayke de Jong and Francis Theuws with Carine van Rhijn (Leiden, 2001), 361–96 (at 371).

[26] The *Translatio Beati Auberti* comprises the seventh chapter in the eleventh-century miracle collection; *Miracula S. Michaelis*, ed. Beaurepaire, I: 884–86. For a survey of Aubert's cult at the abbey in the Middle Ages, see Katherine Allen Smith, "An Angel's Power in a Bishop's Body: The Making of the Cult of Aubert of Avranches at Mont-Saint-Michel," *Journal of Medieval History* 29 (2003): 347–60.

[27] *Miracula S. Michaelis*, ed. Bearepaire, I: 877: "Interim autem super maius altare fecerunt construi tectum ligneum: sub quo predictam capsam infra se alteram minorem continebat in qua eadem pixis erat qua beatus Aubertas sacras, ut dictum est, reliquias condiderat."

[28] One of the house's eleventh-century abbots, Almod (1028–32), even seems to have been deposed by the Norman Duke Robert I in 1032 for siding with the Breton

In her examination of medieval monastic communities in Northern France, Felice Lifshitz has shown that "controversies, conflicts, and threats to (normally ecclesiastical) community identity stimulated the creation of new imagined pasts."[29] Faced with the challenges just described, the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel laid claim not to a new communal past, but to an old one that could be revitalized and utilized as a source of compelling spiritual authority. Claiming access to the very places and persons described in the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba* must have seemed an excellent strategy for advertising such authority to would-be lay patrons and adversaries alike. The promotion of the relics of Bishop Aubert and the concurrent restoration of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre can thus can seen as two components of a larger project, the promotion of Mont-Saint-Michel as a venerable and powerful locus of saintly *virtus*. This *virtus* provides the main theme of the liturgy composed for the feast of Aubert's *translatio*, instituted at the abbey by 1060 and celebrated on June 18, in which the monks invoked their founder's intercessory powers, referencing the miracle-working abilities of Aubert's relics that were being promoted to pilgrims at this time.[30] Given that the bishop was believed to have been originally buried in Notre-Dame-sous-Terre, and that some of Aubert's relics were re-interred behind the crypt's south altar during the abbacy of Bernard of Bec (1131–49),[31] this space would likely have featured prominently in the celebration of Aubert's feast.

Count Alan III in his war against the Norman duke. On the careful balancing act carried out by the tenth- and eleventh-century abbots of the monastery, see Potts, "Resisting the Tide."

[29] Felice Lifshitz, "The Politics of Historiography: The Memory of Bishops in Eleventh-Century Rouen," *History and Memory* 10 (1998): 118–36 (at 118).

[30] The eleventh-century liturgy for the feast of Aubert's translation, which celebrates the saint as *pontifex* and *confessor*, is contained in Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS suppl. 0116 (mm 015), f. 22. As J.J.G. Alexander has shown, this manuscript is a fragment of the incomplete sacramentary of Mont-Saint-Michel, Morgan Library MS 64; see J.J.G. Alexander, *Norman Illumination at Mont St. Michel, 966–1100* (Oxford, 1970), Appendix VI.

[31] On Aubert's burial at the mount, see M. Lelegard, "Saint Aubert," in *Millénaire monastique*, I: 36–37, and Le Roy, *Les curieuses recherches*, I: 81; the twelfth-century montois poet Guillaume de Saint-Pair, however, asserts that Aubert's body was transported from the cathedral of Avranches to the mount at the special request of the montois canons, and interred beneath the altar in the parish church of Saint-Pierre on the side of the Mount, rather than in the oratory of the archangel. See Guillaume de Saint-Pair, *Le Roman du Mont Saint-Michel*, ed. Francisque Michel (Caen, 1856), ll. 1280–1322. For the re-translation of Aubert's relics in the twelfth century, see Jacques Dubois, "Le

On an even more solemn occasion, the feast of Mont-Saint-Michel's dedication on October 16, monks and pilgrims alike would have been confronted by multiple reminders of the mimetic relationship between the two sanctuaries of the archangel: the crypt of Notre-Dame-sous-Terre nestled beneath the floor of the Romanesque church, the relics from Monte Gargano visible, along with those of Bishop Aubert himself, on the high altar of Saint Michael in the church's east end, and the foundation legend of the abbey that served to situate these *memoria* within the narrative of the abbey's origins. On these days, too, the monks reminded themselves of their continuous claim on the archangel's patronage from their monastery's foundation down to the present day. Local tradition maintained that Saint Michael himself held back the tides of the bay every October 16, allowing the throngs of pilgrims to make their way safely across the sands to the island monastery, a miracle which further served to remind the monks of a great flood described in the *Revelatio* which had cut off the mount from the mainland at the archangel's order.[32] The abbey's greatest saintly patron was also known to put in dramatic appearances on these anniversaries, as in the year 1102, when an anonymous local chronicler noted that "on the very night of his festival, Saint Michael the archangel was seen by many who were present to enter the church on this mount in the form of a column of fire."[33] Through the annual celebration of the abbey's foundation, the monks ritually re-dedicated their church and reminded themselves of the tale of their community's miraculous beginnings.

The affirmation of a connection between Mont-Saint-Michel and Monte Gargano remained an important component of the abbey's

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trésor des reliques de l'abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel," *Millénaire monastique*, I: 501–93 (at 550–53).

[32] This tradition was already current by the ninth century, when the Frankish monk Bernard visited Mont-Saint-Michel on pilgrimage. See *Bernardus monachus itinerarium*, PL 121: cols. 569–74 (at 574): "In festivitate autem sancti Michaelis non conjungitur mare in redundando in circuitu illius montis, sed stat instar murorum a dextris et a sinistris." On the flood that cuts off the future Mont-Saint-Michel from the mainland, see *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*, col. 1391.

[33] This is one of two anonymous twelfth-century chronicles edited by Léopold Delisle as an appendix to his edition of the *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1872–73), II: 233: "Anno MCII visus est a nonullis prope ac procul positis sanctus Michael archangelus, prout credimus, in figura columnae igneae, in nocte scilicet suae festivitatis, penetrasse ecclesiam hujus montis." The reference is to Exodus 13:21 and 14:24, where God appears to the Israelites in a pillar of fire by night in order to guide them in the wilderness, and later watches in the same form as the Egyptian army drowns in the Red Sea.

institutional identity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. At least two members of the Norman community made the long pilgrimage to the Apulian grotto during this period,[34] and the celebration of Monte Gargano's dedicatory feast on May 8 occupied a prominent place on Mont-Saint-Michel's liturgical calendar.[35] The earliest surviving liturgical manuscripts from Mont-Saint-Michel, a lectionary for the feasts of Saint Michael produced at the abbey around 1000 and an incomplete sacramentary of about 1060, demonstrate that Monte Gargano's dedication was celebrated as solemnly as the feast of Mont-Saint-Michel's own, and that the Norman monks took pains to locate texts pertinent to the story of the Apulian grotto's origins.[36] A homily on Revelation 12:7 by Pseudo-Bede included in the lectionary as a Matins reading for May 8, for example, likens Saint Michael's famous triumph over the dragon of Revelation with his creation of Monte Gargano, and urges readers to consider the grotto impressed with the archangel's footprints as a physical proof of God's mercy in continuing to send his angelic messengers forth among humans.[37] Likewise, the collect of the sacramentary's mass for May 8 echoes the characterization of Saint Michael in the *Apparitio in Monte Gargano* as a stern and remote figure; the prayer to the archangel who "surpasses all the hosts of angels in his lightning-brightness" is reminiscent of the successive appearances of the archangel as a fiery wind and shower of lightning-bolts in the *Apparitio*, as well as of the fiery apparitions of Saint Michael reported in the annals of Mont-Saint-Michel during this period.[38]

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[34] The two monks' pilgrimage to Monte Gargano is described in the sixth chapter of the eleventh-century miracle collection; see *Miracula S. Michaelis*, ed. Beaurepaire, I: 883.

[35] For an introduction to the performance of the liturgy at the medieval abbey, see Joseph Lemarié, "La vie liturgique au Mont Saint-Michel d'après les ordinaires et le ceremonial de l'abbaye," *Millénaire monastiqe* I: 303–52.

[36] In the sixteenth century the lectionary was bound with several other hagiographical and liturgical manuscripts of a later date; the lectionary, copied by the monastic scribe-illuminator Hervard, is preserved in Avranches, Bibliothèque municipale MS 211, fols. 156–210v. Discussions of Hervard may be found in Alexander, *Norman Illumination*, Appendix II, and Monique Dosdat, *L'enluminure romane au Mont Saint-Michel, XIe–XIIe siècles* (Rennes, 1991), 25–26 and 37–38. For a discussion of the patristic material in the lectionary, see Raymond Etaix, "Les homiliares patristiques du Mont Saint-Michel," *Millénaire monastiqe* I: 399–415. For the sacramentary, see n. 29 above.

[37] Avranches, Bibliothèque municipale MS 211, fols. 168–71v. There is no modern edition of Pseudo-Bede's homily on Revelation 12; for the attribution, see Etaix, "Homiliares patristiques," 411.

[38] New York, Morgan Library MS 641, f. 111rv. The full text of the collect is as follows: "Deus cuius claritatis fulgore beatus Michael archangelus precellit agminibus

The careful organization of the lectionary, which opens not with the abbey's own foundation legend but with the *Apparitio in Monte Gargano*, offers further insights into how the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel negotiated their relationship with the abbey's Apulian archetype. The placement of Mont-Saint-Michel's own foundation legend and its accompanying homilies *after* the collection of readings for Monte Gargano's feast seems to reflect the Norman scribe's sense of an historical relationship between the two texts, and between the two shrines whose origins they describe. This feeling was evidently shared by an anonymous twelfth-century chronicler at the abbey, who opened his narrative with the year 506, the date of the "*revelatio beati Michaelis in monte Gargano*," and chose as his second entry the date 709, the year Bishop Aubert dedicated the archangel's oratory on Mont-Saint-Michel.[39] These striking juxtapositions suggest that the medieval monks of Mont-Saint-Michel viewed the foundations of both shrines as part of a larger historical narrative in which they themselves were actors. Further, these texts define the relationship between Monte Gargano and Mont-Saint-Michel in genealogical terms, portraying the latter sanctuary as the unofficial daughter-house of Monte Gargano and the guardian of its *memoria*, rather than as a mere "copy."

The monks' investment in their community's genealogical relationship with Monte Gargano was also kept alive through their engagement with the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba* itself, which played an important role in the ritual life of the medieval abbey. The *Revelatio* was read aloud to the monastic community and pilgrims on the feast of the abbey's dedication every October 16, and informal retellings of the narrative to visitors are well attested in the abbey's records as well. The earliest miracle collection of Mont-Saint-Michel, composed around 1060, tells of a learned Burgundian pilgrim who asked permission to consult the Latin text of the *Revelatio*,[40] and by the mid-twelfth century the demand for a vernacular version had become so great that a monk of the abbey,

angelorum, presta quesumus ut sicut ille dono tuo principatum meruit possidere celestem ita nos eius precibus vitam obtineamus eternam." In the *Apparitio* the archangel's power is manifested by a "venti flamine" and "igniferis sagittis," prompting the author to quote Heb. 1:7: "Qui facit angelos suos spiritus et ministros suos flammam ignis" (c. 2–3, 541–2).

[39] *Chronique de Robert de Torigni*, ed. Delisle, II: 230. It should be noted that the text of the *Apparitio in Monte Gargano* actually gives the date of the shrine's foundation as 492 rather than 506.

[40] *Miracula S. Michaelis*, ed. Beaurepaire, cap. 5: I: 880–82.

Guillaume de Saint-Pair, decided to compose one in Old French verse for the edification of pilgrims and the monks assigned to tell visitors the history of the shrine.[41] In his retelling of the abbey's foundation in the *Roman du Mont Saint Michel*, Guillaume emphasizes that "the monastery was built on the plan of Monte Gargano," and describes how, in his own day, the feast of Mont-Saint-Michel's dedication was known as "*la petite*," in order to distinguish it from the day commemorating to Saint Michael's older shrine on Monte Gargano.[42] Here again, I would argue that the author meant to articulate a genealogical connection between the two shrines, positing his own community as the cultic offspring of the venerable Monte Gargano through the use of the diminutive form "*la petite*" rather that pronouncing Mont-Saint-Michel to be of lesser importance or sanctity.

Conclusion

For centuries after their community's foundation, the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel continued to view their shrine's relationship with Monte Gargano in mimetic terms, and undertook to advertise this relationship through historical and liturgical texts, relics, and building projects. In the minds of the Norman abbey's monks, their community's origins were to be sought in a faraway shrine most of them had never visited, but whose history they knew as well as their own because it was, in a very real sense, their own history as well. For these monastic liturgists, chroniclers, and builders the advantages of promoting Mont-Saint-Michel as a "memorial" of Monte Gargano outweighed the possible disadvantage of being perceived as a lesser place of cult. While the

[41] *Roman du Mont Saint-Michel*, ed. Michel, lines 1–13: "Molz pelerins qui vunt al Munt,/Enquierent molt, e grand dreit unt,/Comment l'igliese fut fundée/Premierement, et estorée./Cil qui lor dient de l'estoire/Que cil demandent, en memoire/Ne l'unt pas bien, ainz vunt faillant/En plusors leus, e mespernant./Por faire-la apertement/Entendre a cel qui escient/N'unt de clerzie, l'a tornée/De latin tote et ordenée/Par veirs romieus novelment...." On the intended audience of Guillaume's work, see Jean Blacker, "Monastic History in a Courtly Mode? Author and Audience in Guillaume de Saint-Pair's *Roman du Mont-Saint-Michel* and the Anonymous *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Fécamp*," in *Literary Aspects of Courtly Culture*, ed. Donald Maddox and Sara Sturm-Maddox (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1992), and R. Herval, "Un moine jongleur au Mont Saint-Michel: Guillaume de Saint-Pair," *Millénaire monastique*, II: 377–82.

[42] *Roman du Mont Saint-Michel*, ed. Michel, lines 1127–32: "Icele feste est apelée/*La petite* par la contrée;/Quer devant cele une autre en funt/Qui fut trové dedenz Campagne,/Cel que l'en dit Monte-Gargaigne."

modern term "copy" denotes a secondary status, the example of Mont-Saint-Michel demonstrates that, when a medieval community replicated elements of a famous holy site, its members expected to gain access to a larger web of saintly patronage, and to enrich rather than impoverish their historical sense of themselves as a corporate group. The cultivation of such historical connections suited the ideological purposes of the Benedictine monks of Mont-Saint-Michel in the eleventh and twelfth centuries particularly well, as they laid claim to their shrine's past and sought to mine this past as a source of compelling spiritual authority. The success of this strategy is demonstrated by the increasing prominence of Mont-Saint-Michel as a pilgrimage destination, and the large number of important bequests the monks received from lay patrons all over Brittany and Normandy during this same period.[43]

Finally, in my view it seems more appropriate to consider the oratory built by Bishop Aubert—and similar mimetically charged structures of this period—as a memorial, or *memoria*, rather than a "copy" of Monte Gargano. For a medieval monk the word *memoria* would have encompassed a range of concepts—it could refer to memory or a memorial, history, tradition, or a saintly relic[44]—all of which possible meanings evoke the ways in which the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel negotiated their relationship to Monte Gargano. As they worshipped in the crypt of Notre-Dame-sous-Terrre, the monks of the abbey memorialized the space described in the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba*, and also imaginatively inhabited its archetype, the grotto of Monte Gargano, invoking its power as a supplement to the powerful *virtus* of their own shrine. When they recited the *Revelatio in Monte Tumba* as part of a liturgical program, or carried the relics brought from Monte Gargano or the precious remains of Bishop Aubert in solemn procession, they declared their ownership of their shrine's *memoria*. Through all of these ritual actions the monks of Mont-Saint-Michel laid claim to a legacy of angelic patronage that stretched back beyond their own history into the far distant past, and

[43] On the popularity of the pilgrimage in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Lucien Musset, "Recherches sur les pèlerins et pèlerinages en Normandie jusqu'à la Première Croisade," *Annales de Normandie* 12 (1962): 127–50; the later development of the pilgrimage is described in E.R. Labande, "Pèlerinages au Mont Saint-Michel pendant le moyen âge," *Millénaire monastique*, III: 237–50.

[44] J.F. Niermeyer, *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden, 1976), 669. For a discussion of monastic use of the term in relation to relics and reliquaries, see Amy Remensnyder, "Legendary Treasure at Conques: Reliquaries and Imaginative Memory," *Speculum* 71 (1996): 884–906 (at 887).

held out the hope of future protection and prosperity. While the author of the *Apparitio in Monte Gargano* had warned (speaking of the roughness of the grotto) that "one should not seek and cherish embellished stone but purity of heart,"[45] the historical memory of the community at Mont-Saint-Michel was traced on the ancient stones of their crypt, and, for those able to read it, recounted a tale of miraculous mimesis carried out at the order of an angel.

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[45] *Apparitio in Monte Gargano*, 543: "credo docente archangelo Domini, non ornatus lapidum, sed cordis quaerere et diligere puritatem." (The passage aims to explain the roughness and simplicity of the grotto).

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CHAPTER FIVE

HOLY WOMEN AND THE NEEDLE ARTS: PIETY, DEVOTION, AND STITCHING THE SACRED, CA. 500–1150

Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg

One of the little explored yet important roles which provided a special visibility for female piety and sanctity was that of embroiderer or patron/commissioner of sacred embroideries.[1] Queens, noblewomen,

[1] The following is a select listing of studies treating medieval embroidery for this early period, outside of the large body of work which focuses specifically on the Bayeux Tapestry. See A.G.I. Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery: A brief survey of English embroidery dating from the beginning of the tenth century until the end of the fourteenth* (Oxford, 1938); Kay Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1991); É. Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France.* III (Lille, 1936); M. Schuette and S. Müller-Christensen, *The Art of Embroidery* (London, 1964); Beryl Dean, *Ecclesiastical Embroidery: A Batsford Embroidery Paperback* (London, 1958/1989); Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch* (London, 1984); Renate Kroos, *Niedersächsische Bildstickereien des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1970); Désirée G. Koslin, "Embroidery," in *Women in the Middle Ages: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Katharina M. Wilson and Nadia Margolis (Westport, Ct. and London, 2004), I, 311–315; C.R. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West 800–1200* (New Haven, 1993); C.R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art : Manchester Studies in the History of Art*, vol. 3. (Manchester, 1982); Lina Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism* (New York, 1896/1963); Margaret Wade Labarge, "Stitches in Time: Medieval Embroidery in its Social Setting," *Florilegium* 16 (1999): 77–96; Elizabeth Coatsworth, "Stitches in Time: Establishing a History of Anglo-Saxon Embroidery," *Medieval Clothing and Textiles*, I (2005): 1–27; Elizabeth Coatsworth, "The Embroideries from the Tomb of St. Cuthbert," in *Edward the Elder 899–924*, eds. N.J. Higham and D.H. Hill (London, 2001), 298–306; Gale R. Owen-Crocker, "Anglo-Saxon Women: The Art of Concealment," *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. xxxiii (2002): 31–51; Dominic T. Tweddle and Mildred Budny, "The Maaseik Embroideries," *Anglo-Saxon England* 13 (1984): 65–96; Dominic T. Tweddle and Mildred Budny, "The Early Medieval Textiles at Maaseik, Belgium," *Antiquaries' Journal*, 65:2 (1985): 353–389; Mildred Budny, "The Maaseik Embroideries," *Medieval World* 4 (1992): 22–30; Mildred Budny, "The Byrhtnoth Tapestry or Embroidery," in *The Battle of Maldon A.D. 991*, ed. D.C. Scragg (Oxford and Cambridge, MA. 1991), 263–78; Wendy R. Larson, "Who is the Master of This Narrative? Maternal Patronage and the Cult of St. Margaret," in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, eds. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca, 2003), 94–104; *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus Mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern* (Bonn and Essen, 2006). See also the following websites with valuable bibliographies and illustrations: "Historical needlework resources" (http://medieval.webcon.net.au/), "The Atlantian Embroiderers' Guild: Sources for Pre-1000 Embroidery" (http://aeg.atlantia.sca.org/tempore/pre-1000.htm) and Peter Collingwood's extensive bibliography on tablet weaving (http://www.weavershand.com/twbiblio.html).

abbesses and nuns, as well as laywomen of the lower classes, were singled out for their noteworthy skills and impressive achievements as needle artists. As acts of piety and devotion, their mainly high-status works took the form of ecclesiastical vestments and decorations for the church and altar: they were made as special gifts for churchmen, favorite saints, and for the adornment of the "supreme spouse" along with the "hall and table of the Lord."[2] Their needlework thus became an integral part of the liturgy and the Eucharistic celebration. These valuable pieces were recognized by the Church as major donations and were carefully recorded in their detailed inventories. They became part of the ecclesiastical *memoria* and thus provided these women artists and donors with a certain immortality.

Ecclesiastical embroidery carried out by the *mulieres sanctae* was also viewed on a higher spiritual level. These marvelously decorated pieces, with their glittering gold and silver threads and precious jewels, were seen to capture something of the brilliance of God's kingdom on earth. They were also considered as reflections of the virtuous character and pious state of the women who embroidered them. This heavenly activity thus closely associated the artists with their future home in the celestial gynaeceum. Moreover, over time some precious pieces came to be considered as holy relics in their own right: imbued with a special *virtus*, they were believed to bring about miracles.

Based on a collective study of saints' lives and miracles, martyrologies, chronicles, correspondence, charters, wills, and inventories of monasteries and churches, this preliminary survey attempts to explore a number of aspects of the important pattern of piety found among women who won recognition for their special expertise in and association with religious needlework. The focus is limited to the early period in the history of embroidery: that is, from approximately the sixth through the mid-twelfth century.

Until quite recently, medieval embroiderers and their work have remained largely unexamined. Embroidery has frequently been dismissed as "mere women's work": as a craft or minor/low form of art.

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[2] *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and the Liber confortatorius*, eds. Stephanie Hollis with W.R. Barnes, Rebecca Hayward, Kathleen Loncar, and Michael Wright (Turnhout, 2004), ch. 11, p. 38.

It has not received the kind of attention and appreciation from scholars that it deserves.[3]

For the Middle Ages, as well as today, there has been some confusion between the terms "embroidery" and "tapestry." "Embroidery is the art of applying decoration by needle and thread to the surface of a piece of woven cloth, usually called the 'ground'.... Embroidery is an optional additional decoration worked after the completion of the whole weaving process."[4] Tapestry, on the other hand, is a form of weaving with its designs woven into the piece of cloth.[5] As portable and highly fragile artworks, the vast majority of these precious embroideries have unfortunately been lost or destroyed over the centuries. In some cases the lavish use of gold and silver thread and precious jewels—the intrinsic value of the materials used in these pieces—caused churchmen and others to destroy these works in order to recover and reuse the gold.[6] Therefore, what we know about most of these works is based solely on written sources.

Sacred embroideries comprised some of the greatest and most valuable treasures found among the holdings of medieval churches. One can perhaps gain some idea of the original importance, size, and numbers of these marvelous religious works from a visit to the wonderful late medieval embroidery collections found at the German monasteries of Wienhausen and Kloster Lüne in Lüneburg, or the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Medieval inventories are also especially valuable in reporting the large numbers of embroidered pieces found in their

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[3] See especially June L. Mecham's excellent new study, with an extensive bibliography, "Breaking Old Habits: Recent Research on Women, Spirituality, and the Arts in the Middle Ages," *History Compass* 4/3 (2006): 448–480; Jeffrey Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley, 1997); Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*; and Labarge, "Stitches in Time"; Mary Frances Smith, Robin Fleming, and Patricia Halpin, "Court and Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England," *The Catholic Historical Review* LXXXVII/4 (Oct. 2001): 569–602.

[4] Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers*, 4.

[5] Confusion of these terms can be seen, for example, in the famous eleventh-century work, the Bayeux Tapestry, which is in fact an embroidery as its design is stitched on the surface of its linen ground. While the well-studied Bayeux Tapestry is one of the major embroidery works for the early period, I will be focusing in this chapter specifically on ecclesiastical embroideries.

[6] Dodwell describes vestments so "stiff with gold" that they weighed ten pounds; or chasubles that were so solid with gold that they could hardly be bent. Some were so laden with gold that they were too heavy to wear. He notes that three eleventh-century gold vestments, when melted down in the fourteenth century, yielded an amount of gold that could have paid for the building of Boxley Abbey's cloisters. Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 25–26. Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers*, 65–66.

collections. For example, the 1081 inventory of Ely lists some 132 precious textiles, while the later inventory of 1134 (1143) has nearly three pages listing approximately 375 decorated vestments, pillows, and other items.[7]

Thus for the medieval church, embroideries played a major role. They were essential for religious ceremonies, processions, liturgical celebrations, and the decoration of church buildings. Their colorful splendor and iconographic programs complemented those found in the sculpture, stained glass, metal work, manuscript illuminations, and wall paintings of the church. Rich embroideries covered altars and altar frontals; various veils and other pieces concealed the holy objects placed on the altar; embroidered palls covered coffins; and large scale wall hangings and embroidered flags decorated special areas of the church. However, especially important were the ecclesiastical vestments worn by the churchmen in the various processions and liturgical celebrations. High churchmen, for example, were covered from head to toe by special embroidered articles of religious apparel including: slippers, chasubles, copes, albs, belts, dalmatics or tunicles, maniples, orphreys, stoles and mitres.[8] Embroidered vestments, as well as shrouds made of precious fabrics, and special cushions were also buried with churchmen or placed in reliquaries with the relics of saints.[9]

[7] *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth*, trans. Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005): bk. II, ch. 114, pp. 234–235; bk. III, ch. 50, pp. 357–360.

[8] Definitions of some of these pieces of ecclesiastical embroidery are provided in Staniland's *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers*, p. 70: chasuble—"principal vestment worn by the priest for the celebration of mass"; cope—"principal vestment worn for various church ceremonies; a semi-circular cloak, fastened across the chest by a brooch... front edges were often adorned with orphreys"; alb—"enveloping white linen tunic worn by priests... often ornamented with apparels at cuffs and lower hem"; dalmatic—"shin-length sleeved tunic worn by deacons assisting the priest at mass"; maniple—"narrow strip of material worn over the left forearm by priest, deacon, and sub-deacon"; orphrey—"decorative band, often embroidered, used on chasuble, cope, dalmatic, etc."; stole—"narrow strip of material worn over the shoulders by priests and deacons and falling to the knee or lower"; mitre—"cap with two points, or horns, worn by bishops and some abbots. From the back hang two narrow strips of material called lappets." See also Dean, *Ecclesiastical Embroidery*, 45–56.

[9] For example, the splendid burial vestments that clothed the body of Adalbert, archbishop of Mainz (1138–1141), are described as follows: "The costliness of his garments... would scarcely be believed in the telling. The mitre which adorned his head sparkled, interwoven with jewels... the colour of gold gleamed from part of it and part was sprinkled with the radiant colour of silver. The quality of the chasuble and Episcopal stole shone forth from their workmanship... The chasuble blazed with jewels, and with the blush of gold... A glittering dalmatic with glowing threads... was

The materials used in these luxury embroidery pieces included silver, gold, and silk thread, pearls, precious jewels and enamels stitched onto a base piece or ground of linen, silk, or velvet. In contrast, some of the large wall hangings were often embroidered in colored wool on linen. In addition to costly materials, these embroideries also required a substantial commitment of time to accomplish. They were covered with minuscule stitches worked in fine gold, silver, and silk thread. For example, the marvelous "Rider Mantle" of Henry II of the eleventh century, preserved today in Bamberg Cathedral, has forty-five gold threads per cm.[10] It has been estimated that one pattern unit of the still extant Maaseik embroideries, dating to the early ninth century, took approximately one week (working approximately five hours per day) to complete. A strip of about 63 cm by 10 cm would take at least ten weeks of full-time work.[11] An altar frontal for the high altar of Westminster Abbey, dating to the period a little later than this study, ca. 1271, required three years and nine months of work by four women.[12] My own experience as an embroiderer, working in the style of the medieval English embroideries—the *opus Anglicanum*—corroborates these assessments of the long hours required to execute these intricate embroideries as well as the special difficulty in working with metallic threads. (It should be added, medieval women of this early period had the disadvantage of not having access to good artificial light or glasses.)

For the medieval period, Englishwomen were especially renowned for their embroidery work and special expertise as needle artists. The Anglo-Saxon proverb stated: "A woman's place is at her embroidery."[13] In his work *In Praise of Virginity*, dedicated to the abbess and nuns of Barking Abbey, St. Aldhelm (d. 709), abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne, noted the skills of Anglo-Saxon women embroiderers: "The shuttles, not filled with purple only but with various colours, are pushed here and there among the thick spreading threads, and then with the art of embroidery they adorn all the woven work with various groups of figures."[14] Goscelin of St. Bertin (ca. 1040–1114) praised English women for their special expertise in gold embroidery work. He

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heavy with jewels and decorated with different designs." Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 26.

[10] Schuette and Müller-Christensen, *The Art of Embroidery*, 298.

[11] Coatsworth, "The Embroideries from the Tomb of St. Cuthbert," 296.

[12] Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers*, 9.

[13] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 72.

[14] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 1.

noted that they decorated robes of high churchmen and princes with gold embroidery, gems and pearls.[15] In his *Life of William the Conqueror*, William of Poitiers, chaplain to the Conqueror, wrote: "The women of England are very skillful with the needle and in the matter of tissues of gold."[16] Their activity in this field can also be seen in a regulation from the Council of Clovesho (747) which ordered that nuns were to devote more time to "reading books and chanting psalms than to weaving and decorating [*plectendis*] clothing with various colors in unprofitable richness."[17] In this context Caesarius of Arles, in one of his letters, warned his nuns against these luxuries: "For there are those (which is worse) who strive rather to work for their earthly desires for that vain ostentation of the world, than to pursue divine reading, while they desire to provide for the concupiscence of their eyes, at enormous cost and with superfluous expenditure, beautiful bed coverings and decorated tapestries and even pillows and the rest of things like that."[18] Here the churchmen were aiming their criticism towards nuns spending too much of their time on embroidery for frivolous, secular use—for the decoration of opulent gold and jewel clad robes and furnishings for themselves. They were not, however, condemning the dedication of their needlework skills to fashion luxury textiles for the use of the church.[19]

Thus early medieval needle artists were recognized and rewarded for their special talents and skills. Among the Irish, as noted by Lisa Bitel, the *druinech* or embroideress was seen as "prohibitively expensive to support when sick or injured." She was difficult to replace as she was "so skilled, her talents so rare, and her product so richly valuable." And quite remarkably, according to one Irish law, her artistry as a needleworker provided her with more prestige than a queen.[20]

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[15] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 45.

[16] Guillaume de Poitiers, *Vie de Guillaume le Conquérant* in *Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, ed. M. Guizot (Paris, 1826), 433.

[17] Arthur West Haddan and William Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 1871/1964), III, no. 2, p. 369. See also Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 226.

[18] Maria Caritas McCarthy, *The Rule for Nuns of St. Caesarius of Arles: A Translation with a Critical Introduction* (Washington D.C., 1960), 186 citing Caesarius of Arles, *Vereor, Opera* II, 140.

[19] See also Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 57.

[20] Lisa M. Bitel, *Land of Women: Tales of Sex and Gender from Early Ireland* (Ithaca and London, 1996), 128.

Fine embroidery works were then very costly, highly prized and essential to the Church. Churches and monasteries carefully preserved their embroidery collections; they provided detailed listings of these valuable treasures in their inventories, sometimes noting in their entries the embroiderer or the donor of specific pieces.

Catalogue of Women Embroiderers and their Religious Works

While the majority of medieval embroiderers remain anonymous, a number of the sources of this early period mention the names of specific women artists or commissioners/overseers and donors of embroidery work. Most of the names that have come down to us in regard to these high status religious embroideries are those of queens, noblewomen, and female religious. Many of these women also had reputations of piety and devotion with a number recognized as popular saints. In some cases, however, it is difficult to establish whether the women to whom the embroideries are attributed actually made the embroidery "with their own hands"; or if they provided oversight or commissioned the work to be presented as a special gift to a churchman, saint, or religious establishment; or if, perhaps in hagiographic tradition, the expertise in needlework along with the precious objects have been wrongly identified as part of the reputation of these holy women. The following is a listing, taken from a variety of sources, of some of the embroiderers or commissioners who were remembered for their religious contributions.[21]

The sixth-century Irish saint Ercnat, for example, won recognition of popular sainthood for her impressive skills as a needleworker, especially in relation to St. Columcille/Columba (d. ca. 597). The Irish *Martyrology of Oengus* notes that Ercnat, a virgin/nun, was an embroiderer and seamstress for St. Columba of Iona and his disciples. Her name, Ercnat, meant embroideress, "for *eread* in the Old Gaelic is now *rinnaigecht* 'drawing'; for it was that virgin who was embroideress, cutter and sewer of raiment to Columcille with his disciples."[22]

[21] Dodwell provides the following precaution in regard to these holy embroideries/relics: "There was always a tendency for objects to be wrongly associated with saints so that they could thereby be treated as relics, which all religious foundations were anxious to procure." *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 29.

[22] *The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, ed. Whitley Stokes (London, 1905), 43. See also Bitel, *Land of Women*, 128.

The abbess-saint Eustadiola (7th c.) was remembered for building the monastery of Moyen-Moutiers for women in Bourges and embellishing the walls of her new church with magnificent embroidered wall hangings. She also covered the altar with expensive cloth fringed with gold and was involved in embroidering holy vestments. According to her *vita*, the abbess along with her nuns made these works of art with their own hands. Apparently, very much aware of the dangers and distractions of idleness for her nuns, Eustadiola found embroidery work to be a practical solution to this problem.[23]

The Welsh Saint Winifred (d. ca. 660) was known for her embroidery work. As recorded in a later tradition, each year Winifred and her nuns embroidered a chasuble or other pieces of beautiful needlework for St. Beuno, Winifred's uncle. They were said to send their precious vestments to Beuno, who had moved to Ireland, by placing them in a well from which they were then carried by a stream and miraculously delivered, still intact, to the saint.[24]

One of the most famous of the early English embroiderers was St. Etheldreda (d. 679), queen and founding abbess of Ely. Her fine embroidery skills in gold, or orphrey work, are described in some detail in the *Liber Eliensis* compiled by a monk of Ely in the twelfth century. According to the *Liber Eliensis*: "In addition, being skilled in handiwork, she made with her own hands, so it is reported, by the technique of gold-embroidery, an outstanding and famous piece of work, namely a stole and maniple of matching materials, of gold and precious stones, and she sent this work to be offered to him [St. Cuthbert] as a blessing in recognition of a deep-seated affection. These are kept at the church of Durham, as a sign of the pious devotion of both him and her, and they are [still] shown to people on request, as a great honour, and quite frequently some of our number [i.e. clerics from Ely] have seen them."[25]

It is interesting to note that in this discussion of the importance of these embroidery works, the author of the *Liber Eliensis* stated that "We do not find any mention of this in Bede, but we have thought it

[23] *Acta Sanctorum*, Iun. II (June 8), p. 132, henceforth cited as *AASS*. See also *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, ed. and trans. Jo Ann McNamara and John E. Halborg with E. Gordon Whatley (Durham and London, 1992), 108.

[24] *AASS*, Nov I (Nov. 3), ch. 19, col. 0717; see also A.B.C. Dunbar, *Dictionary of Saintly Women* (London, 1904), II, 304.

[25] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. I, ch. 9, p. 30.

essential for us to write of it in view of all the people who have borne witness to it up to now."[26]

The author of the *vita* of the founding abbess-saints of Eyck, Herlinda and Renilda (8th c.) celebrated their artistic skills in the making and decorating of cloth. The sisters were "carefully trained in every area of work such as is done by women's hands, in various designs and in different styles; thus they attained a high standard of excellence in spinning, weaving, designing, and embroidering interlace in gold and flowers in silk."[27] In their convent at Maaseyck they spent their time weaving, embroidering, and writing. They wove with their own hands short curtains to be used for the altar which they "splendidly embroidered with a variety of designs." According to their hagiographer, these curtains "the holy women embroidered with God and his saints ornate with gold and jewels, and left them behind them in their house."[28]

Queen Ermengard (d. 851), the wife of Lothar I, embroidered a silk pallium which illustrated scenes from the life of St. Peter. This embroidery was accompanied by verses on the virtues of the apostle Peter composed by Sedulius Scottus. At the end of the poem Scottus wrote:

> Blessed Queen Irmingard dedicated this ornament
> An embroidered gift of love to Peter—
> May she glitter in an eternal stole,
> And bear an unfading trophy to heaven.[29]

Queen Judith, wife of Louis the Pious and mother of Charles the Bald, was said to have woven and decorated a cloak for her husband so that "he might shine like a hero in the eyes of the people."[30]

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[26] *Ibid.* Dodwell however argues that since Bede and the author of the anonymous *Life of St. Cuthbert* make no mention of St. Etheldreda's skills as an embroiderer or these gifts to Cuthbert "the attribution is therefore highly suspect." *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 49. I would however disagree with this observation as Bede neglected or underrepresented the contributions of a number of his female contemporaries. See also Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, and Rochester, NY, 1992), 179–270.

[27] *AASS*, Mar. III (March 22), ch. 5, p. 385. See also the various articles on the Maaseik Embroideries by Budny and Tweddle, note 1.

[28] *AASS*, Mar. III (March 22), ch. 12, p. 385. See also Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 231.

[29] Sedulius Scottus, *On Christian Rulers and the Poems*, trans. and ed., E.G. Doyle (Binghamton, 1983), poem 21, pp. 121–122.

[30] Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, 242; Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 30.

Ermentrude (d. 869), the wife of Charles the Bald, was known for her expertise as a needleworker. In a poem praising the Queen and her virtues, John the Scot described her great skill as an embroiderer: she was perfectly instructed in the art of Pallas (i.e. Pallas Athena—the Greek goddess of weaving and mentor for weaving and textiles in ancient Greece), and she covered the silk ground in gold couching. In decorating her husband's robes, she made them shine with gold embroidery. Ermentrude also apparently even embroidered the emperor's undergarments with a pattern of jewels.[31] An inventory found in the Cartulary of the Abbey of Saint Vaast of Arras notes that Ermentrude gave the monastery two gold pallia, a gold towel for liturgical purposes, and five stoles of gold with maniples.[32]

The sister of Charles the Bald, Alpaidis, who held the Monastery of St. Stephen in Reims, was remembered for her needlework and special devotion to the cult of St. Remi. For the translation of the saint's relics and dedication of the new church of St. Remi in 852, she made a red silk tomb pillow with embroidered designs to place under the head of St. Remi (d. ca. 530). On the border of the pillow was found an inscription in gold which identified this as specifically the work of Alpaidis, sister of Charles the Bald.[33] This is thought to be the earliest signed European embroidery. Embroidered on the pillow was the following inscription: "The celebrated Hincmar ordered this modest work to be composed and executed by Alpheide. It was made as ordered, but she turned to the task with such urgency and joy that she created the work you see here. On the occasion of the new honours [the translation of the relics and the dedication of the new church in 852] she finished this little cushion by which the gentle and venerable head of St. Remigius might be supported and throughout relieved through the merits of Alpheide. May her prayers be conveyed beyond the stars."[34]

[31] John the Scot, *Versus* iv, 7–8, *Poetae lat.*, III, 533; see also Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 3, 242; Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 30.

[32] Guimann, *Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Saint-Vaast d'Arras*, ed. M. le Chanoine van Drival (Arras, 1875), 111; see also Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 3, 264.

[33] *AASS*, Oct I (Oct. 1), 302, citing Inventory of 1646, *Histoire ecclesiae Gallicanae*, vol. 6, 33. The pillow is still extant but the embroidery has greatly deteriorated and is difficult to decipher.

[34] A. La Barre Starensier, *An Art Historical Study of the Byzantine Silk Industry*, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1982, vol. 2, 606–608, cited by Coatsworth, "The Embroideries from the Tomb of St. Cuthbert," 299.

Queen Emma, wife of Louis the German, gave a golden woven *cingulum* or belt to Bishop Witgarius (858–887) with an inscription that notes the Queen as donor.[35]

Richlin, the sister of Harmut, abbot of St.Gall (d. 883) made "with her own hands" a beautiful veil that was given to St. Gall. During Lent this hanging was displayed before the crucifix.[36]

Some of the most famous and exquisite embroideries, which are still extant from this early period, are those from the tomb of St. Cuthbert.[37] Dating to ca. 909–920, they consist of a stole, maniple and girdle embroidered in silk and gold. The stole and maniple are identified on the underside with the following inscriptions: "Aelfflaed fieri precepit" or "Aelfflaed had [this] made" and "for the pious bishop Frithestan." The name Aelfflaed, as commissioner, or perhaps even embroiderer of these marvelous pieces, is usually identified with Queen Aelfflaed, the second wife of Edward the Elder and stepmother of King Aethelstan. According to the sources, these pieces were then given to St. Cuthbert by Aethelstan ca. 934. Today these exquisite works are found in the museum of Durham Cathedral.

The recluse saint Wiborada (d. 926) fashioned the clothing and vestments for her brother, Hitto, who was a priest at St. Gall. She also worked for the monastery's scriptorium by embroidering beautiful covers for their holy tomes.[38]

Gerberga, sister of the Emperor Otto I and of the Archbishop Bruno of Cologne, embroidered a piece that has been called the "Flag of War" found in Cologne. It is stitched in gold and silk threads and dates to ca. 962. The work depicts the martyr/saints Hilary of Poitiers and Baso along with the figure of Christ and the archangels Michael and Gabriel. Kneeling at Christ's feet is Count Ragenard who is named in an inscription.[39]

St. Edith of Wilton (d. 984), virgin and novice at the Monastery of Wilton, was the daughter of King Edgar and Wulfryth, his repudiated wife.

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[35] Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 3, 263.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 239; Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 29–30.

[37] Jill Ivy, *Embroideries at Durham Cathedral* (Durham, 1997); Coatsworth, "The Embroideries from the Tomb of St. Cuthbert"; C.F. Battiscomb, ed., *The Relics of St Cuthbert* (Oxford, 1956); Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art;* Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 26–27.

[38] *AASS Mai I*, (May 2), 289–290; see also Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500–1100* (Chicago, 1998), 291–294.

[39] Coatsworth, "The Embroideries from the Tomb of St. Cuthbert," 300–301.

Edith was also celebrated for her embroidery work. In his *vita* of Edith, Goscelin of St. Bertin describes the saint's hands as "elegant" and "accomplished"; "they were dedicated only to the adornment of the supreme spouse; they gave attendance to the hall and table of the Lord, the altar and the high officials of the Church." Goscelin then describes her embroidery work in the Old Testament tradition: "Indeed, like the sister of Aaron (Ex 15.20) and the sister of the priests of God, she embroidered with flowers the pontifical vestments of Christ with her skill and capacity to make splendid. Here purple, dyed with Punic red, with murex and Sidonian shellfish, and twice-dipped scarlet (Ex 25.4, 26.1 etc.) were interwoven with gold; union pearls, . . . were set like stars in gold; the golden insignia of the cross, the golden images of the saints were outlined with a surround of pearls. Her whole thought was Christ and the worship of Christ."[40]

Goscelin also mentions several of St. Edith's relics which were found at Winchester. "Among these there is an alb which she made out of the whitest cotton, a symbol of her innocence, very striking with its gold, gems, pearls, and little English pearls, woven around the yoke in keeping with her golden faith and gem-like sincerity; around the feet, the golden images of the Apostles surrounding the Lord, the Lord sitting in the midst, *and Edith prostrated herself in the place of Mary the supplicant, kissing the Lord's footprints*. Her virginal hands worked this valuable piece with such mystical faith that it should give pleasure for its holiness as much as for its rich embellishment."[41]

Eadmer of Canterbury's *vita* of St. Dunstan (d. 988) mentions a noble matron named Aethelwynn who was an acquaintance of the saint, an embroiderer, and lived near the church at Glastonbury. "He was asked by a certain matron, who was indeed religious and possessed by a desire to please God, that he come to her house and design a stole for her with his craftsman's skill which she could copy in golden thread; she wished to cover this stole with gold (diversify and adorn with gold and gems) for the embellishment of the church of God and its service."[42] In this unique example we see the needleworker requesting that a churchman, who was also an artist of some renown, draw the design "with divers

[40] *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith*, ch. 11, pp. 38–39.

[41] *Ibid.*, ch. 16, p. 48, emphasis mine.

[42] Eadmer of Canterbury, *Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and trans. Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (Oxford, 2006), ch. 8, p. 61.

figures," and determine the iconography and style of the piece, which she would then use as the basic pattern for her embroidery.

According to the *Liber Eliensis*, in 991, at the death of her husband ealdorman Byrhtnoth, Lady Elfflaed gave to Ely "a hanging woven upon and embroidered with the deeds of her husband, in memory of his probity."[43]

Hedwig (d. 994), a Saxon princess and duchess of Swabia, embroidered a number of vestments which she gave to the monks of St. Gall. According to Ekkehard, chronicler and teacher of Hedwig, this most intelligent Minerva was always preparing something as a gift for St. Gall. Among these works were silk chasubles, copes and stoles, dalmatics and subtiles, or liturgical vestments for subdeacons. They included a white stole stitched in gold which portrayed a number of images that were taken from the "Marriage of Philology to Mercury" by Martianus Capella.[44]

In Helgaud of Fleury's *Life of King Robert the Pious*, Adelheid, (d. 1004) the mother of the king, is praised as "a queen worthy of admiration on account of her holy devotion." After discussing her formative role in constructing monasteries, Helgaud provides some of the best detail in regard to a royal embroiderer and her ecclesiastical needlework of this early period: "Further, she made for the holy bishop Martin a chasuble with threads of the best gold. It displayed between its shoulders the majesty of the true Bishop as well as cherubs and seraphims bowing their necks in submission to Him Who dominates all. On its breast was the Lamb of God, the host of our redemption and Lord of glory, whom the four animals worshipped from the four corners [of this image]. Further, she made for the same blessed confessor one cope woven of gold threads, and two others of silver. Finally, for her special friend among friends (besides the Lord), that is blessed Denys, she offered a chasuble, also the product of marvelous craftsmanship.

[43] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. II, ch. 63, p. 163. See also Mildred Budny, "The Byrhtnoth Tapestry or Embroidery."

[44] Ekkehard IV, *Casus S. Galli* 10, *SS*, II, 123; see also Lesne, *La Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 3, 262; Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 233. Dodwell also discusses this important theme of Martianus Capella's "Marriage of Philology to Mercury" in regard to the marvelous twelfth-century Quedlinburg tapestries (knotted carpets) which focus on the *De Nuptiis* for their subject matter. *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 19–22. These unique and absolutely splendid works were commissioned by Agnes, Abbess of Quedlinburg, between 1186–1203. A fragmented inscription on the tapestries names her as the donor. These works have recently been restored and are exhibited in the Tapestry Hall in the Collegiate Church of Quedlinburg.

Still for Denys, she (as befitted such a woman) wove yet another called a terrestrial orb, quite different from that of Charles the Bald."[45]

The author of the *Book of Ely* also notes approvingly the decision of Ethelswith, daughter of Leofflaed (ca. 1023), to dedicate herself to the monastery and to a life which focused on embroidery and tapestry work. The monk writes that she "scorned alliance with a husband and, surrendering herself to the church along with the estate of Stetchworth made the profession that she would remain there [at Ely] for ever. She was given Coveney, a place close to the monastery, where in great seclusion she used to devote her time to gold-embroidery and tapestry-weaving, in company with young girls, and at her own expense, she made with her own hands a white chausuble, being very expert at this sort of craft."[46] This "well embroidered" white chausuble, along with a white headband is also listed in the Ely inventory of 1134.[47] We also learn from the *Liber Eliensis* that Ethelswith's sister, Leofwaru, and her husband gave to the church a major embroidery work: "a tunic of red *purpura* bordered all round the hem and from the shoulders with orphrey."[48]

The empress-saint Cunegund/Kunigunde (d. 1033) was also remembered for her pious expertise in the production and donation of exquisite embroideries to the church. According to tradition, the Empress was said to have embroidered a sumptuous mantle for her husband, Henry II. This celebrated robe has long been called the "Great Mantle of Kunigunde." It was believed to have been made in 1012 for the Emperor Henry to wear at the dedication of Bamberg Cathedral. Shortly after Henry's death, Cunegund presented it as a gift to the Cathedral of Bamberg which the emperor and empress had founded. The famous robe still remains there today.[49] Moreover, Cunegund was said to have richly embroidered a robe for herself. According to a fifteenth century

[45] Helgaud of Fleury, *A Brief Life of King Robert the Pious*, trans. Philippe Buc, 2003 electronic form, ch. 14, p. 25. In regard to the robe of Charles the Bald, n. 43: "This may have been a royal vestment, similar to the cloak of emperor Henry II, insofar as it depicted a cosmic totality. The editors surmise it was a *planeta*, that is a chasuble."

[46] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. II, ch. 88, pp. 187–88.

[47] *Ibid.*, bk. III, ch. 50, p. 358.

[48] *Ibid.*, bk. II, ch. 89, p. 188.

[49] Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 28. The robe is made of blue silk covered with sixty-three marvelous gold medallions showing religious scenes, mainly from the life of Christ and episodes from the lives of Sts. Peter and Paul, the patron saints of Bamberg Cathedral. There are also inscriptions around the medallions and delicate foliate designs in the spaces between the medallions.

account, miracles frequently took place at Cunegund's tomb at Bamberg and many were healed by her tunic which was adorned with sparkling jewels and innumerable pearls.[50] Cunegund also obtained for Bamberg many privileges: it was apparently common belief "that her silken threads were a better defense than the walls."[51] In addition, the Empress made a girdle or belt for St. Godehard, Abbot of Nieder-Altaich and Bishop of Hildesheim. This piece of treasured needlework also came to be venerated as a relic.[52] St. Cunegund built a monastery for nuns at Kaufungen which she decorated and provided with all of the necessary ornaments and furnishings including stoles, chasubles, hangings, coverings, and copes embroidered with gold and precious gems. In the convent she worked with the other nuns in decorating many vestments, especially stoles or belts. Realizing the importance of this type of artistic activity for the monastery, she cited the biblical verse: "If anyone will not work, let him not eat." (2 Thess. 3,10)[53]

St. Cunegund's sister-in-law, Gisela (d. 1037), sister of Henry II and wife of King Stephen of Hungary, was also remembered for having made a marvelous embroidered robe for her husband. The so-called "Coronation Robe of St. Stephen" is worked in silks and gold and today can be found in the Hungarian National Museum. Among the figures embroidered on the robe are those of King Stephen holding an orb and Queen Gisela with a model of the church.[54]

Queen Emma (d. 1052), wife of Ethelred II and Cnut, also figures prominently in the *Liber Eliensis* as an accomplished embroiderer and generous donor of high status embroideries. The author notes that during both King Ethelred's and Cnut's reigns the Queen adorned the church "with honors and gifts." "She also made a remarkable [pall of] *purpura*, [shot silk taffeta] bordered all around with orphrey, and decorated over all its parts with gold and precious gems, with wonderful

[50] *AASS, Mar. I* (March 3), *Appendix ex vita Bruxellis anno MCCCCLXXXIV, BHL* 2009.

[51] Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, Complete Edition (New York, 1956), vol. 1, 471.

[52] *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 231.

[53] *AASS Mar. I* (March 3), ch. 1, pp. 273–75.

[54] This robe depicts along with King Stephen and Queen Gisela, angels, prophets, apostles, martyrs, Christ, the Virgin Mary, and St. John. Dodwell suggests that Queen Gisela/Gisla who was German "might either have brought her countrywomen with her [to Hungary] to do the work, or have had access to the women employed by her brother Emperor Henry II." Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 25; See also Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 332–33.

artistry, in a sort of chequer design, and gave it as an offering there, with the result that no other is to be found in the territory of the English of such artistry and value. For the work seems to be superior to its raw material."[55] The Queen made this magnificent pall for St. Etheldreda's tomb. In addition, the Queen provided silk coverings embroidered with gold and gems for the altars of all of the other saints of the monastery. "She also made altar-hangings: an outstanding large pall, green in colour with gold spangles, so that fronting the altar during a feast day, it would appear quite high up, and, above, fine linen of a brilliant blood-red colour, one foot wide, the length of the altar, reaching to its horns and right to the ground, with orphrey, provides a spectacle of very precious beauty."[56] Queen Emma's generosity in this area was also recorded at Canterbury where she gave two dorsals (or hangings) and two copes with gold tassles.[57] In addition, when Queen Emma bought the relic of the arm of St. Bartholomew from the Bishop of Benevento, she gave him in return a gift of a cope stitched in the style of the *opus Anglicanum*.[58] We also learn that King Cnut made donations to the abbeys of Croyland and Romsey of altar cloths that had been embroidered by his first wife, Aelfgifu of Northampton.[59]

Sources also mention St. Guda of Denmark (d. ca. 1055) as an embroiderer. Queen of Denmark, princess of Sweden, and wife of King Sven of Denmark, Guda built a monastery called Gudheim in Westrogothia. There the holy woman, along with the nuns of her convent, occupied themselves in making many magnificent embroideries for various religious establishments.[60]

According to the *Liber Eliensis*, "Lady Gita, the wife of Earl Godwine and mother of Queen Edith, the wife of the glorious King Edward," presented Ely with "one red chasuble, well decorated."[61]

Edith (d. 1075), the wife of King Edward the Confessor, was described as a model of virtue and integrity. Osbert of Clare states that she

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[55] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. II, ch. 79, pp. 176–77; bk. III, ch. 50, p. 359. For Queen Emma's role as a patron, see Pauline Stafford's *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997).

[56] *Ibid.*, bk. II, ch. 79, pp. 176–77; bk. III, ch. 50, p. 359.

[57] Smith, Fleming and Halpin, "Court Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 593.

[58] Veronica Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual, and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford, New York, 1992), 104.

[59] Staniland, *Medieval Craftsmen: Embroiderers*, 7.

[60] Dunbar, *Dictionary of Saintly Women*, vol. I, 356.

[61] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. III, ch. 50, p. 358.

was "famous and distinguished for verse and prose, and in spinning and embroidery was another Minerva.... The excellent queen served him [the king] as a daughter, and from the beginning of their marriage arrayed him in many kinds of embroidered robes."[62] William of Malmesbury noted that the garments that King Edward wore at great feasts were "interwoven with gold which the queen had most sumptuously embellished."[63] The Queen decorated his throne with coverings embroidered in gold. She also gave an embroidered amice decorated in gold and precious stones to the abbot of the abbey church of St. Riquier.[64]

Queen Matilda (d. 1083), wife of William the Conqueror, appears in the sources as a commissioner or generous donor of embroideries. She gave to her monastic church of the Trinity at Caen "the chasuble which is being embroidered at Winchester by Alderet's wife; the cloak wrought in gold, laid up in my chamber, to make a cope of; one of my two gold girdles with crosses, the one which is engraved with emblems, to hang the lamp before the holy altar; also my...robe, and another robe now being embroidered in England."[65]

In his contemporary *vita* of St. Margaret of Scotland (d.1093), Turgot praises the Queen's active involvement and patronage in the art of needlework. He provides a wonderful description of her royal quarters:

> Her chamber was never empty of these things (that is of the things that pertained to the adornment of divine service); it seemed to be a kind of workshop, so to speak, of celestial art. There were always seen copes for the cantors, chasubles, stoles, altar-cloths, and other priestly vestments, and decorations for the Church. Some were being prepared by the artist's hand: others, finished, were kept as being worthy of admiration.[66]

Queen Margaret then established in the royal palace this workshop of celestial art where women "of noble birth and approved gravity of manners" were employed in making and embroidering these religious

[62] *The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster, attributed to a monk of St. Bertin*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow (London, 1962), 14–15.

[63] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 70 citing William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum*, I, p. 271.

[64] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 145.

[65] Christie, *English Medieval Embroidery*, 32.

[66] Turgot, "Life of Queen Margaret." In *Early Sources of Scottish History: A.D. 500 to 1286*, trans. Alan Orr Anderson (Edinburgh and London, 1922), ch. 4, p. 65.

pieces.[67] It is difficult to know the level of involvement of the Queen in this pious activity, i.e. whether she, in the tradition of other royal women, actually participated in making some of the vestments, or whether her role was mainly one of oversight and interested patron. In this context Marjorie Chibnall has argued that "she [the Queen] herself was not so employed. She merely supervised conduct and paid the women an occasional visit."[68]

St. Paulina of Thuringia (d. ca. 1107) was known for her piety, wealth and accomplished needlework. According to the sources, she "had no superior and scarcely any equal in the province of Thuringia where she lived, in the making of gold borders and stoles" as well as in all types of needlework in gold, silver and silk thread."[69]

A final example in this tradition is the holy recluse, Christina of Markyate, who was also recognized for her embroidery work. According to an entry in St. Albans' *Gesta Abbatum*, Christina of Markyate embroidered "by her own hands in wonderful work," "*operas mirifici*," three mitres and a pair of sandals as a present for Pope Hadrian IV who was of English origin. They were sent along with Robert, the abbot of St. Albans, when he traveled to Rome in 1155.[70]

While one finds in our sources this important pattern, which invariably links royal or noblewomen, piety, patronage, and skill in needlework, interesting exceptions also existed. One case concerns the German noblewoman Adela (daughter of Count Balderic), who, according to a source of 1021, was especially skilled in embroidery. She was "said to have surpassed almost all her countrywomen in the fashioning of costly vestments," yet she lacked the prerequisite piety for she was "strident of voice, coarse of conversation, and disorderly of mind...and had a fickle disposition which was expressed by her beckoning eyes."[71]

In compiling this catalogue of embroiderers, it should however be noted that while women definitely dominated the field of textiles and embroidery during this early period, a few names of male embroiderers also appear in our sources. For example, in the *Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey* the author describes St. Dunstan as a multi-talented artist who

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[67] *Ibid.*

[68] Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen, Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford and Cambridge, 1991/1994), 11.

[69] Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 29.

[70] *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse*, ed. and trans. C.H. Talbot (Oxford, 1959, rev. 1997), 9; Eckenstein, *Woman under Monasticism*, 227.

[71] Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, 30.

wrote, painted, carved, and embroidered. "Indeed, in Glastonbury there are, according to tradition, altarcloths, crosses, thuribles, phials, chasubles and other vestments of his workmanship, which are preserved with the honour of which he is worthy."[72] Also, according to the *Liber Eliensis*, a few of Ely's embroideries were made by male embroiderers or churchmen.[73]

Although by no means a definitive listing, we can then find in a variety of sources the names of over two dozen women, mainly queens and abbesses, whose embroidery activity won them recognition and praise as accomplished needle artists or commissioners or patrons of embroidery work. For most, this pious activity was not their only or main claim to fame as recognized by the Church; rather, as a feminine ideal it participated with or reinforced other acts of gendered saintly behavior such as virginity, industry, and generosity.

Pious Acts, Devotion, and the Significance of these Sacred Stitchings

As noted in the catalogue of female embroiderers, a number of sources that praised women's proficiency in needlework placed this pious activity within the context of the ancient feminine virtue or ideal of women's identification with textiles. In the classical tradition, the skilled medieval needleworkers were described as "another Minerva" or "perfectly instructed in the art of Pallas Athena." It is interesting to note that frequently the high education, the celebrated intelligence of these women is mentioned along with their special talents in embroidery. Thus, a few of the embroiderers selected classical themes for their embroidery works; for example, Hedwig's white stole was said to have displayed images taken from Martianus Capella's "Marriage of Philology to Mercury,"

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[72] *The Chronicle of Glastonbury Abbey*, ed. James P. Carley, trans. David Townsend (Woodbridge, 1985), ch. 61, p. 117.

[73] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. III, ch. 50, p. 358. "And one cope of black *purpur*a, well decorated and star-spangled all over, which Wulfstan at first, and later Guthmund, worked upon, but Ralph completed. And one other cope of black *purpura*, decorated with orphrey all over with golden roundels and flowers, which Prior Thembert once made." Or "four copes: one of pall-cloth spangled with stars arranged in a circle, well decorated, which provost Thurstan of worshipful memory made...." See also Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West*, who notes a hanging at Minden Cathedral made by "Rederich and Cunegund," or an Augsburg hanging with an inscription "Udalsalc [the abbot] and Gerard provided the cloth whilst Brother Beretha provided the work of the embroidery." (16)

a fifth-century text which focused on the *trivium* and *quadrivium*—the seven liberal arts.

Several sources discussed the importance of embroidery work for the life of the convent. Following the monastic principle of "*ora et labora*," or the concept "If anyone will not work, let him not eat," embroidery provided a way for the nuns to be employed in a suitable and useful occupation which would produce dividends for the Church. The activity was also recognized as a positive means for the nuns to maintain their purity and virginity through avoiding the spiritual dangers and dreaded distractions of idleness. Moreover, perhaps like the repetition of the daily prayers and the singing of Gregorian chant, embroidery work might have been seen to have a positive, devotional meditative component. That is, while they embroidered the nuns could turn their minds to the contemplation of spiritual things. The *vita* of St. Edith, for example, noted that "Christ was her work...her theme in ornament, painting, etc.; he was in her mind in weaving; in every movement of her mind and every action he was her theme."[74] Nuns no doubt would also have listened to saints' lives and other religious readings during their long hours of work.

Ecclesiastical embroidery was described as taking place in "a kind of workshop...of celestial art." This high status work, with its rich materials of gold, silver, and jewels, was seen to capture something of the brilliance of the heavenly kingdom. In his writings Ethelwulf describes, for example, an Anglo-Saxon woman in heaven with her "whole body covered with gold-embroidered robes."[75] Or St. Etheldreda is depicted in the *Benedictional of St. Ethelwold* wearing a splendid robe of gold. This luxury gold needlework also linked some of the pious artists to their future home in the celestial gynaeceum: their inner perfection and spiritual purity was reflected in their sacred stitches. For example, in Goscelin of St. Bertin's description of the virginal St. Edith, he notes the precious alb that she made which was fashioned "out of the whitest cotton, a symbol of her innocence," covered with gold and gems on the yoke "in keeping with her golden faith and gemlike sincerity." Also the fact that "her virginal hands worked this valuable piece with such mystical faith" indicated that it should give pleasure and be admired as both a holy work and a richly embellished

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[74] *Writing the Wilton Women*, ch. 11, p. 39.
[75] Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, 31.

piece.[76] Thus the work had both a symbolic and practical value—its value and beauty were enhanced as it contained within it something of the artist's special holiness.

However, what is especially fascinating in regard to this alb which Edith apparently made for herself to wear is that she no doubt determined her own subject matter; she created her own images without the interference of a male spiritual advisor. Here she exercised an interpretive freedom; she took artistic license in her embroidered scene of Christ, the Apostles and Mary Magdalene. Rather than simply interjecting herself as a donor figure witnessing the event from a proper distance, from the outside; she boldly replaced the traditional supplicant, Mary Magdalene, with a portrait of herself. Identifying with Mary Magdalene, the quintessential example of the penitent, Edith depicted herself in direct contact, in visible intimacy with Christ—"Kissing the lord's footprints."[77] Like Mary Magdalene, Edith expressed the need to be pardoned for her sins and remembered for her piety, devotion, and faith. In this portrayal one can see an expression of intense spiritual awareness and devotion; of "penance, tears, sin and forgiveness" found in general in the court art of the period.[78] It also reflects the great popularity of the veneration of Mary Magdalene experienced in England at this time with the saint recognized as the first witness of the resurrection, as the leader of the choir of virgins, and the *Apostolorum Apostola*.[79]

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[76] *Writing the Wilton Women*, ch. 16, p. 48.

[77] *Ibid.* In the "Introduction," Stephanie Hollis notes that "Edith was also an early exponent of devotional self-identification; in her embroidered portrait of Christ and his disciples, she depicted herself in the role of Mary Magdalene." (11; see also 301) A similar example of the patron including herself in a biblical scene can be found in Judith of Flanders' eleventh-century Weingarten Gospel Book. In an illumination of the Crucifixion, Judith is shown at the foot of the cross with Mary and John. "This allowed her to imagine herself actually in Jerusalem at the crucifixion while remaining in her own church." Smith, Fleming and Halpin, "Court and Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 592.

[78] Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries*, 78, 70–71.

[79] It is interesting to note that in the context of Wulfryth and Edith's acquisition of a relic of a piece of the nail of the Passion for their monastery at Wilton, Goscelin of St. Bertin further identifies her with Mary Magdalene. He argues: "If the faith of the woman in the gospel who touched the Saviour's garment is praised (Mt 9.20–22), if the sinful woman who poured oil on the feet of Christ (Lk 7.37–50) deserved not only pardon but even the glory of being remembered for ever, the service done by this woman should also be spoken about." He also notes that the large amount of money that they paid for this precious relic "did service to the redeemer with as many pounds of silver as Mary did with pounds of oil." *Writing the Wilton Women*, ch. 14, p. 45.

It is then through the appropriation of the memory of these events, in her imaginative displacement and audacious self-inscription, Edith was able to re-vision or recreate the traditional biblical scene. It provided her with the opportunity to channel her spirituality, for a "flight of devotional fancy."[80] It allowed her to participate vicariously in another age and another space—in the inner circle with Christ and his Apostles. When she wore this piece, her embroidered alb, over her rich silk robes on special occasions in the convent (e.g. in her chapel which she had decorated with a cycle of the life of Christ "as she had pictured [it] in her heart"), this unique iconography highlighted her own special devotion and identification with Mary Magdalene and Christ.[81] Moreover, as a relic on display at Winchester, this visual imagery no doubt also worked to advertise or further advance her status as a holy woman.

The attributes of the virtuous royal wife or queen also included the commissioning and/or embroidering of special ceremonial robes for the king who was seen as Christ's representative on earth. Queen Edith, for example, embroidered robes for her husband and "arrayed him [King Edward] in many kinds of embroidered robes." Cunegund was said to have embroidered a robe for her husband, King Henry and one for herself; similarly, Queen Judith wove and decorated a cloak for her husband, Louis the Pious. These robes of gold provided the kings with additional majesty and prestige; they allowed them "to shine like a hero in the eyes of the people." Moreover, these early queens, alongside of their husbands, were involved in various ceremonies in which embroidered works served diplomatic functions. Ermold le Noir provides an account of the role of King Louis the Pious and Queen Judith in the baptism of Prince Harold and his wife. On this occasion, the Queen gave the wife of the prince a tunic entirely embroidered in gold and covered with jewels "as rich as one could make under the efforts of the art of Minerva."[82]

However, as overseers of the resources and treasures of their realms, through the power of the purse, queens, noblewomen and abbesses were

[80] Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists*, 216. See also Mecham, "Breaking Old Habits."

[81] *Writing the Wilton Women*, ch. 20, p. 53; Hollis, "Introduction," 10–11; Smith, Fleming, Halphen, "Court and Piety," 599.

[82] Ermold le Noir, *Faites et gestes de Louis-le-Pieux, Collection des mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*, ed. M. Guizot (Paris, 1824), 97. Royal women were also often described as gleaming with gold, purple, and resplendent with jewels. See, for example, the women of the Carolingian court in Theodulf of Orleans' poem, "On the court." *Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, ed. Peter Godman (Norman, Oklahoma), 154–55.

especially well positioned to play a strong role as generous patrons of the church. In the documents of the period they were frequently singled out as major donors of landed properties, churches and monasteries, relics, gospel books, altar furnishings and textiles—including luxury embroideries.[83] Thus having access to the elite raw materials—expensive gold, silver, and silk threads, jewels, pearls, etc.—and as skilled textile workers and needle artists, they had a special advantage in that they could make their gifts "with their own hands" that they then presented to their favorite saints and churchmen. In these benefactions they expressed their piety, generosity and devotion. These expressions of personal devotion were meant to increase their social and spiritual prestige: their status on earth and in heaven.[84] Moreover, as active participants in the gift economy, with its rituals of pious gift exchange, there was a basic expectation of reciprocity on the part of these female patrons. Thus their embroideries were not simply "disinterested gifts," or pure benefactions; rather they incorporated commitments, expectations of return or counter-gifts.[85] For many of the royal and aristocratic women donors, their motives clearly involved a desire for salvation—a spiritual recompense. They hoped that in return for their holy stitcheries they might receive prayers for the benefit of their own souls as well as those of their families. Here we see, as noted by Karl Leyser, Patrick Geary and others, women's major involvement in the practice of *memoria*. As custodians of memory they were responsible for commending the well-being of their own souls and those of their family and friends to churchmen and saints.[86] Therefore, in the tradition, for example, of altar crosses with the donors' names inscribed; or of the *liber vitae* or *liber memorialis* where those listed "should be remembered at the altar"; or the calendars which recorded the names of the nobility who should be remembered and prayed for, embroideries made by these women

[83] See Smith, Fleming and Halpin, "Court and Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England"; Lesne, *la Propriété ecclésiastique en France*, vol. 3.

[84] Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, "The Medieval Gift as Agent of Social Bonding and Political Power: A Comparative Approach," in *Medieval Transformations: Texts, Power, and Gifts in Context*, eds. Esther Cohen and Mayke B. de Jong (Leiden, Boston, Cologne, 2001), 124–37.

[85] *Ibid.*, 142; "Gift exchange is defined as a transaction to create, maintain, or restore relations between individuals or groups of people. The reciprocity of the gift is an essential element of this exchange." (124)

[86] Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994); Karl Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (Bloomington, 1979).

also served to remind churchmen to pray for the salvation of their makers/donors and their families.[87]

The underlying expectations of prayers and spiritual benefits in exchange for their embroidery works can be found in a number of our sources. According to the *Liber Eliensis*, St. Etheldreda's embroidery gift to St. Cuthbert, while underscoring her love for the holy man and their special friendship, notes the reciprocal nature of this pious gift. "In terms of righteousness and piety it was fitting that she, in an act of self-abasing devotion such as this, should pledge a gift to him, beloved virgin to beloved virgin, so that subsequently he might use it standing in the presence of our Lord and King, [and] would with the greatest ease be able to display a reminder of her amidst the holiest of holy ceremonies of the mass and placate the Lord of Majesty with pious supplication on her behalf."[88] Thus each time St. Cuthbert put on Etheldreda's precious handmade vestments and wore them while he celebrated mass, they would serve as an unfailing reminder of his dear friend: and before the altar he would be moved to pray for her soul, to advance her cause of salvation.

Gale Owen-Crocker has also noted in regard to the stole and maniple which Aelfflaed made for Bishop Frithestan, the importance of the practice of praying while vesting: "the presence of the donor's name meant that every time the bishop vested in the garments he would see the name of Aelfflaed and would probably pray for her; and her name would be close to his body as he carried out the holy rites."[89]

Helgaud of Fleury describes Adelheid's expectations in regard to her gifts of embroidered vestments for St. Martin of Tours and "for her special friend among friends," i.e. St. Denis. "Indeed, the Queen, faithful to God, hoped to have a share [in Heavens] with Denys, to whom God, in His unbreakable word, promised that he [Denys] would obtain [the salvation] of those he would plead for."[90] One sees in these special gifts made by the Queen, the expectation of reciprocity between pious donor and her family and the recipients (saints), residing in the royal shrines at Tours and at St. Denis—the royal burial church.

[87] For the ninth-century *Liber Vitae* of Durham, the female names of Hildithryth, Hildigyth, Oedilburga and Cyniburg are found among those to be "remembered at the altar." See Christine Fell, Cecily Clark and Elizabeth Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (London, 1984), 121–22.

[88] *Liber Eliensis*, bk. I, ch. 9, p. 30.

[89] Owen-Crocker, "Anglo-Saxon Women: The Art of Concealment," 32.

[90] Helgaud of Fleury, *A Brief Life of King Robert the Pious*, ch. 14, p. 26.

Religious embroideries containing inscriptions of the names of their makers/donors were also placed in the tombs or reliquaries of saints. On Alpaidis' embroidered cushion made for St. Remi's reliquary, the inscription identifies the needle artist and states: "May her prayers be conveyed beyond the stars."[91] Although these inscriptions remained hidden within reliquaries, they occupied a most honored and intimate sacred place next to the saints' holy relics.[92] In this location they were especially "visible" to those who determined their salvation, i.e. the saints who would intercede for them with God. In addition, their gift of embroideries would be recorded in the sources and, on the saint's day as well as with each translation of the saint, they would be remembered for their pious work and special association/friendship with the holy dead.

Gale Owen-Crocker has also argued in regard to Aelfflaed's stole and maniple which were later given to St. Cuthbert and placed in his reliquary: "However the queen gained an even greater sanctity than she might have expected: the stole and maniple, in being placed in a reliquary, became *brandea*—cloths sanctified by proximity to the holy relics. Aelfflaed's name was to spend nine hundred years close to the body of one of Anglo-Saxon England's premier saints."[93]

Thus in a number of cases these precious embroideries made by or associated with the *mulieres sanctae* came to be recognized as sacred relics in themselves. For example, St. Edith's splendidly embroidered alb was displayed among her other relics at Winchester. St. Etheldreda's embroideries, made for St. Cuthbert, were also shown to people on request who visited Durham. Also several of St. Cunegund's embroideries came to be revered as relics. The embroidered girdle which she made for St. Godehard was venerated as a relic in Hildesheim. Her own embroidered robe, covered with jewels and pearls, was said to have healed many pilgrims who sought St. Cunegund's assistance in Bamberg. Especially pregnant women and those with difficult labors asked for the help of the saint, and with reverent devotion, they touched her holy tunic or even put it on. According to tradition, no one was denied her help and the saint freed them from their travails.[94]

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[91] See note 34.

[92] See Owen-Crocker, "Anglo-Saxon Women: The Art of Concealment."

[93] *Ibid.*, 32–33.

[94] *AASS, Mar. I* (March 3), *Appendix ex Vita Bruxellis, BHL* no. 2009.

In stitching the sacred, these women made major contributions to the physical fabric and ceremonial life of the church. Through their good works, their gifts of religious embroideries, these women achieved a certain visibility. Their ecclesiastical patronage, their generosity helped insure their pious memory. They also came to be closely identified with their favorite saints, churchmen, the altar, and the mass.

Churchmen praised these accomplished needle workers and their industrious involvement in this female activity which was especially useful to the adornment of the church. Priests were advised to strongly encourage women to make textiles and particularly altar cloths for the church.[95] However, at the same time, canons of church councils and monastic *regulae* warned that no females were to have access to male monastic churches, not even to attend religious services.[96] Excluded from the priesthood, women were continually reminded that they were prohibited from directly approaching the altar—where "their" splendid altar cloths and frontals, and other pieces were prominently displayed; they were similarly forbidden to stand among priests who were wearing "their" handmade vestments during the celebration of mass, or from even touching "their" vestments or altar cloths *in situ*.[97] Nevertheless, through their precious needleworks there was an ongoing private acknowledgement that they were a necessary, vital part of the liturgical experience and celebration. Through their stitching the sacred, these women could assume a special intimacy with the saints and the divine, an indirect participatory role—by proxy—in the church's most

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[95] See, for example, a capitulary of Charlemagne that stipulated priests were to encourage women to make *linteamina* for their altars. *Capit. Eccles. 7, Capit.*, I, p. 178.

[96] See Schulenburg, "Gender, Celibacy, and Proscriptions of Sacred Space," in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church*, eds. Virginia Chieffo Raguin and Sarah Stanbury (Albany, 2005), 186–193.

[97] For example, when altar linens were to be removed for washing, priests took them from the altars and then handed them over the altar rails to women. After they had been washed, the women, unable to approach the altar, returned them to the priests at the altar rails. On the policies of excluding women from the altar and forbidding them to touch altar cloths or vestments, see, for example, the Council of Mâcon (583), nos. 36, 37, 42, Hefele, III, I, or the Council of Aix-la- Chapelle (789), no. 17, Hefele, III, 2, p. 220; Council of Paris (829), *Conc. Parisiense*, 45, *MGH Conc.* 2, 639; precedent in *Conc. Laodicense* 44 (Mansi 2: 581); *Decretum Gratiani*, Distinction 23, Chapter 25, *Corpus Juris Canonici*, ed. A. Friedberg, vol. 1, col. 85; *Decretum Gratiani*, Section III, Distinction I de cons., ch. 42, *Corpus Juris Canonici*, ed. A. Friedberg, vol. 1, col. 1305. See also Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister 500–900* (Philadelphia, 1981), and the website www.womenpriests.org. I am presently working on a book which deals with these fascinating issues of gendered exclusionary space.

sacred spaces and most sacred of rituals, mass.[98] Moreover, for a figure such as St. Edith, embroidery allowed her the opportunity to shape and express her devotional experience; to adopt images, spiritual motifs that were especially meaningful to her. She could take center stage and, as a second Mary Magdalene, participate in a major scene with Christ and his apostles. And for a few, such as Ercnat, it is only through their reputations as marvelous embroiderers and their highly valued contributions to the Church that they won recognition of popular sainthood and that we know of them today. Moreover, as part of the ritual of gift exchange, the embroideries of some of these talented women became truly "garments of salvation." And as Sedulius Scottus fittingly wrote in regard to Queen Ermengard's brilliance as an embroiderer:

> May she glitter in an eternal stole,
> And bear an unfading trophy to heaven.[99]

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[98] Mecham, *Breaking Old Habits*, 455; Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists;* Smith, Fleming, and Halpin, "Court Piety in Late Anglo-Saxon England," 594; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, 1992), 129.

[99] Sedulius Scottus, *On Christian Rulers and the Poems*, Poem 21, p. 122.

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PART II

PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVOTIONS ACROSS THE GENDER DIVIDE

CHAPTER SIX

THE POLITICS OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY IN EAST FRANCIA: THE CASE OF GANDERSHEIM, CA. 850–950

Scott Wells

The community of religious women at Gandersheim performed several services for the Liudolfing/Ottonian lineage that established the convent in the mid-ninth century.[1] The cloister functioned as a family necropolis, as a center for the commemoration of the lineage in prayer and literature, as a frequent residence for the itinerant royal court, and as a site anchoring the dynasty to its carefully-asserted origins among the Saxon people. Concentrating on several of these functions, I would here like to explore Gandersheim as a "locus of enunciation": a site that derived authority and utility from its capacity to produce 'meaning' for the Liudolfings; or, more precisely, multiple meanings accommodating the dynamic shifts in social and political power experienced by (and within) the lineage over the course of the ninth and tenth centuries.[2] The resources from which the convent constituted this meaning included its location, its foundation legend, its relics and tombs, its abbesses, its textual production, and its material services to the itinerant royal court. Its status as a community of women, and of women following a religious

[1] For a comprehensive overview of Gandersheim's history, including its archives, manuscripts, institutional organization, religious and spiritual life, properties, and personnel, see Hans Goetting, *Das Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, *Das Reichsunmittelbare Kanonissenstift Gandersheim*, Germania Sacra 7 (Berlin and New York, 1973). Also note Caspar Ehlers, "Gandersheim, Bad," in *Die deutschen Königspfalzen. Repertorium der Pfalzen, Königshöfe und übrigen Aufenthaltsorte der Könige im deutschen Reich des Mittelalters 4: Niedersachen. 3. Lieferung: Buxtehude—Gieboldehausen* (Göttingen, 2001), 247–333; and, specifically on literacy and textual production, Katrinette Bodarwé, *Sanctimoniales litteratae. Schriftlichkeit und Bildung in den ottonischen Frauenkommunitäten Gandersheim, Essen und Quedlinburg* (Münster, 2004).

[2] I borrow the concept of a "locus of enunciation" from Walter D. Mignolo, who coined the term (drawing on Michel Foucault) in his *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization* (Ann Arbor, 1995; 2nd ed., 2003), e.g. 5: "[discourses] acquire their meaning on the grounds of their relation to the subject matter as well as their relation to an audience, a context of description (the context chosen to make the past event or object meaningful), and the *locus* of enunciation from which one "speaks" and, by speaking, contributes to changing or maintaining systems of values and beliefs."

rule, further facilitated its power to articulate a meaningful identity for the Liudolfing clan, allowing it to finesse the politics of *familia* in an aristocratic society in ways that neither men nor laywomen could. During periods when Gandersheim proved a successful and important locus of enunciation for the Liudolfings, as in the period from ca. 850 to 900 and in the decades following the installation of Otto I's niece Gerberga as abbess ca. 949, it received extensive attention (fiscal, legal, personal) from the leaders of the lineage, and indeed counted leaders of that lineage among its members and abbesses. When it proved incapable of meeting that purpose, as appears to have been the case for most of the first half of the tenth century, it was correspondingly neglected by the heads of its founding family.

Other scholars have explored the history of Gandersheim by tracing the ups and downs of its importance to the dynasty. Gerd Althoff has written extensively about the convent in the context of *Memorialüberlieferung*.[3] In his analysis, Gandersheim retained a prominent place in the family's interests until the foundation of the convent at Quedlinburg in 936, from which point this second community of canonesses became not only the necropolis of Henry I, the first ruling king of the dynasty, but also the principal center for the commemoration of the lineage through prayer and textual production. Gandersheim recovered some of its status when Otto II's daughter Sophia was sent to the convent for her education and later received the veil as a canoness in 987. Eventually Sophia would even become abbess in 1002, but these events failed to displace Quedlinburg from its premier position as *Hauskloster*. That would take place under Henry II, who would shift principal responsibility for Ottonian commemoration to the cathedral chapter of Merseburg by 1018. Viewing Gandersheim through the lens of its commemorative function, Althoff identifies 936 as a key turning point toward decline in its symbolic status from which the convent never fully recovered.

John Bernhardt, examining the economic foundations and functions of Gandersheim as part of his study of the hospitality and material support royal monasteries provided to the itinerant kings and their courts under the Saxon and Salian dynasties, traces a different pattern through

[3] Gerd Althoff, "Gandersheim und Quedlinburg: Ottonische Frauenklöster als Herrschaft- und Überlieferungs-zentren," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 25 (1991): 123–144. Also note his *Adels- und Königsfamilien im Spiegel ihrer Memorialüberlieferung: Studien zum Totengedenken der Billunger und Ottonen* (Munich, 1984).

the convent's history.[4] Noting the two charters issued for Gandersheim by Otto I, and the ever-increasing frequency and value of property grants made by his successors Otto II, Otto III, and Henry II, under whom "Gandersheim's enrichment at the hands of the Saxon kings continued and reached its apex,"[5] Bernhardt argues that Gandersheim's importance to the interests of the dynasty actually increased between ca. 950 and 1024 due to its vital position along a route frequently traveled by the itinerant court. Gandersheim remained pivotal to the needs of succeeding monarchs, since it was located approximately thirty-five kilometers ("a good day's march")[6] from Goslar along the principal northeast-southwest route to that palace, the pre-eminent residence of the Salian monarchs in Saxony. Examining royal charters and the movements of the royal court, Bernhardt traces a rise in Gandersheim's status, measured both in material wealth and in the recurring presence of the king, over precisely the same period when Althoff notes the convent's failure to significantly dent Quedlinburg's pre-eminence in symbolic significance to the Liudolfing dynasty.

These are not, of course, mutually-contradictory theses. They can simply be set side-by-side as two distinct ways of evaluating Gandersheim's institutional history. Borrowing terminology from Bourdieu, we might say one approach focuses on following the convent's "cultural capital" while the other focuses on following "economic capital". Taking another look at the principal sources for the early history of Gandersheim, however, I would like to trace a third pattern which links the two peaks in the convent's influence together as part of a single process in which the convent strove to adapt to changing circumstances in hopes of maintaining its position as a locus of enunciation for the Liudolfing lineage. It was its *symbolic* capital, this *idea* of Gandersheim as a meaningful and meaning-producing place, which enabled the convent to increase both its cultural and economic resources in the competitive, volatile social field of ninth-tenth century East Francia.[7]

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[4] John W. Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship and Royal Monasteries in Early Medieval Germany, c. 936–1075* (Cambridge, 1993), 149–161 and 290–296; also see Goetting, *Das Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 76–93 and 262–274.

[5] Bernhardt, 154.

[6] *Ibid.*, 156.

[7] The concepts of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital are perhaps best approached through Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002). The scholarly divide in Ottonian studies between those who pursue *Itinerar-* and *Pfalzenforschung* on the one hand and those who research ritual,

Hans Goetting's magisterial survey of the social and institutional history of Gandersheim for the *Germania Sacra* series provides a useful guide to the events surrounding the convent's origins.[8] In the historical imagination of the Liudolfings, Count Liudolf was the eponymous founder of the dynasty, and it was this same Liudolf, along with his wife Oda, who established on the family's lands at Gandersheim a *Hauskloster* over which their daughter Hathumod would preside.[9] The foundation arose in the aftermath of a pilgrimage Liudolf and Oda made to Rome in 845/6 during which the marital pair received the support of Pope Sergius II for their planned cloister, along with the relics of the early fifth-century popes Anastasius I and Innocent I. Hathumod, born in 840, was trained under the supervision of her grandmother Aeda at the Saxon convent of Herford. When Hathumod became abbess upon reaching the canonical age of twelve in 852, the buildings of Gandersheim were not yet ready for habitation, and so she and the *sanctimoniales* under her care resided at the nearby male monastery of Brunshausen, also a Liudolfing foundation.[10] Hathumod died in 874 and was succeeded by her sister Gerberga, under whom the community could finally move to the completed complex and church at Gandersheim in 881.[11]

This early history of Gandersheim took place during a period of Frankish-Saxon integration in the kingdom of East Francia, at least among the elites.[12] The Saxon nobility, following their conquest by

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Staatsymbolik, and *Herrschaftsrepräsentation* on the other is remarked upon by Timothy Reuter, "Regemque, quem in Francia pene perdidit, in patria magnifice recepit: Ottonian ruler representation in synchronic and diachronic comparison," in *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im Ottonischen Sachsen*, ed. Gerd Althoff and Ernst Schubert (Sigmaringen, 1998), 363–380 at 365–366.

[8] Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 81–85; also see Käthe Sonnleitner, "Die Gründungslegende von Gandersheim," *Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento* 26 (2000): 427–435.

[9] For more information on the property Liudolf and Oda bestowed on the original foundation, all in the near vicinity of the convent itself, see Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 252–258.

[10] On Brunshausen, see Hans Goetting, *Das Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 2, *Das Benediktiner(innen)kloster Brunshausen, das Benediktinerinnenkloster St. Marien vor Gandersheim, das Benediktinerkloster Clus, das Franziskanerkloster Gandersheim*, Germania Sacra 8 (Berlin and New York, 1974), 1–82.

[11] Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 289–291 provides brief biographies of Hathumod and Gerberga.

[12] Caspar Ehlers, "Franken und Sachsen gründen Klöster: Beobachtungen zu Integrationsprozessen des 8.–10. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel von Essen, Gandersheim und Quedlinburg," in *Gandersheim und Essen: Vergleichende Untersuchungen zu sächsischen*

Charlemagne, were in the process of incorporating themselves into a hierarchy of power presided over by the Carolingian kings, actively participating in the political projects of their Frankish monarchs and intermarrying with the dominant Frankish families. Liudolf and Oda's expedition to Rome, including their seeking of papal authorization and early Christian relics for their planned ecclesiastical foundation, can be seen in this light,[13] as can their marrying of their daughter Liutgard to a Carolingian prince, the future East Frankish king Louis the Younger (r. 876–882).[14] More specifically, Josef Semmler has demonstrated the links connecting the foundation of Gandersheim into the spread of the Benedictine reform movement from the Frankish monastic centers of Corbie and Notre-Dame de Soissons to the Saxon communities of Herford and Corvey, and from those two cloisters on to Gandersheim and other convents, including Essen, Neuenheerse, and Waldshausen.[15] Thus, at its inception, Gandersheim embodied a multivalent Liudolfing identity exactly matched to the needs of a Saxon noble dynasty on the rise during a period of political-ethnic integration. The convent was at once Saxon by location and in its abbesses and (presumably) its *sanctimoniales*, and at the same time Frankish-Roman by its links to Corbie, Soissons, St. Peter's, and the early Christian pontiffs.[16] Patronized by

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Frauenstiften, ed. Martin Hoernes and Hedwig Röckelein (Essen, 2006), 11–31; Matthias Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung des sächsischen Herzogtums im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert* (Husum, 1996), esp. 25–109.

[13] On the central place of acquiring and venerating Roman relics in Carolingian (and Ottonian) cultural identity, see among others Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1991); Klaus Herbers, "Rom im Frankenreich—Rombeziehungen durch Heilige in der Mitte des 9. Jahrhunderts," in *Mönchtum—Kirche—Herrschaft 750–1000*, ed. Dieter R. Bauer et al. (Sigmaringen, 1998), 133–169; and Katrinette Bodarwé, "Roman martyrs and their veneration in Ottonian Saxony: the case of the *sanctimoniales* of Essen," *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2000): 345–365.

[14] Both Widukind (*Res gestae Saxonicae* I.16) and Hrotsvit (*Primordia*, v. 305ff), writing nearly a century later, viewed the marriage as a key event in the integration of the Liudolfings into Carolingian structures of power: Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens*, 45 and 84.

[15] Josef Semmler, "Corvey und Herford in der benediktinischen Reformbewegung des 9. Jahrhunderts," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 4 (1970): 289–319.

[16] What exactly "Saxon" meant in the ninth and early tenth centuries is contested, with Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens* providing a good introduction to the question emphasizing that, in this period, what most defined the Saxon elite was their desire to become "Frankish" (understood more as a political/cultural rather than a racial/ethnic identity). However, a distinct "Saxonness" was also maintained, at the very least as a geographic designation distinct from "Frankish" but also with cultural components that survived and were increasingly emphasized (by Widukind and Hrotsvit, among others) in the later tenth century. Although the network identified by Semmler (see n. 15) suggests

popes and Carolingian kings as well as by the Liudolfings, Gandersheim embodied and enunciated the desire of its founding family to integrate themselves as Saxons into a Frankish political structure.

Yet Gandersheim did not long retain this role in Liudolfing political maneuvering. In the surviving textual evidence, a consistent chronological pattern emerges. The two principal narrative sources for the early history of the convent are Agius of Corvey's *Vita Hathumodae* and Hrotsvit of Gandersheim's *Primordia coenobii Gandeshemensis*. Agius wrote his life of Hathumod, the convent's first abbess, shortly after her death in 874.[17] Hrotsvit wrote her poem on the foundation of Gandersheim a century later, probably between 973 and 983.[18] Each source, therefore, coincides with the emergence of one of the peaks identified by Althoff and Bernhardt. Their dates of composition also coincide with a pattern observable in the surviving royal charters issued on behalf of

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the possibility that some of the women at Gandersheim came from far afield, most if not all would have come from the surrounding neighborhood, daughters or widows of the Liudolfings' dependents, since the known property grants by Liudolf and Oda were so localized. Furthermore, a list in the *Liber memorialis* of St. Gall that seems to preserve an early Gandersheim necrology, identified by Gerd Althoff, contains several "Saxon" and "Liudolfing" names like Thangmar, Widukind, Liudulfus, Hadeuui, Adae, and Liudgard: Althoff, "Unerkannte Zeugnisse vom Totengedenken der Liudolfinger," *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 32 (1976): 370–404. These *sanctimoniales* and their kin (like their patrons and abbess) would then at a minimum be Saxon by geographic designation. For a comparative anthropological study of revival/reinvention of indigenous cultural traditions and identities in colonial/post-colonial contexts, see Marshall Sahlins, "Goodbye to *Tristes Tropiques*: Ethnography in the Context of Modern World History," in his *Culture in Practice: Selected Essays* (New York, 2005), 471–500. I suspect that the "reawakening" of Saxon culture in the later tenth century could fruitfully be explored from this theoretical perspective.

[17] Agius of Corvey, *Vita Hathumodae*, ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, in MGH SS 6 (1844), 165–175. Agius additionally composed a verse dialogue between himself and the *sorores* of Gandersheim commemorating the virtues of Hathumod and otherwise reinforcing the themes of the *Vita*—the *Dialogus Agii*, ed. Pertz, in MGH SS 6, 176–189; also edited by Ludwig Traube in MGH Poetae III.2 (1896), 369–388. An English translation of both the *Vita* and dialogue, prepared by Frederick S. Paxton, is forthcoming from the Catholic University of America Press. For a brief overview of Agius' life and works see Ewald Könsgen, "Agius von Corvey," in *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters: Verfasserlexikon*, ed. Kurt Ruh et al., vol. 1 (Berlin and New York, 1978), cols. 78–82.

[18] Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, *Primordia coenobii Gandeshemenses*, in Helena Homeyer, *Hrotsvithae Opera: Mit Einleitungen und Kommentar* (Munich and Paderborn, 1970), 439–472, with information on the dating at 439. The *Primordia* is also available in an English translation by Mary Bernadine Bregman, revised by Thomas Head: Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, "The Establishment of the Monastery of Gandersheim," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Head (New York and London, 2000), 237–254.

Gandersheim.[19] The earliest of these were granted by Louis the Younger, Oda and Liudolf's son-in-law, after he came to the throne.[20] Arnulf, as Carolingian king of East Francia from 887 to 899, issued a charter donating further properties to Gandersheim. The original is lost, but the document is referenced in charters issued to the convent by Otto I in 947 and 956. Otto's decrees also cite, in addition to Arnulf's donation and the charters of Louis the Younger, one grant (whose original is also now lost) made by his parents Henry and Mathilda some time before 936.[21] Since Otto's 947 charter served to confirm all previously granted royal privileges, it supports the hypothesis already suggested by the absence of other evidence: that Gandersheim received only one royal grant between 899 and 947, although the Ottonians had held the throne since 919. By contrast, the convent received numerous royal grants over the second half of the tenth century and beyond, as noted by Bernhardt.[22]

The break in the succession of Gandersheim's Liudolfing abbesses constitutes a third reinforcement of this chronological pattern.[23] The first three abbesses—Hathumod, Gerberga (d. 896/7) and Christina (d. 919)—were all daughters of the founders Oda and Liudolf. While Liudolf died in 860, before the convent church was formally consecrated, Oda survived until 913 and died at the very advanced age of one hundred seven.[24] As long as she lived, the convent remained

[19] On the donation charters of Louis the Younger, Arnulf, and Henry I, as well as Otto I's confirmation charter of 947, see Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 258–260. Also note Goetting, "Die gefälschten Gründungsurkunden für das Reichsstift Gandersheim," in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter: internationaler Kongress der Monumenta Germaniae Historica, München, 16.-19. September 1986* (Hannover, 1988), 3: 327–371.

[20] Charters of Louis the Younger, Nos. 3, 4, and 25 (the last a *Fälschung*) in *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Deutschen, Karlmanns und Ludwigs des Jüngeren*, ed. Paul Kehr, MGH Diplomata regum Germaniae ex stirpe Karolinorum 1 (1932–1934), 335–339 and 365–366.

[21] Charters of Otto I, Nos. 89 and 180, in *Die Urkunden Konrads I., Heinrichs I. und Ottos I.*, ed. Theodor Sickel, MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 1 (1879–1884), 171–172 and 262–264.

[22] Bernhardt, 153–156; also Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 262–271. On the general context of charter-preservation at Gandersheim and other contemporary women's religious communities, see Katrinette Bodarwé, "Gender and the Archive: The Preservation of Charters in Early Medieval Communities of Religious Women," in *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies*, ed. Mathilde van Dijk and Renée Nip (Turhout, 2005), 111–132.

[23] Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 289–295, remains the standard reference for the succession of Gandersheim's early abbesses.

[24] Hrotsvit, *Primordia*, lines 574–576, p. 471; also the *Annales Quedlinburgenses*, as quoted at n. 48 below.

under the governance of her daughters. After her passing, however, the next clearly documented member of the Liudolfing family to rule as abbess following Christina was Otto I's niece Gerberga, Oda's great-great-granddaughter, who ruled the convent for the entire second half of the tenth century (949–1001).[25] The fourth abbess, Liudgard (919–923), might have been a member of the Liudolfing *gens*, but the explicit evidence for this is contradictory and late.[26] Certainly the next two abbesses, Hrotsuit (923–933) and Wendelgard (933–949), were not members of the lineage. Whether one associates the end of Liudolfing abbatial rule over the Gandersheim convent with Liudgard or Hrotsuit, the direct links connecting the community of *sanctimoniales* to the family of its founders were broken in the early tenth century, and only re-established some three decades later. The functions Gandersheim originally performed for the Liudolfing lineage, it seems, were no longer so useful to the dynasty by the early 900s—even before their accession to royal office and the subsequent foundation of Quedlinburg. By the late 940s, however, the close alliance between *Hauskloster* and ruling dynasty had returned to public prominence, since the convent could once more provide valuable service to the Liudolfings as a site for articulating the meaning of the family's power and status.

The particular usefulness of the community of *sanctimoniales* at Gandersheim was that, as religious women, they could represent the dynasty in a multifaceted way as at once Liudolfing by descent and Saxon by ethnicity, but Frankish and/or Roman in political allegiance and ambition.[27] From the moment when Oda and Liudolf brought

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[25] It is perhaps not coincidental, given her role in restoring the rule of Liudolfing women to Gandersheim after some 25 to 30 years, that this Gerberga bore the name of the convent's second abbess.

[26] Her name, which she shared with the wife of Louis the Younger, suggests a possible connection, but does not suffice to prove her a descendant of Liudolf and Oda, especially given Hrotsvit's apparent decision to end the *Primordia* with the death of Christina. She could be unrelated or (more likely?) the daughter of a family under the patronage of the Liudolfings. She was honored in Gandersheim's liturgical *memoria* as the fourth abbess, but that also (as Althoff points out) does not demonstrate biological filiation from the founders. See Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 1, 291–292, who concludes that it is "durchaus wahrscheinlich, daß den drei Töchtern Liudolfs und Odas noch eine weitere Angehörige der Stifterfamilie gefolgt ist," and Althoff, "Unerkannte Zeugnisse," esp. 375 where he acknowledges that this abbess's "Zugehörigkeit zur liudolfingischen Familie nur vermutet werden kann."

[27] Typological studies of the other services provided to the nobility by women's religious communities in late Carolingian and Ottonian Saxony include Karl Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (Bloomington, 1979), 63–73; Wilhelm Kohl, "Bemerkungen zur Typologie sächsische Frauenklöster in karolingischer

relics of popes Innocent and Anastasius back from Rome and began planning their new community, Gandersheim provided a stable location for the articulation of a Liudolfing identity in advantageous flux during a period when the dynasty was politically on the rise. The Gandersheim convent both represented and facilitated the bonds linking the *gens* to the Frankish royal dynasty as well as to the papacy in Rome; similarly, it could portray itself locally as a sign of the family's status as semi-independent princes in Saxony and on a broader stage as a cloister whose submission to royal protection reflected the Liudolfing clan's status as loyal counts of Carolingian East Francia. The polyvalent meaning created and embodied in Gandersheim during the last half of the ninth century is well-reflected in Agius' *Vita Hathumodae* and the charters issued to the convent by Louis the Younger.

As author of Hathumod's biography, Agius adopts the authority of the eyewitness, proclaiming his personal knowledge of the abbess and reminding the *sorores* that he was present at her deathbed,[28] while also associating her sanctity with St. Martin of Tours, St. Benedict, and Eustochium's mother Paula through considerable textual borrowings from Sulpicius Severus, the Benedictine Rule, and St. Jerome's Letter 108: *Ad Eustochium virginem, Epitaphium S. Paulae*.[29] He assumes that the members of the convent will want to take the example and actions of

Zeit," in *Untersuchungen zu Kloster und Stift*, ed. Max-Planck-Institut für Geschichte (Göttingen, 1980), 112–139; and Michel Parisse, "Les femmes au monastère dans le Nord de l'Allemagne du IXe au XIe siècle," in *Frauen in Spätantike und Frühmittelalter: Lebensbedingungen—Lebensnormen—Lebensformen*, ed. Werner Affeldt (Sigmaringen, 1990), 311–324, with commentary by Janet L. Nelson at 329–332.

[28] Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, ch. 1, p. 166: "Quod nos non improbabiliter facturos speramus, quia et vitam eius magna, ut nostis, ex parte noveramus, et dormitioni quoque interfuimus. Unde lectorem primo omnium monemus, ut noverit, nos non falsa aut dubia de ea esse dicturos, sed vera et certa, et omnibus fere qui eam nosse poterant nota, narraturos."

[29] On Agius' use of Suplicius' *Vita* of Martin as a model, see Julia M.H. Smith, "The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920," *Past and Present* 146 (1995): 3–37 at 14–16, as well as Max Manitius, "Zur Geschichte von Suplicius' Schriften über S. Martinus im Mittelalter," *Neues Archiv* 14 (1889): 163–170 at 166–167. On Agius' extensive use of the Benedictine Rule and Jerome's Letter 108, see Monika Rener, "Die Prosavita der Hathumod des Agius von Corvey. Ein Beispiel karolingischer Hagiographie," in *Scripturus vitam: lateinische Biographie von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart*, ed. Dorothea Walz (Heidelberg, 2002), 769–780. At 769, Rener contrasts Agius' claims to be reporting from direct observation with the reality of his heavy reliance on literary models; I would interpret this aspect of the *Vita Hathumodae* as a conscious juxtaposition on Agius' part of textual authority with eyewitness authority in a work full of artfully-manipulated paradoxes.

Hathumod as the model for their own way-of-being.[30] Mostly, Hathumod's example is one of typical elite female sanctity of the Carolingian era and beyond: rejection of the honors and luxuries of aristocratic life, complete freedom from sexual temptation since earliest childhood, devotion to reading sacred scripture, etc.[31] However, Agius also attributes a strongly ethnic identity to Hathumod, one whose *exemplum* also transferred to the convent created for her to lead. Hathumod's brother and sister connect her to the Carolingian dynasty through marriage, Brun's wife being the granddaughter of Louis the Pious and Liutgard's husband being Louis the Younger, or as Agius puts it "a king who

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[30] E.g. Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, ch. 1, p. 166: "Proinde quia hoc sanctis eius meritis dignum putamus, quia hoc simul vobis gratum fore non dubitamus, vitam eius breviter, inculto licet sermone, transscriptam vobis mittere dignum duximus; ut, quia, quod summopere optastis, iam eam corporaliter intueri et habere non potestis, in vita quondam eius imaginem teneatis, et in exemplis et actibus eius ipsam vos habere putetis." Also, from the end of the *Vita*, ch. 28, p. 175: "Ad hoc quippe ista vobis scribere volumus, ut quia iam eam corporaliter videre non potestis, in vitae eius sanctitate quondam, ut in principio huius opusculi diximus, eius imaginem attendatis; neque totam a vobis discessisse existimetis, cuius cottidie sanctam conversationem non tam legere ignotam quam relegere cognitam valetis. Hoc vobis pro regula, hoc pro speculo erit, quia ibi, ubi vita et mores vestri corrigantur, invenietis."

[31] Smith, "The Problem of Female Sanctity," discusses Hathumod in the context of several other Carolingian female saints. The virtues attributed to these holy women, Smith notes, emphasized the shunning of the public sphere, of any effort to attract an audience, and of any interaction with men. Yet, at the same time they were meant to "embody the identity of their kinfolk" (27) and raised "the additional question of whether sanctity presupposes an audience to appreciate the exceptional holiness of the person to whom it is attributed" (36), while the heavy reliance of Carolingian hagiographers on authoritative texts like Sulpicius' *Vita Martini*, whereby they used the language of patristic-era *male* sanctity to describe *female* holiness, further complicated the lives and cults of holy women in the period. This also may be an appropriate place to note, following Rener, that the virtues Agius associates with Hathumod emphasize her commitment to the communal monastic life and are explicitly Benedictine. Some scholars, including Josef Semmler, "Corvey und Herford," 314–315, argue that Gandersheim was originally a community of nuns rather than canonesses or, following Suzanne F. Wemple, "Monastic Life of Women from the Merovingians to the Ottonians," in *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: Rara Avis in Saxonia?*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Ann Arbor, 1987), 43 that the community followed a mixed way of life, some like Hathumod living as nuns while others followed the rule of canonesses. Gandersheim indisputably became a community of canonesses during the first half of the tenth century, when its residents established the Benedictine convent of Saint Mary's-Gandersheim as a nearby daughter house for those who preferred to follow the monastic life. This could be read as another example of Gandersheim's stagnation or decline in the early 900s, on the assumption that it was a move away from Liudolf, Oda, and Hathumod's original model, but closer research into this aspect of Gandersheim's history would be required. On St. Mary's, see Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim*, Vol. 2, 83–166, and Paschasia Stumpf, "Gandersheim, St. Marien," in *Die Frauenklöster in Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein und Bremen*, Germania Benedictina 11, ed. Ulrich Faust (St. Ottilien, 1984), 221–249.

[was] the son of a king".[32] Her father Liudolf arose from that most illustrious race, the Saxons, and was the *dux orientalium Saxonum* while her mother, in turn, descended from the equally *nobilissima* lineage of the Franks, shining even more in her own offspring.[33] Hathumod, and the convent itself, thus combine Frankish and Saxon identities, and associate rulership both with the Carolingians (and the Liudolfings who married into that dynasty) and with the Liudolfings themselves as leaders of the Eastphalian Saxons. As unmarried female members of the dynasty, Hathumod and her first two successors, Gerberga and Christina, could embody all these conflicting identities without irretrievably shifting the balance in one direction or another through marriage or through the need to be either loyal count or ruling *dux*.[34] Indeed, symbolically portrayed as withdrawn from public life, holy women were also protected from the perception of being directly entangled in politics. Male religious elites, on the other hand, were expected and understood to exercise their spiritual power publicly and thus politically.[35] This perception, followed logically, would make every action of bishops, abbots, and male monasteries susceptible to a political, and thus partisan and "worldly" reading; whereas the actions and identities associated with female communities, however partisan or political in effect, were protected by the widespread cultural supposition of holy women's purported seclusion from the public world.[36]

The *Vita Hathumodae* blurs the line between the Liudolfing family and the Gandersheim monastic *familia* so successfully that some have

[32] Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, ch. 2, p. 167: "frater eius regum neptem in matrimonio habet, soror regis regi filio, digno digna iugalis coniugi iuncta est."

[33] *Ibid.*: "Pater eius ex illustrissimo Saxonum genere oriundus, dux Orientalium Saxonum fuit; mater ex nobilissima aeque Francorum prosapia descendens, in prole nobilior effulsit."

[34] Agius' use of the term *dux* here is unlikely to reflect any actual supreme military authority that would have been recognized in the region either by Carolingian king or the broader Eastphalian nobility: Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens*, 73. However, Agius *does* use the term, making a symbolic claim even where an institutional or de facto reality did not exist. For more on how, when and why members of the Liudolfing family gained the title of *dux*, see Becher, 67–91 and 195–301. As a vice-regal office the position of *dux Saxonum* only gradually came into being during the kingships of Henry I and Otto I, but the concept had foundations in earlier political rhetoric and practice.

[35] On this contrast, see Smith, "The Problem of Female Sanctity."

[36] As Rener, "Prosavita," 772 notes, Agius' frequent visits to Gandersheim and his relationships with Hathumod and the other sisters in the convent show that the claims to holy isolation from the real world are a literary topos rather than a reflection of lived reality. But I would argue that literary topoi had real affect on the perception and experience of lived reality, and cannot be easily separated from that reality.

argued that Agius, Hathumod's spiritual confrere, might also have been her biological brother.[37] Among modern interpreters of the text, Julia M.H. Smith and Suzanne Wemple read the *Vita* as a demonstration of the close bonds between Hathumod and her Liudolfing kin,[38] while Monika Rener and Carolyn Edwards accentuate the ways this biography separates Hathumod from her biological kin and resituates her among her monastic sisters.[39] A more nuanced version of this latter reading is provided by the most recent interpreter of the *Vita Hathumodae*, Frederick Paxton, who argues that "the complex interplay between [Hathumoda's] two families—spiritual and sanguineal—as their fortunes rose and fell over the course of the tenth century" is key to understanding the larger context of the work, but that Agius' explicit motives for writing the *Vita* centered upon "bind[ing] Gandersheim to the Benedictine movement and the monastic family of Corvey."[40] Agius

[37] A claim discussed and refuted by Helmut Beumann, "Einhard und die karolingische Tradition im ottonischen Corvey," *Westfalen* 30 (1952): 150–174 at 172–174 and Winfrid Glocker, *Die Verwandten der Ottonen und ihre Bedeutung in der Politik* (Cologne, 1989), 258–260.

[38] Smith, "The Problem of Female Sanctity," esp. 25–28, cites the Hathumod of Agius' *Vita* as a prime example of how "even after taking the veil, women's lives remain shaped by their family cares and attachments." Suzanne F. Wemple, "Late Ninth-Century Saints Hathumoda and Liutberga," in *The Joy of Learning and the Love of God*, ed. E. Rozanne Elder (Kalamazoo, 1995), 33–47, accepting Agius as Hathumod's biological brother, writes that he "was driven by a desire to show the religious fervor of his entire family and their role in Hathumoda's saintly behavior. The parents' tolerance of her childhood affectations of dress, refusal of ornaments, play, and sports, their encouragement of her scholarship, the establishment of the monastery, the devotion of her siblings and her mother throughout her last illness, all demonstrated the family's contribution toward her sainthood." (43–44) Wemple compares Hathumod's reliance on her biological kin with the recluse Liutberga's reliance on the patronage and protection of the noble family of Count Hessi and his daughter Gisla.

[39] Rener, "Prosavita," highlights the passages in which Agius portrays Hathumod's religious goals as a rejection of Liudolfing wealth and worldly status, and explores his efforts to construct Hathumod as a model holy woman and monastic leader like Paula and Benedict. Carolyn Edwards, "Dynastic Sanctity in Two Early Medieval Women's *Lives*," in *Medieval Family Roles*, ed. Cathy Jorgensen Itnyre (New York and London, 1996), 3–19, argues that "the monastery was Hathumoda's real family" (6).

[40] Frederick S. Paxton, "Forgetting Hathumoda: The Afterlife of the First Abbess of Gandersheim," in *History in the Comic Mode: Medieval Communities and the Matter of Person*, ed. Rachel Fulton and Bruce Holsinger (New York, 2007), 15–24, esp. 17 (for the first quotation) and 20–21, where Paxton discusses the range of purposes behind Agius' two hagiographical writings about Hathumod, the *Vita* and the *Dialogus*: to console the sisters at Gandersheim for their loss, to secure a charter of immunity from the East Frankish king and protect the convent from the interference and authority of the bishops of Hildesheim, to ensure that the women of Gandersheim defined themselves as Benedictine nuns rather than canonesses, to link Gandersheim to the broader Corbie monastic literary tradition through Corvey, to promote an image of independent female

allows for both interpretations because of his deliberately situating Hathumod (and by extension all the Gandersheim *sorores* he expects to mirror their lives on hers) at the boundary between genetic kin and claustral *familia*. The structure of the *Vita* reflects this, opening with an explication of her Liudolfing connections, moving on to a detailed demonstration of the monastic virtues she displayed as abbess and nun, then concluding with an extended description of her death which brings together her biological and monastic sisters.[41] The care of the dying Hathumod is divided among three groups: her *sanctimoniales*, her female lay relatives (mother and paternal aunt), and especially Gerberga and Christina, who like Hathumod encompassed the identities of both Liudolfing and holy women. Agius describes Gerberga and Christina as Hathumod's *germanae eius sorores*, combining the qualities of both genetic and spiritual sisterhood, and they are the two who specifically care for the ailing abbess's body, maintaining her bedclothes, propping her head on pillows, holding her up in bed, massaging her hands, warming her feet, rubbing her stomach, bathing her, and feeding her.[42] In this memorable scene, Agius encapsulates both how Gandersheim combines spiritual and ethnic familial identities, and how Gerberga and Christina (one Hathumod's successor, the other still an ordinary *sanctimonialis* at the time Agius wrote) embodied that ideal as much as their sister did. Although Hathumod died at Brunshausen before the completion of the monastic complex at Gandersheim, Agius records that she received a divine vision that a grave awaited her at the new site, where she would continue to be surrounded by her sisters (biological and religious) for

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monastic learning and saintliness, and to encourage the cloistered women to break all ties with the outside world—especially their Saxon aristocratic families.

[41] The details of her final illness and demise, starting with the arrival of sickness at Gandersheim, constitute the bulk of the text, from chapter 10 to chapter 29. Peter von Moos, *Consolatio: Studien zur mittellateinischen Trostliteratur über den Tod und zum Problem der Christlichen Trauer* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1971), Vol. 1, 147–149, describes the entire *Vita Hathumodae* as a *consolatio* to the convent women on the occasion of their abbess's death. He provides a much more detailed analysis of the *Dialogus Agii* along the same lines, at 149–184. The notes are in Vol. 2, 106–108 and 108–122.

[42] Agius, *Vita Hathumodae*, chs. 15–22, pp. 171–174, for the services provided by *sanctimoniales*, mother and aunt, and biological sisters to Hathumod, with Gerberga and Christina's care of her ailing body at ch. 20, p. 173: "Praecipue tamen germanarum eius sororum iam antea omnibus nota tunc in eam pietas emituit. Ipse lectulo assidere, ipsae iacenti infatigabunde assistere; ipsae lectulum componere, pulvillum capiti supponere, ipsam in lectulo elevatam corpore suo sustentare, manus fricare, pedes calefacere, stomachumque confovere; ipsae calidam aquam ad lavandum temperare, cibum parare simul et apponere, et in omnibus quae agenda erant singulas praevenire."

eternity, reinforcing how the convent embodied a particular articulation of Liudolfing identity as a house for its holy women who could clothe Liudolfing claims in an aura of sanctity.[43]

In the mid to late 800s, while the Liudolfings' political ambitions remained projected ideals rather than established goals, their claims to ducal authority in Saxony and an illustrious lineage combining the highest ancestry of Franks and Saxons were protected and preserved from the exigencies of public challenge by having them embodied in a community of holy women whom contemporary opinion (and Agius' *Vita Hathumodae*) portrayed as withdrawn from the world. Liudolfing use of Gandersheim as a locus of enunciation for asserting multiple identities coterminously is also on display in the two royal charters granted to the monastery by Louis the Younger on 26 January 877, which not coincidentally also demonstrate the ability of the Carolingian king to manipulate the convent's meaning for his own purposes. In the first of these charters, Oda and Liudolf's sons, Brun and Otto, gave Gandersheim to Louis.[44] From being an exclusively Liudolfing foundation, the convent became a royal monastery under Carolingian protection and immunity, but the Liudolfings received in return the king's recognition of their family's right in perpetuity to select an abbess from their own kin. The grant of immunity also recognized Brun and Otto as the king's *fideles comites*, noted that the abbess was their sister Gerberga, and confirmed the presence of the relics of popes Innocent and Anastasius. Gandersheim has become a site for the further cementing of an allegiance with Louis the Younger.

However, with this action the Liudolfings also ran the risk of losing control over the meaning of Gandersheim. In the second charter issued that day, Louis granted a donation of property to Gandersheim for the *remedio* of the souls of his most pious and august (Carolingian) ancestors, for himself, for his beloved wife Liutgard, and for their most precious descendants.[45] The monastery, the charter notes, is *in comitatu Ottonis*, but neither charter explicitly mentions that queen Liutgard was the sister of Brun, Otto, and Gerberga. Louis' royal successor, Arnulf, issued a charter donating property to Gandersheim with intercession of his wife and niece in exchange for prayers to be offered by the *sanctimoniales* on

[43] *Ibid.*, ch. 12, p. 170.
[44] Charters of Louis the Younger, No. 3, in *Urkunden Ludwigs des Deutschen*, 335–337.
[45] Charters of Louis the Younger, No. 4, in *ibid.*, 337–339.

behalf of their souls as well as those of his royal Carolingian predecessors Charlemagne, Louis the Pious, Louis the Younger, and his own father Carloman.[46] Following the charter evidence, Gandersheim had by 899 become a predominantly "royal" and "Carolingian" foundation, articulating the legitimacy of Arnulf's Carolingian heritage, albeit still with a Liudolfing abbess until 919. The convent's usefulness to the Liudolfings in articulating a familial identity seems, not surprisingly, to have come to an end shortly after, reflected in the "gap" identified earlier in this paper.

Other indicators of Gandersheim's stalled fortunes in the period from circa 900 to 940 are not lacking. Gerd Althoff's studies of Ottonian *memoria* strongly indicate that Hathumod, Geberga, and Christina—still extant in a necrological list sent from Gandersheim to the Alemannian monastery of St. Gall during the reign of Henry I—disappear from Liudolfing liturgical commemoration outside Gandersheim by mid-century. Their names, along with their mother Oda's, are absent from the necrology of Merseburg, our best surviving witness to Ottonian liturgical *memoria* in the post-950 period.[47] Similarly, the *Annales Quedlinburgenses* do commemorate the death of Oda, but as the mother of Duke Otto (and, by association, great-grandmother of Otto "future king and emperor", born in the year of her death) and not as the founder of Gandersheim; Hathumod, Gerberga, and Christina are not mentioned in the *Annales* at all.[48] In place of the women of Gandersheim, Ottonian *memoria* expanded to include non-Liudolfing members of the nobility (Saxon and non-Saxon), Carolingian kings and emperors, abbots of prominent and royal monasteries like St. Pantaleon in Cologne, St. Maximin in Trier, St. Emmeram in Regensburg, Einsiedeln, Reichenau, Gorze, and Cluny, and especially the kingdom's bishops and archbishops.[49] Althoff himself identifies the reign of Henry I as the turning point in Liudolfing/Ottonian commemorative practices, embodied in

[46] Though the original charter is lost, the purpose of Arnulf's donation is quoted in the charters of Otto I, No. 180, *Urkunden Konrads I.*, 263, lines 34–41.

[47] Altoff, "Unerkannte Zeugnisse."

[48] The relevant entry, for A.D. 913, reads, "Otto, ducum praecipuus, de quo velut fertilissimo quodam stemmate imperatoria illa Otthonum propago totius Europae terminis non modicum profutura processit, onus limosae molis abiecit. Domina Oda, mater scilicet ipsius, obit anno CVII. vitae suae. Otto rex et imperator futurus natus est.": *Die Annales Quedlinburgenses*, ed. Martina Giese, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum 72 (Hannover, 2004), 453–454.

[49] Althoff, *Adels- und Königsfamilien*, 180–193 and 201–219.

the shift of the dynasty's memorial center to Quedlinburg.[50] Joachim Ehlers has made a similar point, noting that the shift from Gandersheim to Quedlinburg entailed a shift from the model of a community of religious women praying for all their kin to the model of a royal widow responsible for overseeing the commemoration of her deceased king and husband, as well as a shift from a cognatic, corporate concept of kinship to an agnatic emphasis on primogeniture through the male line.[51] Frederick Paxton likewise argues for the early tenth century as the period in which the cult of Hathumoda's sanctity came to a definitive end through the efforts of Henry I's wife Mathilda to discourage "promoting the women of Gandersheim" as spiritual rivals to herself, her daughters, and her new foundation at Quedlinburg.[52] It seems that, for purposes of achieving legitimacy as rulers of the Frankish kingdom, the heads of the Liudolfing *gens* found Gandersheim of limited value in the project of representing the dynasty's essence to those political groups who needed to be persuaded that the family had the right *fortuna* and *mores* to succeed the Carolingians:[53] namely, their prominent supporters among the lay nobility, the abbots of royal monasteries, and especially the bishops of the *Reichskirche* who were incorporated into the new Ottonian *familia* at the expense of Hathumod, her abbess sisters, and her mother. Tellingly, during this period the convent fell increasingly under the patronage and protection of the bishop of Hildesheim rather than the Ottonian crown.[54]

Gandersheim made a dramatic return to prominence in the public image of the Liudolfing lineage, however, in 947 when Otto I issued his charter confirming all of Gandersheim's earlier privileges and properties. By 949, his niece Gerberga was abbess of the convent, the first

[50] *Ibid.*, 202–206; and Althoff, "Gandersheim und Quedlinburg".

[51] Joachim Ehlers, "Heinrich I. in Quedlinburg," in *Herrschaftsrepräsentation im ottonischen Sachsen*, 235–266 at 251. Ehlers more generally explores the significance of royal burial sites in the Ottonian symbolics of power in "Magdeburg—Rom—Aachen—Bamberg: Grablege des Königs und Herrschaftsverständnis in ottonischer Zeit," in *Otto III.—Heinrich II.: Eine Wende?*, ed. Bernd Schneidmüller and Stefan Weinfurter (Sigmaringen, 1997), 47–76.

[52] Paxton, "Forgetting Hathumoda," 22–24.

[53] The concept of a royal dynasty needing the appropriate *fortuna* and *mores* for kingship comes from the speech of the dying king Conrad I to his brother Eberhard in Widukind of Corvey, *Res gestae Saxonicae*, ed. Paul Hirsch and Hans E. Lohmann, MGH Scriptores rerurm Germanicarum 60 (Hannover, 1935), I. 25, pp. 37–38.

[54] Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim* Vol. 1, 85.

Liudolfing to hold that position since Christina (or perhaps Liudgard).[55] Otto made several subsequent donations to Gandersheim and abbess Gerberga, as did his son Otto II.[56] The latter ruler made a practice of citing Gandersheim's privileges (along with those of Quedlinburg and Essen) as the model form of immunity and free election under royal patronage for a community of female religious when granting those same rights to other convents, as he did for the cloister of Drübeck in 980.[57] During this same period, Gandersheim became a frequent stopping point on the royal itinerary and began to enjoy the periodic presence of the Liudolfing/Ottonian monarch.[58] Finally, as reflected in the composition of Widukind of Corvey's *Res gestae Saxonicae* and Hrotsvit's *Primordia*, a widespread interest in representing and emphasizing the dynasty's Saxon roots also emerged in the second half of the tenth century.[59] From the late 940s, Gandersheim had again become a community embodying the lineage's familial, spiritual, imperial, and Saxon identities.

The *Primordia* addresses all these themes.[60] Hrotsvit's poem begins with a revelation from John the Baptist to Oda's mother Aeda and ends with the death of Christina, a complete narrative of the three generations of Liudolfings who established the convent as a family and dynastic center. Hrotsvit defines Gandersheim as a family foundation, conceived by the grandmother, implemented by the mother, and presided over by a succession of three daughters.[61] Oda, the daughter of Aeda of good and generous *fama*, is described as being both of Frankish

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[55] Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim* Vol. 1, 293–295, provides a brief biography of Gerberga.

[56] See note 3 above.

[57] Charters of Otto II, No. 225, in *Die Urkunden Otto II.*, ed. Theodor Sickel, MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae 2 (1893), 253–254.

[58] Bernhardt, *Itinerant Kingship*, 149–161.

[59] Becher, *Rex, Dux und Gens*, 80–91.

[60] Interpretive studies of Hrotsvit's *Primordia* include Thomas Head, "Hrotsvit's Primordia And The Historical Traditions Of Monastic Communities," in *Rara Avis in Saxonia?*, 143–155; Katharina M. Wilson, *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: The Ethics of Authorial Stance* (Leiden, 1988), 111–142; and Stephen L. Wailes, *Spirituality and Politics in the Works of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (Selinsgrove, 2006), 217–232.

[61] Paxton, "Forgetting Hathumoda," similarly draws attention to the striking contrast of the starring role Agius assigns to Hathumod in Gandersheim's foundation with the minor part she plays in Hrotsvit's poem, which instead emphasizes the agency of her mother and grandmother: "Hrotsvit's purpose was not to celebrate Hathumoda, but to link the house securely to the Liudolfing family, especially the maternal line through Oda, and to reassert Gandersheim's independence from the bishops of Hildesheim" (23; also see p. 16).

descent and, through her father Billung, of Saxon ethnicity.[62] As for Liudolf, the poem consistently describes him as *dux*, and according to Hrotsvit the Carolingian King Louis the German (d. 876) made him leader of the Saxons.[63] To the story of the translation of the bones of Anastasius and Innocent from Rome, Hrotsvit adds a conversation between *dux* Liudolf and Pope Sergius II, in which the pope personally grants the relics to the new foundation along with papal protection and immunity.[64] Describing the miracle that determined the site of the foundation, Hrotsvit explains that mystical lights appear three nights in succession, the last on All Saints' Day. On the first night, the lights appear to Saxon swineherds; on the second night, a local lord joins the swineherds; on the third night *dux* Liudolf joins the assembly of witnesses, a narrative which defines Gandersheim as a place linking Liudolf through the local nobility to all the Saxon people.[65]

Even earlier in the *Primordia*, in Aeda's vision, John the Baptist promises the matriarch that her noble descendants will build a cloister for holy virgins, that peace and victory in the kingdom will endure so long as these women remain steadfast in religious works, and that her descendants will shine from a summit of such great honor that no earthly kingdom at that time will compare with theirs in power.[66] If Hrotsvit's Gandersheim links the Liudolfings to Saxony through miraculous lights, her account of the Baptist's speech describes the convent as embodying the family's imperial power. The *Primordia* also highlights the convent's role as a family necropolis, describing the burial there of Hathumod, her sisters, her parents, and her brother Otto (on whom Hrotsvit also bestows the title of *dux*).[67] Hrotsvit's commemoration of this duke Otto also bridges the chronological divide between Christina's death in 919 and the return of Gandersheim to prominence under the new abbess Gerberga. The *clarus dux* protected and cared for the cloister throughout his life, wishing to fulfill every wish of his mother Oda and to be a good father to the convent's virgins, and now holy

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[62] Hrotsvit, *Primordia*, lines 21–24, p. 451.

[63] E.g. *ibid.*, lines 4–20, pp. 450–451.

[64] *Ibid.*, lines 156–180, pp. 456–457 for the pope's speech.

[65] *Ibid.*, lines 185–232, pp. 457–459.

[66] *Ibid.*, lines 53–64, p. 452 for John the Baptist's speech.

[67] *Ibid.*, lines 292–295 (on the transfer of Liudolf's remains to Gandersheim), 555–560 (on the burial of and commemorative prayers for Duke Otto by the *sorores*), and 578–580 (on the presence of Oda's body *iuxta natarum busta suarum*); pp. 461, 470–471, and 471.

women whose mothers were not even born at the time of his death now keep his *fama* alive, burning no less constantly with love for him than those who saw him in person and received his pious gifts.[68] The intervening period, including the gap from the early 900s to the 940s, is thus crossed over.

This revival in Ganderheim's fortunes and status coincided with Gerberga's appointment as abbess. The new leader of the convent was the daughter of Duke Henry of Bavaria (d. 955), Otto I's younger brother and bellicose political rival.[69] Periods of reconciliation punctuated this internecine struggle, and Gerberga's appointment should be situated in that context.[70] Gandersheim owed its new prominence in large part to its ability to alleviate the tension between the competing brothers and their descendants by providing access to a space that was familial, Saxon, and imperial to the branch of the dynasty that felt displaced from its rightful share in the common Liudolfing heritage. Gandersheim provided Otto I with a means of recognizing the rights of his brother to access the lineage's centers of power through Gerberga while keeping Henry himself at a geographic distance. Symbolically, Otto asserted his continuing supremacy over the foundation with his 947 grant of immunity and his periodic visits to the cloister with the itinerant royal court. Other sources also demonstrate that Gandersheim owed its return to prominence to its capacity to negotiate relations between the Ottonian and Henrician branches of the dynasty.[71] Hrotsvit's verse *Gesta Ottonis*, written prior to the *Primordia*, lauds Otto I as God's chosen king while at the same time presenting Henry of Bavaria and his resistance to Otto in a very favorable light.[72] Thietmar of Merseburg described how

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[68] *Ibid.*, lines 507–528, pp. 469–470.

[69] The disputes between the Ottonian and Henrician descendants of Henry I are extensively covered in surveys of the Ottonian dynasty such as Helmut Beumann, *Die Ottonen*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, 1997) and Gerd Althoff, *Die Ottonen: Königsherrschaft ohne Staat* (Stuttgart, 2000), as well as in English-language surveys of medieval German history, e.g. Benjamin Arnold, *Medieval Germany, 500–1300: A Political Interpretation* (Toronto, 1997), 22–23 and 58–59.

[70] It was in 947 that Otto I made his younger brother Henry duke of Bavaria: Beumann, *Ottonen*, 62; Althoff, *Ottonen*, 86–87; Arnold, *Medieval Germany*, 22.

[71] The link between Gandersheim and the Henrician branch of the family has also been noted by Stefan Weinfurter, *Heinrich II. (1002–1024): Herrscher am Ende der Zeiten* (Regensburg, 1999), 33 and Sean Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and the Epitaph of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C., 2004), 156.

[72] Interpretive studies of Hrotsvit's *Gesta Ottonis* include Henk Vynckier, "Arms-Talks In The Middle Ages: Hrotsvit, Waltharius, And The Heroic Via," in *Rara Avis in Saxonia?*, 183–200; Dennis M. Krantz, "The Gesta Ottonis In Its Contexts," in *ibid.*,

Henry's son Duke Henry the Quarrelsome died at Gandersheim (in 995) and was buried in the church in front of the altar of the Holy Cross.[73] The Quarreler's own son, the member of the Henrician branch who finally achieved the crown as King Henry II in 1002, issued a charter to Gandersheim in 1021 which noted that the bones of his father "the great duke of the Bavarians" rested at the monastery.[74]

Gandersheim again functioned as a stable locus for enunciating a flexible Liudolfing identity to the inhabitants of East Francia, including the Liudolfings themselves. As holy women, they had proved politically useful to the lineage in the period from the 840s to ca. 900 as the family articulated and then worked to realize claims to ever-increasing political authority. It once more achieved prominence in the late 940s, when the now royal head of the lineage encouraged the convent to embody the Saxon roots of the *gens* in a manner that united the family's Ottonian and Henrician branches while concurrently keeping the latter at one remove from the true center of monarchic power. A new phase in the gender, family, and ethnic politics of Gandersheim would follow the entry of Otto II's daughter Sophia into the convent in 987, commencing with her refusal to be consecrated by the bishop of Hildesheim and continuing with her succeeding to the office of abbess in the critical year of 1002 when her brother Otto III died and Gerberga's nephew Henry II claimed the throne.[75] Gandersheim maintained its role as a vital center for enunciating Liudolfing-Saxon

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201–209; Wilson, *Ethics of Authorial Stance*, 111–142; and Wailes, *Spirituality and Politics*, 205–216 and 228–232.

[73] *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. Robert Holtzmann, MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum, n.s., 9 (Berlin, 1955), IV.20, p. 154; David A. Warner, *Ottonian Germany: The Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg* (Manchester, 2001), 165–166.

[74] Charters of Henry II, no. 444, in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs II. und Arduins*, ed. Hermann Broch and Harry Bresslau, MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germania 3 (1900–1903), 566–567.

[75] On Sophia, see Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim* Vol. 1, 295–300; Otto Perst, "Die Kaisertochter Sophie, Äbtissin von Gandersheim und Essen (975–1039)," *Braunschweiges Jahrbuch* 38 (1957): 5–46; Gunther Wolf, "Prinzessin Sophia (978–1039), Äbtissin von Gandersheim und Essen, Enkelin, Tochter und Schwester von Kaisern ; Zum 1000. Jahrestag des Beginns des Gandesheimer Streits, 989/1989," *Niedersächsiches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 61 (1989): 105–123; and Käthe Sonnleitner, "Sophie von Gandersheim (975–1039): Ein Opfer der "männlichen" Geschichtsforschung?" in *Geschichtsforschung in Graz*, ed. Herwig Ebner et al. (Graz, 1990), 371–379.

political identity well into the eleventh century, under the Salian dynasty as well as the Ottonian.[76]

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[76] Sophia was succeeded by her sister Adelheid from 1039 to 1044, then Henry III's daughters Beatrix and Adelheid II presided over the convent from 1044 to 1096: Goetting, *Bistum Hildesheim* 1, pp 297–301. The Salian monarchs were Liudolfing through descent from Liutgard, the daughter of Otto I and the Anglo-Saxon princess Edith.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

NOBLE WOMEN'S POWER AS REFLECTED IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF CISTERCIAN HOUSES FOR NUNS IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY NORTHERN FRANCE: PORT-ROYAL, LES CLAIRETS, MONCEY, LIEU, AND EAU-LEZ-CHARTRES[1]

Constance Hoffman Berman

Noble women were often founders of new houses of Cistercian nuns in thirteenth-century northern France. Their power within the region of Blois, Chartres, Tours, and Nogent in the thirteenth century, however, has often been neglected by historians of women. It was once posited that there was a decline in women's power and authority in western Europe from the twelfth century through the end of the middle ages, particularly with the introduction of the practice of male primogeniture. But it has turned out that allowing only one son to marry and produce heirs in each generation could lead to situations in which the only remaining heir was a woman.[2] In this region the Crusades had a particularly strong impact on noble families; the deaths of male heirs as a result of such adventures as well as growing royal encroachments, may explain some of the strong exercise of authority by women, who

[1] Parts of this paper were presented at a Berkshire Conference on the History of Women at Smith College in 1984; some of the documents have been translated and published in Berman, *Women and Monasticism in Medieval Europe: Sisters and Patrons of the Cistercian Order* (Kalamazoo, 2002); it is part of a much larger project on thirteenth-century religious women and their patrons for which I have received support from the University of Iowa and the NEH. I am particularly grateful to the UI Obermann Center for Advanced Studies.

[2] Georges Duby, who in such work as *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York, 1983), assumed that by the twelfth century, the practice of primogeniture had replaced the partible inheritance of an earlier period, to the great detriment of all women; challenges to Duby's thinking are found in "Georges Duby et l'histoire des femmes," *Clio: Histoire, Femmes, et Sociétés* 8 (1998), passim, but esp. Amy Livingstone, "Pour une révision du 'mâle' Moyen Âge de Georges Duby," 139–54.

became more frequently than might be expected, the sole remaining heirs to countships in the region.[3]

In the cases cited here, the authority and rule of early thirteenth-century women who were patrons of Cistercian women has been ignored in part because the history of those nuns has been denied as a result of a long-standing dispute among Cistercian historians about whether or not houses of nuns were part of the Order, and if so, what constituted proof that they were Cistercian nuns. Several generations of noble women in northern France have been missed in our assessment of women's power and authority because younger historians have been warned off the study of religious women "who were not really Cistercian," and the documents for those nuns which constitute strong evidence that noble women did have power and authority.[4] Studying communities of Cistercian women provides not only evidence of the existence of those religious women, but about their secular mothers, sisters, aunts, and daughters, who were founders and benefactors of such religious communities. The activities of great noble ladies charged with managing family estates and providing for the souls of family members in the early thirteenth century in this and other regions, have now come to the fore as we rehabilitate the history of houses of Cistercian women which those great noblewomen founded. In the region west of Paris on which I concentrate here, those religious and secular women were together contributors to thirteenth-century economic development, as they encouraged the amelioration of property by the construction of mills, the consolidation of land into more efficient holdings, and the opening up under their direction of forest and marshlands to additional settlement. The examples cited here reflect a considerably larger phenomenon.

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[3] On crusades' impact on particular families, see Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The first crusaders, 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997), esp. 21–22; on royal expansion by way of such inheritances, John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus. Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1986), 254–98, but esp. 254–55.

[4] On the nuns themselves, see Penelope D. Johnson, *Equal in Monastic Profession. Religious Women in Medieval France* (Chicago, 1991), and Constance H. Berman, "Were There Twelfth-Century Cistercian Nuns?" *Church History* 68 (1999): 824–64, reprinted in shortened form in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance H. Berman (London, 2005), 217–248.

Matilda of Brunswick and les Clairets

The Cistercian abbey for nuns at les Clairets was founded in 1204 near Nogent-le-Rotrou in the region called the Perche west of Paris and Chartres. The foundation was made by Matilda of Brunswick, countess of the Perche, in replacement for the unfulfilled Crusader vow of her late husband, Geoffrey III, count of the Perche. Matilda was a grand-daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England. Her mother was their daughter, Matilda (1156–89), who married Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, in 1168; Matilda of Brunswick's siblings included the Emperor Otto IV.[5] Geoffrey III of the Perche had set off for Crusade in 1202, fallen ill and returned home, where he died after making a last testament directing that Matilda found a religious house in commutation of his Crusading vows; he specified that the Order and gender of the inhabitants was her choice. In 1204 Matilda of Brunswick obtained a papal bull confirming her intention of founding an abbey of Cistercian nuns at les Clairets near Nogent-le-Rotrou, and confirmed the métairie of Boveria to them. She made additional gifts that reflect her international ties: ten marks in her manor of Hagenet in England, half a mill at Saint-Victor, half a bridge and two arpents of meadow at Tilium, two censives (rent-producing properties), and usage in all her woodlands for building, firewood and pasture for the animals belonging to the nuns. She granted as well the right to have a freeman as agent in Nogent-le-Rotrou to conduct the nuns' business.[6] Matilda died in 1213, but additional gifts were made by her son Thomas.[7]

The Perche is usually described as one of the great forested borderlands between France and Normandy, a buffer state whose ties at ca. 1200 might be either to the Angevins or the Capetians, and it is clear that Geoffrey of the Perche in marrying a grand-daughter of the English King had allied himself on that side. But with Matilda's

[5] Miriam Shadis and Constance H. Berman, "A Taste of the Feast: Re-considering Eleanor of Aquitaine's Female Descendants," *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons (New York, 2002), ch. 8, pp. 177–211.

[6] *Abbaye Royale de Notre-Dame des Clairets: Histoire et cartulaire*, ed. Le vicomte de Souancé (Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1894), nos. 3 and 4 (1204).

[7] *Les Clairets*, nos. 5 (1213), 9 (1216), and 10 (1217) grants by Thomas of additional rights in woodland and mills, including in the last rights to wood for construction and heating, the mills of Prés which had been given earlier, promises not to built other mills there to the detriment of those of the nuns, and 80 livres annual rent perpetually if those mills should be destroyed; William confirmed these or other mills to the abbey in 1220: *Les Clairets*, no. 15 (1220).

death in 1213 this alliance shifted. Matilda's son, Thomas of the Perche, accompanied Prince Louis of France (the future Louis VIII) on an abortive French invasion of England against her uncle, King John. Although the campaign was not a success, Thomas was the sole French knight to die at the siege of Lincoln in 1217. Upon Thomas's death without children, the county fell to his uncle, William, bishop of Châlons, the last independent count of the county of the Perche before it reverted to the crown. After the region fell into royal hands, the county would be granted to Louis IX's son, Peter of Alençon as part of his apanage.[8]

The abbey soon acquired shares and eventually full ownership of mills in Nogent, for tanning, fulling or finishing of cloth, and grinding grain.[9] It is possible that the sheep raised by the abbey would supply wool for that industry.[10] Les Clairets' rural properties, however, included cereal-producing lands as well. Particularly we see the conveyance of vineyards, winepresses and cellars to the nuns.[11] Both mills and vineyards allowed its nuns to participate in the commercial economy of the later middle ages, for wine and the cloth finished at the fulling mills at places like Nogent became important commodities in international trade at this time.[12] The documents also suggest that les Clairets' nuns may have instigated land clearance by dependents on tracts of forest acquired there.[13]

Little more about Matilda of Brunswick can be gleaned from the Cistercian records except that her position as founder of les Clairets is obscured by the activities of William, bishop of Châlons, who became count after Thomas's death in 1217. William muddied the waters concerning the early history of les Clairets by staging a virtual refoundation when the abbey church was consecrated, issuing a new "foundation charter" vaguely resembling the monastic pancartes of the

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[8] Elizabeth M. Hallam and Judith Everard, *Capetian France: 987–1328* (Harlow, 2001), 286.

[9] *Les Clairets*, nos. 9 (1216), 15 (1220), 16, 17 and 20 (1221), 23 (1224), 31 (1232), 52 (1249), 55 (1268), and 62 (1276).

[10] On mills and rising woolen industry in this region, see André Chédeville, *Chartres et ses campagnes (XIe–XIIIe siècle)* (Paris, 1973), 197.

[11] *Les Clairets*, no. 29 (1230).

[12] Many charters include vines; they are accompanied by a wine press in *Les Clairets*, no. 22 (1223).

[13] *Les Clairets*, no. 50 (1243); and no. 60 (1274), entitled: "Et pourront les devant dites noneyns les davant dits boes arracher et mettre à terre gaagnable si il i veyent leur profit."

twelfth century. In that charter his rather meager gift to the nuns of a rent of 60 solidi—three livres per year—was enhanced by the gifts of those who also made gifts at the time. Those gifts of rents and tithes made to the nuns in 1218 by forty-five men and four women totalled six and a half livres, 28 sestiers and 6 mine of cereals, and tithes paid at three places.[14] Such gifts of rents and tithes, apparently those deemed appropriate for the support of a community of nuns by bishops like William, however, were far from inflation proof.[15] In comparison to the original bequests made by Matilda and her son, including mills for which the guarantee of income was 80 livres per annum, William's were insignificant. With the growing inflation of the thirteenth century, they would fade in comparison to the produce and rents which the nuns created for themselves in directing clearance and reclamation in forested areas, in organizing the planting and production of wine, and in the exploitation of mills, particularly for the rising cloth industry.

Matilda of Garlande and Port-Royal

The female founder of Port-Royal in 1204 too has often been left out of the foundation story for that abbey for Cistercian nuns, an abbey which became particularly well-known in the early modern period when its community moved into Paris and became involved with the Jansenists.[16] Again it was a widow, Matilda of Garlande, who founded the abbey. She received fifteen pounds of annual rents from her husband Matthew, lord of Marly, a cadet member of the Montmorency family, to use for his soul as he was about to depart on Crusade, but he died before he fulfilled his Crusader vow. Matilda with the assistance of Eudes de Sully, bishop of Paris, founded a house of Cistercian nuns at Porrois or Port-Royal-les-Champs in the Chevreuse valley, for her late husband's soul.

The story of Port-Royal's foundation is confused by the organization adopted for its thirteenth-century cartulary. Whereas many medieval charter collections place the earliest charter, often that of the founder,

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[14] *Les Clairets*, no. 14 (1218).

[15] The bishop of Orleans preached the return of tithes to the church by gifts to "his nuns" at Voisins: *Cartulaire de Notre-Dame de Voisins*, ed. J. Doinel (Orleans, 1887); and see Constance H. Berman, "Cistercian Women and Tithes," *Cîteaux* 49 (1998): 95–128.

[16] On Port-Royal's Jansenists see Ellen F. Weaver, *The Evolution of the reform of Port-Royal: from the rule of Cîteaux to Jansenism* (Paris, 1978).

as the first text, Port-Royal's nuns organized their volumes by geographical holding. At least that may explain why it opens not with Matilda's charters, but with one from Matilda and Matthew's son, Bouchard, dated 1224. The 1204 charter in which Bouchard's father, Matthew of Montmorency, gave money for his soul to be used by his wife, Matilda, and the 1206 one in which the bishop of Paris explained how the foundation came about, are buried within the medieval charter book, 58th and 59th from the beginning.[17] All indications are that it was Matilda who decided that this should be a house of Cistercian women.

Additional gifts began to be made in 1207 and in the earliest years Port-Royal was treated as a priory subject to the nearby abbey of Cistercian monks at les Vaux-de-Cernay, which had itself been part of the Order of Savigny before their incorporation by the Cistercians. After ca. 1215 the community began to be treated as an independent abbey of Cistercian women, but still subject to Savigniac style visitation up into the 1230s when its maximum size was established by the visiting abbot, Stephen of Lexington, at sixty nuns.[18] Many of the donors to Port-Royal were among the great feudal families of the Île-de-France in the early thirteenth century; in addition to the Montmorency and Garlande families, we see that of the Montforts involved in this and other foundations for Cistercian nuns.[19]

The first volume of the medieval cartulary opens with charters concerning tithes at Chagny and Escrone and controversy turning on whether lands cultivated by the nuns there were tithe-exempt or not. The tithe issue was an important one for the nuns of Port-Royal who quickly moved beyond simply accumulating tithes to using tithe exemption as part of the development of a tithe-exempt grange agriculture.

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[17] *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Porrois au diocèse de Paris plus connue sous son nom mystique, Port-Royal*, ed. A. de Dion (Paris, 1903), no. 183 [no. 2 in the medieval cartulary] is misdated, but should be 1223/24; Matilda of Garlande died on March 16, 1224 (see de Dion's charter no. 68); the original of the second charter in the medieval cartulary must have been dated in Roman numerals MCCXXIII, misread as MCCXXXVIII; the manuscript order was not observed by the editor who printed the charters in chronological order; by the time the first volume of the cartulary was redacted in late thirteenth century, Bouchard rather than his parents may have been considered by the nuns as their founder.

[18] *Port-Royal*, no. 144 (1233).

[19] John, count of Montfort, gave Port-Royal 240 arpents of land that became le Petit-Porrois and rights in the communal forest outside the boundaries of his "defense" for gathering firewood and pasturing animals and pigs; Philip of Montfort in 1259 confirmed earlier gifts by his uncle Guy: *Port-Royal*, nos. 251 (1258) and 274 (1259).

Once they acquired tithes in a parish or vicinity, those tithes became the proverbial "foot in the door" for acquiring additional rights in that place which would eventually be developed into a grange. This is seen at the abbey farm, at Villeray-in-Saclay, and at Saint-Escobille, as well as at Chagny.[20] Elsewhere gifts were made because daughters had entered the abbey as in the case of a donation at Vaumurier made "because of my devotion to that house where my two daughters are nuns."[21] Cens listed as owed to Port-Royal in mid-thirteenth century reveal not only such noble donors, but suggest that Port-Royal's economy encompassed both the new grange agriculture (tithe-exempt, direct cultivation under the nuns' direction), and other holdings cultivated by more traditional tenants, or let out at farm.[22] Port-Royal clearly provided for many of its internal needs from such agriculture. At Port-Royal, and indeed for all these houses, the increasing profitability of wine-production is apparent and gifts of vineyards seem particularly to be associated with requests for prayers for the dead. Indeed the censier suggests that Port-Royal's nuns were even acquiring vineyards over which they owed rents to others, as we see in the case of the gift by Odeline, widow of the late Ingorrent of Sevres who gave vineyards for prayers for his soul to Port-Royal, where their daughter was a nun, but kept an annual rent on them.[23]

What is most striking in Port-Royal's documents is evidence of a knightly class in crisis in the thirteenth century. Many women chose religious lives not only because they had been brought up to believe that entering a religious house was the "finest" Christian life, but because knightly women and men—primarily in a lower tier than the founders—had no money to have their sons knighted or to give as marriage portions to daughters. The charters record multiple daughters entering the abbey or sons of knights not being knighted, and the popularity of such

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[20] *Port-Royal*, nos. 226, 227, and 228 (1244); for Villeray, nos. 29 (1216), 30 (1217), 79 and 80 (1224), 150 (1234), 205 and 206 (1241); for Saint-Escobille where in 1215 the bishop of Chartres gave a quarter part of all the tithes, great and small, nos. 23 (1215), 28 (1216), 50 (1220), 127 (1231) and 138 (1233); at Chagny, nos. 223 and 224 (1243).

[21] *Port-Royal*, nos. 225 (1245) for 140 livres, and 288 (1262).

[22] *Port-Royal*, nos. 112 (1229), 219 (1242), 221 (1242).

[23] *Port-Royal*, p. 20. *Port-Royal*, no. 98 (1228); she retained a rent of two deniers per arpent at the feast of Saint-Rémy and required that the nuns use her winepress unless they constructed their own.

entrances would create concern about over-crowding.[24] For Matilda of Garlande, Lady of Marly, moreover, the cartulary reveals the correct year of her death, 1224, not 1239.[25]

Isabelle of Chartres, her daughter Matilda of Amboise, and the foundations at Moncey, Lieu, and Eau

The Cistercian priory of nuns at Moncey in the Loire valley near Tours was the first of three foundations for Cistercian nuns made by Isabelle of Chartres, a daughter of Alix of Blois, and grand-daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII.[26] This foundation was made by Isabelle and her first husband, Sulpice of Amboise. They appear together in 1214 granting rights at Ile Barbe to the nuns of Moncey (Isabelle here called Elisabeth, as seen elsewhere), with their son Hugh and daughter Matilda, and other relatives asking that prayers be made for Sulpice's soul after his death. A second gift, datable to 1214–18, was made by Isabelle shortly after Sulpice's death: 24 sestiers of grain and two muids of wine were to be paid annually at the feast of Saint-Rémy from the tithes of Amboise, and 7 pounds of the money of Tours on the feast of the nativity of the blessed John the Baptist, to endow a priest at the church of Moncey to say mass each day for the soul of the late Sulpice; we know of it because of the confirmation by Matilda of Amboise in 1239.[27]

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[24] Port-Royal, no. 303 (1264), the four daughters of the late knight, Lord John of Coupières, entered Port-Royal with all their goods; see Constance H. Berman, "Cistercian Agriculture in Female Houses of Northern France, 1200–1300," forthcoming.

[25] This means that this Matilda was not involved in founding a Cistercian college in Paris, as discussed in Constance H. Berman, "Monastic Hospices in Southern France and Colleges in Montpellier, Toulouse, Paris, and Oxford: The Cistercian Urban Presence," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, vol. 101:4 (2007): 747–774.

[26] On her family tree, see Shadis and Berman cited in note 5 above; on Cistercian priories, see Berman, cited in note 4 above; L.-H. Cottineau, *Répertoire topo-bibliographique des abbayes et prieurés*, 3 vols (Macon, 1935–38), attributes the foundation of 1209 to Isabelle's first husband, Sulpice of Amboise.

[27] Tours, A.D. Indres-et-Loire, H799, H800 are the two small folders of material surviving; the confirmation of 1239 appears to have been at the point that Isabelle turned over the title and inheritance at Amboise to her daughter with Sulpice, Matilda of Amboise and her husband Richard of Belmont; they both appear in the documents for Lieu found in *Cartulaire de l'abbaye royale du Lieu-Notre-Dame-lèz-Romorantin*, ed. Ernest Prat (Romorantin, 1892), Richard apparently predeceasing Matilda, disappearing between 1239 and 1246. Matilda herself died between January 1252/3 and December 1256; on these women see Michelle Armstrong-Partida, "Mothers and Daughters as Lords: The Countesses of Blois and Chartres" forthcoming in *Medieval Prosopography* 26 (2005).

After 1218, upon the death of their nephew, Thibaut VI of Blois/Chartres, the succession passed to Isabelle and her sister Marguerite. They then inherited respectively the counties of Chartres and Blois, which were divided by King Philip Augustus and granted to them and their husbands in return for large sums in relief.[28] Once countess of Chartres, Isabelle would found two more houses of Cistercian nuns: the abbey of Lieu-Notre-Dame for which she had considerable help from her daughter, Matilda of Amboise, and Eau-lez-Chartres, where Isabelle had the help of her second husband, John of Oisy.

LIEU: The earlier foundation was that made in 1222 near the town of Romorantin, where Isabelle founded a community of Cistercian nuns at Locus Beatae Mariae, or Lieu-Notre-Dame-les-Romorantin. There is no question about Isabelle as founder, but confusion about the date because the opening document is not the foundation act of 1222, but her final testament of 1249. It was in the 1249 testament that Isabelle granted money to found a chapel at Lieu-Notre-Dame in which perpetual prayers were to be said "for her own soul and for the soul of [her cousin] Blanche, queen of France."[29] The earlier document, from 1222, is clear about her role: it describes the nuns of Lieu, "newly-planted there to live under the rule and habit of the Cistercian Order" by Isabelle of Chartres and John of Oisy, who together gave the abbey site, income from rents on an oven in Romorantin, firewood in their woods of Briod, the tithe from wine produced at Reuilly, and thirty-six arpents of uncultivated land adjoining the abbey.[30] The cartulary places most of the charters by Isabelle and her husband John in its opening pages after Isabelle's will; they are followed by those of her daughter from her first marriage, Matilda of Amboise, including a charter of Matilda's final gift made in December 1256. She became

[28] "En 1218, la succession de Thibaud VI passe à ces deux tantes, filles de Thibaud V et soeurs de Louis I. Les comtés de Blois et de Chartres sont à nouveau séparés: Marguerite reçoit le premier, accru du Dunois, Isabelle hérite du second," Chédeville, *Chartres*, 42; see also Baldwin, *Philip Augustus*, 269–72.

[29] *Lieu*, no. 1 (1247).The Lieu cartulary volume was completed ca. 1270 and its first page suggests the influence of Isabelle's daughter from her first marriage, Matilda of Amboise, in its organization, although she died before its redaction was complete. Its incipit: "Here begin the copies of the charters and letters about rents of the nuns of Locus Beatae Marie iuxta Remorentinum of the Cistercian order." The first charter from May 1249 was the final testament of "the late of good memory Isabelle countess of Chartres, founder of that abbey," made just before her death, but over a quarter century after the foundation of the abbey itself.

[30] *Lieu*, no. 33 (1222).

countess of Chartres as well as Lady of Amboise after her mother's death in 1249.[31] Immediately after her mother's death, Matilda confirmed "conveyances that our dearest Lady my mother Isabelle, late countess of Chartres, made to the religious women and our dear nuns of Lieu-Notre-Dame.[32]

The contents of the cartulary make clear that right up to her death Isabelle was making new gifts to Lieu of land and income, sometimes by purchasing them from earlier owners, as in 1245 when Isabelle granted 10 arpents of woods purchased from William of Furno, so that the nuns could make a mill "on our pond."[33] There are also charters that transfer holdings from other religious communities.[34] The opening section concludes with a series of money-rents granted to the nuns in return for anniversary masses, and those sums in rent are tallied at the end of the section. There a note, later crossed out, indicates that the total of all money rents owed for which the nuns had charters by 1269 was 228 pounds, 16 shillings.[35]

Isabelle appears a particularly intrusive donor. In her 1247 act of confirmation, for instance, we see that of the 60 livres which Lieu's nuns were given by Isabelle in annual income from the revenues of the festagium, or hearth tax, in Romorantin, 50 livres were to be spent on grain for bread.[36] Uncleared land given to the nuns by both Isabelle and her daughter Matilda was to be developed into rent-producing holdings, some of which might benefit the donors. This is made clear in an act of 1232 in which Matilda of Amboise and her husband Richard of Belmont gave additional uncultivated land to the nuns of Lieu. The first additional 100 arpents were to be held by the nuns free of rents paid to the countess; if more land was cleared and settled, the nuns would pay the usual rate of rent to the countess and her heirs.[37] In the case of Lieu as elsewhere, then, we see Cistercian nuns instituting clearance and reclamation using tenant laborers.

EAU: A third house of Cistercian nuns was founded by Isabelle of Chartres and her husband, John of Oisy, at Eau-lez-Chartres in 1226. Unlike Lieu, this was a foundation that might be considered almost

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[31] *Lieu*, no. 10 (1256).
[32] *Lieu*, no. 31, 1249.
[33] *Lieu*, no. 29 (1245).
[34] See below at note 47.
[35] *Lieu*, nos. 11–23 (dated 1245 through 1261); the sum is inserted after no. 23.
[36] *Lieu*, no. 1 (1247).
[37] *Lieu*, no. 24 (1232).

suburban rather than rural and the foundation was made with the cooperation of the abbot of Saint-Pere-de-Chartres.[38] Moreover it is possible that it was located in territory that belonged to John of Oisy rather than Isabelle, for after John's death ca. 1240/41 Isabelle disappears from the Eau cartulary; this does not mean that Isabelle did not participate in those gifts.[39] Eau was located in the fief or territory of Panthoisen not far from the city of Chartres, where the nuns acquired the site by means of a ten-year mortgage costing them 50 livres.[40] They gradually accumulated more land, as when Ersendis of Panthoisen and her son Perry granted land there when she entered Eau, a gift that would provide him a lifetime annuity of 100 solidi.[41] We can identify granges for Eau at Monz and at Morency; considerable sums could be expended, including Eau's purchase of rights at Morency for 200 livres in 1228.[42] Elsewhere at Loches in 1236 they purchased mills from Aimeric of Loches for 240 livres, and so forth.[43] Rights acquired in 1248 from Ameline of Bar were for her anniversary, showing that this community, like other houses of religious women was involved in prayer for souls.[44] This cartulary shows that the rents in money received by such religious women were not as secure as land, as is clear from an act of 1279 recounting that the count of Blois, who had inherited Isabelle of Chartres' county, fell into arrears on the rents of 90 livres of rents, of which forty were on the mills Isabelle had given to Eau. Eventually the nuns agreed to give up claims to part of the previous three years' rents still unpaid, as well as agreeing to a permanent reduction in income there from 90 to 60 livres per annum.[45]

Of the three foundations, it is obvious that Lieu was Isabelle's favorite. Particularly after the death of her husband John of Oisy, her interests and those of her daughter and heir, Matilda of Amboise, who was widowed in this period and without children, were concentrated on Lieu. They were perhaps particularly generous in the 1240s because there was no direct heir to their holdings, only a cousin. Isabelle may

[38] *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de l'Eau*, ed. Ch. Métais (Chartres, 1908): no. 3 (1225).
[39] *Eau*, no. 31 (1241) is the last charter in that cartulary in which Isabelle appears.
[40] *Eau*, nos. 3 and 4 (1225), 18 (1231), and 29 (1240).
[41] *Eau*, no. 15 (1229).
[42] *Eau*, nos. 11 (1228), 19 (1231), 53 (1257), and 55 (1257).
[43] *Eau*, no. 25 (1237).
[44] *Eau*, no. 37 (1248).
[45] *Eau*, nos. 87 (1279), and 89 (1282).

have retired to Lieu in 1247 before her death in late 1248 or early 1249. It is particularly noticeable that it was in founding and endowing the nuns of Lieu-Notre-Dame that Isabelle repositioned earlier gifts to other religious communities.The cartulary's first quires document her reacquisition of rights once given to the Cistercian abbot of Vaucelles for anniversary masses for her late husband John of Oisy, now given to Lieu-Notre-Dame.[46] Not long before her death in November 1248, we see the purchase for 500 livres of a grange at Puy Sauveron not far from Lieu by Isabelle from the abbot of the Cistercian house of Barzelles.[47] Another section of the cartulary opens with the reacquisition in 1225 of the "Gaigneria of Bournigale" which had been given by Isabelle's first husband, Sulpice of Amboise, to William of Monleon who now sold it to Isabelle; it would be granted to Lieu by Isabelle's daughter, Matilda and the latter's husband, Richard of Belmont in 1237 for anniversary masses for their own souls; the conveyance was confirmed by Isabelle and her husband John of Oisy the following January (1237/8).[48] Founder of three houses of nuns, Isabelle of Chartres, with her daughter Matilda of Amboise's help, in the last years of her life placed priority on Lieu.[49]

The records for these five communities of nuns reveal not only the expansion of Cistercian communities of women in a particular corner of northern France, but the role of noblewomen of power and authority in that expansion. While I have concentrated on the founders here, there is material on other women as well within these charters too easily dismissed as only about religious women.[50]

[46] *Lieu*, nos. 3–7 for Vaucelles.

[47] Property purchased from Barzelles had been given to them by Matilda, countess of Auxerre, and her husband Hervé of Donzy in 1201: see *Lieu*, nos. 40 (1201), 41 (n.d.), 42 (1194), 43 (1203); others concern the transfer of land, church and tithes; 44 (1248), 45 (1248, 46 (1251), 47 (1248), 48 (1235); 51 (1210) and 52 (1255), and 53 (1249).

[48] *Lieu*, nos. 56 (1225), 57 (1237), 58 (1237), 58 (1237), 59 (1237), and 60 (1239).

[49] There is an interesting history yet to be written of how post-menopausal medieval women with no direct heirs give their lands.

[50] On this last, see the issue on women's houses' charters edited by Constance Berman and Michelle Herder in *Church History and Religious Culture* 88.4 (2008): 171–297.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

"INSEPARABLE COMPANIONS": MARY MAGDALENE, ABELARD, AND HELOISE

Susan Valentine

While Peter Abelard (1079–1142) has always received scholarly attention for his philosophical works, his relationship with Heloise (d. 1164) and the letters between them have often been something of a curiosity, not useful for serious historians of religion but only for literary study, or rejected altogether for the uncertainty of their authorship. Heloise, for her part, is often denied authorship of the letters purported to be from her, and, though her skill with letters and success as an abbess are attested from other sources, assessments of her have focused on her ideas about love and marriage, or her misgivings about her subsequent entry into the religious life.

The best recent work on these twelfth-century thinkers has returned these texts to their likely original context, as a dialogue between the founders of the Paraclete on the ideal religious life at their monastery, in which the personal elements of the conversation are only part of the story.[1] As leading figures in a new religious institution, Abelard and Heloise have much in common with many of their contemporaries, such as Robert of Arbrissel, founder of Fontevrault, (c. 1047–c. 1117) and even with those with whom they might be contrasted, such as the Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux (1090/91–1153), who engineered the condemnation of Abelard's views at the Council of Sens in 1141.[2] Examining the letters of Abelard and Heloise alongside their other

[1] See especially the work of Constant Mews, most recently, C.J. Mews, *Abelard and Heloise*, *Great Medieval Thinkers* (New York, 2005), and the collection of articles in Bonnie Wheeler, ed., *Listening to Heloise: The Voice of a Twelfth-century Woman*, 1st ed., *The New Middle Ages* (New York, 2000). Also, Fiona J. Griffiths, "'Men's Duty to Provide for Women's Needs': Abelard, Heloise, and Their Negotiation of the *Cura Monialium*," *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2004): 1–24.

[2] For Robert, see especially the recent work of Jacques Dalarun, who has noted Robert's interest in the Magdalene. Jacques Dalarun and Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes (France), *Robert d'Arbrissel et la vie religieuse dans l'ouest de la France: actes du colloque de Fontevraud, 13–16 décembre 2001*, *Disciplina monastica 1* (Turnhout, 2004). For

writings, including Abelard's sermons and the entire corpus of liturgical materials deriving from the Paraclete, reveals the pair to be concerned less with the circumstances of their early love affair than with the crucial religious questions of their day: what is the appropriate role of women in the religious life alongside men? How does one follow the life of Christ and the apostles? How should monastic observances of the liturgy best be conducted?

Appearing again and again in their recorded conversation on these questions is the figure of Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene shares a common predicament with Abelard and Heloise: since the later Middle Ages, each has been known as much for youthful sexual indiscretions as for the contributions that they made to the history of Christian religion in their later lives.[3] But Abelard and Heloise do not evoke Mary Magdalene as a fellow convert from a past of sexual sin. In her many appearances in texts associated with the Paraclete, Mary Magdalene appears as a sexual sinner, yes, but more often as a model for religious women based on her close personal relationship with Christ.

The majority of the Paraclete materials spring from Abelard's pen: his letters exceed Heloise's in length and number, and he appears as sole author of the hymns and sermons. Much of his writing, however, shows the mark of Heloise's agency. Heloise's request that Abelard "teach us how the order of nuns began and what authority there is for our profession," prompts his writing of a history of women's roles in Christianity (Letter 7) peppered with references to the Magdalene.[4] Abelard's prologue to the Paraclete hymnal recalls that Heloise directed him to fill the gaps she perceived in the current canon, asking specifically for hymns for "those holy women who were not at all either virgins or

Bernard's role in charges against Abelard, see C.J. Mews, "The Council of Sens (1141): Bernard, Abelard and the Fear of Social Upheaval" *Speculum* 77 (2002): 342–82.

[3] The classic work on the rise of the Magdalene cult is Victor Saxer, *Le culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident: des origines á la fin du Moyen Age*, *Cahiers d'archéologie et d'histoire 3* (Paris, 1959). The most recent historical monograph on the medieval Magdalene, focusing on the growth of the cult from the thirteenth century, is Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2000).

[4] Heloise, "Letter 6," trans. Betty Radice and M.T. Clanchy in *The Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. M.T. Clanchy (London and New York, 2003), 94. Abelard's response has been translated as: Peter Abelard, "From Abelard to Heloise: The History of Women's Roles in Christianity (Letter 7)," in *Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents*, ed. Vera Petch Morton (Cambridge, 2003).

martyrs," of which the Magdalene is the most prominent example.[5] Heloise's own writings suggest interest in the saint. She raises a question about Mary Magdalene's role at the tomb of Christ in the *Problemata*, a collection of twenty-four "problems" in Christian doctrine that she and her nuns pose to their spiritual father.[6] Though they date from the century after Heloise's death, the Paraclete liturgical books testify to the solemnity of the Magdalene's feast day at the monastery, which blended Abelardian materials with Cistercian elements and traditional Benedictine texts to produce a unique combination of prayers, and reveal a prominent role for Mary Magdalene in the Easter week liturgy.[7] Heloise may also have authored an Easter play commemorating the Magdalene's witness to the resurrection.[8] The first daughter house of the Paraclete, founded in 1126 at Trainel, was dedicated to Mary Magdalene, probably at Heloise's direction.[9]

In his frequent evocation of Mary Magdalene, Abelard is not unusual in his time. Mary Magdalene appears in devotional works, in the liturgy and hagiography, and in more expressly didactic forms, like sermons and letters or treatises of spiritual advice, throughout the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries in Northern France and England.[10] What makes

[5] Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections from the Paraclete*, 2 vols., *Cistercian Liturgy Series; no. 8–9* (Trappist, KY, 1987), vol. 2, p. 5.

[6] "Problema Heloissae V," *Problemata Heloissae*, PL 178, cols. 0683B–0684D. On the *Problemata*, see Anne Collins Smith, "The *Problemata* of Heloise," in *Women Writing Latin*, ed. Laurie Churchill (London, 2002), and Peter Dronke, "Heloise's *Problemata* and *Letters*: Some Questions of Form and Content," in *Petrus Abaelardus (1079–1142). Person, Werk und Wirkung*, ed. R. Thomas (Trier, 1980).

[7] Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *The Paraclete Breviary (Chaumont-en-Bassigny. Bibliothéque municipale. 31)*, 3 vols., *Cistercian Liturgy Series; no. 5–7* (Trappist, KY and Kalamazoo, 1983); Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *The Old French Paraclete Ordinary: Paris, Bibliothéque nationale, Ms français 14410*, 2nd ed., *Cistercian liturgy series, no. 4* (Trappist, KY and Kalamazoo, 1983).

[8] Mews has argued strongly for Heloise's interest in Mary Magdalene based on the evidence of the Paraclete's liturgy, and the dedication of the priory at Trainel in C.J. Mews, "Heloise and Liturgical Experience at the Paraclete," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 11, no. 1 (2002): 25–32; C.J. Mews, "Heloise, the Paraclete Liturgy and Mary Magdalene," in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy of Heloise and Abelard*, ed. Marc Stewart and David Wulstan (Ottawa, Canada and Westhumble, Surrey, 2003), 100–112; and C.J. Mews, "Liturgy and Identity at the Paraclete: Heloise Abelard and the Evolution of Cistercian Reform," in *ibid.*, 19–33. For the play that Mews and David Wulstan have ascribed to her, see below, at n. 54.

[9] Mews suggests that Heloise may have been emulating the dedication of the first priory of Fontevrault, also to Mary Magdalene, in 1100; Mews, "Heloise, The Paraclete Liturgy and Mary Magdalene," 106.

[10] For editions of such texts and discussions of her cult in this period, see the collection of articles in *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge*, vol. 104 (Rome, 1992).

the Paraclete materials unique is the amount of attention Mary Magdalene receives, the evidence for a female response to—and even creation of—these depictions of Mary Magdalene, and the particular characterization of Mary Magdalene in these texts. Mary Magdalene is a constructed saint whose multifaceted persona allows her to prove a useful exemplar in varied contexts.[11] The Magdalene inherited by the late eleventh and early twelfth century was the result of a long process of amalgamation and accretion. Since at least the sixth century, when Gregory the Great (d. 609) offered a homily to this effect, her persona has been comprised of three elements: the follower of Christ or "apostle to the apostles," clearly named Mary Magdalene or "of Magdala" in the Gospels; the model contemplative, a woman called Mary who lived in Bethany as the sister of Martha and Lazarus; and the converted whore, derived from the unnamed "sinful woman" of Luke.[12] Mary Magdalene at the Paraclete is less any of these in particular than a creation from aspects of all three: the beloved friend of Christ, whose devotion to him is so great that it overcomes her sinful past, enables the resurrection of her brother Lazarus and earns her the greatest reward as the first to see the risen Christ.[13]

In addition to the hagiographical materials deriving from her well-known shrine at Vézelay, a *Life* of Mary and her sister Martha has been ascribed to a twelfth-century Cistercian milieu by Victor Saxer. Victor Saxer, "La 'Vie de Sainte Marie Madeleine' attribué de pseudo-Raban Maur, oeuvre claravalienne du XIIe siècle," in *Mélanges Saint Bernard* (Dijon, 1952). Mary Magdalene appears in the writing of Aelred of Rielvaulx, Hildebert of Lavardin, Geoffrey of Vendôme and others. Anselm of Canterbury, for instance, urges Adela of Blois to pray to Mary Magdalene in a letter, "Epistola CXXI," PL 159, cols. 266A–266D, and himself writes a long prayer to the saint that he includes in the collection of prayers that he prepares for Matilda "the Empress," translated in *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Harmondsworth, 1973). His biographer Eadmer recounts a tale of Anselm's interaction with women "devoted to God" who followed the religious life at a priory dedicated to Mary Magdalene that Anselm had founded in Lyon, repeating the story in both the *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, Eadmer's account of Anselm's political career, and in the *Vita Anselmi*, a more hagiographical endeavor: Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia, et opuscula duo de vita Sancti Anselmi et quibusdam miraculis ejus*, ed. Martin Rule (London, 1884), 240–1 and 433–4.

[11] Dominique Iogna-Prat has referred to the Magdalene's "blessed polysemy" that allows her to be a "figure of transition": Dominique Iogna-Prat, "La Madeleine du *Sermo in veneratione sanctae Mariae Magdalenae* attribué à Odon de Cluny," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 104, no. 1 (1992): 37–70.

[12] Gregory the Great, "Homilia XXXIII," PL 76, cols. 1239A–1246A.

[13] Mary Magdalene's great love seems to be a focus in other twelfth-century sources as well. The Vézelay Chronicle refers to her with formulations like "the blessed lover of God," "the holy lover of God" and even "the venerable nourisher and handmaiden of God," appearing to share Abelard's focus on the care that she gives Jesus. Hugh of Poitiers, "The Vézelay Chronicle," in *The Vézelay Chronicle and Other Documents from*

Mary Magdalene and Abelard

Responding to Heloise's request to provide evidence for the authority of the order of nuns, Abelard begins his response in Letter 7 with the Gospels, "holy stories" which tell of "blessed women and true nuns." His first reference to Mary Magdalene in the text is characteristic of the rest, blending aspects of her persona, but consistently foregrounding her devotion above all else:

> We read in the Gospel of the grumbling of the Pharisee who received the Lord as his guest and was rebuked by him, and how the devotion of the sinful woman was valued far beyond the Pharisee's hospitality. We read also that when Lazarus had been raised to life and was reclining at table, his sister Martha alone waited at the tables while Mary poured a pound of precious balm on the feet of the Lord and wiped them with her own hair, and the house was filled with the odour of the balm So Martha was busy in offering food, but Mary offered the balm; one restored the inner man, the other cherished the outer man in his weariness As we recognize Martha's service, we also recognize Mary's that was so much the more devoted as she had formerly been more culpable.[14]

The anointing of Jesus by Mary of Bethany (Matthew 26:6–13, Mark 14:3–9, John 12:3–8) and by the sinful woman of Luke (7:36–50) encouraged their identification with Mary Magdalene, who went to the tomb after Jesus' death to anoint the corpse. For Abelard, these multiple moments of anointing are the physical symbol of Mary Magdalene's devotion to Christ, as well as a sign of God's recognition of women's spiritual authority. "Consider, therefore, the high honour of woman," he encourages Heloise, "for Christ was anointed by her twice in this life, that is on his feet and on his head, and received the sacrament of king and priest," an assertion that he repeats in a sermon and a hymn.[15] When Judas complained of Mary's waste of this ointment, which could have been sold to aid the poor, Jesus defended her, saying "'leave her

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MS. Auxerre 227 and Elsewhere, ed. John O. Ward and John Scott. (Binghamton, 1992), 133, 269, and 164. The Cistercian *vita* refers to her as "most ardent lover of Christ" and makes frequent reference to their friendship: "Vita Beatae Mariae Magdalenae," trans. David A. Mycoff in *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of her sister Saint Martha: A Medieval Biography* (Kalamazoo, 1989).

[14] Abelard, "Letter 7," 53–4.

[15] Abelard, "Letter 7," 55. In *Sermon XI*, Abelard writes, "Nec solum pedes, verum etiam caput ipsius mulier inungens, corporaliter eum Christum fecit, et tam regis quam sacerdotis in eo sacramenta peregit;" PL 178, col. 455D. For the hymn, see below, at n. 39.

alone; she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial.'" (John 12:7) Abelard quotes this gospel text in the letter, and then glosses:

> as if he were to say, Do not reject this service of hers done to a living person, lest in doing so you take away the expression of devotion given the dead. For it is sure that holy women also prepared spices for the Lord s burial.[16]

In the stories of Jesus' death and burial, when the male disciples had fled for fear of persecution, Abelard commends "the devotion of the holy women [which] remained unshaken . . . because their devotion retained its constancy in hope and faith and love."[17] These women "deserved to be the first to see the glory of his resurrection," argues Abelard, because they "loved him as faithfully in death as in life, and they showed this not in words but in deeds."[18] While Mary Magdalene is here subsumed at times in the group of women followers around Christ, Abelard confirms that "first, indeed was Mary Magdalene, who was more eager than the others."[19] Abelard interprets the charge given to Mary by the resurrected Christ, to tell the male disciples of the miracle, as a reward for her steadfastness, placing her and the other women "as apostles, yet above the apostles."[20] Later in the same letter, Abelard refers to Mary as the "apostle to the apostles" (*apostola apostolorum*), a title that he also employs in an Easter sermon, in which he compares Mary Magdalene's role as announcer to that of Moses' sister Miriam, the prophetess.[21]

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[16] Abelard, "Letter 7," 56.

[17] Abelard, "Letter 7," 58.

[18] Abelard, "Letter 7," 59.

[19] Abelard, "Letter 7," 60. While Mary Magdalene sometimes appears subsumed into the broader category of female followers of Christ, Abelard makes clear here and elsewhere that she is rightly singled out as the most important. See also the discussion of the *Problemata*, below, n. 55.

[20] Abelard, "Letter 7," 60. Other devotees of the Magdalene link her first apostolic role as announcer of the resurrection to her a legendary *vita apostolica*, which derives from Vézelay in the late eleventh century and describes her post-resurrection career evangelizing the French countryside. Abelard seems uninterested in making this connection, though the Paraclete liturgical books reveal the use of hymns and verses common to feasts of the apostles being used on Mary Magdalene's feast day. For the use that the mendicant orders will make of this apostolic Magdalene see Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, especially 49–99.

[21] Abelard, "Letter 7," 80. Jansen traces the first use of this sobriquet to Hugh of Semur in the early twelfth century, though similar formulations were developing for some time, and notes that two of its earliest adopters are Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux: Katherine Ludwig Jansen, "Maria Magdalena: *Apostolorum Apostola*," in *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity*, ed. Beverly Mayne

Women remained part of the community of apostles after the ascension of Christ, continues Abelard in *Letter 7*, quoting Augustine's *The Work of Monks*:

> Whoever does not think it was arranged by the apostles that women of a holy way of life went about with them and with those who preached the Gospel, let them hear the Gospel and know how they made this on the model of the Lord himself.

Abelard's extended quotation from Augustine includes citations from Luke 8, the only account that mentions "Mary called Magdalene" outside of the narratives of the Passion and Resurrection, naming her in the company of women who traveled alongside Jesus and the twelve apostles on his mission of preaching and "supported him from their own resources."[22] For Abelard, this evidence of Christ's own authority for women's participation in the religious life precedes even apostolic authority:

> . . . it is clear that the Lord was supported physically by the care of women as he went around preaching and that they were joined to him as inseparable companions (*inseparabiles comites*) equally with the apostles.[23]

Abelard utilized nearly identical evidence in his *Historia Calamitatum*, the letter about his travails that he wrote to a friend, which had purportedly sparked the exchange of letters with Heloise. The *Historia* describes how the pride and vanity of his youth led him to have an affair with his student Heloise, leading to his castration at the behest of her uncle. When he offers the Paraclete, his abandoned oratory in the wilderness, as the site of a new monastery for Heloise and her nuns, his visits set tongues wagging about his intentions toward his former lover. Defending his own relations with religious women, Abelard claims that scriptural authority—buttressed by that of Augustine—"proves that women too

Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker (Berkeley, 1998), 61; cf. Abelard, *Sermo XIII*, PL 178, cols. 484B–489A. Miriam and the Magdalene are also linked by Abelard in his Easter hymn "Da marie typanum," ed. Waddell, *Paraclete Breviary*, vol. III, 141. For a discussion of this hymn, see David Wulstan, "*Novi modulaminis melos*: The Music of Heloise and Abelard," *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 11, no. 1 (2002) at p. 6.

[22] Abelard, "Letter 7," 62.

[23] Abelard, "Letter 7," 62; Peter Abelard, "VII: De ordine sanctimonialium," in *La vie et les epistres: Pierres Abaelart et Heloys sa fame*, ed. Eric Hicks. (Paris, 1991), 116: ". . . ut hinc quoque pateat Dominum etiam in praedictione sua proficiscentem ministratione mulierum corporaliter sustentari, et eas ipsi pariter cum apostolis quasi inseparabiles comites adherere."

were the inseparable companions (*inseparabiles comites*) of our Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, even to the extent of accompanying them on their preaching."[24]

Mary's role at the tomb, as steadfast devotee and the witness and announcer of the resurrection, along with the devotion during his life signified by the multiple anointings and care for his needs, form the core of Abelard's idea of the Magdalene. Though Abelard's letter on the dignity and authority of nuns serves a particular purpose, the emphases we see here carry into other of his writings as well, often in very similar formulations. Abelard's focus on these two elements seems particularly significant because he devotes considerably more attention to these than on either her figuration of the contemplative life or her conversion from sexual sin, elements of her persona that receive a great deal of attention in other contexts.[25] Turning to the rest of the Paraclete corpus, we find some reference to these other elements, but the foregrounding of devotion to the Lord remains significant.

In Letter 7, above, Abelard invoked Mary of Bethany and her sister Martha to commend their services to Jesus. Mary and Martha were more frequently depicted as types of the contemplative and the active lives, respectively. Luke 10:38–42 describes a visit Jesus paid to the two sisters, and describes a moment of conflict in which Martha, who is busy serving the meal, requests that Jesus encourage her sister Mary to help with the serving. Jesus defends Mary—who has been sitting at his feet, listening to his instruction—arguing that while Martha busies herself with cares, Mary has "chosen the best part" by leaving behind such things and listening to his words.[26]

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[24] Abelard, "Letter 1: *Historia Calamitatum*," trans. Radice and Clanchy, in *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Clanchy, 37–8.; Peter Abelard, "I: Ad amicum suum consolatoria," in *La vie et les epistres*, ed. Hicks, 39: "...etiam mulieres Domino Jhesu Christo atque apostolis ita inseparabiles comites adhesisse demonstrat, ut et cum eis etiam ad praedictionem procederent."

[25] As discussed below, Mary and her sister Martha provided the types of the contemplative and active lives, a hugely popular trope in the Middle Ages; see Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge, 1995). Katherine Jansen's recent study of the Magdalene, which follows the fortunes of the legend in the later Middle Ages, mainly through mendicant sermons, suggest that the pre-conversion Magdalene could be invoked to urge sinners to penance, a frequent focus of these sermons; Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen* especially Part Two, "The Wages of Sin," and Part Three, "Do Penance."

[26] This image of Mary as a contemplative, and thus a model for the monastic life, is enhanced by a later legendary accretion suggesting that Mary Magdalene spent many years after the resurrection of Christ as a desert hermit, probably encouraged

Abelard's only explicit mention of the allegory of Mary and Martha proper in the Paraclete texts is in his sermon on the raising of Lazarus from the dead.[27] Abelard pauses in the discussion of the meaning of Lazarus' resurrection, which he sees as an allegory for the hope of rebirth from sin, to note that all faithful people understand Mary and Martha as types of the contemplative and active lives.[28] Rather than focus on Luke's story of the sisters' disagreement, however, Abelard focuses on John's narrative of the sisters' quite active roles in beseeching Christ's help upon the death of their brother, in which Mary runs from her house of mourning to fall at Christ's feet, lamenting his absence when her brother was ill.[29] John introduces this episode by explaining that the entire family of Bethany is beloved of Christ:

> Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed

by conflation between the Magdalene and her fellow prostitute-saint Mary of Egypt. This version of her life, the *vita eremitica*, is the first to emerge in the West, beginning in the ninth century, and develops independently of the *vita apostolica* before merging with it. See Jansen's discussion of the evolution, Jansen, *Making of the Magdalen*, 37–40. For the *vita eremitica*, see Jean Misrahi, "A *Vita Sanctae Mariae Magdalenae* (BHL 5456) in an Eleventh-Century Manuscript," *Speculum* 18 (1943): 335–39 and Guy Lobrichon, "Le dossier magdalénien aux XIe–XIIe siècles. Édition de trois pièces majeures," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome. Moyen Âge* 104, no. 1 (1992): 163–180. As noted below, Abelard invokes Mary of Egypt alongside the Magdalene in Letter 7 and in a hymn. According to the Paraclete liturgical books, the nuns of the Paraclete would have read Mary of Egypt's legend in the midst of the Magdalene-focused Easter liturgy; Waddell, ed., *Paraclete Ordinary*, 31.

[27] Abelard also mobilizes the pair in his Letter 12 as evidence against regular canons, which likely predates the Paraclete materials; Peter Abelard, "Letter XII: To a Regular Canon," in *Peter Abelard, Letters IX–XIV: An Edition with an Introduction*, ed. Edmé Renno Smits. (Groningen, 1983). Other of his sermons make mention of the sisters in passing, including the sermon on the assumption of Mary, that for John the Baptist, and his sermon for the dedication of a church. His rule (Letter 8) invokes Mary once for her listening, though not by name and without her sister: Abelard, "Letter 8," trans. Radice and Clanchy in *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Clanchy, 209. Heloise invokes the pair once in a traditional way in her Letter 6, in which she is asking for clarification of monastic Rules regarding manual labor: Heloise, "Letter 6," 110. The Paraclete liturgy for the feast of Mary Magdalene incorporates the verse "Optimam partem," invoking Mary's choice of the best part.

[28] "In Maria et Martha universi fideles comprehenduntur, tam contemplativae scilicet vitae quam activae: quarum orationes dum sibi conjunguntur, facile pro aliis quoque impetrant quae illi non merentur": *Sermo VIII*, PL 178, col. 438D.

[29] "Quanto autem contemplativorum major religio ferventiori studio adhaeret Deo, tanto Mariae devotionem Evangelista magis commendans ait: Maria autem, cum venisset ubi erat Jesus, videns eum, cecidit ad pedes ejus. Et dixit ei: Domine, si fuisses hic, non esset mortuus frater meus. Jesus ergo, ut vidit eam plorantem, et Judaeos qui venerant cum ea plorantes, etc. (John 11:32–3.)": *Sermo VIII*, PL 178, col. 439B–439C.

> the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) His sisters sent therefore to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick . . . Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus. (John 11:2–5)

John links the service of anointing with love, a love that is clearly reciprocal, a strong influence on Abelard's reading of the Magdalene persona.

It is also love, demonstrated through anointing, which allows Abelard to focus on the commonality between Mary of Bethany and the sinful woman of Luke rather than to draw out any differences. Jesus himself appears to recognize anointing as love in Luke 7, saying of the sinful woman "many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much," referring to the rituals of kissing and anointment that she has just performed. In *Sermon XI*, "On Things Done in the Days of the Passion," Abelard discusses a visit to Bethany in which Lazarus sat at table with Christ while Martha ministered to them and Mary anointed Christ's feet, in which she is entirely elided with the sinful woman:

> We know also that that very one [Mary] of the disciples washed His feet; moreover none of the men furnished this solicitude to Him, but only that sinful woman, who washed his feet with tears of penitence, wiped [them] with [her] hair, restored [them] with balm.[30]

Abelard's references to Mary Magdalene's sin and conversion tend to figure as a necessary explanation of the greater value of her devotion, but not particularly interesting in themselves. While other twelfth-century narratives of conversion reference this episode as a model, Abelard's own does not.[31] While Abelard follows convention in referring to Magdalene as a whore, his letters and sermons never focused on this sexual

[30] "Novimus et ipsum pedes discipulorum abluisse; nullum autem virorum hoc ei obsequium exhibuisse, sed solam peccatricem illam, quae poenitentiae lacrymis pedes ejus lavit, capillis tersit, unguentis recreavit": *Sermo XI*, PL 178, col. 0455C.

[31] For example, see the story of the Cistercian lay brother Pons of Leras (d. after 1146). The tract (1161–1171) telling of the conversion of Pons describes the dramatic public penance that he undertook over the course of Easter Week, in repentance of his earlier life as a brigand. On Good Friday, he fed thirteen poor men, "washed their feet, *rinsed them with* [his] *tears, wiped them with* [his] *hair*, and faithfully completed all things in accordance with the Lord's mandate": "The Tract on the Conversion of Pons of Léras and the True Account of the Beginning of the Monastery of Silvanès," trans. Beverly Mayne Kienzle, in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head. (New York, 2001), 503.

sin or on the penitence that followed.[32] The two hymns that Abelard created for Mary Magdalene's feast day, however, seem to provide an exception, focusing primarily on her repentance and conversion, the first word of each—*peccatris* and *penitentum*—signifying this focus.

The first hymn is a meditation on the penitent soul's weeping appeal to the Lord: Abelard invokes "penitent laments," (*lamenta penitentie*), a "contrite heart," (*cor contritum*) the "blessed whore" (*felix meretrix*) the "rich sacrifice of tears," (*lacrimarum pingue sacrificium*) and "weeping," (*fletuum*) penitential imagery that he has otherwise mentioned only fleetingly.[33] This hymn incorporates elements of Psalm 50 and shares elements in common with a Magdalene hymn by Geoffrey of Vendôme, suggesting that Abelard may have adapted an existing hymn, perhaps explaining why the Magdalene in this hymn does not resemble her in the rest of his writings.[34] The feast of a saint is an occasion for worship, for obtaining the saint's intercession with the Lord, as the last lines of the hymn suggest: "to him the honor, to him the glory,/but above all, his grace (*gratia*)."[35] Magdalene's conversion from the depths of sin is the aspect of her story that demonstrates the working of God's grace in her and the potential for every sinner to receive such grace, the crux of her ability to intercede on behalf of the sinners who beseech her on her feast day, perhaps leading Abelard to focus on this element of her persona that he has otherwise de-emphasized.

The second hymn that Abelard wrote especially for the saint also focuses on the sinful Mary's repentance and God's grace in her

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[32] Towards the end of Letter 7, he refers to Mary Magdalene, along with Mary of Egypt, with whom her legend was often conflated, to make a point about "divine pity for the abject condition of common whores (*publicorum abjectione scortorum*.)" In another passage, Abelard notes the Lord's willingness to consort with "the blessed harlot (*beatae meretrici*)" despite the Pharisee's disapproval, as a further defense of religious men consorting with women: Abelard, "Letter 7," 86 and 94; Peter Abelard, "VII: De ordine sanctimonialium," 138 and 146.

[33] Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections* vol. II, 129.

[34] Joseph Szövérffy's study of 160 medieval hymns to the Magdalene finds the theme of her sin and conversion to be a frequent topic of the hymnodist addressing the saint, writing "in accordance with the Bible (but with even greater emphasis than in the Biblical narratives) the hymns underline Magdalen's sinful past," although Abelard's other favorite motifs, Mary's great devotion to Christ and her special role as witness to the Resurrection, also appear with some frequency in her hymns: Joseph Szövérffy, "*Peccatrix quondam femina*: A Survey of the Mary Magdalen Hymns," *Traditio* 19 (1963): 79–146 at 114. Geoffrey of Vendôme's hymn is "XVIII. Hymnus de S. Maria Magdalena," PL 157, cols. 235D–238A.

[35] "Et ex culpa uilis magis femina/ In hac omnes antecessit gratia/Ut pateat quanto gaudio/peccantium sit conuerso": Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections*, vol. II, 134.

conversion, but with an unusual emphasis. Abelard contrasts the "sharp rebuke" (*seuera correptio*) offered to penitents by the church with God's "more gentle" (*mitiorem*) justice, epitomized by Christ's "pardon" (*veniam*) of Mary's sins in the house of the Pharisee.[36] Abelard, the victim of "sharp rebukes" throughout his career, may at last be identifying with the Magdalene, or at least lamenting his peers' ignorance of the significance of the Magdalene tale.[37]

In addition to offering these two proper hymns for the Magdalene's feast day, Abelard responds to Heloise's request with a series of four hymns for the feasts of holy women, including two that mention the Magdalene in particular. Unlike the Magdalene hymns, for which Abelard would have had a number of exemplars, these are entirely new creations, and Abelard is free to explore the same themes he has found so compelling. In the course of the four hymns, Abelard catalogues the types of holy women and the relevant examples in the Old and New Testaments, marshalling much of the same evidence as in his *Letter 7*. In the first hymn, Abelard lists examples in the traditional categories of virgins, the married and widows before mentioning a fourth category prostitutes, in which he places Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalene, women whose virtue was all the more remarkable for their past sins.[38] The final hymn, which considers women "of our own time," that is, from the New Testament, briefly mentions the Virgin, Anna the prophetess and Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, before devoting the final two stanzas to a Mary Magdalene who is much more familiar to us from the rest of the Paraclete materials:

> The woman held the feet of Christ anointing [them],
> She made him Christ bodily;
> The rites of priest and king
> stand to have received these by a woman,
> and the sex which bore him,
> delivered the sacrament upon everyone.

[36] Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections*, vol. II, 135.

[37] Szövérffy, "*Peccatrix quondam femina*," 114 suggests a psychological reading: "One gets the impression that this passage expresses Abelard's own bitter feelings of resentment at much that had been done to him."

[38] "Post has omnes, si scrota respiciam,/Magdalene iungens egiptiacam,/ubi culpa prius habundauerat,/cerno quia uirtus post exuberat": Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections*, vol. II, 126.

And bringing to the tomb aromatic spices
She saw first the joy of resurrection
And out of her guilt this common woman
More outstrips all in this grace
In order to show how great a joy
The conversion of sinners may be.[39]

The emphasis of the last few lines suggest that Mary's sin and conversion are important to Abelard's understanding of her power as liturgical intercessor evoked by the singing of the nuns, as suggested by the hymns for her feast day. The overall impression from the hymn, however, is in keeping with Abelard's emphases in the rest of the Paraclete materials: that the forgiveness of her sin and her witness and announcing of the resurrection are the rewards of grace that she earns through the love and devotion that inspires her service.

Mary Magdalene and Heloise

In her first letter, framed as a response to Abelard's narrative of their relationship in the *Historia Calamitatum*, Heloise insisted that all of her actions, especially her conversion to the religious life, had been done not for her own gain or even that of her soul, but out of love for him. "It was not any sense of vocation" that brought her to the cloister, "but your bidding alone," at which she would have gladly followed him into "the flames of Hell."[40] The defense of earthly love and seeming lack of repentance in this letter could be, and have been, explored *ad infinitum*.[41] Most interesting for understanding the role of Mary Magdalene in this conversation, however, is the opening she leaves Abelard to engage her in spiritual discussion. If she cannot have him in presence, then at least she might have "some sweet semblance" of him through his words, and she closes the letter with a rhetorical question that suggests the

[39] "Christi pedes capit unguens mulier/christum eum fecit corporaliter/sacerdotis et Regis misteria suscepisse constant hunc a femina/et qui eum sexus peperit/sacramenta quoque tradidit. Et sepulto ferens hic aromata/resurgentis prior uidit gaudia/Et ex culpa uilis magis femina/In hac omnes antecessit gratia/Ut pateat quanto gaudio/peccantium sit conuersio": Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections* vol. II, 129.

[40] Heloise, "Letter 2," trans. Radice and Clancy in *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Clanchy, 54.

[41] The history of the reception of Heloise's side of the conversation is thoroughly explored in the contributions in Wheeler, ed., *Listening to Heloise*.

possible content of these words: "is it not far better now to summon me to God than it was then to satisfy our lust?"[42]

In his response, Abelard summons her to the service of God through what she has claimed she finds more compelling: service of him. Abelard, presently abbot over the murderous monks of Saint Gildas, suggests that the best service that she and her nuns can provide him is their prayers, providing a wealth of examples. Through prayer to Christ, "women have even received back their dead raised to life," argues Abelard, as "he raised Lazarus his own friend at the entreaty of his sisters Mary and Martha."[43] If, despite these prayers, he should be killed, Abelard asks Heloise to allow his body to rest at the Paraclete, arguing "nor do I believe that there is any place more fitting for Christian burial among the faithful than one amongst women dedicated to Christ," citing the role of Mary Magdalene and other women at the tomb of Christ:

> Women were concerned for the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ, they came ahead and followed after, bringing precious ointments, keeping close watch around this tomb, weeping for the death of the Bridegroom, as it is written: The women sitting at the tomb wept and lamented for the Lord.[44]

Heloise's letter to Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, thanking him for returning "the body of our master" after Abelard's death at a priory of Cluny, indicates that Heloise heeded his wishes in this matter.[45]

The reference to the dead Christ as the Bridegroom is unusual, and the phrase that Abelard has quoted as if it were scripture actually derives from a Benedictus antiphon from the Holy Saturday liturgy. Abelard's *Letter 5* opens with an elaborate meditation on the Song of Songs, in which he directs Heloise to embrace the Bride as a model and continues the association between her lost Bridegroom and the dead Christ. Abelard urges Heloise to see their shared misfortunes as an opportunity for her to become the bride of the Lord, calling it "a fortunate trading of your married state."[46] His plea to her features several instances

[42] Heloise, "Letter 6," 53, 55.

[43] Abelard, "Letter 3," trans. Radice and Clanchy, in *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Clanchy, 59.

[44] Abelard, "Letter 3," 62.

[45] Heloise, "Letter (167) to Peter the Venerable," trans. Radice and Clanchy in *Letters of Abelard and Heloise*, ed. Clanchy, 224.

[46] Abelard, "Letter 5," trans. Radice and Clanchy, in *ibid.*, 73.

of Magdalenian imagery and repeats the misquoted antiphon twice. Explaining why the Bride is described as "black," Abelard allegorizes this as the nun's habit, itself a sign of the women religious' mourning for "the dead husbands they had loved… the Scriptures also record of these widows for their spouse who was slain, in the words 'The women sitting at the tomb wept and lamented for the Lord.'"[47] Pleading with her to join him in embracing this opportunity for salvation, Abelard beckons her to "come too, my inseparable companion (*inseparabilis comes*) and join me in thanksgiving, you who were my partner both in guilt and in grace," repeating the phrase he had employed for the women who followed Christ in the *Historia Calamitatum*, and that he will repeat again in *Letter 7*.[48] Asking Heloise if she is "not moved to tears or remorse" for the suffering and death of Christ, he urges her to:

> be always present at his tomb, weep and wail with the faithful women, of whom it is written, as I said, 'The women sitting at the tomb wept and lamented for the Lord.' Prepare with them the perfumes for his burial…[49]

The reference to perfumes here recalls the significance that Abelard consistently places on the Magdalene as the one who anoints Christ, actions which link her to the bride of the Song of Songs. In *Letter 7*, Abelard cites Mary's breaking of the alabaster jar of ointment as evidence of her "ardent longing and extreme devotion":

> This woman is said to have acted well when she poured the balm on his head, not trickled it drop by drop; according to what the bride in the Canticle sings of him, *Your name is like a balm poured out.* (Song of Songs 1:3)[50]

Both David Wulstan and Constant Mews have suggested that the references to the dead Christ as Bridegroom and the repeated quotation of the Holy Saturday antiphon point to the Paraclete Easter liturgy, where they find a link between Mary Magdalene and Bride of the Song of Songs that both ascribe to Heloise's agency.[51] The sequence

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[47] Abelard, "Letter 5," 73.
[48] Abelard, "Letter 5," 83.
[49] Abelard, "Letter 5," 85.
[50] Abelard, "Letter 7," 54–55.
[51] Mews, "Heloise and Liturgical Experience at the Paraclete," 33; Mews, "Heloise, The Paraclete Liturgy and Mary Magdalene," 107; David Wulstan, "Heloise at Argenteuil and the Paraclete," in *The Poetic and Musical Legacy of Heloise and Abelard*, ed. Stewart and Wulstan, 75.

Epithalamica, a bridal song replete with imagery from the Song that Wulstan has attributed to Heloise, was performed at the Paraclete during Easter Week, when the focus of much of the liturgy was on Mary Magdalene's role at the tomb.[52] Verses from this sequence serve as Mary Magdalene's lines in an Easter play, *Verses about the Stranger*, found in a manuscript from the monastery of Vic, suggesting that the play originated at the Paraclete, perhaps at the hand of Heloise herself.[53] Mary Magdalene's dialogue at the tomb with the angel and the risen Christ, whom she thinks is a gardener, interlaces Mary's lines from the Gospel of John with excerpts from the *Epithalamica*, effectively incorporating the character of the Bride into the Magdalene persona.[54]

In the *Problemata*, Heloise poses a direct question about the Magdalene's role in the drama of resurrection. Heloise and her students ask Abelard for clarification of the events around Christ's tomb on Easter Sunday, noting a disagreement in the gospel accounts: how can Mary Magdalene have gone alone to the tomb when it was still dark and seen the stone already rolled away, when in other accounts she went with other women after the sun had already risen and asked who they might find to roll away the stone?[55] Abelard's answer to the question

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[52] The text of *Epithalamica* is reproduced in Chrysogonus Waddell, "'Epithalamica': An Easter Sequence by Peter Abelard," *The Musical Quarterly* 72, no. 2 (1986).

[53] While Chrysogonus Waddell attributed *Epithalamica* to Abelard, and Peter Dronke suggested an unnamed nun of the Paraclete as its author, David Wulstan and Constant Mews have argued that both the sequence and the play are most likely the work of Heloise. Peter Dronke, *Nine Medieval Latin Plays* (Cambridge, 1994), 85; Mews, "Heloise and Liturgical Experience at the Paraclete"; Waddell, "Epithalamica"; Wulstan, "Heloise at Argenteuil and the Paraclete."

[54] "Verses about the Stranger," trans. Peter Dronke, in *Nine Medieval Latin Plays*, 101–03:

> *Mary*: The King had already gone to his place of rest/And my scent of spikenard filled the air;/I entered the garden where he had come down,/But already he had left and turned away. (stanza 5 of *Epithalamica*)
>
> So I go out looking for him, through the night,/Turning now here now there, I find him nowhere. (1st half of stanza 6, *Epithalamica*)
>
> *Angels*: Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? (John 20:13)
>
> *Mary*: The Guards, full of ardent zeal, are running towards me—/When I have passed them I shall find my bridegroom! (2nd half of stanza 6, *Epithalamica*)
>
> *Gardener*: Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?
>
> *Mary*: They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him./If you have taken him away, tell me and I'll remove him. (John 20:15)
>
> *Gardener*: Mary, Mary, Mary!
>
> *Mary, answer again*: Raboni, Raboni, Master! (*cf.* John 20:16).

[55] *Problemata Heloissae*, PL 178, cols. 0683B–0683C.

reconciles the seeming disparities in the literal meaning of the Gospel passages, but not before he answers an underlying question about the spiritual significance of the text:

> Indeed John commemorates only Mary Magdalene, and not other women in the resurrection of the Lord, not because only she was in attendance... but because he himself commends her greater devotion more than the others, by whose exhortation and example other women are incited especially. In the same way, therefore, she was more fervent than the others in love and more anxious about the joy of resurrection, she came earlier and undaunted, when night was still in that place, to the tomb: and she had returned a second time to her friends, about to ask eagerly if anyone in that place had found out for certain about the resurrection of the Lord.[56]

If Heloise and her nuns ask Abelard "Why is Mary Magdalene so important?" Abelard's answer is clear: Mary Magdalene is deservedly singled out by John—and thus also by Abelard in his many writings for the Paraclete—for her special love and devotion to the Lord, in which she is commended specifically to "other women."

Heloise's question is also particularly interesting in relation to the Easter liturgy. If the women of the Paraclete were invoking Mary Magdalene through the performance of liturgical drama, like the play found in the Vic manuscript, they might have had a great deal of investment in the literal meaning of the Gospel text, both in terms of the actors who were present and the exact time that the events occurred. Correct intention in prayer was a key issue in the reform of monastic observance of the liturgy in this period.[57] Abelard suggests in his prologue to the Paraclete Hymnal that Heloise's request for a new hymnal derived in part out concern about exactly this problem, recalling Heloise's concern that some hymns required the singers to

[56] "Solus quidem Joannes de Maria Magdalene, et non caeteris mulieribus in resurrectione Domini commemorat non quod ea sola his, quae tunc facta sunt, adfuerit, sed quod ejus devotionem caeteris majorem plurimum ipse commendaret, cujus hortatu et exemplo caeterae feminae incitarentur maxime. Sicut ergo caeteris in dilectione ferventior erat et de gaudio resurrectionis magis sollicita, venit prior et intrepida, cum adhuc nox esset, ad monumentum: et reversa est iterum ad suos, quaerendo studiose si quis adhuc de resurrectione Domini certificatus esset": *Problemata Heloissae*, PL 178, cols. 0684B–0684C. Abelard had briefly noted the varying opinions of patristic authorities on this question in the *Sic et Non*: "LXXXVI. Quod Dominus resurgens primo apparuerit Mariae Magdalenae, et non," PL 178, cols. 1472B–1472D.

[57] See Giles Constable, "The Concern for Sincerity and Understanding in Liturgical Prayer, Especially in the Twelfth Century," in *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1996).

lie, such as those that evoke night, but were sung during the day.[58] The discussion of Mary Magdalene's role in the resurrection narrative that we find in the *Problemata* may reveal a reform-minded abbess looking to her spiritual advisor for guidance in resolving a liturgical issue, as well as Abelard's former wife asking him why he has put so much emphasis on one particular saintly exemplar in his writings for her. The *Institutiones Nostrae* of the Paraclete, a set of monastic customs likely authored by Heloise, are mainly devoted to rules governing the proper performance of the divine office by the nuns, also recalling Abelard's assurances that Heloise can best show her care for Abelard by devoting to him the prayers of her and her nuns.[59]

Heloise famously stated in her first letter, in response to Abelard's narrative of their affair in the *Historia Calamitatum*, that she preferred to be called his whore than to be a wife.[60] The letter collection reveals the two founders of the Paraclete to be negotiating a new framework for their own interaction as well as plotting the observance of the religious life at their monastery—once they were teacher and student, then lovers, then husband and wife, now a monk and a nun. In presenting Magdalene as a model, Abelard suggests that Heloise focus her attention on Christ as her Bridegroom, but does not entirely write himself out of the picture. *Letter 5* seems to suggest that Heloise can both become the Bride of Christ and remain Abelard's "inseparable companion:" as he writes towards the end of the letter, they remain "one in Christ, one flesh according to the law of matrimony. Whatever is yours cannot, I think, fail to be mine, and Christ is yours because you have become his bride."[61] Abelard appears to suggest the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Christ as a model for a possible continued relationship between his former wife and himself—a relationship marked by devotion and mutual service.

Does Abelard focus on the merits of another former *meretrix*, who rose to become the "inseparable companion" and even bride to her Lord, to urge Heloise to see a new possibility for herself? We cannot say for sure what she made of Abelard's urging that she follow in the Magdalene's

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[58] Waddell, ed., *Hymn Collections*, 5–8.

[59] Chrysogonus Waddell, ed., *The Paraclete statutes* "Institutiones nostrae": *Troyes, Bibliothéque municipale, Ms. 802, ff. 89r–90v, Cistercian Liturgy Series; no. 20* (Trappist, KY, 1987).

[60] Heloise, "Letter 2," 51.

[61] Abelard, "Letter 5," 88.

footsteps. Her request for hymns about women who were neither virgins nor martyrs, the strong tradition of liturgical veneration of the saint recorded in the Paraclete liturgical materials, her potential authorship of the Vic play, the careful questioning about Mary Magdalene's importance in the *Problemata*, and her concern to return Abelard's body to his foundation for women—all of these glimpses suggest that Heloise responded positively to Abelard's invitation to emulate the Magdalene and to be his inseparable companion in the religious life.

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CHAPTER NINE

BOOK, BODY, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF IN THE TAYMOUTH HOURS[1]

Kathryn A. Smith

Illustrated religious and devotional manuscripts designed for personal use are potentially valuable sources of evidence for the history of later medieval subjectivity. Their textual and pictorial contents express ideals of religious experience and behavior. Through the inclusion of heraldry and other elements of decoration, these volumes could powerfully affirm or shape their owners' sense of personal, familial, local and social identity. Moreover, because they were held and touched or set on a nearby stand and their texts and images internalized during the acts of prayer and contemplation, they had the power to engage their owners in an exceptionally intimate way, one that implicated the physical self as well as the devout imagination. In light of these observations, it is worth noting that the "allegories and metaphors of the book" so central to late medieval notions of personhood had a markedly physical, bodily dimension: the human body and the human heart as well as the individual conscience, the individual life, and human experience were all conceptualized as books in literature, homiletic and art, as was the body of Christ.[2] Thus, if the illustrated devotional manuscript was a

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[1] This article derives from my book in-progress, *The Taymouth Hours: Stories and the Construction of the Self in Late Medieval England*. Portions of this article were presented at the Conference of the Research Centre for Illuminated Manuscripts, *Illuminating Narrative: Visual Storytelling in Gothic Manuscripts*, July 9, 2005; and the session *In Honor of Penelope D. Johnson II: Spiritual Partnerships and Shared Devotions Across the Gender Divide* at the 41st International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, May 5, 2006. I am grateful for the many perceptive questions and comments offered by the attendees of those conferences, and particularly to Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells, co-organizers of the Kalamazoo sessions and co-editors of this volume. It gives me the greatest pleasure to contribute this essay in honor of Penny Johnson, a distinguished scholar, superb teacher, marvelous colleague and valued mentor.

[2] For these ideas and metaphors, see Margaret Aston, 'Devotional Literacy', in Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion*, History Series 22 (London, 1984), 101–33; Vincent Gillespie, "Strange Images of Death: The Passion in Later Medieval English Devotional and Mystical Writing", in *Zeit, Tod, und Ewigkeit in der Renaissance Literatur* 3, *Analecta Cartusiana* 117 (Salzburg, 1986), 111–59; Mary Carruthers,

"mirror" of the self, it was a mirror that "reflected" and mediated both the inner and outward dimensions of the book owner's personhood: her conscience, values and ambitions, her habits of thought, feeling and response, her conduct, and her sense of social and spiritual place.[3]

These interrelated ideas converge with particular force in the illustrated book of hours, the principal personal prayer book of the late medieval laity.[4] This paper considers the devout self as pictured in and shaped by one profusely illustrated but remarkably understudied example of the genre, the Taymouth Hours (London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13).[5] Produced in the early 1330s for a royal female

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The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture (Cambridge, 1990), 183–94; Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London, 1993); Eric Jaeger, *The Book of the Heart* (Chicago, 2000); Sylvia Huot, "The Writer's Mirror: Watriquet de Couvin and the Development of the Author-Centred Book", in *Across Boundaries: The Book in Culture and Commerce*, ed. Bill Bell, Philip Bennett and Jonquil Bevan (New Castle, DE, 2000), 29–46, here quoting 29; and Kathryn A. Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England: Three Women and Their Books of Hours*, The British Library Studies in Medieval Culture (London and Toronto, 2003).

[3] For the book as mirror of the self, see Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (Chicago and London, 1998); Huot, "The Writer's Mirror": and Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England.*

[4] The burgeoning literature on the book of hours includes Victor Leroquais, *Les Livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1927); and idem, *Supplément aux Livres d'heures manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale (*Mâcon, 1943); John Harthan, *Books of Hours and their Owners* (London, 1977); Janet Backhouse, *Books of Hours* (London, 1985); Roger S. Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York and Baltimore, 1988); and idem, *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York, 1997); Paul Saenger, "Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Late Middle Ages", in *The Culture of Print*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, 1989), 147–73; Claire Donovan, *The De Brailes Hours: Shaping the Book of Hours in Thirteenth-Century Oxford* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1991); Christopher de Hamel, "Books of Hours: 'Imaging' the Word'", in *The Bible as Book: The Manuscript Tradition*, ed. John L. Sharpe III and Kimberly van Kampen (London and New Castle, DE, 1998), 137–43; Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*; idem, "Books of Hours", in *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Susan Mosher Stuard, Thomas Izbicki and Margaret Schaus (New York and London, 2006), 89–92, with further bibliography; and most recently Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240–1570* (New Haven and London, 2006).

[5] M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Second Series of Fifty Manuscripts (Nos. 51–100) in the Collection of Henry Yates Thompson* (Cambridge, 1902) 50–74, no. 57; Claire Baker [Donovan], "The Early Development of the Illustrated Book of Hours in England, c. 1240–1350" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of East Anglia, 1981), 265–93, no. 14; and Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 5, gen. ed. J.J.G. Alexander, 2 vols (London, 1986) II, 107–9, no. 98, contain the fullest accounts of the Taymouth Hours to-date. Recent, focused studies of portions of the manuscript include the seminal article by Linda Brownrigg, "The Taymouth Hours and the Romance of *Beves of Hampton*", *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 1 (1989): 222–41; Amy Neff, "The Pain of *Compassio*: Mary's Labor at

owner by professional artisans working in the context of the London commercial book trade, the Taymouth Hours comprises an illustrated Calendar, a series of unusual Anglo-Norman verse devotions, and a full complement of standard Latin offices, all embellished at the main text divisions with miniatures, historiated initials or decorated initials. However, the most remarkable aspect of the program of the Taymouth Hours is its marginal imagery, which takes the form of consecutive series of narrative cycles that unfold in the *bas-de-page* of nearly every folio. In the lower margins of the Taymouth Hours, episodes from chivalric romance, a comic morality tale, a series of hunting vignettes and other secular themes are interspersed with narratives from Scripture, hagiography and sacred legend, forming a continual narrative "chain" of nearly 380, frequently captioned images that are subtly synchronized with one another, with the major illumination, and with the devotional texts they border. This study will consider a small selection of images and illustrated texts in Yates Thompson MS 13, with the goal of illuminating how they engaged the external and physical, as well as the internal and mental dimensions of their owner's spiritual experience, thereby serving as exceptionally effective templates for their owner's conception and construction of self.

The importance to medieval concepts of identity of the idea of patterns, of form and conformity, of "likeness", imitation, and of model and anti-model, is widely recognized. The process of "the development of the self . . . toward God" was one activated by contrition and fulfilled in the self's "re-forming" by the model of Christ and the saints, as Caroline Walker Bynum eloquently put it.[6] "Reform by

the Foot of the Cross", *The Art Bulletin* 80 (1998): 254–73, esp. 265–70, figs. 25–31; Jessica Brantley, "Images of the Vernacular in the Taymouth Hours", *Decoration and Illustration in Medieval English Manuscripts*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards, *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700* 10 (2002): 83–113; Anne Rudloff Stanton, "Isabelle of France and Her Manuscripts,1308–58", in *Capetian Women*, ed. Kathleen Nolan (Houndmills, Eng. and New York, 2003), 225–52, esp. 242–5; Sylvia Huot, "Polytextual Reading: The Meditative Reading of Real and Metaphorical Books", in *Orality and Literacy in the Middle Ages: Essays on a Conjunction and its Consequences in Honour of D.H. Green*, ed. Mark Chinca and Christopher Young (Turnhout, 2005), 203–22, esp. 218–22; and Richard K. Emmerson, "Visualizing the Vernacular: Middle English in Early Fourteenth-Century Bilingual and Trilingual Manuscript Illustrations", in *Studies in Illuminated Manuscripts: Tributes to Lucy Freeman Sandler*, ed. Kathryn A. Smith and Carol H. Krinsky (Turnhout and London, 2007), 187–204.

[6] Caroline Walker Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?", in *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), 82–109, esp. 95–106. Also fundamental and extremely useful are Beckwith, *Christ's Body*; Giles

model" was not merely an internal process, however: it also brought the outer and inner selves into conformity with one another. Indeed, just as appropriate inner spirituality was the catalyst for outward reform, proper *gestus*—gesture, bearing or behavior—was seen as simultaneously expressing and shaping the inner self.[7] These ideas had increasingly widespread currency from the early thirteenth century as a result of the efforts of the Church in connection with the pastoral care of the laity, efforts vigorously supported and advanced by the mendicant orders in their roles as homilists, authors of religious manuals and treatises, and spiritual advisers. The increasing number of richly illustrated religious and devotional manuscripts, many featuring multiple portraits of their owners at prayer, as well as the emergence of the genre known as the layfolk's mass book, are developments in the sphere of book production that are directly connected to the desire to provide the layperson with models of appropriate devout behavior, experience and response.[8]

Constable, "The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ", in *Three Studies in Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge and New York, 1995), 145–248; and R.N. Swanson, "Passion and Practice: the Social and Ecclesiastical Implications of Passion Devotion in the Late Middle Ages", in *The Broken Body: Passion Devotion in Late-Medieval Culture*, ed. A.A. MacDonald, H.N.B. Ridderbos and R.M. Schlusemann (Groningen, 1998), 1–30. Bynum's ideas underlie a diverse body of recent historical and art historical scholarship, including Jeffrey F. Hamburger, "Medieval Self-fashioning: Authorship, Authority, and Autobiography in Suso's *Exemplar*", reprinted in *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York, 1998), 233–78; Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept", *American Historical Review* 105, 5 (2000): 1489–1524; Thomas E.A. Dale, "Monsters, Corporeal Deformities, and Phantasms in the Cloister of St.-Michel-de-Cuxa", *The Art Bulletin* 83 (2001): 402–36; idem, "The Individual, the Resurrected Body, and Romanesque Portraiture: The Tomb of Rudolf von Schwaben in Merseburg", *Speculum* 77 (2002): 707–43; Jacqueline E. Jung, "Peasant's Meal or Lord's Feast?: The Social Iconography of the Naumburg Last Supper", *Gesta* 52 (2003): 39–61; Paul Binski, *Becket's Crown: Art and Imagination in Gothic England 1170–1300* (New Haven and London, 2004); and Sarah Lipton, "'The Sweet Lean of His Head': Writing about Looking at the Crucifix in the High Middle Ages", *Speculum* 80 (2005): 1172–1208.

[7] Bynum, "Did the Twelfth Century Discover the Individual?", 102–5. For gesture, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident medieval* (Paris, 1990).

[8] For these developments as manifested in illustrated religious manuscripts, including miscellanies, see Adelaide Bennett, "A Book Designed for a Noblewoman: An Illustrated *Manuel des Péchés* of the Thirteenth Century", in *Medieval Book Production: Assessing the Evidence*, ed. L.L. Brownrigg (Los Altos Hills, CA, 1988), 163–81; Roger S. Wieck, "The Savoy Hours and Its Impact on Jean, Duc de Berry", *Beinecke Studies in Early Manuscripts. The Yale University Library Gazette*, Supplement to vol. 66 (1991): 159–80; Lucy Freeman Sandler, "The Image of the Book Owner in the Fourteenth Century: Three Cases of Self-Definition", in *England in the Fourteenth Century*, Proceedings of the 1991 Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Nicholas Rogers, Harlaxton Medieval Studies 3 (Stamford, Eng., 1993): 58–80; Madeline Caviness, "Patron or Matron? A Capetian

Even the optical theories that underpinned medieval ideas of vision were conceived as operating through a physical mechanism of pattern and form, whereby images were believed to be impressed upon the eye and the mind.[9] Thus, the very act of contemplating the imagery in a personalized devotional manuscript was integral to the process of conforming the self to the ideal of Christ and his perfect imitators, the saints.

An interest in the book owner's devout comportment as reflecting and shaping a proper inward spiritual disposition is manifest in the first miniature in the Taymouth Hours, the image that marks the book owner's first appearance in her manuscript (Fig. 1). Wimpled, her braided hair covered by a transparent veil and wearing a jeweled crown, the royal devotee witnesses the Elevation of the Host in a setting suggestive of a private chapel, a closed book no doubt intended to represent the Taymouth Hours itself resting on the *prie-dieu* before her. The image is linked thematically to and thus personalizes the texts it prefaces, a series of Anglo-Norman verse prayers to be said at important points during the performance of the Mass, from the beginning of the service through the Offering, the Elevation of the Host and the Kiss of Peace (fols. 7–14). As is well known, books of hours were used not only in the chamber but also in church or the chapel, where their prayers were recited and their imagery contemplated during the Mass or other services. Clearly, the Taymouth Hours Mass prayers, which include petitions for forgiveness of sin, requests for protection for oneself, one's kin, one's servants and one's associates from an assortment of spiritual and

Bride and a Vade Mecum for her Marriage Bed", *Speculum* 68 (1993): 333–62; Joan Holladay, "The Education of Jeanne d'Evreux. Personal Piety and Dynastic Salvation in her Book of Hours in the Cloisters", *Art History* 17 (1994): 585–611; Sylvia Huot, "A Book Made for a Queen: The Shaping of a Late Medieval Anthology Manuscript (B. N. Fr. 24429)", in *The Whole Book: Cultural Perspectives on the Medieval Miscellany*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols and Siegfried Wenzel (Ann Arbor, MI, 1996), 123–43; Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*; Kathryn A. Smith, "The Neville of Hornby Hours and the Design of Literate Devotion", *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999): 72–92; Anne Rudloff Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter: A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia, 2001); idem, "The Psalter of Isabelle, Queen of England 1308–1330: Isabelle as the Audience", *Word & Image* 18 (2002): 1–27; and Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*. For the layfolk's Mass book see T. F. Simmons, ed., *The Lay Folks Mass Book* (London, 1879); and for "pastoralia" generally, see now Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 179–205.

[9] For a recent account of these issues and major bibliography, see Cynthia Hahn, "Vision", in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 44–64.

physical perils, and appeals for spiritual guidance, tailor the program of the book of hours to just this type of para-liturgical use.

A priest elevating the Host was a stock pictorial subject by the early fourteenth century, one the late medieval artist usually would have executed "by rote" or from memory. In the Taymouth Hours miniature, however, the royal devotee holds her joined hands high and extends them away from her body, a gesture unusual in contemporary English depictions of lay prayer at the Elevation (Fig. 1). On the opening page of the Canon of the Mass in the Tiptoft Missal, commissioned c. 1311–32 by John Clavering and Hawyse Tiptoft, for example, the donors in the margins keep their joined hands low and close to their bodies as they witness the Elevation in the miniature, as do the members of the Butler family of Wem (Salop) in the impressive full-page picture in their book of hours of c. 1340 (Fig. 2).[10]

That the royal book owner's emphatic prayer gesture was regarded as a template for, and barometer of, a proper inward spirituality is evidenced by the presence in the right margin of this page of an instruction or memorandum for the artist in the form of a sketch of two raised hands holding a Host, represented as a large disc inscribed "Ihs" (Fig. 1). Whether they were provided by the patron or his/her representative, a stationer, the scribe or the artist himself, schematic pictorial *aides mémoire* of this kind often functioned as prompts to the illuminator to consult an outside source—a separate set of verbal instructions or patterns or pictorial models—in rendering an image,[11] and in this case, the source of the model the illuminator consulted can be identified. It derives from the illustrations created for an Anglo-Norman Mass treatise, one text in an unusual bilingual (Anglo-Norman and Latin) devotional miscellany made c. 1325 that is among the most fascinating volumes in the widely influential Queen Mary group of

[10] The Tiptoft Missal is New York, PML MS M. 107; for which see Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts* 2, 84–6, no. 78, and 1, fig. 199 for the image (at fol. 142r). For the Butler Hours (Baltimore, WAM MS W. 105 and Stockholm, Nationalmuseum MSS B. 1726, B. 1727) see ibid. 2, 130–1, no. 117.

[11] For verbal or written and pictorial instructions for illuminators, see Jonathan J.G. Alexander, *Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work* (New Haven and London, 1992), 54–73. Useful recent discussions of marginal cues or *aides mémoire* for artists include Richard A. and Mary H. Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris, 1200–1500*, 2 vols. (London and Turnhout, 2000) 1, 250–2; and the catalogue entry by Lucy Freeman Sandler for a mid-13th century Parisian bible (New York, NYPL MS MA 7) in *The Splendor of the Word: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts at the New York Public Library* (Turnhout and London, 2005), 30–33, no. 4.

manuscripts.[12] Like the Taymouth Hours Mass prayers, the Queen Mary Mass treatise offers the reader/viewer a "step-by-step" guide to devout thought, feeling and behavior during the service.[13] In the Mass treatise, the pictures and/or instructions at the key moments of the rite consistently direct the kneeling congregants to lift up their joined hands ("Levez vos mains jointes", fol. 46v) when reciting particular prayers or when contemplating specific sacred events or actions of the celebrant (Fig. 3, top), and the royal owner of Yates Thompson MS 13 follows suit (Fig. 1). In fact, the illuminator made use of models derived from the Queen Mary miscellany in designing other elements of this page of the Taymouth Hours: as Linda Brownrigg observed, the "portrait" in the lower margin of the prophet Jeremiah (Fig. 1), the purported author of the Mass prayers, depends on the "portrait" of Jerome that opens the Latin Psalter of St. Jerome in the Queen Mary miscellany.[14] It is perhaps noteworthy that the artist of the Taymouth Hours appears not to have worked from the Mass treatise model in executing the illustrations for another volume that can be ascribed to his hand, the religious and philosophical miscellany he illuminated not for a *lay* owner but for one Roger of Waltham (d. c. 1341), a canon of St. Paul's, London.[15] In the initial illustrating a Eucharistic prayer in Roger's miscellany, the canon is portrayed kneeling directly behind the

[12] The Queen Mary miscellany is Paris, BnF MS fr. 13342 and Oxford, Bodl. Douce MS 79; for which see Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts* 2, 67–8, nos. 58 and 59. The two manuscripts were identified as part of the same work by Albinia de la Mare in *The Douce Legacy* (Oxford, 1984), 224, no. 157; and Lynda Dennison, "An Illuminator of the Queen Mary Psalter Group: The Ancient 6 Master", *The Antiquaries Journal* 66 (1986): 287–314, esp. 290–1. The parts of this composite manuscript include four full-page Marian pictures; Anglo-Norman prose lives of Adam and Eve, Solomon, and Judas followed by the Passion of Christ and the history of the True Cross; an Anglo-Norman dialogue between a father and son on Baptism; an Anglo-Norman version of St. Edmund Rich's (d. 1240) *Speculum Ecclesiae*; the Anglo-Norman Mass treatise; and the abbreviated Latin Psalter of St. Jerome, all illustrated with miniatures or historiated initials. For the Paris portion of the miscellany, see also François Avril and Patricia Danz Stirnemann, *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine insulaire, VIIe–XXe siecle* (Paris, 1987), 143–5, no. 179; for the Oxford portion, see also *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, ed. J.J.G. Alexander and Paul Binski (London, 1987), 453–4, no. 572. For the Mass treatise in particular, see Francis Wormald, 'Some Pictures of the Mass in an English XIVth Century Manuscript', *Walpole Society* 41 (1966–8): 39–45, pls. 37–42; and most recently Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 198–201.

[13] In my use of the term "step-by-step" I quote Binski, *Becket's Crown*, 198.

[14] Brownrigg, "The Taymouth Hours and the Romance of *Beves of Hampton*", 236.

[15] Glasgow, UL MS Hunter 231; for which see Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts* 2, 109–10, no. 99; idem, 'Face-to-Face with God: A Pictorial Image of the Beatific Vision', in *England in the Fourteenth Century*, Proceedings of the 1985 Harlaxton Symposium, ed.

celebrant, hands clasped before him close to his chest (Fig. 4). As the illuminator of the Taymouth Hours or his client clearly recognized, the designs produced for the Queen Mary Mass treatise present models of ideal lay conduct or *gestus* during the performance of the Mass, models of behavior that were regarded as both reflecting and constructing an ideal religious interiority. By adapting this particular Queen Mary design to the requirements of his commission, the illuminator of Yates Thompson MS 13 produced an owner portrait that was both a template of correct spiritual comportment and a "mirror" in which the royal book owner saw her correct comportment "reflected" each time she opened her book of hours to this page.

The physical, bodily dimensions of *imitatio Christi* have been explored with great nuance by scholars in all areas of medieval studies. Until recently, however, far more attention has been paid to the practices of female (and male) religious and mystics than to the experiences of the affluent, "devotionally literate" layperson.[16] The suite of images opening the Latin Short Office of the Cross in the Taymouth Hours (Figs. 5 and 6) offers compelling evidence of the ingenuity that professional artists brought to the task of structuring the devout layperson's imitation of Christ.

In Yates Thompson MS 13, this popular Passion devotion opens with a lavish two-page spread featuring full-page miniatures and *bas-de-page* imagery, an indicator of the highly graded place the text occupies in the manuscript. In the framed miniature on the verso, Jesus prays atop the hill in Gethsemane while Peter, James and John sleep at its foot (Fig. 5). A bar border floating in the lower margin of the page forms a ground-line for the *bas-de-page* vignette, which shows a crowned, wimpled devotee kneeling in prayer in the company of a crowned male companion. The dramatic miniature of the Arrest of Christ on the recto

W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge, Eng. 1986), 225–35; and idem, 'The Image of the Book-owner in the Fourteenth Century".

[16] For aspects of this phenomenon see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1987); idem, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York and Cambridge, MA, 1991); Beckwith, *Christ's Body*; Constable, "The Ideal of the Imitation of Christ"; David Aers, "Figuring Forth the Body of Christ: Devotion and Politics", in *Figures of Speech: The Body in Medieval Art, History, and Literature*, Essays in Medieval Studies 11, ed. Allen J. Frantzen and David A. Robertson (Chicago, 1995), 1–14; Swanson, "Passion and Practice"; and Meri Heinonen, "Henry Suso and the Divine Knighthood", in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff, Wales, 2004), 79–92.

(Fig. 6) is patently based on models developed in the workshop of the celebrated Parisian illuminator, Jean Pucelle (d. 1334).[17] In the margin beneath this miniature, three armed men who appear to have escaped from the crowded miniature of the Arrest stick out their tongues at Jesus and dance in exultation at his capture (Fig. 6).

These four images work together in striking ways to shape the book owner's devotional experience. As Jessica Brantley observed, the prayerful poses and upturned gazes of the royal personages in the margin on the verso echo the posture of Jesus in the miniature above.[18] Thus, the owner portraits serve as primers of proper devout conduct and of the physical, behavioral mechanism of *imitatio Christi*: they are pictorial exhortations to a gestural mimesis that is both a manifestation of, and a means to, an appropriate inward spiritual disposition and affective experience. The use of the donor or owner portrait to encourage physical, gestural *imitatio* in this manner is not unique in the contemporary English corpus, however. An equally compelling example occurs in the Neville of Hornby Hours, commissioned c. 1335 by Isabel de Byron, wife and later widow of the Lancashire knight, Robert de Neville of Hornby, a manuscript illuminated by a group of London professional artisans whose work is closely connected, both stylistically and iconographically, to that of the artist of the Taymouth Hours.[19] In the miniature of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple illustrating a Latin Salutation of the Virgin in the Neville of Hornby Hours, the High Priest Simeon extends his veiled hands to receive the infant Jesus. A figure probably intended to represent the patron's husband, Sir Robert, is depicted in a side-niche of the temple directly behind the High Priest, making an open-armed gesture that echoes Simeon's action (Fig. 7).[20] The image functions as a visual prompt to Robert de Neville to project himself

[17] Madeline H. Caviness, *Reframing Medieval Art: Difference, Margins, Boundaries*, Chapter 4, *Edging Out Difference: Revisiting the Margins as a Post-Modern Project*, http://nils.lib.tufts.edu/Caviness/chapter4.html. For Pucelle, see Kathleen Morand, *Jean Pucelle* (Oxford, 1962); François Avril, *Manuscript Painting at the Court of France: The Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1978), 12–23; Paris, Grand Palais, *Les Fastes du Gothique: Le Siècle de Charles V* (Paris, 1981), 276–82 and passim; and Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, 1, 264, with additional bibliography.

[18] Brantley, "Images of the Vernacular in the Taymouth Hours", 96.

[19] London, British Library Egerton MS 2781; for which see Baker [Donovan], "The Early Development of the Illustrated Book of Hours in England", 357–76, no. 22; Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts* 2, 127–9, no. 115; and most recently Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*.

[20] Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*, 188–90.

mentally into the solemn event of the Presentation, and, by imitating Simeon's gesture, to share the High Priest's awe in his recognition of the divinity of Jesus and even to imagine himself holding the infant Savior, as Simeon does at the culmination of the Presentation (Luke 2: 22–39).

In the Taymouth Hours, the praying royals in the margin beneath the picture of the Agony in the Garden are likewise encouraged to project themselves imaginatively into this pivotal event of the Passion through aspects of their representation. The pair kneel not directly on the ornamental bar border, but rather on a patch of ground or earth rendered by means of the same mottled brown and orange strokes used to depict the terrain of Gethsemane (Fig. 5); and the implication of this detail is that through their pious contemplation of Jesus' Arrest and their imitation of his ardent prayer, they can achieve the compassionate assimilation with Jesus that is the goal of *imitatio Christi*. Moreover, physical *imitatio* was held to facilitate the devotee's attainment of the spiritual ideal of *conformatio*, "the adoption of the moral characteristics of Christ".[21] In contemporary devotional literature, such as the famous Franciscan work, the mid-fourteenth-century *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, the anguished, praying Jesus in Gethsemane is held up as an exemplar of humility and obedience "...most worthy of compassion, admiration, and veneration".[22] "Heed all these things as though you were present, and watch Him attentively as He...prays to the Father, kneeling humbly and reverently! Tarry here a little and examine the marvelous things of your Lord with pious mind".[23] The *bas-de-page* imagery on this folio is thus a blueprint for the book owner's imitation of Christ's humble, obedient vigil in Gethsemane, and for her adoption of Jesus' laudable moral qualities (Fig. 5). Indeed, in the manner in which it prescribes both physical imitation and imaginative contemplation of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, marginal vignette and full-page miniature call to mind (and anticipate) the devotional regime of the German mystic, Dorothy of Montau (1347–94), who practiced a three-step imitation "in memory

[21] Swanson, "Passion and Practice," 15.

[22] *Meditations on the Life of Christ: An Illustrated Manuscript of the Fourteenth Century*, trans. Isa Ragusa and Rosalie Green (Princeton, 1961), 321. For the text, see more recently John of Caulibus, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. F. Taney, A. Miller, and C.M. Stallings-Taney (Asheville, NC, 2000). For the date of the work's composition see Sarah McNamer, "Further Evidence for the Date of the Pseudo-Bonaventuran *Meditationes Vitae Christi*", *Franciscan Studies* 50 (1990): 247–8.

[23] *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, trans. Ragusa and Green, 320.

of Christ's threefold prayer in Gethsemane", the second stage of which entailed kneeling with her hands joined in prayer and raised "the way images of Christ showed him praying on Mount Olivet".[24] But the *bas-de-page* portraits are potent devotional and behavioral models on yet further levels. Unlike Jesus' disciples, who sleep despite their master's command that they "watch with" him (Matthew 26: 36–40), the royal devotees keep vigil with Christ in Gethsemane. And, unlike the enemies of Jesus in the margin on the recto, whose awkward, antic bodies and grotesquely contorted faces express their mocking rejection of Jesus' teachings as well as their spiritual and moral depravity, the praying royals are the perfect embodiments of self-disciplined, empathetic mimetic devotion.

As the previous analysis suggests, the major illumination in the Taymouth Hours was not the only element of the page that contained powerful appeals to the book owner to train body and mind toward achievement of an appropriate spiritual disposition. Indeed, one might even argue that the *bas-de-page* was a field of the page especially well suited to the task of personalizing the messages of the illustrated devotional manuscript by virtue of its proximity to the body of the devotee. Whether the manuscript was set on a *prie-dieu*, as in the miniature showing the book owner at prayer in the so-called Psalter-hours of Yolande of Soissons of the late thirteenth century, or held in the hands, as in the picture of the book owner at prayer in an oratory in the Hours of Mary of Burgundy made two centuries later (Fig. 8), it is the lower margin that impinges most forcefully on the book owner's physical self through its nearness to her body.[25]

[24] For Dorothy of Montau and her imitation of Jesus in Gethsemane, see Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago and London, 1984), 22–33 and 117–18, here quoting 117.

[25] New York, PML MS M. 729, fol. 232v, for which see Karen Gould, *The Psalter and Hours of Yolande of Soissons* (Cambridge, MA, 1978); Alison Stones, "The Full-Page Miniatures of the Psalter-Hours New York, PML, ms M. 729: Programme and Patron," in F. O. Büttner, ed., *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose, and Placement of its Images* (Turnhout, 2004), 281–307, who argues that the manuscript was originally made for Comtesse de la Table, dame de Coeuvres, widow of Raoul de Soissons; and most recently Alexa Sand, "Vision, Devotion, and Difficulty in the Psalter of Hours 'of Yolande of Soissons'", *The Art Bulletin* 87 (2005): 6–23; and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1857 fol. 14v, for which see most recently *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy: Codex Vindobonensis 1857, Vienna Österreichische Nationalbibliothek*, commentary by Erik Inglis (London, 1995).

Continuous narrative *bas-de-page* cycles like the ones in the Taymouth Hours are most susceptible to being read *horizontally*, that is, as separate narratives running parallel to the text and major illumination. Nonetheless, as the scholarship on the illustrated Gothic psalter has shown, English artists assiduously sought opportunities to create *vertical* links between *bas-de-page* images and the Latin texts they frame. Through the venerable process known as "word illustration" or "literal illustration", individual scenes and even entire *bas-de-page* series were generated from words and phrases in the psalm text.[26] The most well-known product of this mode of image-making occurs in the famous Luttrell Psalter, a manuscript contemporary with the Taymouth Hours, in which the "foot" of Psalm 93: 17, "If I said: My foot is moved: thy mercy O Lord, assisted me", was interpreted pictorially as the "foot" of the plough in the remarkable ploughing scene that opens a *bas-de-page* cycle of agricultural labors.[27]

The designer of the Taymouth Hours capitalized on opportunities to connect the *bas-de-page* and the Latin offices above through analogous modes of image-generation, and the resultant text-image ensembles, many of which make implicit or explicit reference to the body, would have constituted evocative starting-points for the interior dialogue that was the engine of devout self-examination. At Lauds of the Holy Spirit, the opening lines of Psalm 14, "Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle? Or who shall rest in thy holy hill?" in the text above become a pointed question the royal book owner could pose to *herself* by virtue of the text's juxtaposition with the Expulsion from Paradise in the margins (Figs. 9 and 10); and the subtly modeled nude body of Eve, depicted on the recto, must have reminded the book owner of her own carnality.

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[26] For literal illustration see most recently Koert van der Horst, William Noel and Wilhelmina C.M. Wüstefeld, *The Utrecht Psalter in Medieval Art, Picturing the Psalms of David* (Tuurkijk, Netherlands, and London, 1996), esp. 55–76. For this process in relation to Gothic psalter illustration, see Günther Haseloff, *Die Psalterillustration im 13 Jahrhundert. Studien zur Buchmalerei in England, Frankreich, und den Niederländen* (Kiel, 1938); and Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 226–8.

[27] London, British Library Add. MS 42130, fol. 170; for which see Eric G. Millar, *The Luttrell Psalter* (London, 1932); Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts* 2, 118–21, no. 107; *Age of Chivalry*, 455–6, no. 575; Janet Backhouse, *The Luttrell Psalter* (London, 1989); and for the ploughing scenes and their relation to the text of the Psalms, see Michael Camille, "Labouring for the Lord: The Ploughman and the Social Order in the Luttrell Psalter", *Art History* 10 (1987): 423–54; and idem, *Mirror in Parchment*, 193–231. For other examples of word illustration in the Luttrell Psalter, see Lucy Freeman Sandler, "The Word in the Text and the Image in the Margins: The Case of the Luttrell Psalter", *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery, Essays in Honor of Lilian M.C. Randall* 54 (1996): 87–97.

Humanity's misguided pursuit of transitory material pleasures is the theme of several text-image pairings in the Taymouth Hours. Accompanying portions of Matins and Lauds of the Virgin is a marginal sequence depicting young noblewomen hunting a verdant landscape, titled the "sport of ladies" ("jeu de dames") in the caption beneath the first scene in the series. The activities of these women, who were no doubt perceived by their royal viewer as surrogate selves, constitute a richly allusive, multivalent counterpoint to both the major illumination and the Latin text above. For instance, in the margins below the last page of Matins and the opening page of Lauds—the latter Hour illustrated by the Visitation, the theme of which is two miraculous pregnancies—the ladies snare rabbits or hares, well-known symbols of both fertility and cupidity;[28] while the hymns, responses and psalms for these Hours extol Mary's chaste, salvific fecundity (Figs. 11 and 12). A few folios further on, the young noblewomen are shown *hawking* by a golden fountain and flowing stream in the margins below Psalm 62, "For thee my soul has thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways! In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no *water*:...I will rejoice *under the covert of thy wings*..." [emphasis added] (Psalms 62: 2–3, 8) (Figs. 13 and 14). Text and pictures are linked by their mutual reference to the aquatic and the avian, but the real power of this ensemble derives from the striking contrast between the *bas-de-page* imagery—concerned with lushness and leisure and the pleasures of the world—and the urgent tone of the psalm, a plea for divine aid in the spiritual desert that invokes the petitioner's longing for God in markedly physical terms.

Hawking was the subject of vigorous clerical critique, and a falcon on the wrist was a sign not only of youth and nobility in medieval art but also of a host of vices and sins, including lust, greed, and the pursuit of rank and power,[29] as in the popular moralizing mortality theme,

[28] Caviness, "Patron or Matron", 343–4.

[29] For the falcon and its meanings, see Mira Friedman, "The Falcon and the Hunt: Symbolic Love Imagery in Medieval and Renaissance Art", in *Poetics of Love in the Middle Ages: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Moshe Lazar and Norris J. Lacy (Fairfax, VA and Lanham, MD, 1989), 156–75; Adelaide Bennett, "A Woman's Power of Prayer versus the Devil in a Book of Hours of c. 1300", in *Image and Belief: Studies in Celebration of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane, Index of Christian Art Occasional Papers 3 (Princeton, 1999), 89–108, esp. 96; Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*, 164; and now Robin S. Oggins, *The Kings and Their Hawks: Falconry in Medieval England* (New Haven, 2004), esp. Chapter 7, "Falconry in Medieval Life".

The Three Living and the Three Dead,[30] a subject portrayed in the Taymouth Hours in the margins of the Office of the Dead (Figs. 15 and 16). The three fresh-faced youths confront the three grisly cadavers across the gutter of the book, a diptych-like configuration that by c. 1300 had become standard for representations of this moralizing theme.[31] The bilateral composition enhances the mirror-function of the devotional book, because the three young noblemen see their corrupting selves as if in a mirror. In addition, as Paul Binski and Susanna Greer Fein have argued, the reconfiguration of this narrative image into a devotional diptych enhances the sense of a dialogue between the figures and between the two aspects of the book owner's self they represent.[32] In the Taymouth Hours, the captions beneath the *bas-de-page* images present a summary of the conversation between Living and Dead, rendered in Middle English couplets, with the first couplet inscribed, appropriately, beneath the three youths and the second beneath the three corpses: "Ich am agast. Me þi(n)keþ ise./ þat ȝond(er) stoned deuelen þre." "Y was wel far. Scuch ssaltou be./ for godes loue be war be me" ("I am aghast. I think I see,/ that yonder stand devils three." "I was once fair. Thus shall you be./ For God's love be warned by me").[33] The "diptych" in her manuscript becomes a mirror for the royal book owner that implicates her in the conversation between Living and Dead: the words of the protagonists are spoken not only to one another, but also to the reader/viewer.[34]

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[30] For the Three Living and the Three Dead in medieval literature and art, see Karl Künstle, *Die Legende der drei Lebenden un der drei Toten under Totentanz* (Freiburg, 1908); Willy F. Storck, "Aspects of Death in English Art and Poetry—I, II", *Burlington Magazine* 21 (August/September 1912): 249–56, 314–19; "Stefan Glixelli, *Les cinq poèmes des trois morts et des trois vifs* (Paris, 1914); Carleton E. Williams, "Mural Paintings of the Three Living and the Three Dead in England", *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 3rd ser. 7 (1942): 31–40; Willy Rotzler, *Die Begegnung der drei Lebenden und der drei Toten* (Winterthur, 1961); Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle* (London, 1983; paperback edn. with updated bibliography, 1999), 44; Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, NY, 1996), 134–9; Susanna Greer Fein, "Life and Death, Reader and Page: Mirrors of Mortality in England Manuscripts", *Mosaic* 35 (2002): 69–94; and Emmerson, "Visualizing the Vernacular".

[31] For additional examples, see Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*, 154–5.

[32] Binski, *Medieval Death*, 138; Fein, "Life and Death, Reader and the Page", 71–2.

[33] For a different version of these verses in the early 14th-century Psalter of Robert de Lisle (London, BL Arundel MS 83 II), see Sandler, *The Psalter of Robert de Lisle*, 44 and plate 5.

[34] Binski, *Medieval Death*, 138; Fein, "Life and Death, Reader and the Page", 71–2; Emmerson, "Visualizing the Vernacular".

The theme of the Three Living and Three Dead in the Taymouth Hours is eminently suited to its specific manuscript context, because its imagery resonates dramatically with the Latin text it borders, Job 19: 20–26, a portion of the eighth lesson for Matins of the Office of the Dead, the language of which is redolent with imagery of the body, both the mortal, corrupted body and the transmuted, perfected body that has been "re-enfleshed" at the Last Judgment (Figs. 15 and 16):

> The flesh being consumed, my bones hath cleaved to my skin, and nothing but lips are left about my teeth.
> Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me.
> Why do you persecute me as God, and glut yourselves with my flesh?
> Who will grant me that my words may be written? Who will grant me that they may be marked down in a book?
> With an iron pen and in a plate of lead, or else be graven with an instrument in flint stone?
> For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth.
> And I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God.

By virtue of its juxtaposition with the Three Living and Three Dead, Job's complaint, which unites the themes of book, body and self, is transformed into the royal devotee's personal plea for mercy. Perhaps nowhere more profoundly than on these two pages, the illuminated texts in the Taymouth Hours offered their royal owner both a mirror of her mortal self and a glimpse of the promise of eternal life, themes framed by—and in terms of—the book of the self: "Who will grant me that my words may be written? Who will grant me that they may be marked down in a book?"

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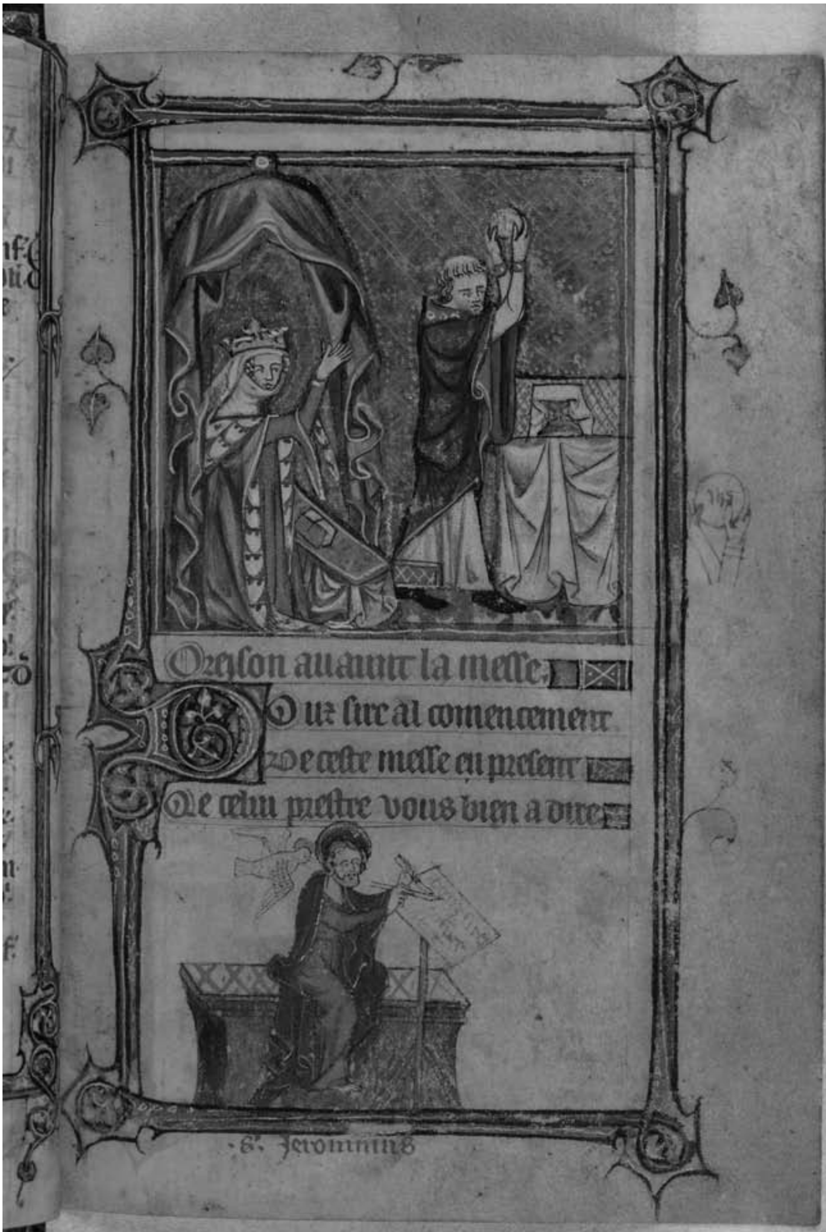

Fig. 1. *Royal Book Owner Praying at the Elevation of the Host*. Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 7.

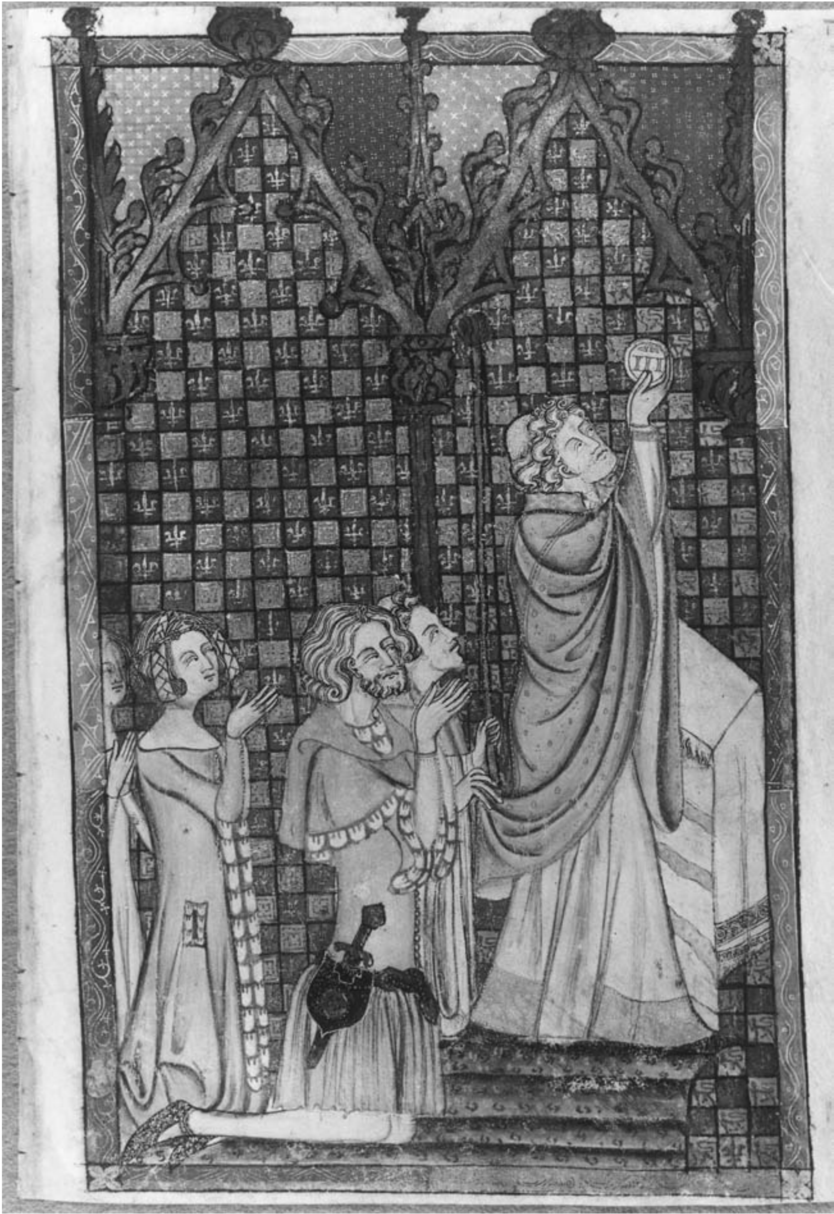

Fig. 2. *The Butler Family at Mass.* Butler Hours. Baltimore, Walters Art Museum MS W. 105, fol. 15.

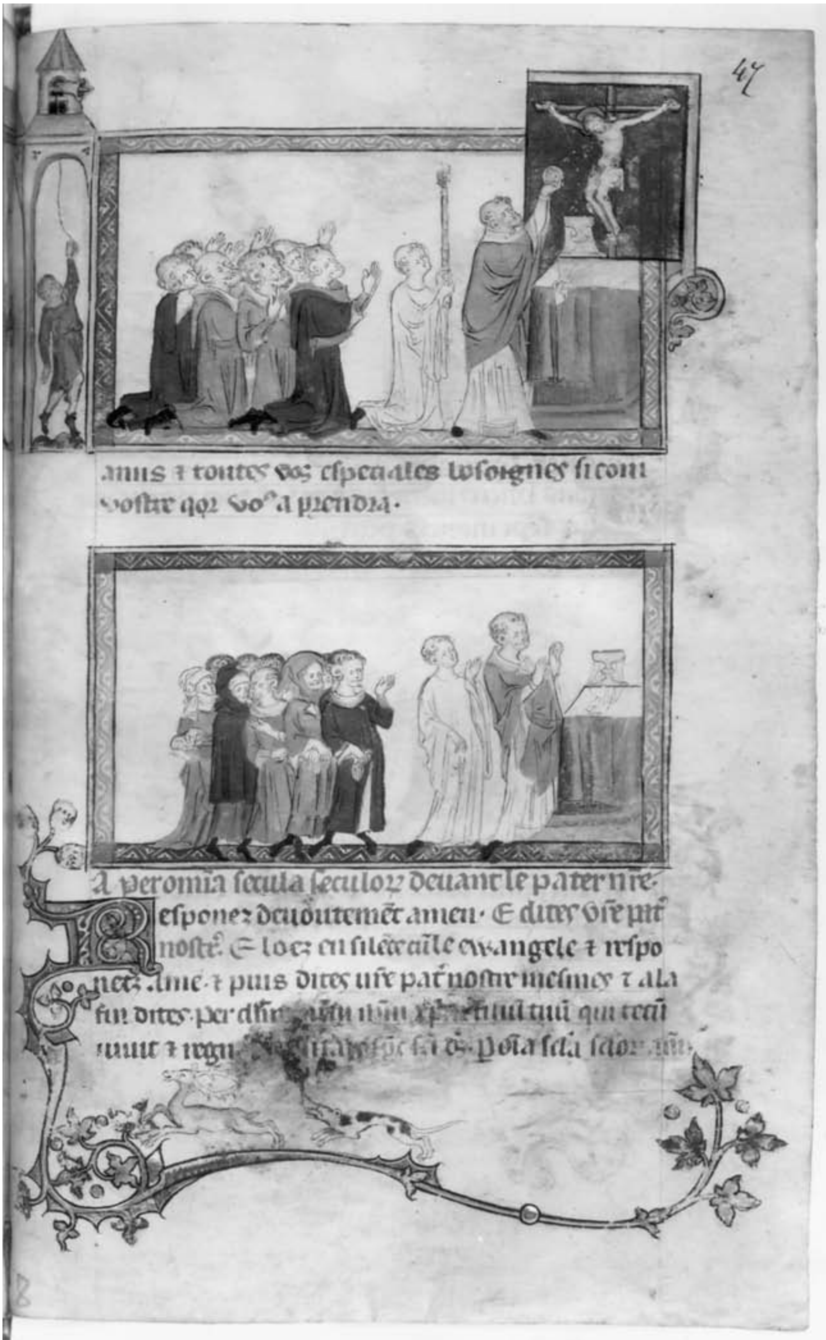

Fig. 3. *Lay Prayer at the Elevation of the Host.* Queen Mary devotional miscellany. Paris, BnF MS fr. 13342, fol. 47 (top).

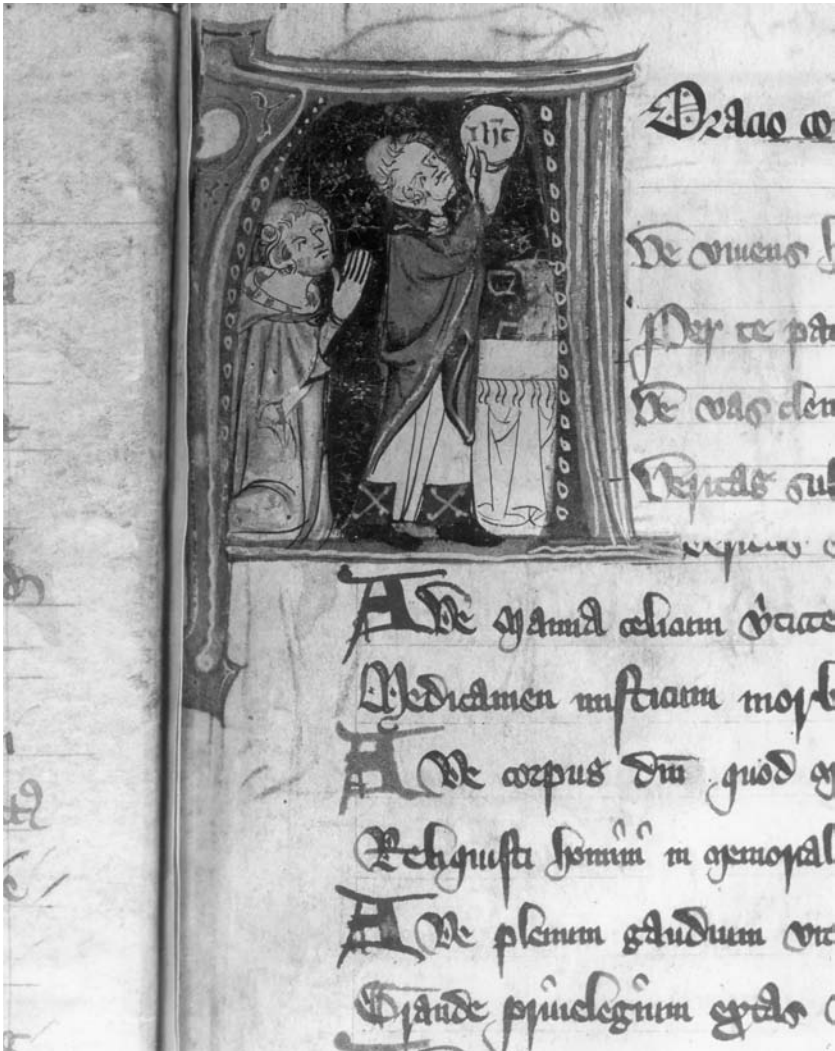

Fig. 4. *Roger of Waltham Praying at the Elevation of the Host.* Devotional and philosophical miscellany. Glasgow, University Library MS Hunter 231, p. 49 (detail).

Fig. 5. *Christ in Gethsemane; Royal Devotees at Prayer.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 118v.

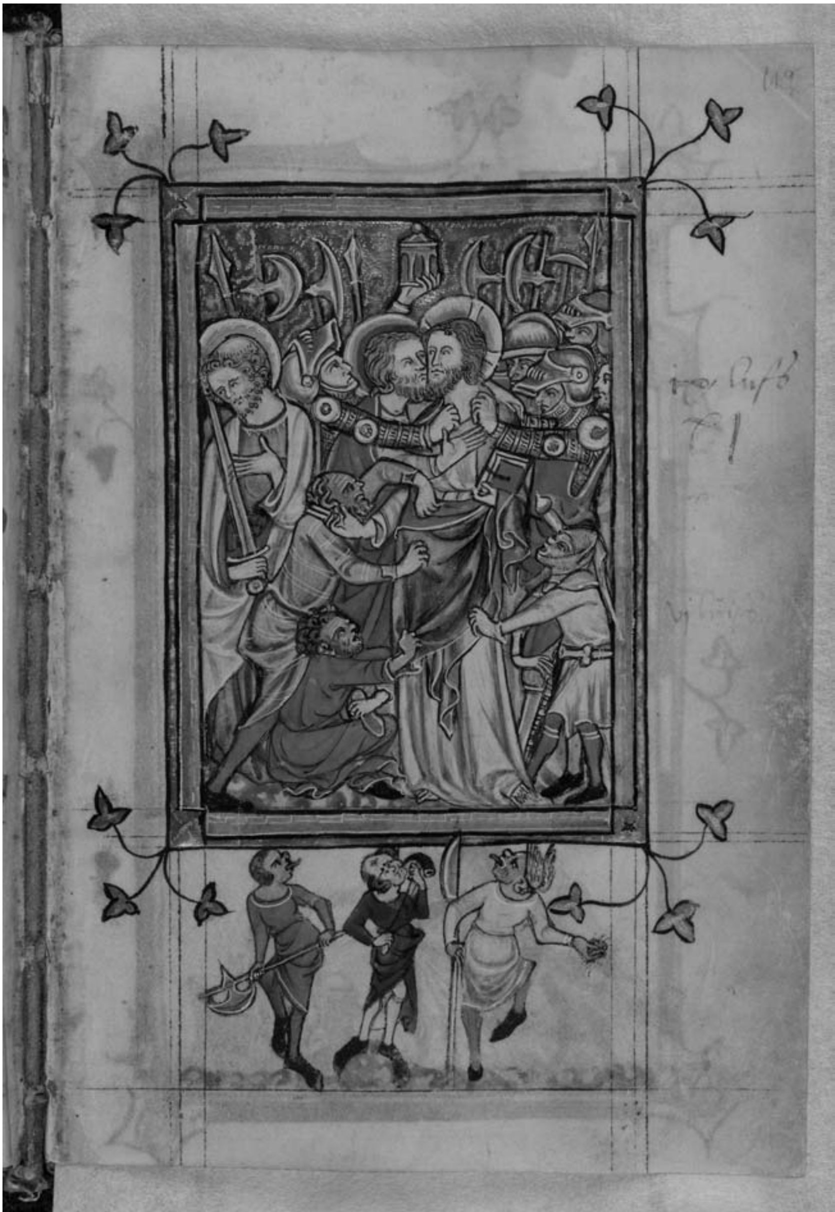

Fig. 6. *Arrest of Christ; Assailants of Christ Mock Him.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 119.

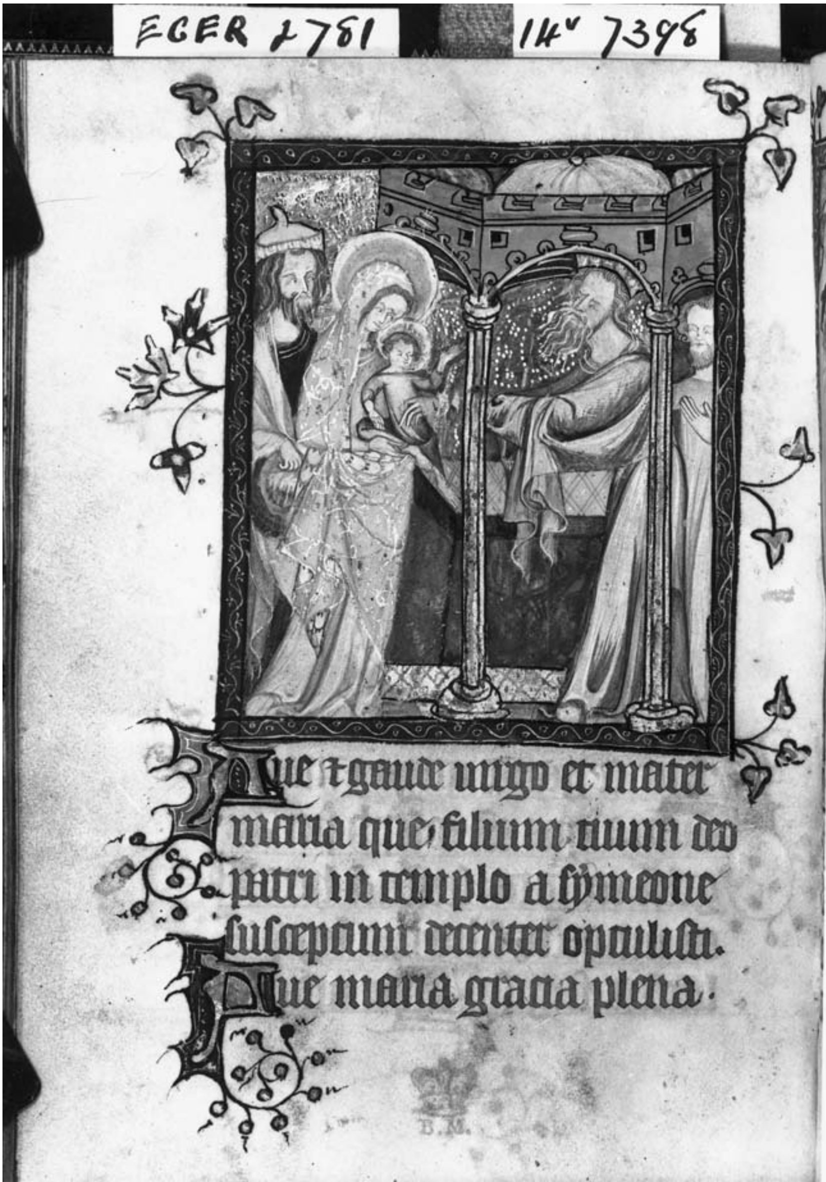

Fig. 7. *Presentation of Christ in the Temple, with Robert I de Neville of Hornby.* Neville of Hornby Hours. London, British Library Egerton MS 2781, fol. 14v.

Fig. 8. *Book Owner at Prayer in an Oratory.* Hours of Mary of Burgundy. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Codex Vindobonensis 1857, fol. 14v.

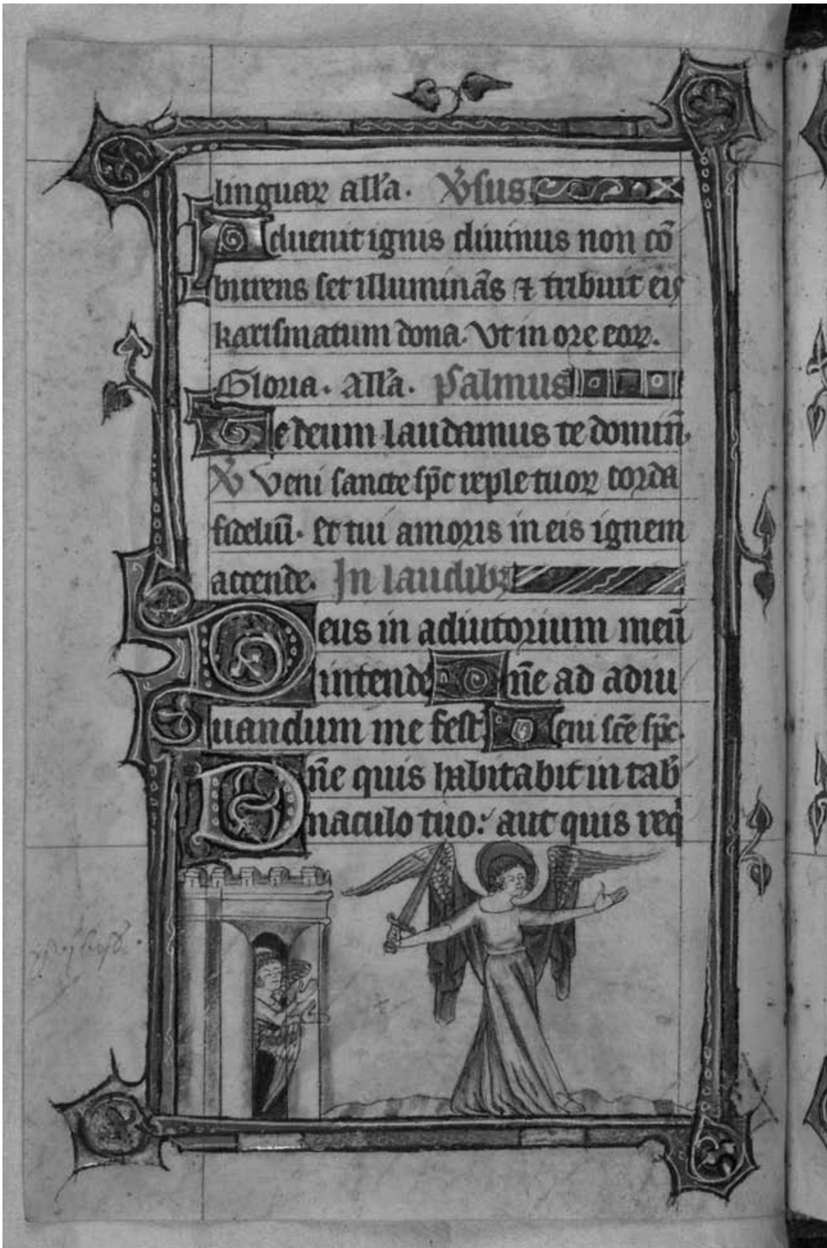

Fig. 9. *Angel of the Expulsion.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 22v.

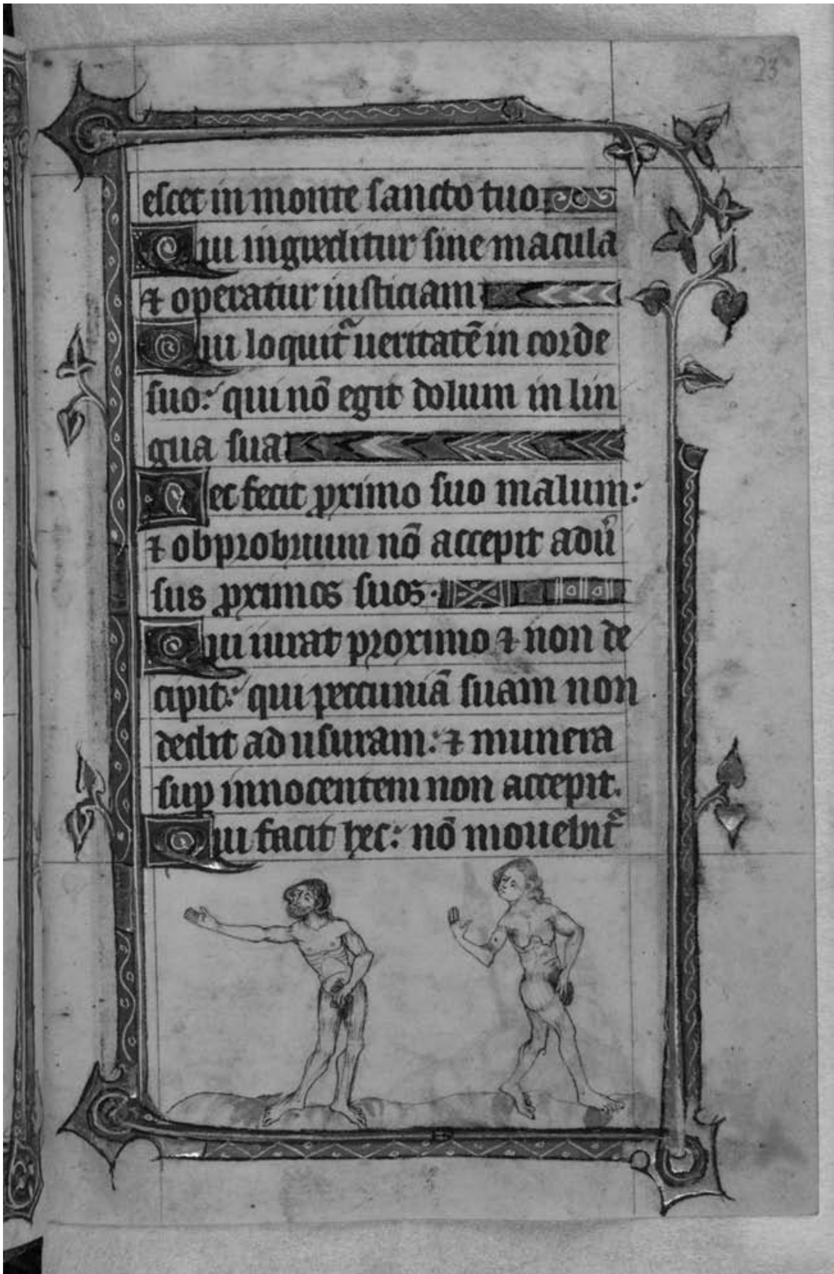
escet in monte sancto tuo
Qui ingreditur sine macula
⁊ operatur iusticiam
Qui loquit ueritatē in corde
suo: qui nō egit dolum in lin
gua sua
Nec fecit proximo suo malum:
⁊ obprobrium nō accepit adu
sus proximos suos
Qui iurat proximo ⁊ non de
cipit: qui pecuniā suam non
dedit ad usuram: ⁊ munera
sup innocentem non accepit.
Qui facit hec: nō mouebit

Fig. 10. *Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 23.

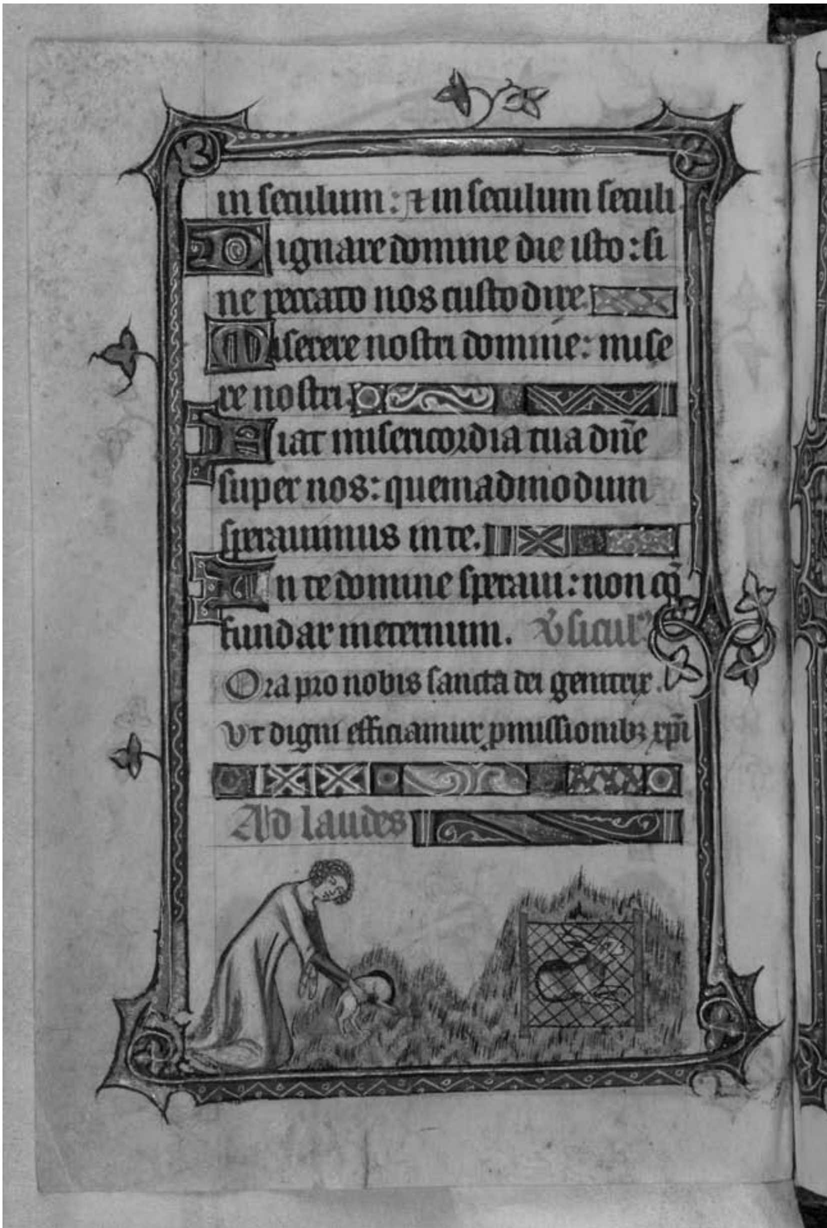
in seculum: et in seculum seculi
Dignare domine die isto: si
ne peccato nos custodire.
Miserere nostri domine: mise
rere nostri.
Fiat misericordia tua dñe
super nos: quemadmodum
sperauimus in te.
In te domine speraui: non con
fundar in eternum. Sicut
Ora pro nobis sancta dei genitrix.
Ut digni efficiamur pmissionib3 xpi
Ad laudes

Fig. 11. *Noblewoman Snaring Rabbits.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 70v.

Fig. 12. *Noblewoman with Hound and Rabbit.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 71.

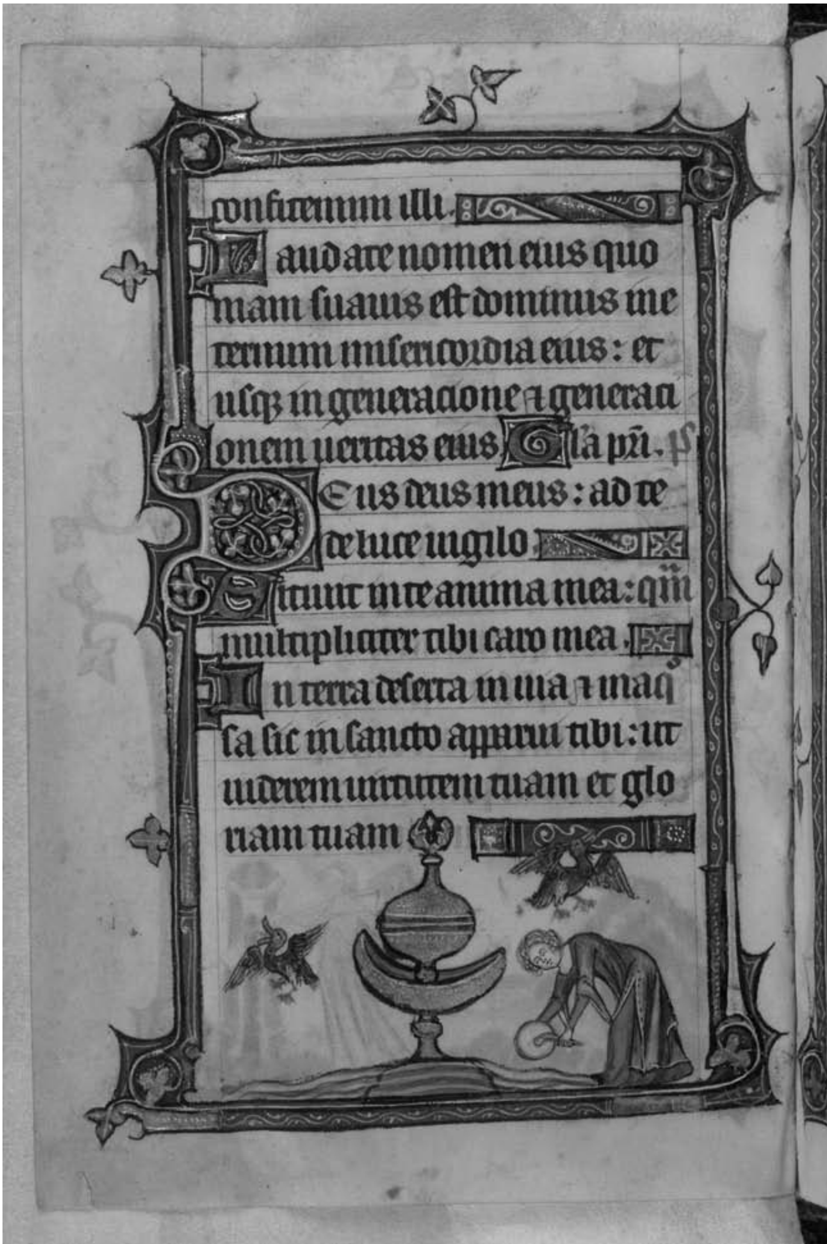

Fig. 13. *Noblewoman Hawking by a Fountain.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 72v.

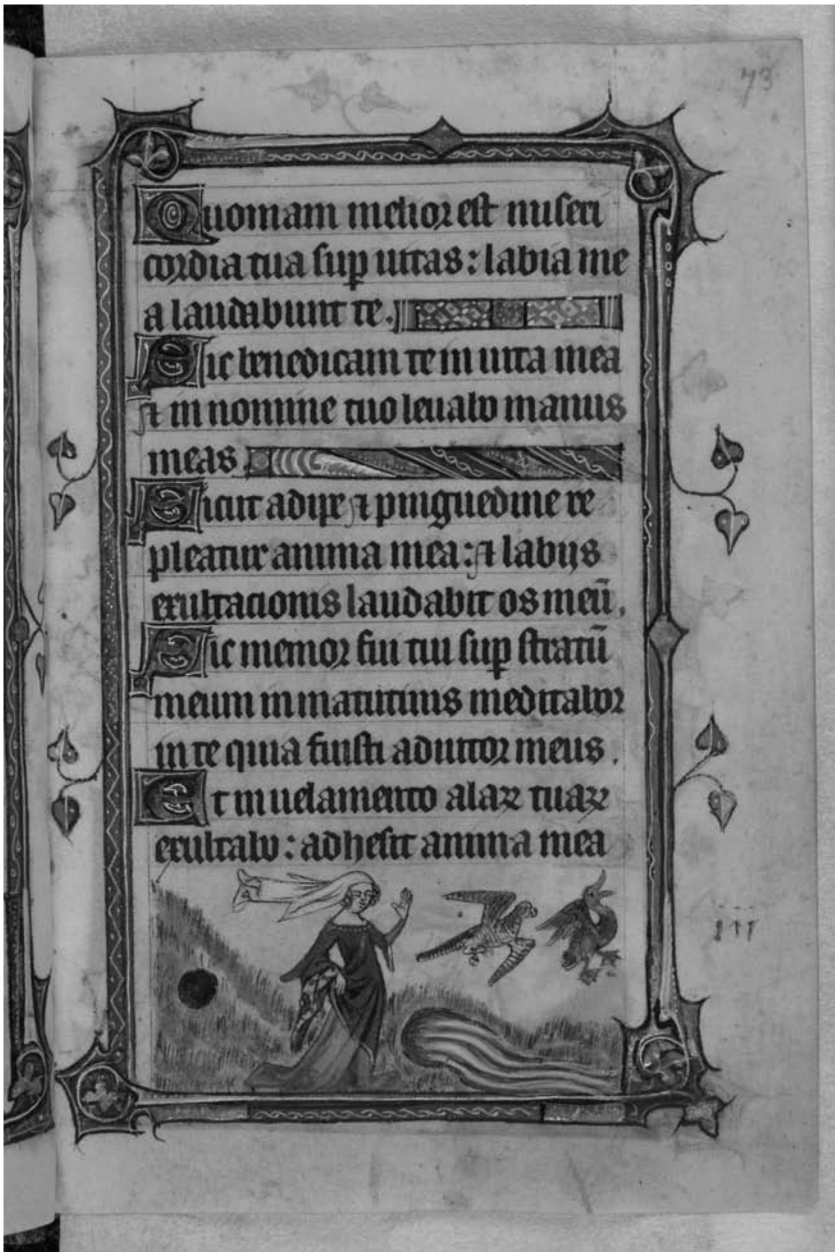

Fig. 14. *Noblewoman Hawking by a Stream.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 73.

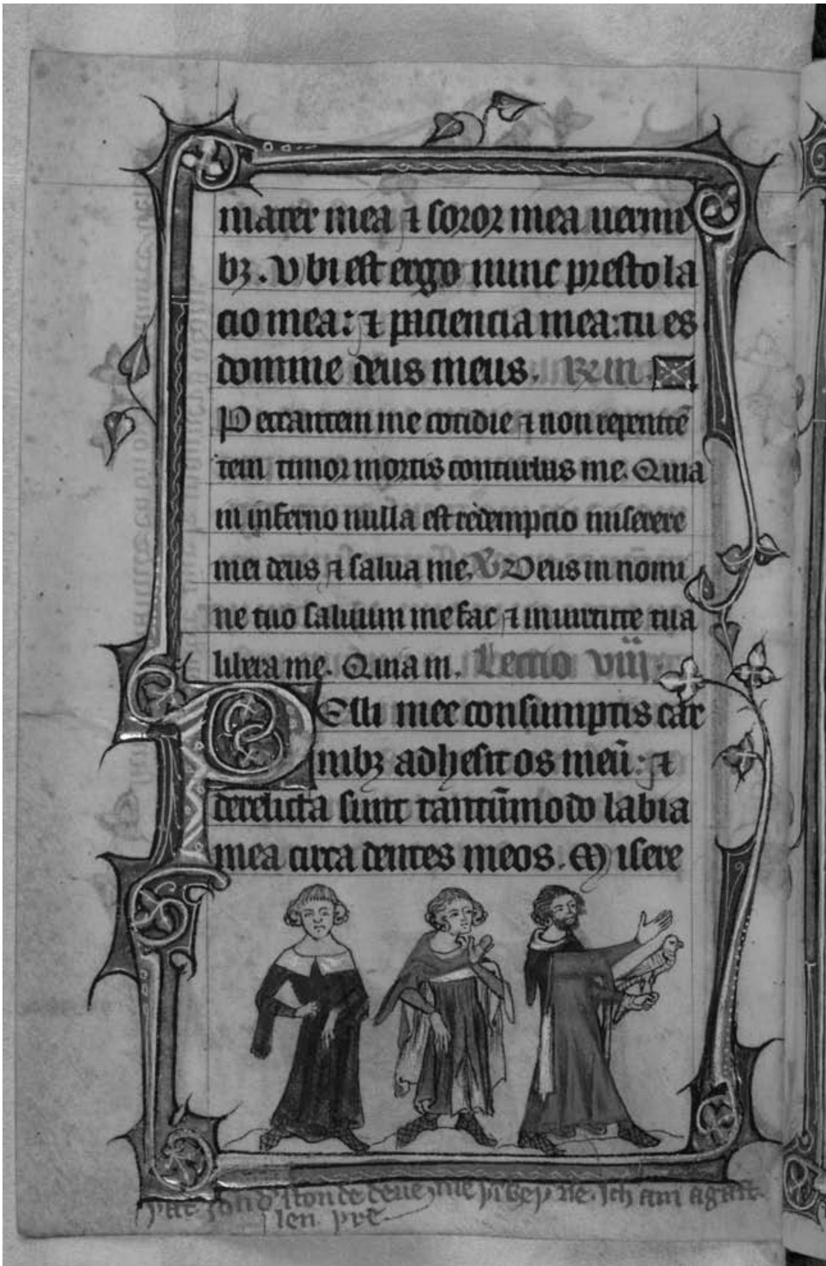

Fig. 15. *The Three Living.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 179v.

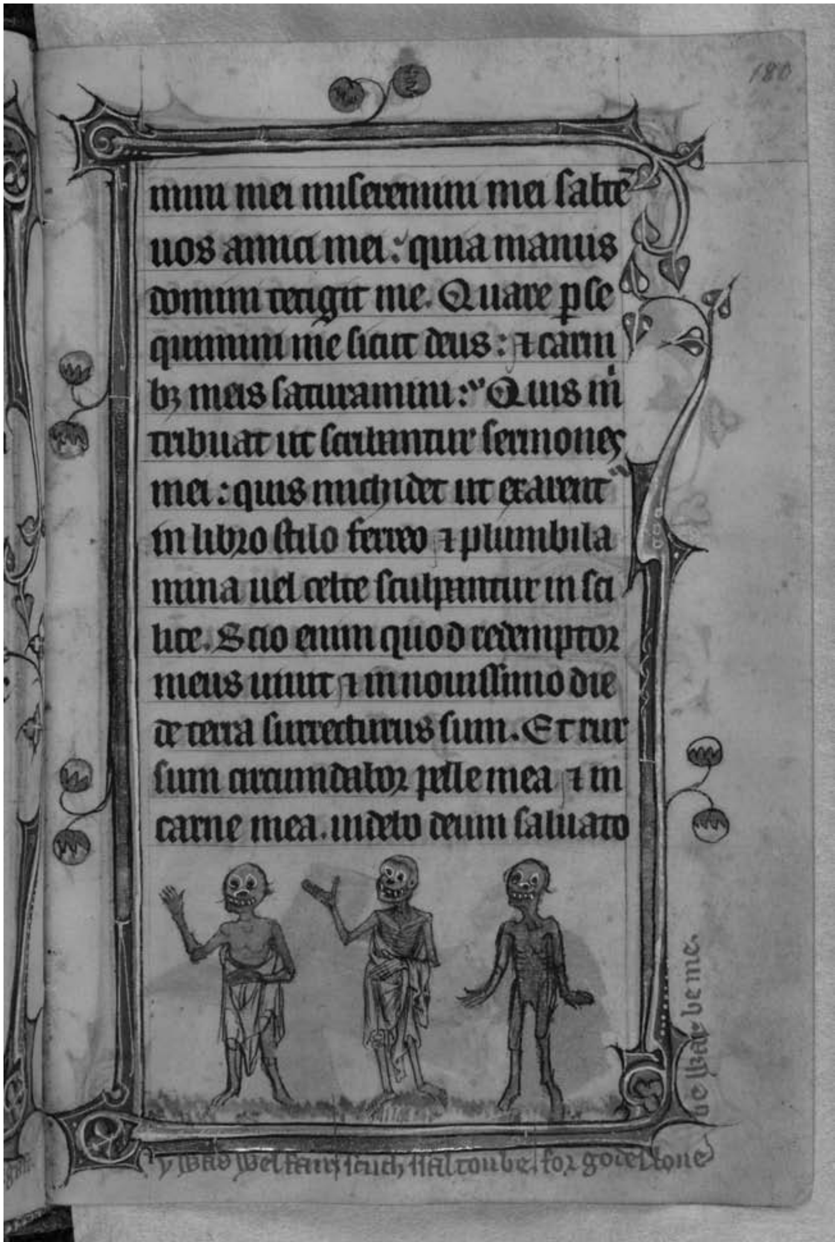

Fig. 16. *The Three Dead.* Taymouth Hours. London, British Library Yates Thompson MS 13, fol. 180.

PART III

BLOOD, EMBODIMENT, AND DEFINING SEPARATION

CHAPTER TEN

ABBOT ERLUIN'S BLINDNESS: THE MONASTIC IMPLICATIONS OF VIOLENT LOSS OF SIGHT

Susan Wade

On the night of October 20, 957 three young monks at the monastery of Lobbes assaulted their acting abbot, Erluin of Gembloux, blinding him and cutting out part of his tongue.[1] The violent excision of the organs used for sight and speech was not typical of monks, and even contemporary writers viewed the attack on Erluin as grossly exceeding the boundaries of monastic precedent.[2] However, because of the eye's dominant role in the process of monastic meditative prayer, blinding held a singular meaning within the monastery that went beyond the idea of bodily punishment as a public expression of power.[3] While the tongue was an essential tool for daily *lectio divinia*, the link between the physical and spiritual eye gave sight preference over speech in monastic writings and thought.[4] Thus, for the monastic a violent loss of sight

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[1] "tres ex illis, qui iuventutis et propinquorum adminiculo ceteris praestabant magno satis professionis et ordinis cum periculo dormitorium noctu agressi, eum extrahunt, et non longe ab ambitu claustri protractum oculis privant, partem etiam linguae amputant." Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, ed. G. Pertz, in MGH SS 4, 68.

[2] While it was not unknown for monks to turn to violence when trying to rid themselves of unpopular abbots, poisoning was associated with the life of St. Benedict and thus represented a monastic precedent. The monks of Benedict's first abbey, who were resentful at being forced to live by the rule, tried to poison his wine, however, Benedict was saved when the wineglass miraculously cracked in two as he made the sign of the cross over the contents. See Gregory I, *I Dialogi de Gregorio Magno: parafrasi in versi latini*, ed. Mauro Donnini, (Rome, 1988), 85–132, 90.

[3] Blindness was considered punishment for religious and moral offenses in both the ancient and medieval west, as Moshe Barasch suggests "the blind one is delinquent and his blindness reminds us of his guilt." Thus, if as Michael Foucault states, "the tortured body is inscribed in the legal ceremonial that must produce open for all to see, the truth of the crime" the public expression of blinding also warns the sighted of the consequences of transgressive use of the eye. See Moshe Barasch, *Blindness: The History of a Mental Image in Western Thought* (New York and London, 2001), 9. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York, 1977), 42.

[4] In his treatise on the Trinity Augustine suggests that sight is the first of the senses. Augustine, *De Trinitate* XI: 1, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill (New York, 1991), 304–307.

such as that suffered by Erluin held distinct implications for full participation in the monastic *habitus* that appears to eclipse the loss of any other bodily organs, including the tongue.

In the years following the attack on Erluin authors from both the monasteries of Lobbes and Gembloux composed narrative accounts placing the events of that October night in 957 within the historical and monastic traditions of their individual monasteries. While Folcuin of Lobbes' *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* and Sigebert of Gembloux's *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium* differ in their presentation of the reasons for the attack on Erluin, the importance of the eye is apparent in both *gestae*. Using the differing narratives from Lobbes and Gembloux this paper examines the specific monastic implications of Erluin's wounds, particularly focusing on the meanings associated with loss of sight.

Lobbes, Erluin, and Folcuin's "Gesta abbatum Lobiensium"

The depiction of Erluin and his tenure as abbot of Lobbes in the *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* is highly negative; indeed, Folcuin appears to suggest that Erluin got what he deserved. Monastic authors associated blinding with the control of lust and cupidity, and the *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* implies that Erluin's injuries were justified by his greedy desire to rule as abbot of Lobbes.[5] In order to understand the portrayal of Erluin's abbacy and wounding in the *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* it is first important to examine Lobbes' history prior to the attack. At his appointment to the abbacy Erluin was viewed as an interloper who supplanted the rightly elected Lobbensian candidate.[6] More importantly, Erluin was intimately tied to Count Régnier of Hainault for whom the monks of Lobbes held a particular and vehement dislike. Régnier had been given the lay abbacy of the monastery by his nephew Bishop Balderic of Liège. This appointment aroused suspicion in the monks who desired

[5] The medieval concept of lust or *luxuria* was associated both with sexual desire and the desire or greed for material goods. *Luxuria* was often considered a feminine vice while the vice of *avaricia* was usually attributed to men. In images of the virtues and vices the representation of *Luxuria* or lust is partnered with *Avaricia* and in earlier medieval art is usually represented as a woman (both virtues and vices are depicted as female) holding luxury goods, or flowers. Early illustrations of Prudentius' *Psychomachia*, show *Luxuria* choking on the instruments of her own gluttony while *Avaricia* struggles to collect the treasures that her sister vice has dropped. See Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art*, 1939 (Toronto, 1989), 1–21.

[6] Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 67–68.

self-control and feared Régnier's appropriation of the abbatial mense. Folcuin attributes Erluin's troubles almost solely to his friendship with Régnier.[7] Régnier's relationship to the monastery of Lobbes came at a critical point in the monastery's history and the monks' negative opinion about the count may in part reflect the monastery's problems with a series of ninth-century lay abbots appointed by the Carolingian royal family with whom the monastery had long been associated.

Although the details of Lobbes' foundation in the mid-to-late seventh-century are somewhat sketchy, there is documentary evidence to suggest that its first regular abbot, Ursmar, was appointed by Pippin II and that Lobbes was considered to be a royal abbey.[8] Lobbes' position as a royal abbey made its wealth vulnerable to misappropriation by the Carolingian royal family during the ninth century. Each of the Carolingian laymen appointed to the abbacy used the monastery's economic resources for his own purposes, which were often secular, and Lobbes' chroniclers record the rule of these lay abbots as a distinctively low period for observance of the monastic rule.[9]

In 889 Lobbes' status as a royal monastery changed when Arnulf of Carinthia transferred the monastery and its economic privileges as a benefice to the bishop of Liège. During the period between 889 and 957 the bishops of Liège acted as abbots of Lobbes administrating the monastery's economic, political, and spiritual concerns. As Arnulf's

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[7] Additionally, as Warichez points out the monastery of Lobbes was filled with the offspring (and thus patrimonies) of many powerful families from the region who were intolerant of the Count's interference with one of the wealthiest monasteries in Liège. Joseph Warichez, *L'Abbaye de Lobbes: depuis les origins jusqu'en 1200* (Louvain, 1909), 55.

[8] Lobbes' foundation is attributed to the reformed bandit St. Landolin, who was succeeded by Ursmar. While Folcuin's *Gesta abbatum* states that Pippin II appointed Ursmar, his earliest *vita* gives no indication of how he came to be abbot, however, the *vita* does state that Pippin granted him the right to redeem hostages (*siquidem a Pippino potestatem redimendi capitvos acceperat*). See Anson, *Vita sancti Ursmari*, ed. Krusch and Levison, MGH SRM 6, 457. On Lobbes as a royal abbey see Mayke de Jong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. II c. 700–900*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 622–653.

[9] This was particularly true during the tenure of the first lay abbot, Hucbert, brother-in-law of Lothair II, about whom Folcuin wrote, "He was hateful to God and the saints." Folcuin's (and other Lobbensian chroniclers') intense dislike of Hucbert appears to have been partially inspired by the installation of his concubines and men at arms within the monastery's properties. As Folcuin noted that Hucbert's concubines preferred their lovers to be tonsured, the presence of these women appears to have presented a singularly difficult problem for Lobbes' monastic inhabitants. "Efficitur ad haec uxorius, liberos procreans, et ad suae damnationis cumulum nil sibi clericale praeter tonsuram praeferens." Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 60.

diploma stipulates that the monks could enjoy the benefits of their portion of the monastery's economic holdings only if they return to "the life called the rule" this document of transfer gives evidence that the monks had probably not been living a regular life for some time.[10] The abbatial tenure of the bishops of Liège was sometimes cordial and sometimes hostile. The monks often balked at episcopal governance and complained that some bishops overstepped their authority while others saw Lobbes as a "valley of silver" (*argentea vallis*) to be exploited for the bishops' coffers.[11] With the appointment of Balderic to the episcopal seat of Liège in 953 relations between the monks and the bishops appear to have reached an all time low. When Balderic appointed his uncle Régnier III of Hainault as lay abbot of the monastery shortly after an invasion by the Hungarians the monks were suspicious of the count's intentions for Lobbes' monastic wealth. Folcuin's negative attitude towards Régnier is immediately apparent as the depiction of the count opens with the beheading of one of his enemies in the monastery's church.[12] Folcuin states that Régnier did not hesitate to violate the sacred church even though it had just been the site of a miraculous liberation from the invading Hungarians, and thus the text of the *Gesta* makes a particularly revealing association between a destructive assault on the monastery and the tenure of Count Régnier.[13]

The story of Erluin's appointment to the abbacy of Lobbes immediately follows the account of Régnier's desecration of the church, and Folcuin's depiction of Erluin opens positively. The *Gesta* notes that Erluin had been abbot at Gembloux where many warriors had been

[10] "Insuper si eam vitam, quam dicunt regularem quamque se impedimento Hucberti dolent reliquisse, de caetero voluerint restaurare, certum habemus predictum venerabilem episcopum medietati abbatiae, quam tenent, velle superiungere." *Charter of Arnolf*, ed. Paul Kehr, MGH DD ex stirpe Karolinorum 3, 94–96. See also Jean-Pierre Devroey, *Le polyptyque et les listes de biens de l'abbaye Saint-Pierre de Lobbes (IX–XI siècles)* (Brussels, 1986), IX.

[11] "Rursus sub eo, ut pridem sub Richario, apud nos cuncta fuerunt venalia, adeo ut locus idem a parasitis Argentea diceretur vallis." Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 64. For a clear and succinct description of Lobbes' rule by the bishops of Liège see Alain Dierkens, *Abbayes et chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VII–XI siècles)* (Sigmaringen, 1985), 113–114.

[12] "Nactus occasionem Raginerus advolat, ut insperatum in ecclesia cogat; quem inermem ab ipsis sanctorum sepulchris, quae tunc forte patebant, extrahit, et in ipsis atriis ante vestibulum ecclesiae capite truncat." Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 68.

[13] "qui Raginerus post mirificam illam Hungrorum liberationem ecclesiam sancti Ursmari omnium primus, et utinam adhinc solus, non exhorruit violare." Ibid.

converted to the regular monastic life.[14] However, as the text continues Erluin's entanglements with count Régnier begin to take on a rather sinister edge. Folcuin writes that Régnier had made Erluin his friend and through persistent flattery had induced him to take the abbacy of Lobbes: an office that was rightly held by Blitard, a monk whom the brothers had legitimately elected according to the Rule of St. Benedict.[15] The *Gesta* notes that "little by little" (*paulatim et per incrementa*) Régnier's blandishments led Erluin to "pant after" (*anhelabat*) the abbacy of Lobbes and leave behind the honor that he already held at Gembloux.[16]

Folcuin's account of Erluin's abbacy is filled with descriptions of the abbot's wrong doings and the squabbles between the abbot and the monks. First, Erluin maneuvered the ejection of Blitard through lies and cunning tricks;[17] more significantly during the Christmas of 956 Erluin held a feast for Régnier, his wife, and the bishop of Liège, Balderic, which according to Folcuin's description was of bacchanalian proportions. The party is reported to have desecrated the church by sleeping in the sacristy and using the altar to store their shoes and dishes; and Erluin compounded the insult to the monastery by not inviting the monks to the festivities.[18] Apparently, Erluin's abbacy reached its nadir when he tried to cover the cost of the celebration by selling the harvest from the village of Biesmerée.[19] The *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* states that the brothers were irate with this plan, and the attack on Erluin is directly attributed to his scheme for the revenues of Biesmerée. The

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[14] "Erat autem a Gemblaus monasterio, quod quidam Wibertus mundanae nobilitatis titulis insignitus in proprio suo construxerat, et in quo ipse vere conversus ex mundiali militia fuerat; quem inibi abbatem, cui ipse pauper Christi regulariter obediret, praefecerat." Ibid.

[15] RB 64:1–2. *Rule of St. Benedict: Full text in Latin and English*, trans. Monks of Glenstal Abbey, commentary by George Holzherr (Dublin, 1994), 290.

[16] Focluin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 68.

[17] "In sermone ipso tanta illi diversitas, ut cum proloqueretur, verba ipsa quasi trutinaret, ad ultimum multimodas cavillationum strofas doctus versutiarum rethor intexeret. Hic quia, ut dictum est, invitis fratribus promotus erat, unanimitati fratrum exosus erat." Ibid.

[18] "Rogat praeterea Raginerum cum Baldrico pontifice, ut dies natalicios Domini Laubiis celebrent; quod et obtinuit. Erat tunc videre abominationem, stantem in loco ubi non deberet. Nam comes cum coniuge in sacrario ecclesiae mansitabat et mensa, qua sacratissimum Domini corpus absumebatur, ministerium calciamentorum et paterarum seu scutellarum efficiebatur." Ibid.

[19] A ninth-century list of Lobbes' holdings identifies the villa of Biesmerée as providing large donations of both money and food to the monastery including a pig, chickens, and eggs. Archives de l'Etat à Mons MS 34, fol. 17.

magnititude of the conflict is reiterated in Foluin's description of Erluin's escape from Lobbes after the night of October 20 when he took a boat up the river to Gembloux because he feared further attacks.[20] Again, the text displays little sympathy for Erluin's plight, suggesting that the abbot had desired but failed to achieve martyrdom.[21]

Folcuin follows the description of Erluin's blinding and flight with two revealing scriptural references. The first, "*Impii agent impie, neque omnes intelligent impii*" is a partial quote from Daniel 12:10 "Many will purify themselves and be refined but the wicked will continue in wickedness and none of them will understand; only the wise leaders will understand." The second quotation is also part of a longer verse from Revelations 22:11 "*Qui in sordibus est sordescat adhuc*," which reads in full, "Meanwhile, let the evildoers persist in doing evil and the filthy minded continue in their filth, but let the good persevere in their goodness and the holy continue in their holiness." Although Folcuin's quotations are brief, the full connotations of these passages would be known to a monastic audience well trained in the study of the Bible. While these verses are almost certainly also directed at Régnier, they implicate Erluin in his own downfall, particularly the passage from Daniel that speaks of purification and wise leadership. Thus, Folcuin's scriptural quotations associate Erluin's rule with evil and filth and indicate that through his own wicked intentions, Erluin was himself responsible for the loss of his eyes and tongue.

[20] Building on the perception of Erluin's complicity in Régnier's schemes for the monastery the *Gesta* also states that Régnier's tyrannies multiplied as he trampled the poor (the word is *pauperes* which may also refer to the monks) and used the revenues of the church for himself. Finally, Folcuin writes, Régnier's atrocities caught up with him and he was banished from the land by the newly appointed Duke of Lotharingia Archbishop Bruno of Cologne. Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 68–69.

[21] Mayke de Jong suggests that Folcuin's depiction of Erluin was almost certainly influenced by political events in Lotharingia rather than to some flaw in Erluin's personality or to his efforts at reform. Aletan, the abbot who immediately followed Erluin at Lobbes initiated successful reforms and is remembered kindly by Folcuin and the monks of Lobbes. For a fascinating discussion of the political ramifications of Erluin's tenure as abbot of Lobbes see Mayke deJong, "Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, ed. Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), 653.

Monastic Uses of the Eye and Folcuin's Text

Although blinding is not a typical monastic punishment, medieval authors interpreted the fall and subsequent blinding of Samson as an example of punishment that the virtuous might receive for lustful thoughts or behavior.[22] While Erluin is not depicted as particularly virtuous, Folcuin's text does appear to relate his wounds to the idea of purgation of cupidity, particularly in reference to the abbot's Christmas feast and subsequent efforts to alienate the revenues from Biesmerée. In medieval religious and medical literature the eye was considered the locus for greed and avarice. Thus, Erluin's blinding removed the organs that were primary in feeding the abbot's desire for Lobbes; while the partial excision of his tongue, could be considered as a secondary punishment of the organ that he misused (presumably by lying) to attain his desire.

While monastic writings often express the desire for illuminating visions of God, the haptic nature of physical sight could lead unwary individuals to a dangerous and tangible gaze. Thus, in order to remain pure the eye had to be controlled.[23] In most of the theological writings on which medieval authors based their thinking about vision, the close association of the eye and the soul gave sight a spiritual privilege above all other senses. For John Chrysostom, the eye was the means to understand God himself. "If the eyes have been disabled wisdom also departs because by them we know God."[24] Chrysostom believed that

[22] Ambrose, *The Holy Spirit*, Book II, Prologue, trans. Roy Defarriari (Washington, 1963), 97–105. At the church of Anzy-Le-Duc Romanesque columns depicting this story are paired with the vice of *luxuria*. See Carol Stamatis Pendergist, "New Romanesque Capitals from Anzy-Le-Duc," *Gesta* 14/2 (1975): 47–57.

[23] The necessity of purification of the eye and the soul is discussed throughout the *Rule of St. Benedict*. For example, the *Prologue* tells monks to "open our eyes to the divine light" (RB Prologue: 9) while in chapter seven, *On Humility*, the eyes of the monk, like those of the tax collector from Luke (18:13–14), are to be fixed on the ground during ascent of the ladder towards heaven (RB 7:65, trans. Monks of Glenstal Abbey). Additionally, in the *Rule of a Donatus* control of the eye is specifically mandated for women religious. See *Regula ad virgines* Caput L, "De custodia oculorum," ed. J.P. Migne, PL 87, col. 288.

[24] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John* 56, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (Washington, 1960), 90–91. For an examination of the importance of sight to early Christian writers of the East, see Georgia Franks, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Late Antique Christianity*, (Berkeley, 2000), 115–118. The tenth-century catalog of Lobbes' library contains entries for both Chrysostem's *Homilies on John* and Isidore's *Etymologies*: Archives de l'etat à Mons MS 34, fols. 39–41.

seeing God's creation allowed for knowledge of God's unseen divinity; the eye was, "the light not merely of the body but also of the soul more than the body."[25]

The close association between the physical eye and the eye of the soul is particularly evident in prescriptive writings on monastic meditation. During the process of meditational prayer the monastic employed visual imagery to gain access to the eye of the soul. The first step, purification of the mind, entailed the use of a device that could act as a place of withdrawal held "constantly in front of the inner eye."[26] To achieve this goal monastic writer John Cassian advises that the "yearnings of one's heart become a single and continuous prayer."[27] In his tenth conference, Cassian instructs that a preferred method of withdrawal is continual recitation of the first verse of Psalm 69 and thus the tongue was also important to monastic meditation.[28] However, recitation of words of the Psalm was not necessarily enough for successful withdrawal from the world, and Cassian further suggests that the monastic think upon the image (*imago*) of Christ.[29] According to Cassian beginners see a corporeal Jesus while those who are more experienced in meditative prayer see a glorified countenance.[30]

The nature of medieval optical theory, however, also meant that the gaze of the physical eye was tangible and thus potentially dangerous. Between the sixth and the twelfth century medieval optical theory was based almost solely on Chalcidius' translation of Plato's *Timaeus*.[31] Plato believed that light (*lumen*) flowed from the eye and coalesced with light from the sun creating a single visual stream that produced the sensation of sight in the soul.[32] In his *Etymologies*, which until 1200 served as the most common medical text of the Middle Ages, Isidore of Seville

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[25] John Chrysostom, *Homilies on John*," 56, trans. Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin, 91.

[26] On the use of visual devices in meditative prayer see Mary Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, (Cambridge, 1998), 75.

[27] The medieval monastic community was intimately acquainted with the *Conferences* of John Cassian because they were specified as reading daily by the Benedictine Order, RB 42:3–6, (trans. Monks of Glenstal Abbey), 211.

[28] "Deus in adiutorum meum intende, domine ad adiuvandum me festina," Ps. 69:1.

[29] *Iohannis Cassiani Conlationes X.*, ed. Michael Petschenig (Vienna, 1886), 379.

[30] "velhumilem adhuc et carneum, vel glorificatum et in maiestatis suae gloria venientem," ibid., 291. In Cassian's words "the glory of his face (*vultus eius*) and the image of his brightness" (*claritatis imaginem*) are revealed to those who purify and remove themselves from every earthly thought and disturbance: ibid., 292.

[31] David C. Lindberg, *Theories of Vision from Al-Kindi to Kepler* (Chicago, 1976), 89–90.

[32] Plato, *Timaeus, A Calcidio translatus commentarioque intructus*, ed. J.H. Waszink (London, 1962).

also held that light shone forth from the eye and maintained the close connection between the eye and the soul. "Among all the senses the eyes are thought to be the closest neighbors of the soul and every disposition of the intellect is reflected in the eye... but the eyes are also the same as lamps (*lumina*), because *lumen* shines forth from them."[33] Theories of ocular extramission led to a perception that physical sight was haptic, because rays of light from the eye were believed to touch the object of the gaze and then return to the eye of the viewer. In some instances, such as envy, greed, or carnal lust, this tangible gaze could cause harm to both the viewer and the viewed.[34] The eye thus takes on a dual symbolism and becomes a locus for anxiety regarding control of its possible uses, and it was particularly important for the monastic to guard the eye from gazing at objects that might incite lust or avaricious desire.[35]

Considering the vocabulary that Folcuin employs to describe Erluin's appointment to the abbacy of Lobbes, in which he is depicted as "panting after" the monastery, it certainly appears that the author associates Erluin's wounds with cupidity. As the *Gesta* states that the attack on Erluin's eyes and tongue occurred after he had angered the monks by selling off monastic property to fund the scandalous Christmas festivities

[33] "Hi inter omnes sensus viciniores animae existunt. In oculis enim omne mentis indicium est, unde et animi perturbatio vel hilaritas in oculis apparet. Oculi autem idem et lumina. Et dicta lumina, quod ex eis lumen manat, vel quod ex intio sui clausam teneant lucem, aut extrinsecus acceptam visui proponendo refundant." Isidore of Seville, book XI: 36 *Etimologias*, ed. Jose O. Reta and Manuel A.M. Casquero (Madrid, 1982), 18.

[34] In one well-known example from the *Confessions*, Augustine attributed the spiritual downfall of his friend Alpyuis to one glance at gladiatorial combat. Seeing the bloody exchange of the gladiators Alpyuis "was struck by a wound in the soul greater than the gladiator in his body." Afterwards Alpyuis was changed; his wound drove him to a bloodthirsty madness that caused him to return to the gladiatorial arena again and again. See *Confessions* VI viii 13, trans. Henry Chadwin (Oxford, 1991), 100. Additionally, the dry gaze of post-menopausal women was considered dangerous and possibly even lethal to small animals and children. See Danielle Jacquart and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Princeton, 1988), 191.

[35] An example of the monastic attitudes towards misuse of the eye can be found in the first miracle of the Book of St. Foy. In this miracle St. Foy restores the eyesight of a pilgrim to her shrine named Guibert. After Guibert's eyes are restored, the abbot of Conques places him in charge of selling wax at Foy's church at Conques. Guibert falls into lustful ways by consorting with a local woman and Foy blinds him in one eye. Guibert repents, is tonsured, and joins the monastery at Conques and Foy again restores the sight in his eye. Unfortunately, Guibert cannot control his sexual desires and is finally abandoned by the saint and expelled from the monastery. *Liber miraculorum Sancte Fidis*, ed. Luca Robertini (Spoleto, 1994), 83–85.

to which the monks had not been invited, Erluin's blinding and partial muting could be seen as purgation of a lust for the monastery of Lobbes, particularly its rich economic opportunities. Loss of the eyes, which were the physical nucleus for both greed and lust, and the tongue, with which he panted after the monastery, would remove the physical expressers of his desire. Moreover, as the Benedictine Rule states "keep your tongue from evil and your lips from uttering lies," the monks may have considered removing part of the tongue as a punishment for lying.[36] In this way, the scriptural verses that Folcuin quotes directly after the story of Erluin's loss of eyes and tongue appear to echo the theme of purification and thus also justify the actions of the three young monks. In Folcuin's account Erluin's greed leads to the violent loss of sight and partial loss of speech, which consequently deprive him of the organs used in meditative prayer and thus exclude the abbot from the most important aspect of monastic daily experience.[37]

The Implications of Blindness in the "Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium"

While the *Gesta abbatum Lobbiensium* appears to expel the former abbot of Lobbes from the monastic milieu, Sigebert's *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium* reinstates Erluin as a full participant in the *opus dei*. In Sigebert's chronicle Erluin is depicted as a pious reformer sent specifically to reinstate the rule of St. Benedict to the recalcitrant and disobedient monks of Lobbes. Erluin had been the first abbot of the monastery of Gembloux, which was founded in honor of Saints Peter and Exupery with lands donated by the noble Guibert and confirmed by Otto I in 946.[38] Guibert, who eventually became a monk at the French monastery of Gorze, was attracted to the idea of monastic reform, and Gembloux was the first monastery within the diocese of Liège to follow the observance of the Rule of St. Benedict as interpreted by the Gorze reforms. These were marked by a strict adherence to the

[36] RB *Prologue*: 17 (trans. Monks of Glenstal Abbey).

[37] Because the tongue was only partially removed Erluin was still able to speak somewhat and thus while the attempt to remove his organs for speech is indicative of a monastic attitude it was ultimately unsuccessful. Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium*, MGH SS 4, 68.

[38] Confirmation of the donation is found in Sigebert of Gembloux, *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*, ed. Pertz, MGH SS 8, 526.

rule including Benedict's injunction that monks remain cloistered and not own property.[39]

Sigebert's account of Erluin's tenure at Lobbes begins with the assertion that he will uncover the persecutions and martyrdom that the religious man had sustained for the love of God and adds that his text will be a correction to the interpretation found in Folcuin's little book (*libello*). Sigebert had obviously read the *Gesta abbatum Lobbiensium*, and his narrative of the sequence of events that led to Erluin's wounding closely follows Folcuin's text. However, Sigebert immediately makes his revisions apparent by asserting that Erluin accepted Régnier's offer out of obedience and a benevolent desire to lead Lobbes back to the rule after ninety years without a monastic abbot.[40] When writing of Erluin's relationship to Régnier, Sigebert compares Erluin's motivations to Isaiah 11:7–8 "and the lion shall eat straw like cattle and the infant will play over the cobra's hole." With these verses Sigebert appears to suggest that Erluin understood both the nature of Régnier's secular power and the risks of initiating reform at Lobbes.

The *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium* continues its history of Erluin's abbacy of Lobbes with a description of the abbot's Christmas feast that is obviously meant to restore his reputation.[41] Again, while Sigebert's narrative parallels Folcuin's in many details, it differs in its explanation of the motivations that drove the monks to assault Erluin. Although Sigebert writes that the celebration seemed scandalous to the monks, he suggests that the monks did not want to pay for the provisions due to petty resentment at their exclusion from the feast.[42] Sigebert makes no

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[39] The monastery at Gorze was founded in the mid-eighth century by Bishop Chrodegang of Metz (d. 766) who was a powerful figure in Carolingian ecclesiastical reforms and who was particularly noted for his efforts to differentiate canons and monks. See M.A. Claussen, *The Reform of the Frankish Church*, (Cambridge, 2004). See also Warren Sanderson, "Monastic Reform in Lorraine and the Architecture of the Outer Crypt, 950–1100," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, New Ser. 61:6 (1971): 3–36.

[40] Sigebert gives description Hucbert's tenure as abbot of Lobbes, and suggests that the monks of Lobbes had not enjoyed the governance of a regular abbot for more than ninety years after Hubert's era. "Non inquam, mirum, si lenitatis dissolution eos effrenaverat, quibus per annos plus 90 nulla abbatu regularium paternitas excubaerverat." Sigebert of Gembloux, *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*, MGH SS 8, 531.

[41] As a modern historian of Lobbes notes, "pour Sigebert, Erluin c'est un martyr, un autre saint Benoît maltraité par ses moins impies." See Joseph Warichez, *L'Abbaye de Lobbes: depuis les origins jusqu'en 1200* (Louvain, 1909), 56.

[42] "Quod fratribus omnibus omnino visum est nimis vituperabile, et in obsoniis eorum sua nimis distrahi intolerabile, et loca sancta indifferenter a secularibus frequentari satis importabile. Percelebrata itaque natalicium dierum sancta celebritate ubi discessum

mention of any improprieties on the part of the guests but rather states that it is possible to know the many difficulties that Erluin endured from the descriptions in Folcuin's book.[43] As Sigebert's *Gesta* approaches its climactic description of the attack on Erluin the author again reminds the readers that the monks of Lobbes had not been living by the rule of St. Benedict and that Erluin was struggling to bring the monks under control.[44] Sigebert describes the assault on Erluin in language similar to Folcuin's stating "*oculis privant, partem lingua amputant*," and attributes the wounds to three young monks describing them as "vain nobility in the firmness of youth."[45]

Sigebert follows his account of Erluin's wounding with a consideration of its enormity stating that there is little to which the event can be compared, an evaluation not found in Folcuin's narrative.[46] The best analogy that Sigebert can make is to the story of the unruly monks who attempted to poison St. Benedict, thus associating Erluin's intentions and authority directly with Benedict's. It is telling that just after linking Erluin to the key founder of cenobitic monasticism, the *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium* addresses the implications that blinding specifically held for monks. Here, Sigebert grapples with the issue of blindness stating that although Erluin was missing the eyes of his body he retained the perfect eyes with which the heart of God's universe could still be contemplated.[47] Such an assertion, that the loss of physical sight did not damage the interior eye used for contemplation, implies that Sigebert needed to counter the assumption that the physical eye was necessary for spiritual sight. Sigebert does not appear to consider the partial loss of the tongue to have the same significance as the loss of the eye since he does not discuss the implications of the injured tongue; indeed, the loss of part of Erluin's tongue is not mentioned

est, fratres sibi sua minui et subtrahi in commune deplorant." Sigebert of Gembloux, *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium*, MGH SS 8, 531.

[43] "Sed quanta et qualia fuerint quae pertulerit, ex scriptis Fulquini abbatis intellegi poterit." Ibid.

[44] "Sed nullo modo eos potuit vel Dei timor subiugare vel suo eos amori applicare." Sigebert, *Gesta abbatum gemblacensium*, MGH SS 8, 532.

[45] "Tres eorum quibus nobilitatis vanitas et juventae robur." Ibid. This description of the three young monks also suggests that Sigebert understood the political ramifications of the situation between the monks of Lobbes, Régnier, and Erluin.

[46] "Liceat hic paululum rerum convenientiam considerare, et rem rei comparare." Ibid.

[47] "cum interior suus homo illis oculis perfecte delectaretur, quibus mundi cordes Deum contemplantur." Ibid.

again. In this way, Sigebert's statement about the purity and retained function of Erluin's inner eye focuses on the injury that appears to hold the greatest importance for the monastic audience, the eye, and denies any suggestion that after his injury Erluin was unable to engage in contemplative prayer.[48] By clarifying that Erluin's interior eyes still functioned, Sigebert's narrative restores the abbot to the most important aspect of the *opus dei*, contemplation of God, and thus reinstates Erliun as a full participant in monastic spirituality.

Leo III and Erluin

It is curious that the stories of Erluin's blinding found in the *Gestae* of Sigebert and Folcuin do not recall a similar attack on Pope Leo III recorded in accounts of Leo's life, Charlemagne's letters, and in the verses of the *Carmen de Carolo Magno* attributed to Angilbert of St. Riquier. As with Erluin, Leo was attacked by subordinates who tried to blind him and cut out part of his tongue and who then imprisoned the pope in the monastery of St. Erasmo. The reasons for the aggression remain obscure; most scholars, however, attribute the attack to conflicts between Leo and the Roman nobility.[49] Unlike Erluin, the attempt to blind and mute Leo was unsuccessful, and he was able to retain his hold on the papal throne. Traditionally, blindness had been considered an impediment to the priesthood, and the rule of a blind and mute pope would have presented difficulties for the church.[50] Perhaps it is for this reason that certain authors, including that of the *Carmen de Carlo Magno*, maintained that Leo's eyes and tongue had miraculously regenerated themselves, thus simultaneously vindicating the pope and

[48] As the Benedictine rule stipulates that the abbot is accountable to God for the care of the souls of his monks Sigebert's use of "mundi cordes Deum" also suggests that Erluin is still able to see into the hearts of the brothers under his charge. RB 2:37–40 (trans. Monks of Glenstal Abbey).

[49] See T.S. Brown, "Urban Violence In Early Medieval Italy: The Cases of Rome and Ravenna," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge, 1998): 77–89 at 81.

[50] Earlier medieval attitudes towards physical fitness for the priesthood were based in scriptural passages including Leviticus 21:18 which states "no man with a defect is to come, whether a blind man, a lame man, a man stunted or overgrown."

dispelling any notion of a lingering injury that might interfere with pontifical rule.[51]

While sightedness may have been a prerequisite for papal rule, it was apparently not required for the abbacy of Gembloux which Erluin retained until his death (his brother Heriward is recorded as succeeding him in 987). There are no stories suggesting that Erluin's eyes or tongue miraculously regenerated which may be why Sigebert does not mention the attack on Leo III.[52] Although comparison to Leo III might give Erluin's story a link with Carolingian authority, it would also highlight the lack of divine intervention on Erluin's behalf implying that his injuries were perhaps justified. Folcuin's reticence on the subject is more problematic, though his silence may indicate anxiety about vilifying the monks of Lobbes by aligning them with Leo's attackers and thus against the Ottonian rulers who considered themselves to be descended from the Carolingian dynasty.[53] However, it is also possible that Folcuin and Sigebert did not discuss Leo's injuries in relation to the attack on Erluin because this particular pope was not, and never had been, a monk; indeed, Leo represented the elite of the ecclesiastical clerical establishment. Leo had been brought up and trained in the Lateran treasury and at the time of the death of his predecessor, Hadrian I, Leo was head of the pontifical treasury and cardinal priest of St. Susanna.[54] In this way the pope's alleged injuries may not have held a specifically monastic significance, particularly in terms of contemplative prayer but would instead relate to the application of pontifical/ecclesiastical power.

In conclusion, Folcuin's *Gesta abbatum Lobiensium* and Sigebert's *Gesta abbatum Gemblacensium* present divergent interpretations of the blinding

[51] The *Song of Charlemagne* recounts that people who later encountered Leo were surprised to see new eyes and tongue in an old head: "Et capite in veteri visus cernendo novellas, obstipeant linguamque loqui mirantur ademptam," ed. J.P. Migne, PL 98, col. 1441.

[52] In his *Chronica* Sigebert includes the attack on Leo III and the miraculous regrowth of his eyes and tongue: "Leonem papam celebritatem letaniae maioris agentem Romani capiunt, et linguam ei oculosque evellunt. Cui voce et visu reddito divinitus, iterum ei oculos et linguam eruunt radicitus." *Chronica*, ed. Ludowig Conrad Bethmann, MGH SS 6, 329.

[53] The desire to maintain links to the Carolingians and Ottonians may have held particular significance for Folcuin who was descended from Charles Martel. See Karine Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (York, 2005), 61.

[54] Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages* (St. Louis, 1925), 6.

and partial muting of Erluin of Gembloux. While Folcuin appears to suggest that Erluin's wounds relate to cupidity in his desire to rule as abbot of Lobbes, Sigebert's text addresses the specific negative implications that blinding held for the monastic community at large. For Folcuin, Erluin's injuries derived from his relationship to Régnier, who fueled the abbot's greedy desire for the abbacy and its requisite economic privileges. In Folcuin's text the loss of eyes and tongue suggest the ultimate purification of the physical organs that the monastic considered the locus for desire, greed, and lies. Additionally, considering the use of the eye and the tongue in meditative prayer, Folcuin's focus on incriminating Erluin as the provocateur of his own injuries also appears to justify the abbot's expulsion from participation in the spiritual life of the monastery.

Sigebert's text, in contrast, represents Erluin as a pious monastic reformer, who like St. Benedict, was attacked by rebellious monks who refused to live by the rule. By recalling St. Benedict Sigebert aligns Erluin with the ultimate examplar of monastic rule and reaffirms the validity of Erluin's motivations. With the statement that Erluin's inner eye remained pure and thus capable of contemplating the divine, Sigebert rehabilitates his abbot within the monastic psyche. Moreover, Sigebert's assertion that Erluin's inner eye retained its purity also counters Folcuin's allegations of the abbot's corruption. For both authors, however, Erluin's wounds, particularly his blindness, held specific and monastic symbolism that exceeded secular notions of physical disfigurement as a public expression of sovereign power.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

BLANCHE OF ARTOIS AND BURGUNDY, CHÂTEAU-GAILLARD, AND THE BARON DE JOURSANVAULT

Elizabeth A.R. Brown

Blanche of Artois and Burgundy (1296/97–1325/26) was the luckless daughter of Count Otto of Burgundy (ca. 1239–1303) and Countess Mahaut of Artois (ca. 1269–1329). At eleven, she married Charles of La Marche (b. 1294, r. 1322–28), then thirteen, the third son of Philip IV the Fair of France (b. 1268, r. 1285–1314).[1] They were wedded at her mother's fairy-tale castle of Hesdin, in January 1308, shortly before Charles's sister Isabelle married Edward II of England at Boulogne-sur-Mer on 25 January. Blanche's older sister Jeanne (1287/88–1330), some nine years older and heiress of the county of Burgundy, had married Philip the Fair's second son Philip of Poitiers (b. ca. 1292, r. 1316–22) in January 1307.[2] At some point Jeanne was betrothed to Philip the Fair's first son Louis (b. 1289, r. 1314–16), but in 1305 Louis had married Marguerite of ducal Burgundy.

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[1] Because I will present a full account of the marriages of Philip the Fair's sons in a forthcoming study, I do not offer exhaustive supporting evidence for all my statements in the introductory section. I use BM as an abbreviation for Bibliothèque municipale; BnF for Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France; *HF* for *Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, ed. Martin Bouquet et al., 24 vols. (Paris: Victor Palmé, H. Welter, Imprimerie nationale, 1738–1904). I extend deep thanks to Richard C. Famiglietti, a connoisseur without peer of documents and archives, who helped me locate the Joursanvault documents in Rouen. I am grateful as well to Jean-Pierre Gantier and Christelle Quillet of the Bibliothèque municipale of Rouen, and to J. Fernando Peña of the Grolier Club of New York.

[2] Although the precise date of Jeanne's birth is unknown, a marriage agreement concluded on 2 March 1295 stated that Jeanne was then "in aetate legitima ad contrahenda sponsalia constituta," and thus at least seven years old: Urbain Plancher and Zacharie Merle, *Histoire générale et particulière de Bourgogne*..., 4 vols. (Dijon: A. de Fay, 1739–81), 2: *preuves*, lxxxxvii, no. CXXXXI. Patrick Van Kerrenbrouck, *Les Capétiens 987–1328* (Villeneuve d'Ascq: l'auteur, 2000), 164, gave the date of her birth as 1294, without explanation.

Less than a decade later, in the spring of 1314, Philip the Fair's three daughters-in-law—Marguerite, Jeanne, and Blanche—were seized and incarcerated. Accused of adultery with the three women, two young knights, Gautier and Philippe d'Aulnay, were horribly executed. Jeanne was cleared and released from the castle of Dourdan near Paris shortly after Philip the Fair died on 29 November 1314 and his eldest son Louis succeeded him as king. The fates of Marguerite and Blanche, imprisoned at Château-Gaillard on the Norman border, were far different.

In April 1315 Marguerite suddenly died, and her suspiciously providential demise permitted Louis X to marry his cousin Clementia of Hungary. Blanche lived on, still married to Charles of La Marche, and she seems likely to have had a child by him while she was in prison. Louis X died in 1316 and was succeeded by his brother and successor Philip, who in turn died in January 1322. Charles of La Marche then ascended the throne, and in short order, on 19 May 1322, he obtained from Pope John XXII (r. 1316–34) dissolution of his marriage to Blanche and permission to remarry—permission that was also granted to Blanche. Charles indeed wed Marie of Luxembourg on 21 September, whereas Blanche languished in prison, with no hopes of release or remarriage. Little more has been known of her except that by 1325 she had been transferred from Château-Gaillard to the castle of Gavray near the Norman coast,[3] and that she was dead on 5 April 1326, when Pope John XXII mentioned the fact in a supplementary dispensation for the marriage of Charles and his third wife Jeanne of Évreux, whom the king had wed on 5 July 1325, sixteen months after the death of his second wife Marie.[4] The only other piece of solid evidence regarding Blanche has been a laconic note in the account

[3] According to Père Anselme, in 1325 Blanche was being guarded at the château of Gavray (some 20 km. south of Coutances), by Jean d'Aumont and Jean de Granvillier, about whom I have been able to find no additional information: *Histoire genealogique et chronologique de la Maison royale de France*…, ed. les P. Ange de Sainte Rosalie (François Raffard) and Simplicien, 9 vols. (Paris: La Compagnie de Libraires, 1726–33) 1:96. Note that "Johannes de Barco, de Grandi Villari" served Charles IV as *prévôt* of Beauvais and as *procureur du roi* in the *baillage* of Amiens: *Les Journaux du Trésor de Charles IV le Bel*, ed. Jules Viard (Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1917), 889 n. 1, and under his name in the index.

[4] Paris, Archives nationales, J 437, nos. 30bis and 30quater; Bernard Barbiche, *Les actes pontificaux originaux des Archives nationales de Paris*, 3 vols. (Index Actorum Romanorum Pontificum ab Innocentio III ad Martinum V Electum, 1–3; Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1974–82), no. 2703; Van Kerrebrouck, *Les Capétiens*, 172 (the death of Marie of Luxembourg in March 1324).

of expenses of the *baillie* of Cotentin for the Easter (26 March) term of 1326, which refers to "madame Blance de Bourgoigne" and horses obtained for her.[5] No documentary evidence supports the widespread belief that she died at the abbey of Maubuisson, perhaps as a nun.

For more than half a century I have been pursuing Blanche and evidence about her life before, during, and after her imprisonment. Here, in honor of Penny Johnson, indefatigable sleuth and dedicated advocate of women and their history, I would like to present thirteen documents concerning Blanche, which cast some light on her final years.

I first learned of these documents' existence from an article on Blanche and Charles's divorce that J. Robert de Chevanne published in 1936.[6] One of his notes cites a laconic description of acts relating to Blanche that were sold in 1838 as part of the collection of the baron de Joursanvault: "Pièces relatives au château de Gaillard, appartenant à Madame Blanche de Bourgogne," dated 1319–20.[7] Chevanne concluded from the final phrase of this description that Blanche had somehow gained possession of Château-Gaillard, since he suggested that after Blanche's sister Jeanne became queen of France in 1317, Blanche herself "ait été quelque peu mieux traitée en sa prison." Chevanne did not know the documents, and as will be seen, they provide no evidence

[5] *Comptes royaux (1314–1328)*, ed. François Maillard, 2 vols. (Recueil des historiens de la France, Documents financiers, 4; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1961) 2:228 no. 14994 (BnF, fr. 25945, no. 2996) ("Pour un message envoié de Coustances a Lessé [Lessay, 21 km. NNW of Coutances], du commandement du balli [*sic*], pour avoir chevaulx pour madame Blance de Bourgoigne et porter la response a Valoignes [Valognes, 35 km. N of Lessay]: 10 s."). Godefroid le Blond was *bailli* of the Cotentin from 1322 to 1326: *HF* 24[1]: *155–56*. The Easter term of 1326 began on Michaelmas, 29 September 1325 and ended on Easter, 23 March 1326.

[6] "Charles IV le Bel et Blanche de Bourgogne," *Bulletin philologique et historique (jusqu'à 1715) du Comité des travaux historiques et scientifiques [du Ministère de l'Éducation nationale]* (1936–37): 313–50, at 319 n. 2.

[7] *Catalogue analytique des archives de M. le Baron de Joursanvault, contenant une précieuse collection de manuscrits, chartes et documens* [sic] *originaux au nombre de plus de quatre-vingt mille, concernant l'histoire générale de France, l'histoire particulière des provinces, l'histoire de la noblesse et l'art héraldique; avec un grand nombre de chartes anglo-françaises et de pièces historiques sur la Belgique, l'Italie, et quelques autres états de l'Europe*, 2 vols. (Paris: J. Techener, 1838), no. 1491 (p. 274; where the description begins, "Cinq pièces: Titre relatif à l'Hôtel-Dieu d'Évreux"); the description of Lot 1494, for which see below, is found on p. 275. Techener published many copies of a deluxe, illustrated, two-volume edition of the catalogue; I have consulted those in the New York Public Library, the Cabinet des manuscrits of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, and the Grolier Club of New York. A less elegant edition of the catalogue, with identical text but no illustrations, was probably intended for use at the sale; I have employed the annotated copy of vol. 1 of this edition that is in the collection of the Grolier Club (designated there as "Copy 2" of the Joursanvault catalogue), which unfortunately does not own a similarly annotated copy of the second volume; see n. 15 below.

regarding the quality of Blanche's life at Château-Gaillard, aside from showing that she and her attendants (and her guards) are unlikely to have gone hungry.[8] Thanks to Chevanne's reference and to Richard C. Familietti's guidance, I recently found these documents—with others from the Joursanvault collection—in the Bibliothèque municipale of Rouen. Before considering the acts' contents, I will describe how these documents, once in the Chambre des comptes in Paris, found their way to Rouen.

Jean-Baptiste-Anne-Geneviève Gagniare [or Gagniard], baron de Joursanvault (1751–93), was a native of Beaune and like his father a passionate collector and dedicated bibliophile.[9] During his short lifetime, he amassed a huge and impressive collection of manuscripts and documents. Many of them came from the Chambre des comptes, which was dissolved in 1775. The baron was one of those who profited from the shady activities of Abbé Jean-Baptiste-Guillaume de Gevigney in pillaging the repository.[10] On the baron's death, his collection passed to his son Alexandre, who eventually decided to sell it. In 1838 (two years before Alexandre's death) the bookseller Jacques Techener (1802–70)

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[8] Chevanne's hypothesis about Blanche may nonetheless be valid. An entry in the treasury journal of Charles IV (which Chevanne did not cite) records a credit of 151 l.p. allowed in the Easter Exchequer of 1322 to Blanche herself (on the basis of a mandate of Philip V) "for her expenses and those of the people who guard her at Château-Gaillard" ("pro expensis suis et gencium que ipsam custodiunt in Castro Gaillardi"): *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 144, no. 714. Élisabeth Lalou discussed some of the evidence regarding Blanche's imprisonment, in "Le souvenir du service de la reine: l'hôtel de Jeanne de Navarre, reine de France, en juin 1294," in *Guerre, pouvoir et noblesse au Moyen Âge. Mélanges en l'honneur de Philippe Contamine*, ed. Jacques Paviot and Jacques Verger (Cahiers et civilisations médiévales, 22; Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2000), 411–26, at 421–22.

[9] For a useful guide to bibliography and summary of the evidence, see Claude Lannette-Claverie's introduction to *Archives départementales du Loiret. Collection Joursanvault, sous-série 6 J, Inventaire analytique* (Orléans: no pub., 1976), v–xi, xli. On the baron's life, see Jules Pautet, "Le baron de Joursanvaux," *Le Cabinet historique* 4 (1858): 193–201. Léon de Laborde meticulously described the dispersal of Joursanvault's collection, in *Les ducs de Bourgogne. Études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le XVe siècle et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le duché de Bourgogne*, second part, 3 vols., *Preuves* (Paris: Plon Frères, 1849–52) 3:xviii–xxxiii.

[10] Georges Tessier, "Les archives de la Chambre des comptes de Blois à la fin du XVIIIe siècle (1775–1781)," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 90 (1929): 354–77, at 377; idem, "Encore les archives de la Chambre des comptes de Blois," in idem, 123 (1965):179–86, at 184–86; Elizabeth A.R. Brown and Marie-Noëlle Baudouin-Matuszek, "Un scandale étouffé à la Bibliothèque royale à la veille de la Révolution: l'affaire Gevigney-Beaumarchais (1784–1792)," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et l'Ile de France* 116 (1989): 239–307.

published a catalogue of the collection,[11] the source of Chevanne's information. Since a single buyer could not be found for the collection as a whole, lots were auctioned off in January and February 1839, and Techener gradually disposed of items that did not find buyers at these sales.[12]

Lot 1491 of the collection (consisting of five documents) contained the item that attracted Chevanne's attention, which described four original "acts [dated 1319–20] relating to the castle of Gaillard, belonging to Mme. Blanche of Burgundy." Joursanvault in fact possessed other similar acts related to Blanche, but for the sale they were separated from Lot 1491 and placed in Lot 1494. The description of this second lot contained no reference to Blanche. According to the catalogue, Lot 1494 consisted of ten original documents dated 1323: "Titres divers concernant les Andelys" and a single "Titre relatif à la seigneurie de Willegessart." Had the person who compiled the catalogue attentively consulted Joursanvault's own inventory of his collection (to which the cataloguer surely had access),[13] he would have grouped eight of the nine documents in Lot 1494 mentioning "les Andelys" with the four featuring Blanche included in Lot 1491, since they all concern provisions for Blanche and her household. He would also have dated both

[11] See n. 7 above. Michel Nortier attributed the catalogue to the *chartiste* Julien-Philippe de Gaulle, in "Le sort des archives dispersées de la Chambre des comptes de Paris," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 123 (1965): 460–537, at 528. Nortier mistakenly suggested (p. 537) that the volumes in which the documents concerning Blanche are found (Rouen, BM, Y 29) reached the library after a sale in Brussels in 1855. According to Lannette-Claverie, *Catalogue*, vi, the inventory was made by an archivist of Dijon named Boudot.

[12] A notice at the beginning of the illustrated catalogue announced that the collection would be sold as a whole if a sufficient sum was offered before 15 August; if not the collection would be auctioned off, "et un nouvel avis indiquera l'époque précise de la vente et l'ordre des vacations." Bound at the front of the Grolier Club's annotated unillustrated copy of the first volume are two "Ordre[s] des vacations de la vente des Archives Joursanvault"; a second copy of the first of these "Ordres" is bound at the end of vol. 1 of the Grolier Club's illustrated copy of the catalogue. The first "Ordre" is an eight-page pamphlet (with the last two pages blank), which lists the various divisions into which the Collection was divided (enumerated as well on pp. ix–xiv of vol. 1), and assigns minimum sale prices to the divisions. A note on the first page declares that "L'estimation ayant été faite, articles par articles, le plus bas possible, il ne sera fait aucune adjudication au dessous de la mise à prix." As notations on the "Ordre" show, the date of the sale was postponed: first to 10 October, then to 10 December, then to 14 January 1839, when the sale (that ended on 7 February) actually commenced.

[13] On this inventory, now BnF, fr. 10430, see Nortier (see n. 11 above), "Sort des archives dispersées," 528–29; Laborde (see n. 9 above), *Ducs de Bourgogne* 1:xxvii; Joseph de Croy, "Histoire des cartulaires rédigés par les ordres de Gui Ier de Châtillon," *Mémoires de la Société des sciences et lettres de Loir-et-Cher* 29 (1936): 65–66 (read on 12 January 1931).

sets of documents 1323 (or, perhaps, 1322 [according to the old style of dating] and 1323), rather than indicating that the four in Lot 1491 had been issued in 1319 or 1320.[14] At the sale, a certain "de Montbret" obtained Lot 1491 for 15 francs, whereas Jacques Techener himself purchased Lot 1494, for 17 francs.[15]

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[14] For Lots 1491 and 1494, see *Catalogue analytique* (see n. 7 above), 274–75. Cf. the entries in Joursanvault's own inventory, BnF, fr. 10430, p. 118 ("Titres de l'an 1322"), nos. 653–56, all dated 6 January 1322/23 (now, respectively, Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 25, 23, 22, 24); pp. 121–22 ("Titres de l'an 1323"), nos. 663, 673–81 (the first, dated 8 January 1323/24, concerning the lordship and forest of "Villegenart"—not, as in the sale catalogue, "Willegessart" [now Rouen, BM, Y 29, no. 28]; the second dated at Les Andelys on 28 August 1323 [now Rouen, BM, Y 29, no. 26]; the last eight, receipts for provisions furnished to the "garde de Madame blanche de bourgogne a gaillart" and dated, respectively, 31 May, 2 May, 27 May, 27 May, 2 May, 28 May, 16 June, and 2 May 1323 [now, respectively, Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 29–35, 27]); in his inventory, Joursanvault misleadingly dated nos. 678 and 681 (now Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 33 and 27) "du lundi apres la S. jaques 1323," rather than "le lundi apres la S. Iaque & S. philippe" of that year. At the top of the sheet in Y 29 on which the documents now numbered 32–35 are pasted, the figures "677. 78. 79 et 80" are written, precisely the numbers that Joursanvault assigned to these acts. There seems little possibility that no. 663 [now no. 28] has any connection with Blanche, although I shall consider below the possibility that no. 673 [now no. 26] may have been concerned her and her retinue.

[15] See the annotated copy of vol. 1 of the Joursanvault sale catalogue in the Grolier Club, pp. 274–75, where names of purchasers and prices are written in both ink and pencil. Montbret apparently also bought Lot 1490 (for 18 francs), whereas Lot 1495 went for 15 francs to a certain M. Baudot; see Laborde, *Ducs de Bourgogne* 3:xx–xxiii, n. 2, listing names of buyers and the items they purchased, including the person he identified as "De Mombret" (Lots 1490–91 and other items) as well as the publisher and bookseller Jacques Techener (Lot 1494 and other items) and "Baudot" (who apparently bought only Lot 1495); Laborde's extensive list of buyers includes neither "Jacob" nor "Lacroix" (see below for Paul Lacroix's later acquisition of parts of the collection). In the annotated Grolier Club copy, the penciled notation following Lot 1491 clearly reads "Montbret," and this name also appears beside Lots 1153 (p. 201, 15 francs 11), 1155–57 (ibid., here as "de Montbret," 14 francs), 1158–59 (p. 202, 25 francs), 1563 (p. 286, 17 francs), 1585 (p. 289, 21 francs 50), 1641 (p. 299, "de Montbret," 30 francs), 1925–29 (pp. 346–47, 71 francs), 1930 (p. 347, 15 francs) lots that (except for Lot 1930) Laborde assigned to "de Mombret"; Laborde also assigned to him Lots 2642 and 3569, which are included in the second volume of the Joursanvault catalogue, of which the Grolier Club possesses no annotated copy. Of the acts included in the first volume, Laborde also assigned to "de Mombret" Lot 398 (p. 54, 20 francs), but in the Grolier Club's annotated copy, the name is not as clearly written as the others that I list above; Laborde also identified "de Mombret" as purchaser of Lot 1308, but no name appears beside this lot in the Grolier Club copy (p. 342, *male* for p. 242, 14 francs) nor yet beside Lots 1693–95 (p. 307, 43 francs), which Laborde also assigned to "de Mombret." Laborde gave no details about "de Mombret," and I have been unable to identify any likely purchaser called "de Mombret" or "Montbret," although it is tempting to connect the latter name with the family Coquebert de Montbret, one of whose members, the interpreter and linguist Eugène (1785–1849), bequeathed his library to Rouen in 1847: Isabelle Laboulais-Lesage, *Lectures et pratiques de l'espace: L'Itinéraire de Coquebert de Montbret, savant et grand commis d'Etat (1755–1831)* (Les dix-huitièmes siècles, 31; Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999),

In short order, both these lots (and doubtless others) came into the hands of the bibliophile Paul Lacroix (1807–1884), historian, novelist, and conservator of the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris from 1855 until his death.[16] Like Joursanvault, Lacroix was a confirmed collector, and he adopted the pseudonym "Bibliophile Jacob" to call attention to his passion, which extended to original documents as well as printed volumes. One of his goals in life, he declared, was to "réunir tout ce qui regarde l'histoire de France, à laquelle je me consacrais tout entier."[17] The Joursanvault sale provided him an unparalleled opportunity. Although I have seen no evidence that he purchased items at the auction, Techener may possibly have been acting on his behalf. In any case, Lacroix acquired numerous acts from the Joursanvault collection, and he had many of his purchases mounted in albums. Then, in 1840, just two years after the Joursanvault sale, Lacroix decided with great regret to sell his working library ("Mes livres de travail"), which he himself inventoried for auction. Lot 1328 was described as "Ms. Collection de Chartes, titres et documens originaux (plus de 400), pour servir à l'histoire de la Normandie (1319–1700). En 2 vol. in-fol. dos de mar." and, in addition, "Plusieurs liasses de titres concernant également l'histoire de la Normandie au 15e e au 17e siècles."[18] This lot

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13–14; and also Henri Omont, *Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France, Départements, Tome premier, Rouen*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie., 1886–88) 1:xxxi (a total of some 60,000 volumes and more than a thousand MSS).

[16] Henry Martin, *Catalogue des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, vol. 8, *Histoire de la Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* (Paris: E. Plon, Nourrit et Cie., 1899), 578, 586, 595. Lacroix made many important acquisitions for the library, which in 1928 obtained a large collection of autographed documents he had amassed (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 9623).

[17] *Catalogue des livres et des manuscrits, la plupart relatifs à l'histoire de France, composant la bibliothèque du Bibliophile Jacob, laquelle sera vendue en totalité à l'amiable, ou, à défaut d'acquéreur, le Lundi 24 Février 1840, et jours suivans, à six heures de relevée, Maison Silvestre, Rue des Bons-Enfans, 30, Par le ministère de Me Commendeur, commissaire-priseur, rue Saint-Germain-des-Prés, 11* (Paris: Techener, 1839), ii–v. In the preface to this catalogue, Lacroix described his albums of documents, modeled on those of the historian Amans-Alexis Monteil (1769–1850), and he stated that most of their contents came from the Joursanvault collection. See also Lannette-Claverie (see n. 9), *Catalogue*, vii, xxvii.

[18] *Catalogue…Jacob*, 235 (in the section "Histoire des provinces et villes de France," 211–70). Note also, ibid., 251, no. 1443 (in the section entitled "Bourgogne et Franche-Comté.—Bresse et Bugey"); "Ms. Inventaire analyt. de chartes, titres et documens du Xe au XVe siècle, pour servir à l'histoire de France et particulièrement de la Bourgogne et de la Franche-Comté, ainsi qu'aux généalogies des maisons nobles de ces deux provinces, avec tables géographiques et onomastiques. In-fol. sur pap., dos de mar." This volume is now MS. 2601 [2] of the Bibliothèque municipale of Rouen; it is part of the bequest of the Marquis de Martainville, whose father was *maire* of Rouen between 1821 and 1830, and who left the library some 500 volumes relating to the history of Normandy:

came into the possession of the Bibliothèque municipale of Rouen, and the documents now constitute the core of the seven-volume collection of 857 acts related to the history of Normandy, ranging in date from 1179 to 1723, which comprise MS Y 29.[19] On its first folio, the initial volume of the series bears the notation "Fonds du bibliophile Jacob. no. 1328 de son catalogue," reproducing the number Jacob assigned the collection in his inventory.[20] Curiously, the catalogue of the Bibliothèque municipale of Rouen does not refer to Jacob (or Lacroix) in describing the collection, but rather calls it a "Recueil de chartes relatives à l'histoire de la Normandie," and states that it "Provient de la collection Joursanvault."

Joursanvault believed the twelve documents that mentioned Blanche had special historical significance. Thus, in his own inventory he included the marginal notation "hist[oire] de france" beside his analysis of each of the acts to indicate their special importance. As will become clear, their significance stems simply from the fact that they refer to Charles IV's discarded wife Blanche.

Four acts, dated 6 January 1323, are receipts issued by Pierre la Vache, castellan of Melun and royal sergeant-at-arms, long known to have been one of the "guardians of Lady Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard" in 1322.[21] He issued the receipts as castellan of Melun, royal

Catalogue... Rouen 1:xxxi, and also 2:13. Martainville doubtless acquired the MS from the sale of the Jacob/Lacroix collection. After Martainville's death, most of his books were disposed of by auction: *Catalogue des livres composant la bibliothèque de feu M. le Marquis de Martinville. Libres sur l'art héraldique et l'histoire généalogique de la noblesse; Grands ouvrages à figures (Histoire naturelle, beaux-arts, voyages pittoresques); Chroniques gothiques; Topographie et histoire de France, histoire de Normandie; Paléographie, etc., etc*. (Paris: L. Potier, 1859).

[19] Omont, *Catalogue... Rouen* 1:311 (formerly Y 130, MS 1236); see below, following n. 20, for the catalogue's description of the volumes.

[20] On the same page the total of documents in the volume is given as 144 (corrected from 143), whereas according to *Catalogue... Rouen* it contains 139 acts.

[21] "Petrus de Tonliz et Petrus La Vaiche, castellanus Meleduni, servientes armorum, custodesque domine Blanche de Burgundia apud Castrum Gaillardi": *Journaux... Charles IV le Bel*, 145, no. 716 (30 May 1322, referring to royal letters dated 15 January 1322). Both men witnessed the procuration that Blanche issued on 6 April 1322, authorizing Aimeri Mazerant to represent her before the pope on 8 May following: John XXII, *Lettres secrètes et curiales relatives à la France extraites des registres du Vatican*, ed. Auguste-Léonel Coulon et al. Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 3, ser. 1; Paris: Albert Fontemoing et al., 1906–) 2:104 (appended to the bull of divorce of 19 May 1322; their names appear as "Petro de Thoulis" and "Petro dicto la Vache, armigeris"). See also *Journaux... Charles IV le Bel*, 313, no. 1782 (October 1322), where Pierre la Vache alone is listed as Blanche's guardian. Le Père Anselme had access to other accounts in the archives of the Chambre des comptes of Paris showing that in 1316 Blanche was in

sergeant-at-arms, and "guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at the castle of Gaillard." To judge from Pierre's future career as a master of the royal artillery, he was a trained and experienced soldier.[22] The receipts are all for relatively small amounts of grain and peas "pour la garnison" of Château-Gaillard, whose cost totalled less than 20 l.p.[23] The eight other acts were issued by Guillaume de la Rivière, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys and guardian of the seal of the castellany. They testify to payments that eight individuals received for grain provided to Pierre la Vache. These payments were all said to have been made by (or "through the hand of") Jean de Fresnay, *bailli* of Gisors, and the transactions with Pierre la Vache for which they were tendered all seem to have occurred earlier, "at the time when Pierre was at Gaillard" or "at the time when he was, at Gaillard, guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy."[24] Three of these receipts are dated 2

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the hands of Robert Berfumée, *bailli* of Crécy, and that between 26 August 1319 and 21 May 1321, her guards at Château-Gaillard were Jean de Croisy and André Thiart [*sic*], and later, Geoffroy le Cauchois as well as the *bailli* of Gisors: *Histoire genealogique* 1:96 (citing "Compot. Thesauri 1322" and "Jornale Thesauri 31. octob. 1328"); consult also Robert Mignon, *Inventaire d'anciens comptes royaux dressés par Robert Mignon sous le règne de Philippe de Valois*, ed. Charles-Victor Langlois (Recueil des historiens de la France, Documents financiers, 1; Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1899), 37, no. 128, for accounts tendered by Robert Berfumée for the *bailliage* of Crécy and Coulommiers, west of Paris, for All Saints 1313. Mignon also listed (ibid., 363) among accounts received for Ascension and All Saints in 1319 one of *Andreas Tyardi* "for his expenses for the needs of Lady Blanche at Château-Gaillard" ("Compotus Andree Tyardi de expensis per eum factis ad opus domine Blanche in Castro Gaillardi tunc"). On 13 March 1322, Andreas Tyardi, identified as *ostarius armorum* and former *panetarius* of Charles's mother, gave testimony before the bishop of Paris concerning the critical issue of Mahaut of Artois's role as Charles's godmother: AN, J 682, no. 2, lines 695–700. On 18 April 1322, Thiard (called *serviens armorum Regis*) was paid 48 l.p. for his expenses in going to the papal court at Avignon "pro secretis negociis domini Regis," doubtless the dissolution of the marriage: *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 96, no. 446, and n. 1.

[22] *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 1463, no. 9126 (28 November 1325, military service in Flanders); 1536, no. 9569 (28 January 1325, similar service in Beaucaire and the Toulousain; 1566, no. 9764 (20 February 1326, similar service in Carcassonne).

[23] Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 22–25; in no. 24, Pierre acknowledged receiving not only "sis boiss[eaux] de ble," but also "sis boiss[eaux] de pois."

[24] Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 27, 29–35. The eight documents were prepared by two different scribes, to judge from the script and the spelling of a number of words. In nos. 29 and 31 (issued, respectively, on 31 and 27 May) "de la Rivière" is rendered "de la Ryuiere"; "recheu" (or "receu") is in these acts "recoeu"; Burgundy (in the other acts "bourg'" or "bourgoigne") appears as "bourgongnie"; "biens muebles & non muebles" (in the others) is rendered "biens Mouebles et Imouebles"; "en temoing" (in the others) is here "el temoing." The phraseology of nos. 29–35 is virtually identical, but that of the earliest of the documents (no. 27), drawn up on 2 May, differs in several respects from the others.

May, two 27 May, another 28 May, one 31 May, and the last 16 June 1323.[25] Two of them, both issued on 27 May, are the counterparts of receipts for grain that Pierre la Vache made out on 6 January, one to Robert Roussel for 22 s. 6 d. par.,[26] and the other to Colart le Boulanger, *bourgeois* of Les Andelys, for 9 l. 15 s. par.[27] These payments reveal how long these two individuals had to wait for reimbursement; their situation was doubtless not extraordinary.

Another act in the series does not refer to Blanche but may be connected with the others. It was issued on 12 June 1323 on behalf of Jean de Gaillon, *chevalier*, lord of "Grollay" (probably Grosley-sur-Risle, ca. 10 km. SW of Beaumont-le-Roger). In it, Jean de Fresnay (here *frenoy*) is said to have paid Jean de Gaillon 70 s.p. for grain that Pierre la Vache (identified simply as "le chastelain de melleun") had taken when Jean was transporting grain to the market at Les Andelys.[28] The receipt does not mention Blanche of Burgundy, but in view of the other grain that Pierre la Vache received in his capacity as Blanche's guardian, it seems likely that this receipt was also related to Blanche and her household.

The acts show that some 34 l.p. were spent on grain and food for Blanche of Burgundy and her retinue in the first six months of 1323—which represents only a portion of the expenses for her upkeep. The treasury journals for the reign of Charles IV show that 628 l.p. were allocated to those guarding her in 1322 (in addition to 151 l.p. credited to Blanche herself for earlier expenses).[29] A similar sum was spent in 1323.[30] The accounts suggest that the money expended on Blanche made considerable inroads on the budget of the *baillage*.[31]

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[25] See the Appendix, below.

[26] Rouen, BM, Y 26, nos. 22, 31.

[27] Rouen, BM, Y 29, nos. 25, 32.

[28] Rouen, BM, no. 26. Gaillon is located 12 km. SE of Les Andelys, on the south bank of the Seine.

[29] For 1322, see *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 144, no. 716; and 313, no. 1782 (payments to Blanche's guardians of 400 l.p. and 228 l.p.); see also n. 8 above.

[30] For 1323, see *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 522, no. 3013 (400 l.p. to Pierre la Vache, Blanche's *custos*, in the Easter Exchequer, 1323); 700, no. 4191 (180 l. 10 d.p. to Jean de Fresnay, *bailli* of Gisors, in the Michelmas Exchequer, for Blanche's expenses from 12 May to 30 September).

[31] Compare the receipts of the five *bailliages* of Normandy for the period when Blanche was at Gisors (which I have rounded off for convenience' sake): *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 308–9, nos. 1745–49 (Michaelmas Exchequer, 1322, when Jean de Fresnay was credited with 400 l.t., and the other four *baillis* with between 980 l.t. [Caux] and 5816 l.t. [Caen]); 519, nos. 2978–83 (Easter Exchequer, 1322, when Jean de Fresnay was credited with nothing, and the other four with between 1482 l.t. (Caux) and 7355 l.t. [Caen]); 694, nos. 4144–45 (Michaelmas Exchequer, 1323, when Jean de Fresnay credited with 63 l.t., and the other four with between 1278 l.t. [Rouen] and 6415 l.t. [Coutances]); 999, nos.

The flurry of receipts drawn up in May and June seems likely to have resulted from Pierre's replacement as Blanche's guard by Jean le Cervoisier, whom Charles IV sent to Château-Gaillard in early April.[32] At the same time as Jean assumed the post of *custos*, the *bailli*, Jean de Fresnay, took over the functions Pierre had exercised in accounting for Blanche's expenses. It was Jean through whose hands the king's creditors were paid, and through whose hands the receipts reached the royal accounting office in Paris. In none of the acts drawn up in May and June of 1323 does Pierre la Vache figure as an active participant, although they all refer to the time when he was Blanche's guard at Château-Gaillard. How long Blanche remained at Château-Gaillard is unclear, but she may have been taken elsewhere in the spring of 1324, since she does not figure in the accounts of the *bailli* of Gisors after 1 April of that year.[33] As has been seen, the only sure evidence conerning her death is John XXII's incidental remark that she was no longer alive, included in the bull he issued for Charles IV and Jeanne d'Évreux on 5 April 1326.[34]

The twelve, possibly thirteen, acts related to Blanche now in Rouen may not be as important as Joursanvault and Chevanne considered them, but they confirm and amplify information provided by other documents that were once in the Chambre des comptes, some of which survive, others of which do not. They witness the importance of the impartial light that fiscal documents, prepared for purely administrative purposes, sometimes shed on events and individuals that, for one reason or another, have been accorded "historical" significance.[35]

5981–85 (Michaelmas Exchequer, 1324, when Jean de Fresnay credited with nothing and the other four with between 560 l.t. [Rouen] and 2996 l.t. [Coutances]).

[32] *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 506, no. 2916 (6 April 1323); 699, no. 4188 (November 1323). Jean was sent with "litteras Regis de commissione sibi facta super dicta garda"; he received 64 l. 9 s.p. for Blanche's expenses in the Michelmas Exchequer of 1323 (ibid., 506, no. 2916; 699, no. 4198).

[33] On 17 May 1324, Jean de Fresnay, *bailli* of Gisors, was paid some 257 l.p. for Blanche's expenses from 1 October 1323 through 1 April 1324 (*Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 848, no. 5103; see also no. 5104, reimbursement of 147 l.p. for clothing for Blanche and her attendants; see as well n. 30 above); he received no similar sum in the Michelmas Exchequer, but was put "in sufferentia" of 50 l. for the Lord of Chambly "et de toto residuo pro expensis domine Blanche de Burgondia" (ibid., 1001, no. 6006). Jean de Fresnay was *bailli* of Gisors until at least the end of May 1325, when he was replaced by a former *bailli* of Gisors, Jean l'Oncle (*Avunculus*), who served in 1325–26; see *HF* 24[1]: *123, and *Journaux… Charles IV le Bel*, 1263, no. 7668; 1266, no. 7690; 1456, no. 971.

[34] See n. 4 above.

[35] See Elizabeth A.R. Brown, "Subsidy and Reform in 1321: The Accounts of Najac and the Policies of Philip V," *Traditio* 27 (1971): 399-430, at 400–1, rprt. in eadem, *Politics*

Appendix

The following documents are edited from the original acts preserved in Rouen, BM, Y 29. I present them here in the order in which they are mounted in the album where they were affixed by Paul Lacroix between 1838 and 1840. I have attempted to identify the places given in the acts; some are easy to locate whereas others pose problems, leading me to suggest alternatives. I have silently expanded most abbreviations; where I have doubts, I enclose my addition in brackets or add a note explaining my decision. The punctuation and capitalization reflect those of the originals, although I have separated some words that the scribes linked (such as, for example, "aauoir," "apresent," "lamain," "lameson").

no. 22. Sachent Touz que Ie castellain [*sic*] de meleun Sergent darmes du Roy nostresire & Garde de Madame blanche de bourgongne ou castel de Gaillart & Fesant les despens pour la dite dame & pour ses gens a present Connois A avoir. Pour la Garnison dudit chastel. de Robert Roussel de la buscaille.[36] vn setier de ble prizie a vint deus sous sis deniers parisis. En tesmoing de laquelle choze [*sic*] Ie scelle ceste lettre de mon seel escript a Gaillart le Ieudi Iour de la Typhaine lan de Grace Mil Trois cens & deus. [6 January 1323]

Sealed on a single strip of parchment; fragment of seal in brown wax; 187 × 60/48 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 118, no. 655: "autre Recu par le meme d'un Septier de bled de roussel de la Buscaille, Sous Son Seau apposé a cet acte; desd. jour et an."

no. 22. Let all know that I, castellan of Melun, sergeant-at-arms of the king our lord, and guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, and at present in charge of expenses for the said lady and her people, recognize having [received] for the garrison of the said castle from Robert Roussel de La Buscaille a setier of grain worth 22 s. 6 d.par. In witness of which I seal this letter with my seal. Written at Château-Gaillard on Thursday the day of the Epiphany, in the year of grace 1322.

and Institutions in Capetian France (Variorum Collected Studies Series, 350; Aldershot: Variorum, 1991), no. VIII.

[36] La Bucaille is located ca. 5 km. SW of les Andelys, ca. 7 km. SW of Château-Gaillard. Note also the Bois de La Bucaille some 20 km. ESE of La Bucaille.

no. 23. Sachent Tous que Ie chastellain [*sic*] / de meleun Sergent darmes du Roy nostresire & Garde de Madame blanche de bourgongne ou castel de Gaillart & Fesant les despens pour la dite dame & pour ses gens a present. Connois a Avoir Pour la Garnison dudit chastel. de Pierre du pont de noion le sec[37] Trois setiers de ble du pris de Trente Trois souls le setier valent les Trois setiers quatre liures diz & noef souls parisis. Pour laquel choze Ie seele ceste lettre de mon seel Escript a Gaillart le Ieudi ou Iour de la Tiphaine lan de Grace Mil Trois cens vint & deus. [6 January 1323].

Sealed on a single strip of parchment; fragment of seal in red wax; 168 × 68/54 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 118, no. 654: "autre par lequel le meme reconnoit avoir recu pour la meme cause trois septiers de bled de pierre du pont de noyon le Sec desd jours et an."

no. 23. Let all know that I, castellan of Melun, sergeant-at-arms of the king our lord, and guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, and at present in charge of expenses for the said lady and her people, recognize having [received] for the garrison of the said castle from Pierre du Pont of Noyon-le-Sec three setiers of grain valued at 33 s. a setier, in sum 4 l. 19 s.par [in payment]. Because of which I seal this letter with my seal. Written at Château-Gaillard on Thursday the day of the Epiphany, in the year of grace 1322.

no. 24. Sachent Touz que Ie castellain [*sic*] de meleun Sergent darmes du Roy nostresire & Garde de madame blanche de bourgongne ou castel de Gaillart Et fesant les despens Pour la dite dame & Pour ses gens a present Connois a Auoir pris pour la Garnison dudit chastel de la personne de Guisemees sis boiss[eaux][38] de ble prizies a vint deus souls sis deniers & Sis boiss[eaux] de pois prizies a dishuit souls parisis. En tesmoing de quel choze Ie seele ceste lettre de mon seel. Escript a Gaillart le Ieudi ou Iour de la Tiphaine lan Mil Trois cens. Vint & deus. [6 January 1323]

Sealed on a single strip of parchment; fragment of seal in red wax; 185 × 78/65 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 118, no. 656: "autre recu

[37] I have not been able to locate this place; note, however, Nojeon-en-Vexin, ca. 15 km. NE of les Andelys; also a Noyers 3 km. NW of Les Andelys, and another Noyers some 20 km. east of les Andelys.

[38] Six *boisseaux* were equivalent to one *mine*, six *boisses* to one *boisseau*.

par le meme de Six boisseaux de bled pour la meme cause desd. jour et an."

no. 24. Let all know that I, castellan of Melun, sergeant-at-arms of the king our lord, and guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, and at present in charge of expenses for the said lady and her people, recognize having taken for the garrison of the said castle from the person of Guisemees six boisseaux of grain worth 22 s. 6 d., and six boiseaux of peas worth 18 s.par [in payment]. In witness of which I seal this letter with my seal. Written at Château-Gaillard on Thursday the day of the Epiphany, in the year of grace 1322.

no. 25. Sachent Tous que Ie castellain de meleun Sergent darmes du Roy nostresire & Garde de Madame Blanche de Bourgongne ou castel de Gaillart & Fesant les despens pour ladite dame & pour ses gens a present. Connois a Avoir pris pour la Garnison dudit chastel de Colart le boulenger bourgois dandely Trois sonmes[39] de ble prisie la sonme sexante & chinc sous valant[40] les Trois sonmes noef liures quinze souls. Pour laquel choze Ie ay seele ceste lettre de mon seel. Escript a Gaillart le Ieudi ou Iour de la Tiphaine. lan de Grace mil Trois cens vint & deus. [6 January 1323]

Sealed on a single strip of parchment; fragment of seal in brown wax; 191 × 70/52. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 118, no. 653: "acte par lequel castelain de Melun Sergent d'armes du roy et garde de Madame Blanche de Bourgogne au castel de Gaillart, reconnoit avoir recu de colart le boulenger bourgeois d'angely trois Sommes de bled pour les depens de lad' dame et de ses gens du jour de la tiphanie 1322."

no. 25. Let all know that I, castellan of Melun, sergeant-at-arms of the king our lord, and guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, and at present in charge of expenses for the said lady and her people, recognize having taken for the garrison of the said castle from Colart the baker, burgess of Les Andelys, three sommes of grain worth 65 s. a somme, totaling for the three sommes 9 l. 15 s. For which reason I have sealed this letter with my seal. Written at Château-Gaillard on Thursday the day of the Epiphany, in the year of grace 1322.

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[39] A *somme* was equivalent to six *setiers*.
[40] *vla'*, at the end of a line.

26. A tous cheus qui ches lestres verront & orront mahiet de vaus salut. Sachies tous que Ie eu & Recheu de noble home & sage Iehen de frenoy baillif de gisors v nom de noble home monsieur Iehen de gaillon cheualier seigneur de grollay[41] lxx s. par. pour.v. mines de ble les quelles le chastelain de melleun avoit fet prendre du ble audit cheualier en venant au marchie a andely en tesmoig [*sic*] de cen [*sic*] Ie seellees [*sic*] ches lestres de mon seel qui furent fetes len de grace mil^{o} iij^{cc} & xxiij le diemenche apres la saint barnabe apostre. [12 June 1323]

Sealed on a single strip of parchment, in brown wax, with most of the seal surviving; 160/165 × 64/48 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, pp. 121–22, no. 673: "acte par lequel mahiet de vaus reconnoit avoir recu de noble homme et sage jean de fresnoy baillif de gisors, au nom de jean de gaillon chevalier Seigneur de grollay 70 Sols parisis pour du bled que le chatelain de Melun avoit fait prendre dud chevalier au Marché a andely. du dimanche apres la S. Barnabe 1323 Sous Son Seau apposé a cet acte."

no. 26. To all those who see and hear these letters, Mahiet de Vaus [sends] greetings. Let all know that I had and received from the noble and wise man Jean de Fresnoy, bailli of Gisors, in the name of the noble man, Monsieur Jean de Gaillon, chevalier, lord of Grollay, 70 s. par. [in payment] for five mines of grain, which the castellan of Melun had had taken from the chevalier's grain [when he was] coming to the market at Les Andelys. In witness of this I seal these letters with my seal, which were written in the year of grace 1323, on Sunday after the [feast of] Saint Barnabas the Apostle.

27. A tous Ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli garde du scel de la chastelerie dandeli salut. Saches que par deuant nous fu present Iohan bourdon de la paroisse de hanesies[42] Et Recognut que il auoit eu & Recheu de pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart Garde de madame blanche de bourgogne vint & vn soulz parisis pour ble dont il se tint pour bien paie par deuant nous & en quita le dit pierre & Iohan de fresnay baillif de giss[ors] par qui main il Rechut le dit argent / & tous ceus qui

[41] Note Grosley-sur-Risle, ca. 5 km. SE of Beaumont-le-Roger.

[42] This could also be read *hauesies*; note Hennezis, ca. 8 km. SSE of les Andelys, slightly SW of La Bucaille.

dudit pierre & du dit baillif aront cause / Et quant a cen tenir ferme & estable ledit obligie en a obligie soy & ses h[oir]s[43] & tous ses biens Muebles & non Muebles presens & avenir & son cors a tenir en prison se il venoit encontre cest fet Et Rendre tous cous & damages que ledit pierre & ledit baillif ou ceus qui aroient deus cause pouroient auoir par la cause de ceste quitance dont le porteur de ces lettres seroit creu par son serement sanz autre preuue fere En tesmoing [*sic*] de cen [*sic*] nous avon [*sic*] mis a ces lettres le scel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le lundi apres la S. Iaque & S. philippe. [2 May 1323]

Sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 10 mm., with traces of red wax remaining; 178/176 × 82/78 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 681: "Quittance par jean Bourdon de 21 Sols parisis pour meme cause du lundi apres la S. jaques 1323."

no. 27. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Jean Bourdon of the parish of Hanesies, who recognized that he had had and received from Pierre la Vache at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, 21 s.par. [in payment] for grain, for which, in our presence, he confessed himself well paid and acquitted the said Pierre and Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, by whose hand he received the said money, and all those who have a claim against the said Pierre and the said bailli. And as to confirming and upholding this, the said obligated person has obligated himself and his heirs and all his property movable and immovable, present and future, and his body to be held in prison, if he contravenes this act, and to pay all costs and damages that the said Pierre and the said bailli or those who have a claim against them could suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Monday after [the feast of] Saint James and Saint Philip.

[43] Here and below, *hs'*.

29.[44] A touz Ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Ryuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandely garde du seel de la chastelerie dandely. salut Saches que par deuant nous fu present Iohan du fontenil personne de baillueil[45] fermier de la buscaille et Recognut que il auoit eu et Recoeu de Iohan de fresnay baillif de Gisors quatre liures et Seze soulz parisis pour ble pris par la main Pierre la vache garde de Madame blanche de bourgongnie el chastel de Gaillart et en quitons ledit baillif et touz ceus qui aroient cause de li et[46] quant a la dite quitance tenir ferme et estable il en obliga touz ses biens Mouebles & Imouebles presens et avenir se il venoit de Riens contre la quitance dessus dite El temoing de ceus auon [*sic*] Mis a ces lettres le seel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit donne lan de grace Mil Trois cens vint et trois le Mardj apres la feste du saint sacrement. [31 May 1323]

Once sealed on a single strip of parchment, which is now torn off; 264/120 × 57/39 mm. The date "1323" is written in ink at the bottom of the act. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 674: "acte par lequel guillaume de la riviere pretre prieur de la maison dieu dandely et garde du Scel de la chastellenie d'andely atteste que le fermier de la Buscailles [*sic*] a recu de jean de fresnoy baillif de gisors quatre livres Seize Sols parisis pour bled livré a prerre la vache garde de Madame Blanche de Bourgogne au chateau de gaillart du mardi apres la fete du S. Sacrement 1323."

no. 29. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Jean de Fontenil, person of Bailleveil, fermier of La Buscaille, who recognized that he had had and received from Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 4 l. 16 s. par. [in payment] for grain taken by the hand of Pierre la Vache, guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, and acquits the said bailli and all those who have a claim against him, and as to confirming and upholding this receipt, he has obligated all his property movable and immovable, present and future, if he in any way contravenes the aforesaid receipt. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of

[44] For no. 28, see n. 14 above.
[45] A cluster of places incorporating the name "Bailleul"—St-Pierre-de-Bailleul, St-Etienne s/s Bailleul, Villez s/s Bailleul—is located just west of Vernon, ca. 14 km. south of Les Andelys, on the south bank of the Seine.
[46] Following *et*, *nec* is crossed out.

the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Tuesday after the feast of the Holy Sacrament.

30. A tous ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli Garde du seel de la chastelerie dandeli salut Saches que par deuant nous fu present vace capet de la paroisse de hanesies[47] Et Recognut que il auoit eu & Recheu de pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart Garde de madame blanche de bourg[oigne][48] par la main de Iohan de fresnay baillif de Gisors trente soulz parisis pour ble dont il se tint pour bien paie pardeuant nous Et en quite ledit pierre & ledit baillif & tous ceus qui de li aront cause & du dit baillif / Et quant a cen tenir Ferme & estable le dit vace en a obligie soy & ses h[oir]s & tous ses biens Muebles & non Muebles presens & avenir / a prendre & a vendre par le Seriant le Roy se mestiers estoit / Et[49] son cors a tenir en prison se il venoit de Riens encontre cest fet Et Rendre tous cous & damages que le dit pierre & ledit baillif & tous ceus qui aront cause de eulz aroient par la cause de ceste quitance dont le porteur de ces lettres Seroit creu par son Serement sanz autre preuue fere En tesmoing de cen nous avon [*sic*] mis a ces lettres le scel de la chastelerie dessusdite sauf aut[rui] droit. Donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le lundi apres la S. Iaq[ue] & S. philippe. [2 May 1323]

Sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 8–10 mm.; fragments of a seal in brown wax remain; 173/180 × 89/87 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 675: "quittance par vace capet a jean de fresnoy, baillif de gisors de trente Sols parisis pour bled livré de pierre la vache dans le tems qu'il etoit garde de Madame blanche de bourgogne a gaillart du lundi apres la S. jaques et S. philippe 1323."

no. 30. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Wace Capet of the parish of Hanesies, who recognized that he had had and received from the hand of

[47] See n. 42 above.

[48] I have expanded *bourg'* in this manner because *bourgoigne* is spelled out in full in nos. 34 and 35 below, acts that were written by the same scribe as this act.

[49] Following *Et, Re* is crossed out.

Pierre la Vache, at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 30 s. par. [in payment] for grain, for which, in our presence, he confessed himself well paid, and acquits the said Pierre and the said bailli, and all those who have a claim against him and against the said bailli, and as to confirming and upholding this [act], the said Wace has obligated himself and his heirs and all his property movable and immovable, present and future, to be taken and sold by the king's sergeant if necessary, and his body to be held in prison, if in any way he contravenes this act, and to pay all costs and damages that the said Pierre and the said bailli and all those who have a claim against them suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Monday after [the feast of] Saint James and Saint Philip.

31. A Tous Ceus qui Ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Ryuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandely garde du seel de la chastelerie dandely salut Saches que par deuant nous fu present Robert Roussel de la bucaille en la paroisse de Guiss'[50] Et Recognut que il auoit eu et Recoeu de pierre la vache chastelain de Meleun. du temps que il estoit a gailla[rt][51] et garde de Madame blanche de bourgongnie par la main Iohan de frenay [*sic*] baillif de Gisors vint deus soulz et Sis deniers parisis pour ble pris / a Gaillart pour ladite dame dont le dit Robert se tint pour bien paie par deuant nous. Et en quita le dit baillif Et touz ceus qui aroient cause de li Et quant a ce tenir ferme et estable ledit Robert en obliga touz ses biens Mouebles et Imouebles presens et avenir. Et son cors a tenir en prison fermee [*sic*] se il venoit Iames ne fesoit venir contre la quitance dessus dite et Rendre couz [*sic*] & damages que le dit baillif ou ceus qui aroient cause de li pouroient auoir par la Reson de la dite quitance dont le porteeur [*sic*] de ces lettres seroit Creu. par son Serement sans autre preueue [*sic*] fere El temoing de ce nous auon Mis a ces lettres le seel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit donne lan degrace Mil Trois cens vint & Trois le vendredj apres la trinite. [27 May 1323]

[50] Note Guiseniers, 1 km. north of La Bucaille.
[51] The end of this word, at the end of a line, is cut off.

Once sealed on single strip of parchment, which has now been torn off; 160/53 × 104/88 mm.; "Andaly" is written in pencil on the bottom of the document. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 676: "quittance par pierre roussel de la Bucaille a jean de fresnoy Baillif de gisors de vingt deux Sols parisis pour bled livré a prirre [*sic*] la vache chatelain de Melun dans le tems qu'il etoit garde de Madame Blanche de Bourgogne, du vendredi aprés la trinité 1323."

no. 31. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Robert Roussel of La Bucaille in the parish of Guiss, who recognized that he had had and received from the hand of Pierre la Vache, castellan of Melun, at the time when he was at Château-Gaillard and guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 30 s. par. [in payment] for grain taken at Gaillard for the said lady, for which, in our presence, the said Robert confessed himself well paid, and acquitted the said bailli, and all those who have a claim against him, and as to confirming and upholding this [act], the said Robert has obligated all his property movable and immovable, present and future, and his body to be held in a well-guarded prison, if he ever contravenes (or has anyone contravene) the aforesaid receipt, and to pay the costs and damages that the said bailli or those who have a claim against him could suffer because of the said receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Friday after the Trinity.

32. A tous Ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli Garde du scel de la chastelerie dandeli salut Saches que par deuant nous fu present Colart le bouleng[er] bourgeis dandeli Et Recognut que il auoit eu & Receu de pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart garde de madame blanche de bourg[oigne] par la main Iehan de fresnay baillif de gisors / noef liures & quinze soulz parisis Pour ble & en quitent ledit baillif & le dit pierre & tout [*sic*] ceus qui de eus aront cause & sen tint [*sic*] pour bien paie pardeuant nous Et quant a cen [*sic*] ledit colart en a obligie soy & tous ses biens muebles & non muebles presens & a venir & son cors a tenir en prison se il venoit encontre cest fet & Rendre tous cous & damages que ledit baillif & ledit pierre & ceus qui aroient cause de eus & pouroient auoir par la cause de ceste quitance dont le port[eur]

de ces lettres Seroit creu par son serement sanz autre preuue fere En tesmoing de cen nous avon mis a ces lettres le seel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le vendredi apres la feste du saint sacrement. [27 May 1323]

Sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 10 mm., with traces of red wax remaining; 162 × 85/90 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 677: "quittance par colart le Boulenger bourgeois d'andely de 9 # 15 S pour bled fourni a pierre la vache garde de Mde Blanche de Bourgogne a gaillart. du vendredi apres la fete du S. Sacrement 1323."

no. 32. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Colart the Baker, burgess of Les Andelys, who recognized that he had had and received from Pierre la Vache at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 9 l. 15 s.par. [in payment] for grain and acquits the said bailli and the said Pierre and all those who have a claim against them, and in our presence confessed himself well paid, and as to this [act], the said Colart has obligated himself and all his property movable and immovable, present and future, and his body to be held in prison, if he contravenes this act, and to pay all costs and damages that the said bailli and the said Pierre, and those who have a claim against them could suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Friday after the feast of the Holy Sacrament.

33. A tous Ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli Garde du scel de la chastelerie dandeli salut. Saches que pardeuant nous fu presente Thomasse[52] la caronnesse de la paroisse de hanesies[53] Et Recognut que elle auoit eu & Recheu de pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart garde de ma dame blanche de bourg[oigne] vint & deus soulz parisis pour ble par la main de Iohan de fresnay baillif de gisors / dont elle se tint pour bien paie

[52] In the act *Thsse*, possibly *Thssie*.
[53] See n. 42 above.

par deuant nous Et en quita le dit pierre & ledit baillif & tous ceus qui aront cause de eulz / Et quant a cen tenir ferme & estable elle en a obligie soy & ses h[oir]s & tous ses biens muebles & non muebles presens & avenir & son cors a tenir en prison se elle venoit encontre cest fet Et Rendre tous cous & damages que ledit pierre & ledit baillif ou ceus qui aront cause de eulz pouroient auoir par la cause de ceste quitance dont le port[eur] de ces lettres Seroit creu par son Serement sans autre p[reu]ue fere / En tesmoing de cen nous avon[54] mis a ces lettres le seel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le lundi s [*sic*] apres feste S.[55] S. Iaque & S. philippe. [2 May 1323]

Sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 10 mm.; no traces of wax remain; 179/182 × 96 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 678: "quittance de thomasse la caronnesse de vingt deux Sols parisis, pour meme cause. du lundi apres la S. jaques 1323."

no. 33. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Thomasse la Caronnesse of the parish of Hanesies, who recognized that she had had and received from Pierre la Vache, at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 22 s. par. [in payment] for grain, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, for which, in our presence, she confessed herself well paid, and acquitted the said Pierre and the said bailli, and all those who have a claim against them, and as to confirming and upholding this [act], she has obligated herself and her heirs, and all her property movable and immovable, present and future, and her body to be held in prison, if she contravenes this act, and to pay all costs and damages that the said Pierre and the said bailli, or those who have a claim against them could suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Monday after [the feast of] Saint James and Saint Philip.

[54] MS *avo'*.

[55] *Sic*, at the end of the penultimate line. This act, the first of the series issued by Guillaume de la Rivière, seems to have been written in great haste.

34. A tous ceus qui ces lettres verront guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli garde du scel de la chastelerie dandeli salut Saches que par deuant nous fu present Iohan du puis[56] de la paroisse de forest en vneguest[57] Et Recognut que il auoit eu & Receu de Pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart Garde de madame blanche de bourgoigne / par la main Iohan de fresnay baillif de gisors sexante & deus soulz parisis pour ble dont le dit obligie se tint pour bien paie par deuant nous & enquite ledit baillif & ledit pierre & tous ceus qui aront cause de eus Et quant a cen tenir ferme & estable le dit Iohan du puis[58] en a obligie soy & tous ses biens Muebles & non Muebles presens & avenir & son cors a tenir en prison se il venoit encontre cest fet Et Rendre tous cous & damages que les diz baillif & pierre ou ceus qui de eus aroient eu par la cause de ceste quitance dont le port[eur] de ces lettres Seroit creu par son Serement sanz autre P[reu]ue fere En tesmoing de cen nous avon mis a ces lettres le scel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit. donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le samedi apres feste du saint sacrement. [28 May 1323]

Sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 12 mm., with traces of brown wax remaining; 192/190 × 87/80 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 679: "quittance par jean dupuis de 62 Sols parisis pour meme cause. du Sambedi [*sic*] apres la fete du S. Sacrement 1323."

no. 34. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de La Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Jean du Puis of the parish of Forest-en-Vneguest, who recognized that he had had and received from Pierre la Vache, at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 62 s. par. [in payment] for grain, for which, in our presence, the said obligated person confessed himself well paid, and acquits the said bailli and the said Pierre, and all those who have a claim against them, and as to confirming and upholding this [act], the said Jean du Puis has obligated himself and all his property movable and immovable, present and future, and his body to be held in prison, if he contravenes this act,

[56] The name can also be read *pins* or *purs*.
[57] I have been unable to identify this place, although I note Forêt-la-Folie, ca. 8 km. ESE of Les Andelys.
[58] See n. 56 above.

and to pay all costs and damages that the said bailli and Pierre, or those who have a claim against them suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Saturday after the feast of the Holy Sacrament.

35. A tous ceus qui ces lettres verront Guillaume de la Riuiere prestre prieur de la meson dieu dandeli garde du scel de la chastelerie dandeli salut Saches que pardeuant nous fu present Iohan bou'loche[59] de la paroisse de guiseignies[60] Et Recognut que il auoit eu & Receu de pierre la vache du temps que il estoit a gaillart garde de madame blanche de bourgoigne par la main Iohan de fresnay baillif de gisors diz & huit soulz parisis pour vne Mine de ble / dont il se tint pour bien paie par deuant nous & en quite le dit pierre & ledit baillif & tous ceus qui aront cause de eulz Et quant a cen ledit obligie en a obligie tous ses biens Muebles & non Muebles presens & avenir & son cors a tenir en prison se il venoit encontre cest fet Et Rendre tous cous & damages que les diz pierre & ledit baillif ou autres qui de eulz aront cause pouront[61] auoir par la cause de ceste quitance dont le port[eur] de ces lettres Seroit creu par son Serement sanz autre preuue. fere En tesmoing de cen nous avon mis a ces lettres le seel de la chastelerie dessus dite sauf aut[rui] droit. Donne lan de grace mil trois cens vint & trois le Ioesdi deuant la feste saint geruais & saint prothaise. [16 June 1323]

Once sealed on a strip of parchment inserted through slits in the middle of a foldup of 12 mm., although the seal and strip are now missing; 190/192 × 78/68 mm. See BnF, fr. 10430, p. 122, no. 680: "quittance par jean Bouloche de 18 Sols parisis pour meme cause du jeudi avant la fete S. gervais 1323."

no. 35. To all those who see these letters, Guillaume de la Riviere, priest, prior of the Maison-Dieu of Les Andelys, [and] keeper of the seal of the castellany of Les Andelys, [sends] greetings. Know that before us was present Jean Bouerloche

[59] The abbreviation mark over the *u* suggests that the name should perhaps be rendered *bouerloche* or *boureloche*.

[60] Note Guiseniers, just north of La Bucaille.

[61] *pouront* terminates with a flourish over the final *t* which may be meant as an abbreviation mark.

of the parish of Guiseignies, who recognized that he had had and received from Pierre la Vache, at the time when he was guard of Madame Blanche of Burgundy at Château-Gaillard, by the hand of Jean de Fresnay, bailli of Gisors, 18 s.par. [in payment] for a mine of grain, for which, in our presence, he confessed himself well paid, and acquits the said Pierre and the said bailli, and all those who have a claim against them, and as to this, the said obligated person has obligated all his property movable and immovable, present and future, and his body to be held in prison, if he contravenes this act, and to pay all costs and damages that the said Pierre and the said bailli, or others who have a claim against them could suffer because of this receipt, concerning which the bearer of these letters will be believed on his oath without offering any other proof. In witness of this we have placed on these letters the seal of the aforesaid castellany, saving any other person's right. Given in the year of grace 1323, on Thursday after the feast of Saint Gervasius and Saint Prothasius.

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Note: Since this paper was completed in Fall 2006, the following important article has appeared: Olivier Canteaut, "L'annulation du mariage de Charles IV et de Blanche de Bourgogne: une affaire d'État?" in *Répudiation, séparation, divorce dans l'Occident médiéval. Actes du colloque organisé par la MSH Nord-Pas-de-Calais à Valenciennes les 17–18 novembre 2005*, ed. Emmanuelle Santinelli (Recherches valenciennoises, 25; Valenciennes: Presses universitaires de Valenciennes, 2007), 309–27. Note also that in the testament which Blanche's sister, Queen Jeanne of Artois and Burgundy, wife of Philip V, drew up on 27 August 1319 (Paris, Archives nationales, J 404A, no. 23), she made a substantial bequest to Blanche, "should she still be in the condition in which she was" at the moment of Jeanne's death ("se ma dame Blanche nostre seur demoroit ou point ou elle est..."). Blanche was to have 2000 l. as a lump sum and an annuity of 600 l. a year (doubtless in *livres tournois*). This bequest was not mentioned (or changed) in the codicil that Jeanne approved in May 1325 (Paris, Archives nationales, J 404A, no. 30).

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE MATTER OF OTHERS: MENSTRUAL BLOOD AND UNCONTROLLED SEMEN IN THIRTEENTH-CENTURY KABBALISTS' POLEMIC AGAINST CHRISTIANS, "BAD" JEWS, AND MUSLIMS

*Alexandra Cuffel**

The impurities of Gentiles and errant Jews were regularly equated with seminal impurity and *niddah* (menstrual impurity or the menstruating woman herself) within certain kabbalistic texts. Elliot Wolfson, Isaiah Tishby, Sharon Koren and others have already demonstrated that "the other nations," or more generally, evil and divine punishment, were associated with impurity and the Left, feminine, sometimes demonic, side of the divinity within theosophic kabbalah.[1] For some kabbalists,

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[1] Sharon Faye Koren, "Kabbalistic Physiology: Isaac the Blind, Nahmanides, and Moses de Leon on Menstruation," *AJS Review* 28 (2004): 317–339; idem, "'The woman from whom God wanders': the menstruant in medieval Jewish mysticism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1999); Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in Kabbalah*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel, edited and revised by Jonathan Chipman (New York, 1991), 60–87; Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, trans. David Goldstein, 3 vols. (Oxford and New York, 1991 reprint), vol. 2; Elliot Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (Oxford and New York, 2006), 30–31, 37–105, 132–154, 165–175; idem, *Circle in the Square: Studies in the Use of Gender in Kabbalistic Symbolism* (Albany, 1995), 79–121; idem, "Re/membering the Covenant: Memory, Forgetfulness, and the Construction of History in the *Zohar*," in *Jewish history and Jewish memory: essays in honor of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi*, ed. Elisheva Carlbach, John M. Efron, David Myers (Hanover, NH, 1998), 214–246; idem, "Woman—the feminine as other in theosophic Kabbalah: some philosophical observations on the divine androgyne," in *The Other in Jewish thought and history: constructions of Jewish culture and identity*, ed. Lawrence J. Silberstein and Robert L. Cohn (New York, 1994), 166–204; idem, "Left contained in the right: a study of Zoharic hermeneutics," *AJS Review* 11 (1986): 27–52. Scholars of kabbalah distinguish between "theosophic kabbalah" and "ecstatic kabbalah." The former generally presupposes a system whereby God is made up of *sefirot*, or aspects, and emphasizes their importance. These in turn were understood as having a gender, though as recent scholarship has shown, the gender of individual *sefirot*, especially the *shechinah*, was not always stable. Elliot Wolfson has been the most prominent scholar arguing for the shifting, unstable quality of gender within the divine. See for example Elliot Wolfson, *Language, Eros, Being:*

just as the demonic feminine, like her divine feminine counterpart, could be reunited with the divine male, so too could some Gentiles either be redeemed or were characterized as somehow an integral part of the divine schema. Even in such seemingly conciliatory texts, however, Gentiles remained impure and spiritually inferior to Jews; their redemption lay in conversion or some other kind of purification by association with Judaism.[2] The human body, subject as it was to a variety of impurities, remained the fundamental source of symbolic imagery to portray impurity/evil within the Godhead itself, in human-divine relations, and in human-human hierarchies. Yet not all impurities held the same connotations, nor were all Gentiles alike. In this essay I explore the nuances of gendered impurity in polemic against Christians, Muslims, and "bad" Jews in a variety of thirteenth-century Iberian kabbalists' writings that span both the ecstatic and theosophic approaches.[3] I will focus on Abraham Abulafia (1240–c. *post* 1291), the primary exemplar of "ecstatic kabbalah," the *Zohar*, a multi-layered Jewish mystical text of the thirteenth century that became the foundation for future theosophic kabbalistic works, and Joseph Gikatilla (1248–c. 1305), who was strongly

Kabbalistic Hermeneutics and Poetic Imagination (New York, 2005), 49–121; idem, *Through a Speculum that Shines: vision and imagination in medieval Jewish mysticism* (Princeton, 1994). Ecstatic kabbalah, by contrast, focused on the individual mystic's encounter with, revelations from, and union with God and placed less emphasis on the sefirotic system. The thirteenth-century mystic Abraham Abulafia is the primary example of this form of kabbalah. On ecstatic kabbalah see Moshe Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (Albany, 1988).

[2] Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros* (New Haven and London, 2005), 112–115, 119–122; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 27, 58–73, 97–101, 158–171, 195–196, 240.

[3] While the impurity of the foreskin, failure to circumcise or circumcise correctly, and the proper relationship of the divine and human phallus to the feminine are also relevant to the gendered, polemical use of impurity in kabbalah, these issues have been examined extensively by others, and hence will receive only passing attention here. Instead I concentrate on the uncleanness of seminal emissions, menstruation, and illicit sex. For literature about the symbolism of circumcision and the phallus in kabbalah see: Ronald Kiener, "The Image of Islam in the *Zohar*," *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought* 8 (1989): 43–65; Wolfson, "Re/membering the Covenant;" idem, *Circle and the Square*, 92–98; idem, *Through a Speculum that Shines*, 336–345, 339, 357–368; idem, "Woman-feminine as Other;" idem, "Images of God's Feet: Some Observations on the Divine Body in Judaism," in *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an embodied perspective*, ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Albany, 1992), 143–181; idem, "Circumcision and the Divine Name: a study in the transmission of esoteric doctrine," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 78 (1987): 77–112; idem, "Circumcision, Vision of God and Textual Interpretation: from midrashic trope to mystical symbol," *History of Religions* 27 (1987): 189–215.

influenced by Abraham Abulafia but who became a major proponent of theosophic kabbalah.[4]

While sometimes these Gentile nations were feminized because of their association with the feminine demonic, as some scholars have suggested, I contend that they often followed patterns of negative or "wrong" masculinity. Abraham Abulafia's negative biological symbolism revolves around menstruation, in part because his primary target is Christianity. Joseph Gikatilla and authors of the *Zohar* combined menstrual symbolism with discussions of inadvertent nocturnal emissions, masturbation, intercourse with demons or non-Jewish women and comparisons with animals to create hierarchies of impurity. According to this hierarchy, Christianity, signified by Esau and Edom, is the very worst and Islam, represented by Ishmael, Hagar, and sometimes Egypt or Persia, is an impure enemy of Israel, but also potentially redeemable, a status similar to "bad" (male) Jews.[5] Milder or even positive portrayals of Islam in mystical texts reflect Jewish expectations that were current

[4] On Joseph Gikatilla's life and influences see Avi Weinstein's introduction to Joseph Gikatilla, *Gates of Light/Sha'are Orah*, trans. Avi Weinstein (San Francisco and London, 1994), xxiii–xxxiv. On the structure and authorship of the *Zohar* see: Yehuda Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, trans. Arnold Schwartz, Stephanie Nakache, Penina Peli (Albany, 1993). On the relationship of Gikatilla's writings to some strata within the *Zohar*, see Liebes, *Studies*, 99–103.

[5] Ronald Kiener and Elliot Wolfson point out that kabbalists often portrayed Islam more favorably than Christians. Kiener, "The Image of Islam in the *Zohar*"; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 22–23n.31, 27, 90–91n.296, 130–135, 155–163. However, see *Zohar* II.17a and Kiener's discussion of the passage ("Image of Islam," 52–53) in which Ishmael is described as the most difficult diaspora for Israel. Wolfson indicates that the main body of the *Zohar* manifests a more favorable attitude toward Islam than the later strata or additions the *Zohar*, such as the *Ra'aya Meheimna* or the *Tiqqunei Zohar*. Regarding Abraham Abulafia see Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, viii, though Idel mentions Abulafia's influence on "Sufi-like" works in the Middle East, not Sufism's influence, if any, on Abulafia. Raphael Cohen notes that Abraham Abulafia, despite speculations and ample opportunity that he had to be influenced by Islam, all but ignores Islam in comparison to Christianity. Raphael Cohen, *Razi'el, yaḥaso shel R. Avraham ben Shemuel Abulafia el ha-Nazrut* (Jerusalem, 2003), 1. See however Abraham Abulafia, *'Ozar 'Eden Ganuz* (Jerusalem, 2000), 192 where Abulafia mentions the Prophet Muḥammad explicitly. More generally see: D. Ariel, "'The Eastern Dawn of Wisdom:' the Problem of the Relation between Islamic and Jewish Mysticism," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times*, vol. 2, ed. D. Blumenthal (Chico, CA and Atlanta, 1985), 149–167. I used the Aramaic edition of the *Zohar* edited by Reuven Margoliot: *Sefer ha-Zohar* 3 vols. ed. Reuven Margoliot (Jerusalem, 1999). Two English translations of the Zohar exist: *The Zohar*, 5 vols. trans. Maurice Simon (London and New York, 1984) and the as yet incomplete, but better *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition*, trans. and commentary by Daniel C. Matt (Stanford, 2004), both of which I have consulted.

during the crusading period that Islam would assist Jews during the end times. Finally, the battle—often cosmically described—between Israel and the other nations, also takes place within individual Israelites. The losers—those Jews who cleave to uncleanness rather than evade the demonic—like the Gentiles, are impure, failed males.

Abraham Abulafia and the Polemic of Menstruation

By the Middle Ages, of all the impurities within Jewish culture, apart from that of corpses, the uncleanness of *niddah* had become the most severe, so that association with menstruation symbolically placed any group so associated firmly at the bottom in a hierarchy of impurities—a designation primarily reserved for Christianity in Abulafia's work and in much of theosophic kabbalah.[6] Christians, Muslims, and "bad" Jews often become the products and/or producers of menstruation, and thus feminized, but the association with nocturnal emissions and animals simultaneously marked them as failed or bad men so that they, especially Muslims and "bad" Jews occupied a negatively liminal space between feminization and a kind of hyper-masculinized status

[6] On the development and growing severity of *niddah* impurity see: Shaye Cohen, "Purity and piety: the separation of menstruants from the Sancta," in *Daughters of the king: women and the synagogue: a survey of history, kalakhah, and contemporary realities*, ed. by Susan Grossman and Rivka Haut, 1st ed. (Philadelphia, 1992), 103–115; idem, "Menstruants and the sacred in Judaism and Christianity," in *Women's history and ancient history*, ed. by Sarah B. Pomeroy (Chapel Hill, 1991), 273–99; Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Notre Dame, 2007), 26–35, 55–58, 98–105; Yedidya Dinari, "Ḥilul ha-qodesh ʿal-yadei niddah ve-taqanat 'Ezra'," *Te'udah* 3 (1983): 17–37; idem, "Minhagei tumʿat ha-niddah-meqoram ve-hishtalshelutam," *Tarbiz* 49 (1979/80): 302–324; A. Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious: Jewish Women in Medieval Europe* (Waltham, MA, 2004): 22–25; Lawrence Hoffman, *Covenant of Blood: Circumcision and Gender in Rabbinic Judaism*, (Chicago, 1996): 145–154; Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (Oxford, 2000), 26–42, 75–79, 107–108; Koren, "Kabbalistic Physiology;" idem, "'Woman from Whom God Wanders'"; Tirzeh Meacham, "Mishnat masekhet Niddah ʿim mavo: mahadurah biqortit ʿim heʿarot be-nusaḥ, be-farshanut uve-ʿarikhah u-feraqim be-toldot he-halakhah uve-re'alyah" (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1989); Israel Ta-Shema, "Harḥaqot niddah be-Ashkenaz ha-qadem: ha-ḥaim ve-ha-sifrut," *Sidra* 9 (1993): 163–70; *Women and water: menstruation in Jewish life and law*, ed. by Rahel R. Wasserfall (Hanover, NH, 1999). On the association of Christianity with menstruation see Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 45–61; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 135–145, 165.

characterized by preoccupation with phallic pleasure, violence and animalistic irrationality.[7]

Abraham Abulafia used menstruation and biological imagery to define both Jesus' position in the cosmic realm and to warn fellow Jews of the battle in which they needed to engage for their own souls. In *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot* Abulafia firmly associated Jesus and matter with menstruation:

> For the error of the Christians today concerns Jesus, son of Pantera: the hidden issue of Jesus is that he was a bastard, son of a menstruant. And it is the secret of the primordial matter (חמר הראשון) that he is the firstborn of everything created...and he is a man and he is a heretic (מין) [in] whom every heretic believes according to the reality of his humanity, the people who are the rulers of the faith.[8]

This connection between Jesus and the material, specifically biological, feminine world is much stronger in a different reading of this text. Idel, in his discussion of Jesus in Abulafia's work read the second sentence of the above passage thus: "That blood is the mystery of the primordial matter of which all things are made."[9] In either reading of the text Jesus is the foundation of the material world. Abulafia links Jesus' status as "primordial matter" to the circumstances of his birth, namely his being the son of a menstruating woman and the illegitimate son of Pantera. Here Abulafia is drawing from the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, best described as a Jewish "anti-Gospel" in which Jesus was the illegitimate son of a menstruating woman who learned magic in Egypt and led

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[7] On animal imagery, irrationality, and failed masculinity see below and Ruth Mazzo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formulations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2003), 100–108; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 198–239; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 295–297. On Jewish uses of animals in anti-Christian polemic generally see Marc Epstein, *Dreams of subversion in medieval Jewish art and literature* (University Park, PA, 1997); idem, "'The ways of truth are curtailed and hidden': a medieval Hebrew fable as a vehicle for covert polemic," *Prooftexts* 14/3 (1994): 205–31.

[8] כטעות הנצרים היום בעניין ישו בן פנדוירא שסודו יש ממזר בן נדה, והוא סוד החמר הראשון שהוא הבכור לכל נברא וגם הוא נברא....והוא איש והוא מין מבקש שיאמין בו כל המין לפי מציאות אישיו האנשיים שהם בעלי האמונה.

Abraham Abulafia, *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot* in *Mafteaḥ ha-Ḥokhmot- Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot* (Jerusalem, 2001), 130.

[9] והוא סוד החמר הראשון ק__ור לכל נברא ודם הוא נברא MS JTS 843 fol. 81a; Idel, *Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 52–53. "It" (הוא) Idel is interpreting as referring to the word *niddah*, menstruation, which just precedes the pronoun in this passage. Also Idel seems to read דם (blood) whereas the editor of the published version reads גם (also). The edited version of *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot* is not a critical edition.

Jews and others astray with it. His father, depending upon the version of the tradition, was either a neighbor or Roman soldier named Pantera.[10] Abulafia goes beyond the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, however, to suggest that Jesus and the impure blood from which he came is in fact the matter of the physical world. During this period, Christian theologians were incorporating Aristotelian and Galenic theories of generation into their understanding of the nature of both Mary and Jesus. Since most if not all of the matter of the fetus derived from the mother's blood (in contrast to semen, which provided the soul, or only some of the material for the fetus' body) they theorized that all of Jesus' humanity derived from Mary's blood/body. Strengthening the physiological connection between Jesus and Mary in turn prompted efforts to discredit Christian theology of the Virgin Mary that stressed her physical purity and virginity above that of other women as a foundation for Jesus' own purity and divinity.[11] By simultaneously evoking dubious human paternity (as opposed to the divine paternity ascribed to him by the Christians) and his conception during Mary's menstrual cycle Abulafia doubly emphasized Jesus' human, material nature and its origins from one of the strongest impurities within medieval Jewish thought—*niddah*. Jesus is indeed derived from Mary's blood, as Christian theologians argued, but her impure blood, and thus is *entirely* material, feminine and impure in contrast to the spiritual attributes assigned

[10] *Das Leben Jesu nach jüdischen Quellen*, ed./trans. Samuel Krauss (Berlin, 1902; reprinted New York, 1978), 28–32; Samuel Krauss, *The Jewish-Christian controversy from the earliest times to 1789*, ed. William Horbury (Tübingen, 1996), 1:12–15; Yaacov Deutsch, " 'Aduiot nusaḥ qodem shel 'Toledot Yeshu,' " *Tarbiz* 69 (2000): 177–197; William Horbury, "The Trial of Jesus in the Jewish tradition," in *The Trial of Jesus*, 147–66. For evidence that some of these traditions pre-date the ninth century (the date of the earliest manuscript of the *Toledot Yeshu*) see BT 100b; Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 1.28, 32–33; *Gospel of Nicodemus, Acts of Pilate* I.1 in *New Testament apocrypha*, ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher, trans. R.McL. Wilson, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1963–66), 1:451. On Abraham Abulafia's use of the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, menstruation, and his polemic against Christianity see Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 45–61; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 137n.27; also Raphael Cohen, *Razi'el*.

[11] On the shifting nature of Marian theology in connection with medical beliefs see especially Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York, 1991), 79–117, 151–179; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 108–113. More generally see Hubertus P.J.M. Ahsmann, *Le culte de la Sainte Vierge et la littérature française profane du moyen âge* (Utrecht-Nijmegen and Paris, 1930), 36–49; Walter Delius, *Geschichte der Marienverehrung* (Munich, 1963); Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, 1996), 192–198; Mary Warner *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*, 1st American edition (New York, 1976).

him by the Christians. Abulafia underscores Christians' worship of a human rather than a divine being near the end of this passage when he says that Christians/heretics believe "according to the reality of his *humanity*." While his primary target is Jesus, calling the Christian messiah a "*ben niddah*" (son of a menstruant) and the illegitimate son of a human father, also marked Mary as profoundly impure and sexually immoral, an accusation that would have been extremely offensive given the growing Christian rhetoric about Mary's virginal purity. Thus, in Abulafia's text, Christianity is doubly reprehensible and feminized for its followers' worship of a human man derived from menstruation and veneration of a menstruating woman.[12]

Abulafia further hints about Jesus' connection to Egypt and thus the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition in this passage by calling him the "firstborn." Earlier in *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot* Abulafia connects Jesus explicitly to the firstborn of Egypt, particularly the firstborn of Pharoh himself, who were killed because of the Pharaoh's stubbornness. In this passage the firstborn of Pharoh "rides the dust" and is linked to Deut. 13: 5–11 in which Israel is commanded to "put away evil from your midst" namely any, including close family, who attempt to entice the Israelites to worship false gods. Jesus and Mary, Abulafia asserts, are without doubt false gods.[13] Calling Jesus the "firstborn," but linking him to the firstborn of Egypt, toys with the Christian doctrine that Jesus was God's firstborn (and only) son and with the Christian connection between Jesus and the paschal lamb; the lamb, with whom Christians associated Jesus, was originally sacrificed in place of the firstborn of Israel while the firstborn of Egypt were killed by the angel of God. In Abulafia's reworking, Jesus is the firstborn of Pharaoh/Egypt, with all their associations with magic, false gods, and slavery, rather than

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[12] Targeting Mary's body and its impurities, and specifically the use of the epithet "*ben niddah*" for Jesus was becoming common in Jewish anti-Christian polemic during this period. See for example Joseph ben Nathan Official, *Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane'*, ed. Judah Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1970), 69; *Jewish-Christian Debate*, paragraphs 6 and 39, Hebrew pp. 5–6 and 27, English pp. 44 and 68; Joseph Qimḥi, *Sefer ha-Beriṭu vikuḥe Radaq 'im ha-Nazrut*, ed. Frank Talmage (Jerusalem, 1974), 29; ibid., *The Book of the Covenant of Joseph Kimḥi*, trans. Frank Talmage (Toronto, 1972). 36; Pseudo-David Qimḥi, *Vikuḥei Radaq*, in *Sefer ha-Beriṭu vikuḥe Radaq 'im ha-Nazrut*, 87, 92; *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Zarfat: divre zikhronot mi-bene ha-dorot shebi-tekufot masè ha-tselav u-minuhar piyuṭehem*, ed Abraham Meir Habermann (Jerusalem, 1945), 24, 31–32, 101, 104; Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, (Berkeley, 1987), 237, 241, 244, 255, 265; and Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 117–131.

[13] Abulafia, *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot*, 125.

being the salvific lamb dying to save firstborn of Israel.[14] Jesus' end, like that of the firstborn of Egypt, is death, not salvation. Therefore, Jesus/the firstborn of Pharaoh "rides the dust" because he is lord over the material world, not the spiritual.[15]

Abulafia makes his dichotomy of Jesus/Christianity/material world vs. Judaism/spirituality even more clearly later in the same text:

> Regarding the issue of the Messiah of the people of Jesus whom accordingly the Messiah is called by the Greek Christians "*Andi Christos*." That is to say the lord (*adonai*) of that man, an allusion to the verse: "The man, the lord spoke roughly to us." (Gen. 42:30) And his matter is that he (the true messiah?) will stand against him (Jesus) and make known to all that what he said to the Christians—that he is a god and a son of a god and man—is a complete lie. For he did not receive power from the Unified Name (i.e. the Name of God). Rather all his power depends upon the hanging image that hangs/relies upon the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. The matter of the Messiah hangs/ relies on the Tree of Life. It is the pillar upon which everything hangs/relies. Jesus was hanged bodily because he relied on a physical tree. And the Messiah is dependent/hanging—it is for him today 18 years—upon a spiritual matter, which is the divine intellect, and two years remain of the days of his dependence/hanging.[16]

In part, Abulafia is reversing the customary medieval Christian accusation that Jews follow what is literal and material by portraying the

[14] While Egypt's association with magic was common, Abulafia explicitly links the two in *Ibid.*, 89, 118. Of course equating Jesus with Egypt or its king further played into the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition, for in these tales Jesus travels to Egypt and learns much of his magic there. Abulafia seems to refer to Jesus' magical abilities specifically on p. 89 in which he explains: "And here it speaks of the King of Egypt and he was bewitching his slaves and they engraved them upon his servant, [who] acted in a spirit of impurity." וכן מספר מלך מצרים והוא היה מכשף בעבדיו וחרטום במשרתיו פועל ברוח טומא In the *Toledot* tradition Jesus engraves the true name of God upon his arm, which enables him to do his most powerful magic. See references to the *Toledot Yeshu* tradition above.

[15] Compare with *Ibid.*, 24, 76–77, 87, in which dust often seems to be contrasted to spirit.

[16] בעניין המשיח עם ישו שעל כן נקרא המשיח אצל הנצרים היונים "אנדי כריסטוס" כלומר אדני האיש ההוא ברמז "דבר האיש אדני הארץ אתנו קשות." ועניינו שיעמוד כנגדו להודיע לכל, שמה שאמר לנצרים שהוא אלוה ובן אלוה ואדם שזה היה שקר גמור. שלא קבל כח מהשם המיוחד רק כל כחו תלוי בדמות התלי שהוא תלוי על עץ הדעת טוב ורע. ועניין המשיח תלוי על עץ החיים והוא יתד שהכל תלוי בו. וישו נתלה תליה גופנית מפני שתלה עצמו באילן גופני. והמשיח נתלה יש לו היום ח"י שנה על דבר רוחני והוא השכל האלוהי ונשארו לו מימי תלייתו שנתים ימים. Abulafia, *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot*, 130–131. For an alternate translation of this passage and pertinent discussion, see Idel, *Ecstatic Kabbalah*, 52.

Christians as ignorant of the spiritual messiah and as followers of one who embodied physicality rather than spirituality. Abulafia does so by playing upon the dual meaning of תלוי (*talui*)—1) to hang, 2) to depend or rely upon—so that Jesus literally hangs upon an actual tree, whereas the true, Jewish messiah relies upon what is spiritual.[17] Materiality and spirituality are signified respectively by the two trees, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. In this particular work, Abulafia ties the tree of knowledge with the Pharaoh of Egypt and death.[18] The attraction of that tree is feminized for it is likened to King Solomon's error regarding women, namely that they were followers of "foreign worship" or gods.[19] In the passage above, however, by associating Jews with spirituality and intellect, Abulafia also redefined Jews as correctly masculine in contrast to the Christians who followed the material, now very literally feminine world, made from impure woman's blood. Abulafia makes a similar equation in *Ḥayye ha-ʿOlam ha-Baʾ* where the "evil blood" is equated with Satan and man's animal nature.[20]

In other works, however, Abulafia portrayed the human heart as torn in a battle between spirit—black ink, and soul—red blood, also linked with "dust," which are its father and mother:

> And God spoke to me at the time of my vision. His Name is explained by blood, and especially my heart distinguishes between blood and ink and ink and blood: and God said to me: Behold your soul (נפש). Blood is its name. Ink is the name of your spirit (רוח). Behold your father and mother...and I know that my soul dwelt upon its color, in appearance red like blood. And my spirit dwelt upon its color, in appearance black like ink. And the battle in the heart was very strong between the ink and the blood. And the blood was from the spirit and the spirit and the

[17] Referring to Jesus' hanging upon a tree would have further reminded Abulafia's Jewish audience that Jesus was cursed according to Deut. 21:23, and that his literal hanging made him into a corpse, the only thing more impure than *niddah* in the Jewish purity system.

[18] Abulafia, *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot*, 123.

[19] *Ibid.*, 124.

[20] Abraham Abulafia, *Ḥayye ha-ʿOlam ha-Baʾ* (Jerusalem, 1999). Idel, *Mystical Experience*, 27. Blood was an essential if somewhat ambiguous symbol within the Abulafian corpus, for it often represented the evil urges within man. In the case of *Ḥayye ha-ʿOlam ha-Baʾ*, where the author distinguishes between good and bad blood, good blood could signify spirituality.

> ink from the dust and the ink triumphed over blood and the Sabbath overcame all profane days.[21]

Based on remarks made earlier in the text, in which Abulafia sees in his heart צלם (image) and דמות (likeness), which are identified as the intellect and the imagination respectively, Idel argues that the battle between the ink and the blood is a war between the intellect and the imagination respectively.[22] Idel does not, however, comment upon the gendered nature of the symbolism in this passage.[23] While blood can be either masculine or feminine in Abulafia's system, red blood is feminine whereas connected to semen, and thus masculine.[24] The gendered, biological nature of Abulafia's symbolism is clearest in *Shevaʿ Netivot*:

> And all which happened to the ink happened as the seminal emission governed the human forms, which is the matter of every man.... For it is said about it that the blood is the soul (נפש). And it is further said that this blood redeems. And the term "soul" is a homonym for the following: The blood is female at the beginning and its appearance and its color is red even though it is variable. It is changeable in color as in nature and it (the red blood) is half of the matter of man and the other half of the blood is masculine and white in color...[25]

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[21] וידבר יהוה אלי בעת ראותי\ שמו מפורש בדם ומיוחד \לבי מבדיל בין דם לדיו ובין \ דיו לדם: ויאמר אלי יהוה \ הנה נפשך דם שמה ודיו \ שם רוחך והנה אביך ואמך\...\...ואדע\ כי נפשי שכנה על צבעה \ במראה האדומה כדם ורוחי \ שכנה על צבעה במראה \ השחורה כדיו: והמלחמה \ היתה חזקה מאד בלב בין \ הדם ובין הדיו והדם היה מן \ הרוח והדיו מן העפר ונצח \ הדיו לדם והשבת גברה על \ כל ימי החול...

Abraham Abulafia, *Sefer ha-Ot*, ed. A. Jellinick, in *Jubelschrift zum 70 Geburtstag des Prof. H. Graetz* (1887), 81. Compare with *Mafteaḥ ha-Shemot*, 38, 71–72.

[22] Idel, *Mystical Experience*, 96–100. Abulafia is using the tripartate philosophical division of 1) Rational/Intellectual soul; 2) the Imagination or emotive soul; 3) the animal soul, i.e. that which only deals with the needs of the body. On the symbolism of ink and blood as intellect and imagination generally see: Moshe Idel, *The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia* (Albany, 1987), 73–178; Elliot Wolfson, *Abraham Abulafia—Kabbalist and Prophet, Hermeneutics, Theosophy, and Theurgy* (Los Angeles, 2000), 150n.153. Wolfson discusses Abulafia's ideas about the Active and human intellect throughout his book.

[23] Elsewhere he discusses similies of sexual awakening and impregnation of the mystic's soul with the Active Intellect, namely God in the thought of Abulafia and those influenced by him. Idel, *Mystical Experience*, 179–227.

[24] On masculine and feminine blood in Abulafia's thought, see Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 68n.216.

[25] וכל מה שקרה לדיו קרה לשכבת זרע בעלת הצורות האנושיות שהוא חמר כל אדם....שנאמר עליו כי הדם הוא הנפש ונאמר עוד כי הדם יכפר ושם נפש משותף זה הדם הוא נקביי תחלה ומראהו וצבעו אדום ואע"פ שמשתנה. בצבע כמו שמשתנה בטבע והוא חצי חמר האדם וחצי הדם האחר הוא זכרי והוא כצבע לבן...

Abraham Abulafia, *Shevaʿ Netivot ha-Torah* in Adolph Jellinick, *Philosophie und Kabbala* (Leipzig, 1854), 18. Abulafia seems to be following a Galenic model of reproduction in which semen (very purified, masculine blood) contributes to the body of the child.

In his *Sitre Torah* that same "soul blood" if turned in the wrong way will follow the path of magic, and in doing so will spill blood: "And from there (*demut* which comes from blood) comes your soul (נפשך) and every magician (כשפן) will be turned about the path of magic (כשפים), and one who does so spills blood (שפך דם)..."[26] I suggest that this wrongly turned blood is like menstruation, for such "bad blood" according to Jewish tradition makes women especially capable of magic.[27] Abulafia's younger contemporaries, such as the authors of the *Zohar*, were elaborating upon and strengthening this connection in their own writings.[28] Menstruation is also the punishment God imposed upon Eve for "shedding the first blood," namely bringing death into the world by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.[29] By this metaphor Abulafia emphasizes Christianity's connection to violence, a common trope in Jewish representations of Christianity.[30] Certain Christian exegetes, such as the early twelfth-century author Rupert of Deutz were also making the connection between menstruation and violent bloodshed, only their polemic was directed against the Jews, Israel, or *synagoga* who possessed an imperfect soul and were leprous (a disease thought to be caused by intercourse with or conception from a menstruant woman) impure and violent.[31] Abulafia effectively counters such anti-Jewish accusations by turning them upon the Christians.

Galen, *On the Usefulness of Parts (De usu partium)*, 2 vols., trans. Margaret Tallmadge May (Ithaca, 1968), 14.2.302–7, 320–321; idem, *On Semen*, ed. and trans. Philip De Lacy, Corpus medicorum Graecorum V. 3.1 (Berlin, 1992) 2.1–6; *On the Natural Faculties* (London and New York, 1916), 2.3.83–86; Lesley Dean Jones, *Women's Bodies in Classical Greek Science* (Oxford and New York, 1994), 149–193; Anthony Preuss, "Galen's Criticism of Aristotle's Conception Theory," *Journal of the History of Biology* 10 (1977): 65–85.

[26] Abraham Abulafia, *Sitre Torah*, ed. Amnon Gros (Jerusalem, 2001). Idel, *Mystical Experience*, 96–100.

[27] BT Sanhedrin 67; BT Shabbat 110a.

[28] *Zohar* I:126a–127a

[29] *Bereshit Rabbah*, ed. Jehuda Theodor and Chanoch Albeck (Jerusalem, 1965), 17.

[30] *Sefer Gezerot*, 54, 81, 158, 168–169, 177, 191, 220, 238; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 290; Joseph Official, *Sefer Yosef ha-Mekane'*, 77; Moses b. Naḥman, *Vikuaḥ ha-Ramban,* in *Kitvei Ramban*, 2 vols., ed. Ḥaim Chavel (Jerusalem, 1977), 1:311; *Jewish-Christian Debate*, nos. 18–19, Hebrew p. 16, English, p. 55; Robert Chazan, *Daggers of Faith: thirteenth-century Christian missionizing and Jewish Response* (Berkeley, 1989), 62–64 and R. Mordechai b. Joseph, *Maḥazek Emunah*, trans. by Robert Chazan in *Daggers of Faith*, 110–111. For menstrual blood as a metaphor for violent bloodshed in ancient Jewish culture see Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington, 1990), 181.

[31] Rupert of Deutz, *De Sancte Trinitate* Vol. 1, *In Genesim* III. 23, VII: 5–7, pp. 261, 433–437 respectively; Vol. 2. *In Exodum*, I. 6, p. 588; *In Leviticum* II. 16– 28, pp. 873–892; *In Libros Regnum* V. 7, 9–10, 14, pp. 1415, 1419–1423, 1429–1432 respectively. For discussion of Rupert's imagery see: Cuffel *Gendering Disgust*, 166–169.

The reference to magic alludes to the *Toledot* tradition in which Jesus is a magician and the son of a menstruant. Those Jews who would turn to Christianity become like its founder, the product of "blood turned bad" and a violent, dangerous magician, in contrast to one who was attached to the true source of spiritual power and rationality—God as understood by Jews.

Jews outside, and as we shall soon see, within kabbalistic traditions, regularly characterized Christians as particularly violent. Here the concern seems to be focused on Jews who might follow the blood/soul in the wrong way and thus participate in magic and violence. The struggle within the Jewish believer is couched in the same terms as that between Christianity and Judaism; in both cases the one led astray follows feminine impurity which is in turn linked to improper spirituality, i.e. magic, materiality, and death. Nevertheless they are also part of the cosmic whole.

Bestial Masculinity in Joseph Gikatilla and the Zohar

Like Abulafia, both Joseph Gikatilla and some authors of the *Zohar*, portray Gentiles as lacking in intellect and spiritual comprehension. In one passage in the *Zohar* the souls of Gentiles are compared to those of cattle, without understanding.[32] Gikatilla describes Isaac as saying, "Esau will never inherit the higher blessings of intellect, but will only inherit the lower blessings of the body"[33] Gikatilla also connects Esau, and thereby Christianity, with goats, foxes, dogs, and serpents, which are in turn objects of sexual lust for demons.[34] Not only is Edom the worst of the nations, but its guardian, Samael, gives strength to Mars, the planet of war.[35] Throughout *Sha'arei Orah*, Gikatilla emphasizes Esau/

[32] *Zohar* III.218b–219a.

[33] אין עשו ראוי לירש ברכה עליונה שכלית אבל הוא יורש ברכה תחתונה גופנית *Sha'arei Orah* (Brooklyn, 1985), Gate 5, p. 110; idem, *Gates of Light*, 203. On animals as a way of defining ethnic and sexual boundaries in Judaism see Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savage*, 115–140.

[34] *Sha'arei Orah*, Gate 2, pp. 55–56; idem, *Gates of Light*, 98. Also see: *Sha'arei Orah*, Gates 2 and 9, pp. 56–57, 182, 186; *Gates of Light*, 101, 320, 328. In Gate 9 Gikatilla is discussing Amalek, who is also connected to Esau/Edom, and thereby stands as a symbol for Christianity. Amalek seems to be more closely associated with the primordial serpent however. Compare with Joseph Gikatilla, *Sod ha-Naḥash u-mishpaṭo*, ed. Raphael Cohen (Jerusalem, 1998), 3.

[35] *Sha'arei Orah*, Gate 2, p. 56; *Gates of Light*, 99 In *Sha'arei Orah*, Gate 2, pp. 55, 62 / *Gates of Light*, 97, 111, Gikatilla reasserts Samael's status as the guardian of Edom and the denouncer of Israel.

Edom/Amalek's, and thus Christianity's propensity toward bloodshed and violence, thus creating a network of associations between animals and bestiality, lack of intellect, war, violence and Christianity.[36]

Similar connections are created in the *Zohar* through the figure of Balaʿam. Herford, in his study of Christianity in the Talmud and midrash, argued that Balaʿam (and Gehazi), the biblical, Moabite prophet served as a symbolic code for Jesus in talmudic and midrashic literature.[37] Elliot Wolfson argues that kabbalists drew from and expanded this tradition.[38] In the *Zohar*, Balaʿam is alternately designated the king of the demonic realms, and/or a prophet of the Gentiles. In either case he obtains magic in part through sexual relations with his donkey.[39] Elsewhere in the *Zohar*, Balaʿam's supposed descendents, those who constructed the golden calf and thereby led the people of Israel astray in Moses' absence, are also magicians, who manipulated two spirits of impurity, male and female, disguised as an ox and ass, respectively.[40] Parallel to Balaʿam's sexual-magical relationship with his own donkey, the author of this passage also implies that sexual relations between these later magicians and the female ass/demon are the foundation of their magic: "Why the ass? Because of magic, these of Egypt, it is written about them: 'that the flesh of the asses is their

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[36] *Shaʿarei Orah*, Gates 2, 3&4, 9, pp. 54, 65, 183–184; *Gates of Light*, 96, 117, 322–324.

[37] R. Travers Herford, *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* (London, 1903). The biblical story of Balaam may be found in Num. 22–24. 2 Kings 5 contains the story of Gehazi who is struck with leprosy for trying to take King Naman's reward to the prophet Elisha for curing the king of the disease once Elisha had refused it. Relevant talmudic passages about Balaam or Gehazi are BT Sahnhedrin 106a–b, 107b, BT Sot,ah 47a, BT Gittin 56a–57a.

[38] Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 43–44n.112, 140–141; idem, "Re/membering the Covenant."

[39] *Zohar* I:126a; III:193a–b; Joel Hecker, *Mystical Bodies, Mystical Meals: Eating and Embodiment in Medieval Kabbalah* (Detroit, 2005), 156–58, 176. Berachiah b. Natronai ha-Naqdan chose the ass to represent Jesus / a false messiah in his fable collection: Berachiah b. Natronai ha-Naqdan *Mishlei Shuʿalim*, ed. Abraham Meir Habermann (Jerusalem, 1945–1946) fable 47, pp. 55–56; idem, *Fables of a Jewish Aesop*, trans. Moses Hadas (New York, 1967), 87–88. In this story the ass is also violent, or attempts to be, in his guise as a lion. On this fable as a polemic against Christianity see Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 208–210. Wolfson has noted that sometimes the ass can symbolize the demonic realm. See *Zohar* I:238a and Wolfson, "Re/membering the Covenant," esp. 239n.61.

[40] *Zohar* II:192a–b.

flesh.' (Ezek. 23:20)."[41] The entire context of this biblical passage is that Israel is compared to a fornicating woman, who has gone back to her promiscuous ways when she was in Egypt. "And she lusted after their concubines that the flesh of asses is [like] their flesh, and the seed of horses, their seed."[42] Thus Balaʿam/Jesus and all his descendents (Christians) perform illicit magic and engage in bestiality, as well as being followers or worshippers of "animals", the demonic ox and ass. As in Gikatilla and Abulafia, figures such as Balaʿam, Esau and Amalek are strongly associated with violence, war, and the oppression of Israel as well as with animalistic and demonic sexuality.[43]

In part, by attributing bestiality to symbolic representatives of Christianity, Gikatilla and the author of these zoharic passages capitalized on long-standing sexual polemic against Romans, "bad" Jews, and Christians. Michael Satlow has demonstrated that in the Talmud Roman men were regularly accused of bestiality and sodomy.[44] Since Roman identity was regularly transposed onto Christians in the Middle Ages, this Talmudic polemic would be easily applied to Christians. Within the Talmud, the sexual conduct on the part of the *ammei ha-ʾareẓ* ([Jewish] "people of the land") is compared to having intercourse with animals.[45] These kabbalists also may have been influenced by current Muslim anti-Christian polemic which depicted monks as libidinous and engaging in same-sex love and other illicit forms of sexuality.[46] However, I would argue that these authors along with Abulafia were responding to a strain of Christian anti-Jewish polemic and to a more general rhetoric of correct vs. incorrect masculinity.[47] Examining a slightly later period in Christian culture, Ruth Karras has shown that ritualized associations of young men with animals and then the removal of tails, horns, etc. was

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[41] חמור אמאי. בגין דחרשין אלין דמצראי כתיב בהו אשר בשר חמורים בשרם *Zohar* II:192b.

[42] ותענבה על פלגשיהם אשר בשר חמורים בשרם וזרמת סוסים זרמתם

[43] *Zohar* I:145b; II.64b–65a; III:147b, 192b. In this last passage, Esau is linked to Mars, the planet of war, as in Gikatilla's *Shaʿarei Orah*.

[44] Michael Satlow, *Tasting the Dish: Rabbinic Rhetorics of Sexuality* (Atlanta, 1995), 83–118, 146–153, 203–222.

[45] BT Pesaḥim 49b; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 51–52.

[46] Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Jurjanī, *al-Muntakhab min kināyāt al-ubadāʾ ishārāt al-bulghāʾ* (Hyderabad, 1983), 28; Everett Rowson, "The Categorization of Gender and Sexual Irregularity in Medieval Arabic Vice Lists," in *Body Guards: The Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, ed. Julia Epstein and Christina Staub (New York, 1991), 50–79.

[47] Wolfson has also argued that kabbalists were influenced by Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric and refuted it in their writings. Wolfson, *Venturning Beyond*, 45–46.

a way of bringing them from "wrong," bestial masculinity to "right," rational masculinity. She suggests that such rituals and attitudes may date prior to the fourteenth century, though she has found no clear evidence of them.[48] In Christian anti-Jewish polemic of various genres from the thirteenth century, Jewish men were regularly compared to violent, mad, dogs or, in the cases of the medieval Infancy Gospel and Peter the Venerable, to cattle, playing upon Is. 1:3 "The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand."[49] In turn, Hebrew chronicles and *piyyuṭim*, Hebrew liturgical poetry, regularly compared Christians to violent predatory animals, including dogs.[50] These themes in the *Zohar*, Gikatilla, and to a lesser extent Abulafia, who impugns Christian intellect but uses no animal similes that I have found, are part of a broader Jewish response to medieval Christian suggestions that Jews are animalistic in their irrationality, lack of intellect, and violent desires. Making such comparisons may have feminized the Christians (or Jews—depending on who was doing the accusing). However, given Karras' findings and the tendency in other genres of twelfth- and thirteenth-century literature to target *men* specifically with such "animal" polemic I would suggest that this imagery in these kabbalistic texts marks the Gentiles, specifically the Christians, not so much as feminine and demonic, but as very much

[48] Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 100–108.

[49] For Jews as mad, violent dogs see Gautier de Coincy, *Les Miracles de Nostre Dame*, 4 vols. ed. Fréderic Koenig (Geneva, 1955–70) 2:97, 1.62; 2:98, 1. 84; 4:47, ll. 140, 142, 4:52, ll. 257–58; Peter the Venerable, *Petri Venerabilis Adversus iudeorum inveteratam duritem*, ed. Yvonne Friedman, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio medievalis 58 (Turnhout, 1985), III, p. 57; Gilbert Dahan, "Les Juifs dans les *Miracles* de Gautier de Coincy," *Archives Juives* 16 (1980) 3:41–49; 4:59–68. For Jews as stupid cattle or other animals see Petrus Alfonsi, *Diálogo contra los judios*, ed. Klaus-Peter Mieth, trans. Esperanza Ducay (Huesca, 1996), chap. 9, pp. 146–147; *Evangelia infantiae apocrypha = Apocryphe Kindheitsevangelien*, trans. Gerhard Schneider (Freiburg and New York, 1995); *The Old French Evangile de l'Enfance*, ed. Maureen Boulton (Toronto, 1984), 76–80, ll. 1761–1888; *Les enfaunces de Jesu Crist*, ed. Maureen Boulton (London, 1985), 71–73 ll. 1385–1467, especially 73, ll. 1452–55; Peter the Venerable, *Adversus iudeorum*, V, p. 132.

[50] *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz ve-Zarfat,* 82, 158, 168–69, 177, 191, 220, 238; *Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*, in *Sefer Gezerot*, 25, 52; Chazan, *European Jewry*, 245, 272; and *Chronicle of Rabbi Eliezer bar Nathan*, in *Sefer Gezerot*, 72, trans. in *The Jews and the Crusaders: the Hebrew chronicles of the First and Second Crusade*, ed. and trans. Shlomo Eidelberg (Madison, 1977), 81; R. Ephraim of Bonn, *Sefer Zekhirah*, in *Sefer Gezerot*, 115; *Jews and the Crusaders*, 122; Epstein, *Dreams*, 16–38, 102–12.

male, but defective in their masculinity because of their animalistic inability to grasp beyond the material world.[51]

Illicit Sex and Impure Fluids in Gikatilla and the Zohar

With bestiality came "wrong" sex. Already in BT Shabbat 145b–146a idolaters are ontologically polluted in contrast to Jews because of a bestial, illicit sexual act. They are impure:

> Because they did not stand at Mount Sinai. For when the serpent came upon Eve he injected his filth/pollution (*zohama'*) into her. [As for] the Israelites who stood at Mount Sinai, their filth/pollution (*zuhamatan*) departed; the idolaters, who did not stand at Mount Sinai, their filth/pollution (*zuhamatan*) did not depart.[52]

This passage captured the imagination of later medieval kabbalists, though the exact nature of the serpent's pollution is ambiguous. The most obvious, as Sharon Koren points out, is that the serpent had intercourse with Eve and the pollution is its semen.[53] Certainly some of the compilers of the *Zohar* seem to have ascribed to this interpretation.[54] However, Koren argues that *zohama'* can sometimes refer to menstruation within the Talmud, and suggests that what in fact the serpent passes on to Eve is menstrual impurity.[55] This hypothesis is upheld by passages such as *Zohar* III:79a–b in which the filth that the serpent injected into Eve is directly tied to the rules regarding women's separation during *niddah*, fears about the dangers of the menstruant's nail clippings and ability to perform magic.[56] Indeed, in theosophic kabbalah (of which the *Zohar* is part) since the serpent and the demons of the "Other Side"—i.e. the demonic world that mirrored that of the divine—are

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[51] I have argued elsewhere that medieval comparisons of the religious other to violent or irrational animals served to feminize or, more often, to mark the other as lacking the right kind of masculinity. I was not, however, dealing with kabbalistic texts. See Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, chaps. 2 and 6; also see Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 45, 52–53n.153, 54–56, 88–89, 269, 296.

[52] שלא עמדו על הר סיני שבשעה שבא נחש על חוה הטיל בה זוהמא ישראל שעמדו על הר סיני פסקה זוהמתן עובדי כוכבים שלא עמדו על הר סיני לא פסקה זוהמתן

[53] Koren, "'The woman from whom God wanders,'" 184.

[54] For example in *Zohar* II.231a the serpent is said to have had intercourse with Eve. Cain is the result. In I.126a the serpent's copulation and injection of *zohama'* into Eve is contrasted with intercourse with and ejaculation of her husband.

[55] Koren, "'The woman from whom God wanders,'" 183–184.

[56] On the dangers of the menstruant's hair and nail clippings see BT Shabbat 110a and *Baraita de Niddah*, chap. 2 halakhah 4, p. 16.

products of divine menstruation flowing down from the Left, feminine side of God, anything which the serpent cast into Eve would have been derived from menstruation because of the serpent's origins.[57] *Zohar* I:125b–126b involves a complex set of analogies in which the serpent does indeed copulate with Eve and inject her with *zohamaʾ*, however this filth is simultaneously the basis for women's greater affinity to magic, akin to the filth (*masʾav* מסאב) that Balaʿam brings upon himself by having intercourse with his donkey and likened to *niddah*. During this impurity men must be very careful of the woman and, were she to engage in sorcery, she would be most successful. Thus, in this instance, the serpent's filth is both semen and menstruation, which in turn makes the nature of Balaʿam and his impurities curiously ambiguous. Sexual intercourse with his ass is a very masculine sexual sin, and yet he draws the serpent's impurity upon him much as Eve did, making him female in relation to the serpent. Joseph Gikatilla is less elaborate, however, he too portrays Amalek and Balaʿam as riding and copulating with the primordial serpent.[58] This action, like the primordial woman's copulation with the serpent, enables Balaʿam to gain (illicit) magic and prophetic knowledge, even as women as a group are more prone to practice magic and are more successful at it during menstruation because of Eve's sexual encounter with the serpent. Balaʿam thereby incorporates both the worst of male and female, through sexual sin, magic, impurity, and by the damage that all of these could potentially inflict upon the pure, male kabbalist.

Some kabbalists make the connection between the serpent's filth and menstruation more explicit. Koren notes that Isaac of Acre (late 13th/early 14th century) states outright that the filth that the serpent cast upon Eve is menstruation.[59] Joseph Gikatilla, in his *Shaʿarei Orah* ties Amelek and Esau, who come from the primordial snake, to the "blemish of the moon," which persists in the world even after God's blessing of Israel on Mt. Sinai.[60] Near the end of his text, he explains that this "blemish" on the moon was created when Adam ate from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge before waiting for the proscribed

[57] One of Koren's main arguments in her dissertation is that in theosophic kabbalah, God menstruates.

[58] Joseph Gikatilla, *Sod ha-Naḥash*, 3–4. On Esau and the serpent see Wolfson, "Re/membering the Covenant," esp. 218–221 and 237n.41.

[59] Ibid., 188.

[60] Joseph Gikatilla, *Shaʿarei Orah*, Gate 9, p. 182; *Gates of Light*, 320.

three years for fruit to become lawful (Lev. 19:24). He plays with the dual meaning of *ʿorlah* (ערלה) which refers both to such a tree and to the foreskin, suggesting that Adam consumed the foreskin—a sign of Christians and Muslims. Indeed, slightly later in the section he explicity states that Adam "pulled his foreskin" trying to hide his circumcision. The result of this behavior, however, is leprosy, tying this "eating" with menstruation or intercourse with a menstruant, as we shall see.[61] Likewise in *Zohar* II 167 a–b the "accuser" (קטרגא)—Satan—descends from the left-over waters of creation: the "refuse" (פסולת) of the Left side's "turbulent waters" (מים עכורין) that could not be purified and which caused the moon to wane and be blemished. Throughout the passage creation is described in very biological terms by referring to it in terms of semen and the womb. *Pesolet* (פסולת), the word used for the material from which the accuser comes, refers to worthless chips of metal or stone, base metal, refuse, worthless matter. *Pasul* (פסול), from the same root, is something that is innately blemished or unfit for ritual purposes.[62] Thus the material from which the serpent and the Left side were created come from the unusable, divine feminine waters, much as menstrual blood was thought to be unsuitable matter for the generation of a fetus, or, if it was used, caused a variety of diseases in the resulting child or the man who had intercourse with the menstruating woman. Here, as in medieval medical texts, biblical commentaries and more explicit passages from the *Zohar*, the feminine waste/menstruation causes illness, especially leprosy, in children.[63] Given that the moon

[61] Gikatilla, *Shaʿarei Orah*, Gate 10, pp. 209–210; *Gates of Light*, 367–369. In *Sod ha-Naḥash* Gikatilla also parallels the foreskin with the blood of menstruation in relation to the tree of knowledge (p. 5). In both *Shaʿarei Orah* and *Sod ha-Naḥash* Gikatilla is ultimately hopeful about the eventual redemption/purification of the two (and presumably those whom they symbolize). Wolfson has argued that Joseph Gikatilla was "less dualistic" in his formulation of Jews vs. non-Jews, though Jews still retain primacy and must keep separate from the other nations. *Venturing Beyond*, 97–107.

[62] See Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli, Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (New York, 1989).

[63] Medieval writers debated whether or not menstrual blood could be used for generation. Some argued that it was too poisonous. See Danielle Jacquart and Claude Tomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages*, trans. Mathhew Adamson (Princeton, 1988), 76–78. According to them the twelfth-century Muslim Spanish author, Ibn Zuhr, in his *Kitāb at-Taysir*, was the first to completely disassociate menstrual blood from which the embryo is supposedly created. Authors such as Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Aquinas did attempt to differentiate between types of menstrual blood. See Moses b. Naḥman's commentary on Leviticus 18:19 [*Torat Ḥayim: ḥamishah ḥumshe Torah: mugahim ʿal-pi ha-nusaḥ veha-mesorah shel Keter Aram Tsovah ve-kitve-yad ha-qerovim lo, ʿim Targum Onkelos mugah ʿal-pi ha-Tagʾ; ʿim perushe Rasag, Rah, Rashi...; yozʾim la-ʾor ʿal-pi kitve-yad u-defusim rishonim ʿim ziyune meqorot, heʿarot u-veʾurim*, 7 vols. (Jerusalem, 1986–93)] where

and its cycles were also regularly linked to women's menstrual cycles in classical and medieval medicine, in both the zoharic passage and in *Shaʿarei Orah* the serpent or accuser seems to be not only the product of divine menstruation but the distributor of it.[64]

Within the *Zohar* non-Jews and "bad Jews" are both the result and perpetrators of menstruation, promiscuity and bestiality. Portions of the *Zohar* expand upon earlier tropes linking sodomy, bestiality, and intercourse with menstruants to mark the other nations and "bad Jews" as a whole (as opposed to individual figures such as Balaʿam) as deplorable and impure in their sexual choices and to explain their supernatural powers. I already indicated that in parts of the *Zohar* Balaʿam gains prophetic knowledge and magic by having sex with his she-ass. Occasionally within the *Zohar* demons who travel at night seducing people or

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he argues that menstrual blood *per se* was too poisonous to be used in the formation of a child. For Aristotle on menstrual blood as excess moisture see Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* ed. T.E. Page, E. Capps, W.H.D. Rouse, L.A. Post and E.H. Warmington, trans. A.L. Peck (London, 1953), I.19, pp. 93–101. On intercourse with a menstruant as the cause of illness, especially leprosy, see Jacquart and Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine*, 185–91; Jean Louis Flandrin, *Le Sexe et l'occident: Evolution des attitudes et des comportements* (Paris, 1981), 163, 193, 361nn.108 and 109. Leprosy and other kinds of sicknesses were also closely associated with menstruation in the Jewish tradition. See *Midrash Vayikra rabbah: a critical edition based on manuscripts and Genizah fragments with variants and notes*, ed. Mordecai Margulies, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1953–60), 15:5; *Baraita de Niddah* in *Tosfata Atiqata*, part 5, ed. Haim Meir Horowitz (Frankfurt, 1890), 17–18, 36; Moses b. Naḥman, commentary on Gen. 31:35 and Leviticus 18:19; *Zohar* II:3b, III:79a; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 30–32, 40–42, 101–103, 115, 156, 159, 163, 168, 177, 193–195; Koren, "'The woman from whom God wanders,'" 19, 103–106, 108–109, 125, 196–197, 223–224, 232–235, 244, 251–252, 254, 266.

[64] In *Shaʿarei Orah* Amelek makes the blemish worse by striking Jacob's thigh (Jacob often symbolizes Tiferet, though in this case may refer to the Shechinaḥ). In that same Zoharic passage the "lights wane" as soon as the serpent goes forth so that the moon and sun are no longer equal in brightness, making the serpent the *cause* of the moon's waning. In theosophic kabbalah the moon regularly symbolizes the Shechinah, the lower feminine presence of God upon earth, so that what this passage describes are processes within the divinity, namely the origin of divine menstruation. For the moon as the Shechinah, see Koren, "'The woman from whom God wanders,'" 159–165; Elliot Wolfson, "The face of Jacob in the Moon: Mystical transformations of an Aggadic Myth" in *The Seduction of Myth in Judaism: Challenge or Response?* ed. S. Daniel Breslauer (Albany, 1997), 235–270; idem, *Language, Eros and Being*, 168, 176–177, 360; idem, *Venturing Beyond*, 146–148, 209–211; idem, "Re/membering the Covenant," esp. 220, 239n.64. For the moon as affecting or symbolic of menstruation see *The Prose Salernitan Questions (Auct. F. 3. 10) An anonymous collection dealing with science and medicine written by an Englishman c. 1200 with an appendix of ten related questions*, ed. Brian Lawn (London, 1979), 344, quest. 11; Albertus Magnus, *Quaestiones super de animalibus*, in *Opera Omnia: Ad fidem codicum manuscriptorum edenda apparatus critico notis prolegomenis indicubus instruenda*, vol. 12, ed. Berhard Geyer (Cologne, 1951), bk. 9, quest. 7; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 30, 100, 166, 176–177; Koren, "'The woman from whom God wanders,'" 159–165, 197–198, 204–205. Compare with *Zohar* I:20a.

enabling them to do magic are described as dogs, asses, or the "other gods" of the idolatrous nations.[65] By extension those who are seduced by these powers have intercourse with animals, like Balaʿam, and draw impurity upon themselves. Readers of these passages would have recalled the frequent talmudic accusations and accompanying condemnations against the Romans for bestiality (and male-male penetration) and potentially applied the condemnations to those who consented to demonic intercourse. Again such individuals depicted in the *Zohar* and related texts would have been marked as "wrong men," this time not for their animalistic irrationality, violence, or even lust—though the latter is certainly an element here—but because of the parallel between them and a long-standing, very specifically *masculine* anti-Roman and internal anti-Jewish polemic.[66] Their inappropriate sexuality reflected the wrongness of their spiritual power, which while extant derived from illegitimate sources, namely magic and non-divine prophecy.

Linking Gentiles and "bad" Jews to menstruation likewise drew not merely from the *Toledot Yeshu* traditions, as noted above, from rabbinic and midrashic texts. Already in the third-century minor Talmudic tractate, *Kallah Rabbati*, a youth who is disrespectful to the rabbis is both the son of a menstruant and a bastard.[67] Midrashic texts regularly portray non-Jews, and specifically Esau as sons of menstruating women and polluted by afterbirth.[68] Jewish polemicists against Christianity specifically argued that Christians were polluted by menstrual blood, as evidenced by their initial redness at birth.[69] Gikatilla and authors of the *Zohar* built upon these traditions. Gikatilla likewise emphasizes Esau's redness in relation to blood—mostly in his desire to spill it—however, given this coloration's association with the impurity of menstruation, afterbirth,

[65] For example, *Zohar* III.112b–114a.

[66] In the Talmudic discussions of the *ammei ha-ʾarez*, intercourse with either a man or daughter of the *ammei ha-arez* is compared to having intercourse with an animal; however, the men actively misbehave, tearing their "prey," i.e. wives like lions. BT Pesaḥim 49b. For other examples of various sexual improprieties: BT Nedarim 20a–b; BT Pesaḥim 112b; BT Gittin 70a; BT Niddah 17a; BT Eruvin 100b and David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: from biblical Israel to contemporary America* (Berkeley, 1997), 50–53.

[67] *Masekhet Kalah rabbati: ʿim perush Lehem sheʿarim*, ed. by Hayim M. Mendel (Jerusalem, 1982/3), 2:2.

[68] *Midrash Tanḥumaʾ*, 2 vols. (Israel, n.d.) Meẓorʿa 13. Also see *Midrash Rabbah Bereshit*, 63:8 discussing Gen. 25:25 "and the first (Esau) came forth red."

[69] Official, *Sefer Yosef ha-Mekaneʾ*, no. 104, p. 95; *Jewish-Christian Debate*, no. 238, Hebrew p. 159, English p. 224. Both argued that Christians, because they did not observe the laws of *niddah*, were born red and polluted, though they turned pale over time.

along with violence, Gikatilla may have also been alluding to Esau/Christianity's derivation from menstrual blood.[70] If so, he, like Abraham Abulafia, sought to redirect Christian associations of Jews with Esau, menstruation and the blood of violence toward Christians themselves.[71] Certain passages in the *Zohar* portrayed Esau, "other gods" and the seducing demons as derived from the dross or filth (*zohama'*) of gold, red, or black, synonyms for the red refuse descending from the Left side, i.e. divine menstruation.[72] Jews, therefore, who succumb to demons are in effect having intercourse with a menstruating woman. Likewise non-Jews who approach their wives are rendered impure, whether because non-Jews simply did not observe the purification laws or because the women were presumed to have their own nightly, demonic visitations, is not clear.[73] Having intercourse with a "woman of the idolatrous nations" will also render the Jewish man impure.[74]

While Esau, gentile women, and demons' derivation and association with menstruation, both supernal and human, are very much part of this chain of impurity, the focus is on men, in particular on men's, usually Jewish men's, stray semen. The nightly demons who seduce humans in their sleep, are both male and female—a point regularly emphasized in the *Zohar*—so that while the demons derive from divine menstruation, the source of demonic impurity can be technically marked male as well as female.[75] While in most zoharic retellings of the drama between the serpent, Eve, and Adam, Eve receives the serpent's *zohama'* and then contaminates Adam and subsequent generations through intercourse much like a menstruant could contaminate her husband or any man who had intercourse with her, a few passages imply that Adam was equally seduced and infected by the serpent.[76] Furthermore, during his separation from his wife, Eve, Adam had intercourse with "unclean female spirits" (רוחין נוקבי מסאבי), who in turn bore other spirits and demons, equated with the "plagues of the children of men"

[70] Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Orah*, Gates 3 & 4, p. 65; *Gates of Light*, 117.

[71] On menstruation and violence see discussion of Abulafia and blood above, with notes. Compare with Rupert of Deutz's polemical use of Esau and blood in *De Sancte Trinitate*, vol. 2, *In Leviticum*, II.16, p. 873.

[72] *Zohar* II:149b, 236a–237b, III:50b–51a; Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 194–195; Koren, "'Woman from whom God wanders,'" 176–177; Wolfson, "Re/membering the Covenant."

[73] *Zohar* I.130b.

[74] Ibid., I.131b.

[75] Ibid., I:53b–54a, 55a, 125a–b, II:130a–b, 193b, 231a–b, 236a–b.

[76] Ibid., I:125a–b, II:236a.

(נגעי בני אדם).[77] Thus, Adam's actions, while masculine, have the same effect as intercourse with a menstruant, namely to bring sickness upon subsequent generations. In *Zohar* I:125a–b, just prior to discussing Bala'am, the writer describes the numerous demons ready to surround and defile the man who defiles himself. These demons call out "impure, impure!" the call required of a leper in Leviticus 13:45. Again, the implication is that the men who engage in such illicit sex, have brought impurity upon themselves equivalent to that of the menstruant or the children of a menstruant, given that leprosy was believed to be caused by intercourse with or conception by a menstruant.[78] Such passages create an ambiguous status for Jewish men who violate sexual prohibitions. These texts portray men, Jewish men, as conveying impurity and disease in a way normally exclusive to women, thus according them a highly negative, feminine status. In *Zohar* I.131b the Jewish man's choice to have intercourse with a non-Jewish woman defiles "the holy covenant" and "Isaac" meaning Yesod, the divine phallus, and *Gevurah*, the feminine power of judgment. The man and his semen serve, therefore, as a transmitter of menstrual impurity from the demonic-feminine to his own wife (not emphasized in these texts) and children, and even to the supernal feminine realm. These men's pollution is thus ambiguous like that of the serpent: both capable of impregnating like semen, but menstrual and demonically feminine in its effects. Just as the Left, feminine and/or demonic side is part of the divine yet a danger to it, so too are these men part of Jewish community but also threatening to it and to the divine. Their ambiguous gender status reflects their religious one.

Having intercourse with non-Jewish women or demons was one way in which Jewish men's semen could "go astray." However, most texts discussed above focus on the problem of illicit masculine ejaculation presumably in the form of wet dreams, or, by inference, masturbation, since nightly seminal emissions were believed to be induced by demons.[79] Dyan Elliot has discovered that contemporaneous Christian texts expressed similar worries about monks' inadvertent ejaculation

[77] Ibid., II:231b.

[78] On intercourse with a menstruant as the cause of leprosy and other ailements see note above.

[79] On demons, ejaculants and seminal impurity in kabbalah see: Koren, "'Woman from whom God wanders,'" 24, 70, 72, 102, 111, 123n.57, 168, 194n.63, 275.

and demonic seduction.[80] In the Jewish texts, nightly demons, if successful, contaminate the whole body, yet in *Zohar* I.53b the mystic is warned specifically against the impurities of a man who has not yet washed his *hands* after waking. The implication seems to be that he may have touched his genitals during the night—demons rest upon his hands—giving him some complicity in this pollutative process. Indeed, true mystics are said to be able to avoid the seductive demons during their sleep.[81] That there was great concern in kabbalistic circles about men's autosexuality is confirmed by a warning in *Sha'arei Orah* about the "the judgement of (on) the one who uncovers his genitals or knowingly hardens himself (i.e. gives himself an erection) or holds the penis and urinates"[82] With this remark, Gikatilla problematizes a man's touching his genitals under any circumstances, including urination, however Gikatilla seems most concerned with intentional, male autosexuality, namely uncovering genitals and masturbating. Gikatilla likens the status of such a Jew to that of a Gentile by implying that the consequences are the same as for an uncircumcised Gentile who studies Torah, namely death.[83]

Jesus, Christians, and the various symbolic persona representing them in the *Zohar* and the work of Joseph Gikatilla and Abraham Abulafia are the *products* of the menstruating woman, with all the impurity, disease, and poison that this entailed and in much of the *Zohar* and writings of Joseph Gikatilla, the distributors of menstrual-like impurity.[84] Menstrual pollution was one of the most powerful metaphors of

[80] Dyan Elliot, "Pollution, illusion, and masculine disarray: nocturnal emissions and the sexuality of the clergy," in *Constructing medieval sexuality*, ed. by Karma Lochrie, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz (Minneapolis, 1997), 1–23.

[81] *Zohar* I:54a. On sexual self control as a mark of virility in kabbalistic thought see: Wolfson, *Language, Eros and Being*, 264–265, 309; idem, *Venturing Beyond*, 296–297, 300; idem, "Eunuchs who keep the Sabbath: Becoming Male and the Ascetic Ideal in Thirteenth Century Jewish Mysticism," in *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey J. Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York, 1997), 151–185.

[82] וכן תבין מה הוא דין המגלה עריות או המקשה עצמו לדעת או האוחז באמה ומשתין *Sha'arei Orah*, Gate 2, p. 48; *Gates of Light*, 82. My translation. Weinstein's translation is slightly less literal and reads as follows: "[W]e will give you a way to understand... what the judgement is for him who transgresses sexual prohibitions, or who causes himself to have an erection, or who holds his penis while urinating." עריות (*'arayot*) can be understood as a general word for sexual misbehavior, however, paired with the verb גילה (*gilah*; the word in the text is מגלה / *megalh* "to uncover, reveal, discover") it seems more likely in context that *'arayot* should be understood according to one of its other meanings, namely "genitals," though often it refers to female genitals rather than male.

[83] *Sha'arei Orah*, Gate 2, pp. 47–48, *Gates of Light*, 81–82.

[84] I have made a similar argument elsewhere: Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust*, 194–195.

uncleanness available to Jewish writers, given the increasingly negative beliefs surrounding *niddah* in the Middle Ages. Menstrual impurity was especially apropos to Christianity given the extant *Toledot Yeshu* tradition that already established Jesus' menstrual origins and illicit magical abilities, and Christian preoccupation with the bodily purity of Mary and Jesus.[85] Yet careless or willfully unobservant Jews could become similarly contaminated and contaminating. Furthermore, the pollution, while feminine in origin, is often profoundly masculine, resulting from semen and men's handling of their own sexual organ. The concern is with *masculine* temptation and the central role of *men* in transmitting a level of impurity nearly identical in effect and potency to menstrual blood. The emphasis on the perpetrators' masculinity in combination with associations with menstrual-like pollution mark these men as being in limbo—neither really men nor fully feminized.[86] This ambiguous symbolic sexuality reflects their ambiguous religious status: not Jews yet potentially redeemable, or in the case of "bad" Jews, Jewish, yet potentially as dangerous and undesirable to their co-religionists as Gentiles. In very different contexts, Judith Butler and Homi Bhaba have both noted that people, bodies, or beings that do not fall with neat, expected categories of gender or ethnicity are especially disturbing.[87] Julia Kristeva has likewise argued that abjection, i.e. horror or disgust, is caused by what disturbs identity and/or the existing order.[88] In the mystical texts discussed above, the polluting, threatening and highly changeable gender of the serpent, Christians and "bad" Jews, even more than their feminization, reflect the mystics' anxiety about the mixed or hybrid identity of other Jews and even Christians in their midst. While not the ultimate cause of "abjection" the use of extreme

[85] Another parallel between some versions of the *Toledot Yeshu* and Balaʿam exists in *Zohar* III: 193a–194b and chapter 9 of the Ms Vindobona in Krauss, *Das Leben Jesu*.

[86] Wolfson has pointed out that the demonic phallus, like the divine one, is androgynous. In the divine realm, however "the female is ontically rooted in the male" whereas in the demonic "the male is an aspect of the female." Wolfson, "Re/membering the Covenant," citation on 221. In this article he regards the serpent as feminine and Esau as masculine; however, I would argue based on the texts above that the serpent in and of itself is androgynous or ambiguous in its gender and it renders men who encounter it similarly "androgynous," albeit in a highly negative way. Because of the poisonous, impure attributes of the serpent/men, they are feminized more than they are masculinized however.

[87] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity* (New York, 1990), esp. 110, and Homi Bhaba, *Location of Culture* (New York, 1994).

[88] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror, an essay on abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, 1992), 4.

impurity emphasized the undesirability and danger of these and, potentially, served to prod the conscience of Jewish readers to move from the poisonous feminine or irrational, violent masculine to the side of the divine, desirable, and properly masculine.

Placing Islam within the Hierarchy of "Others"

Islam and the figures or regions that sometimes symbolized it—Ishmael, Hagar, Qeturah, Persia, Egypt—shared many of the characteristics of Edom and Jews who misbehaved and allowed themselves to become polluted by the demonic. While not entirely acceptable both Gikatilla and the authors of the *Zohar* create a hierarchy of foreign nations, portraying Islam as better and potentially more redeemable than Christianity. In *Shaʿarei Orah* Gikatilla states this hierarchy quite clearly:

> And the reason behind this (that Edom shall become the most despised of nations—Obadiah 1:12) is that the other nations have guardian angels in the upper world, as it is said: "And behold the guardian angel of Greece came and the guardian angel of Persia" (Daniel 10:20) So too it is with the seventy nations, and Ishmael was given twelve princes for each nationality, but the portion and inheritance of Esau were *saʿirim* (he-goats), which are the lowest of all creatures.[89]

The point of this passage is not to exalt Ishmael/Islam, but to demonstrate Edom/Christianity's baseness in relation to all other nations. Following this passage, Gikatilla explains that Edom's guardian angel is Samael (Satan) thereby indicating that Edom's guardian angel, in contrast to all others, came from the lower world.[90] Yet this passage also hints that Ishmael/Islam has a special status as well. Ishmael remains part of the religious and ethnic "other," for he is designated as one of the "other nations." Nevertheless, he is given "twelve princes for each nationality" which suggests that he is more powerful than the other nations, and that his rule is widespread, even global.

Gikatilla creates a similar hierarchy in his *Sod ha-Naḥash u mishpaṭo* (*The secret of the serpent and his judgment*) and *Shaʿarei Zedeq (Gates of Righteousness).*

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[89] והטעם כי שאר הגוים יש להם שרים עליונים בענין שנאמר והנה שר יון בא ושר מלכות פרס וכן לשבעים אומות ובישמעאל שנים עשר נשיאים לאומותם. אבל עשו חלקו ונחלתו השעירים שהם שפלים שבכל הנברא.
Gikatilla, *Shaʿarei Orah*, Gate 2, p. 56; *Gates of Light*, 98.

[90] Gikatilla, *Shaʿarei Orah*, Gate 2, p. 56; *Gates of Light*, 99.

There he presents Ishmael, being the son of Abraham, as being from the Right, i.e. from the loving, masculine side of the divinity, whereas Esau, the son of Isaac, is from the Left, i.e. the judging, feminine side of divinity.[91] Characterizing Ishmael as aligned with the Right in contrast to Esau suggests that the former is preferable to the latter. Despite this exalted ancestry however, both Ishmael and Esau are described as the "dross" (פסולת *pesolet*) of their respective fathers and the basis for which the gates of righteousness are dedicated to Jacob, with whom Gikatilla associates Israel, as opposed to Abraham and Isaac.[92] The children of the concubine Qeturah, sometimes identified with Hagar, Ishmael's mother, inherit filth (*zohema'*) and impurity (*ṭum'aḥ*.[93] Whether Ishmael is included in this dubious inheritance is not clear but it seems likely. Impure and undesirable though Ishmael may be in Gikatilla's writings, the impurity and warlike behavior of Esau, along with his corollaries Bala'am and Amalek, are Gikatilla's primary focus in his work dedicated to the "serpent," usually a synonym for the feminine, demonic world. He seems to recognize that "Esau" sought to conquer/destroy both Jews and Christians.[94] Similar to the passage cited above from *Sha'arei Orah*, in *Sha'arei Ẓedeq*, Gikatilla accords greater political power to Islam than any other non-Jewish nation. He describes Egypt as second only to Israel. Egypt's guardian angel is above that of all the other nations and Egypt is to rule all nations except the holy one, i.e. Israel.[95]

In these texts, Gikatilla clearly marks Islam as other, impure, undesirable, and threatening. Both Ishmael and Esau are "dross" or errors of their fathers—examples of male seed gone wrong. In this way, Gikatilla's rhetoric about Islam is very similar to that about Christianity, however, of the two, Christianity is clearly portrayed as more closely associated

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[91] Gikatilla, *Sod ha-Naḥash*, 1; idem, *Sha'arei Ẓedeq, Sha'arei Orah—Sha'arei Ẓedeq*, 1a. In the sefirotic structure of the divinity in theosophic kabbalah, the biblical figure Abraham is associated with the *sefirah* of *ḥesed*, meaning love or benevolence, which is portrayed as the "right arm" and is on the masculine "side" of the divinity. Isaac is associated with *gevurah*, meaning power, also linked with judgement in the sense of judging sins. *Gevurah* is directly opposite *ḥesed*, and is the left, feminine counterpart. Frequently it is from her that the red refuse that created the demonic world comes. See the diagram of the *sefirot* in Matt, *The Zohar*, ix, any volume.

[92] Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Ẓedeq*, 2a. Also see ibid., 5a–b.

[93] Gikatilla, *Sod ha-Naḥash*, 1. On Qeturah see Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 106–121.

[94] Gikatilla, *Sod ha-Naḥash*, 4, 20. Discussions of Esau, Amakek, and Bala'am pervade the entire work, and the additional fragments that Cohen found.

[95] Gikatilla, *Sha'arei Ẓedeq*, 5b. I am assuming that Egypt here also represents the Islamic world. On this see Kiener, "Islam in the Zohar."

with the demonic and more warlike. I would suggest that the emphasis on the political power of Islam reflects Jewish awareness and interest in the crusades and the wars within Iberia itself between Muslims and Christians, and the hope that was current in a variety of writings during this period, that the wars between the Muslims and Christians would ultimately result in their mutual destruction so that Israel could finally inherit the land of Israel.[96]

A similarly mixed portrayal of Islam may be found in the *Zohar*.[97] Ishmael, like Edom, is called "dross of gold." Sarah is praised for casting Hagar and Ishmael out, for according to one passage in the *Zohar* she did so because Ishmael was beginning to worship idols like his mother.[98] The passage continues with a debate as to whether, as a minor or teenager, Ishmael could be held accountable for such idolatry. Ultimately, the rabbis in the passage contend he will be punished despite not being accountable according to either the higher or lower courts.[99] The fact that his guilt is even contested, however, places him in a more favorable position than most depictions of Esau/Edom within the zoharic corpus. Following earlier midrashic texts that promise Ishmael's redemption, on an even more positive note, Ishmael will repent of his ways and achieve permanency.[100] Elsewhere in the *Zohar* Hagar also repents and becomes Abraham's wife after Sarah's death under

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[96] See for example David Qimḥi's biblical commentaries on Joel 4:19–21; Obad. 2; Isa. 24:5, 13; 34:1; 44:5; 52:1; 63:1; Jer. 9:23, 49:7; Ps. 125:3; 127:5; idem, *The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimḥi on Psalms CXX–CL*, ed. and trans. Joshua Baker and Ernest W. Nicholson (Cambridge, 1973), 28, 29; A. Neubauer, "Documents inédits: I. une pseudo-biographie de Moîse Maîmonde," *Revue des Etudes Juives* 4 (1882): 173–188, esp. 177; Frank Talmadge, *David Kimhi: The Man and his Commentaries* (Cambridge, MA, 1975), 22, 42–48, 147–154; J. Prawer, *Jews in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1988), 66–69, 153–168; A. Cuffel, "Call and Response: European Jewish Emigration to Egypt and Palestine in the Middle Ages," *Jewish Quarterly Review* XC/1–2 (1999): 61–102, esp. 86–95; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*, 65–67.

[97] Some of the ambiguity about Islam (and Christianity) may be due to different layers of composition of the Zohar, as some have suggested. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 22–23n.31, 27, 90–91n.296, 130–135, 155–163; Liebes, *Studies in the Zohar*; Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 99–100.

[98] *Zohar* I.118b. See Kiener's discussion of this passage in "Image of Islam in the *Zohar*," 63–64. This passage equates Ishmael with "dross" in contrast to Isaac's "gold." The word used here for dross is סוספיתא (*suspita'*) which Matt suggests is a neologism derived from כוספא (*kuspa'*) meaning "pomace, husk, residue" *The Zohar*, 2: 185 nt. 540. Perhaps it derives from כסף, meaning silver and is the dross or remnant from processing this metal. In any case, it seems to be interchangeable with פסולת (*pesolet*)—see above.

[99] *Zohar* 119a.

[100] *Bereshit Rabbah*, 30:4, 59:7; *Zohar* I.124b.

the new name Qeturah.[101] Yet neither Ishmael nor Hagar is completely transformed for the good. The marriage of Abraham and Qeturah result in sons who must be sent away to keep them from antagonizing Isaac, namely *Gevurah*/divine judgment. They in turn become nations of magical practitioners.[102]

Similarly, the King (God) is portrayed as having put aside Matrona in favor of the handmaid, the "alien Crown whose firstborn God slew in Egypt." This handmaid, according to *Zohar* III.69a, "will one day rule over the holy land below, as the Matrona once ruled over it, but the Holy One blessed be He, will one day restore the Matrona to her place," namely as the legitimate wife of the King—God—and ruler over the Holy Land. This "handmaid" because of the reference to Egypt and the similarity of this passage to the tale of Qeturah and Abraham is none other than Hagar, signifying Islam. Islam holds the Holy Land during the time in which this text was being written, so that the author looks forward to a time in which Jerusalem will be restored to Israel and the Shechinah. In *Zohar* II:32a Ronald Kiener sees an even more explicit discussion of the crusades, in which Ishmael and Edom battle over the Holy Land.[103] This passage emphasizes that Edom will not prevail, but the intensification of Edom's efforts will finally prompt God's intervention, after which Ishmael will also be cast from the land and it will be given over to Israel. Even more than in the writings of Gikatilla, these segments from the *Zohar* accord Ishmael/Islam a definite role in cosmic history, specifically the regaining of the Holy Land. Ishmael does not help Israel, however, it serves to hold the land and prevent it from falling into the hands of a worse and more impure enemy, namely Edom/Christianity, and thus, these passages are very much in accord with some of the views expressed in contemporary, non-mystical Jewish writings about the crusades.[104]

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[101] *Zohar* I.133b; *Bereshit Rabbah*, 61:4; *Midrash Tanḥuma*, ḥayye Sarah 8; *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer*, ed. Chaim Meir Horowitz (Jerusalem, 1972), 30; *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer (The chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great) according to the text of the manuscript belonging to Abraham Epstein of Vienna*, trans. Gerald Friedlander (New York, 1970). Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 112.

[102] *Zohar* I:133b According to this passage, these children go East from where Laban, Beor, and Balaʿam come—all sorcerers. Thus a link is established between Islam and Christianity, and both are associated with magic.

[103] Kiener, "Islam in the Zohar," esp. 49–51.

[104] For references see above. While seeing these battles as potentially messianic was fairly common during this period, I do not mean to imply that Jews throughout Europe had the same expectations or saw Islam as playing the same role. On the diversity of views see: Cuffel, "Call and Response." That Islam should serve as a kind of "place

Ishmael/Hagar are not portrayed as helping Israel achieve her spiritual or material goals, nevertheless, they, and through them the Islamic world they symbolize, seem to be granted a quasi-permanent, tolerated space within the divine realm and sacred history. In *Sha'arei Orah* and parts of the *Zohar*, the non-Jewish nations as a whole are granted a space in that history, usually as abject servants of the redeemed Israel. Abraham Abulafia also accorded such a status to Christians and their messiah, but his characterization of them is predominantly negative.[105] In the *Zohar*, the status of Islam is more ambiguous; Islam, like Christianity and even the "bad" Jews who allow themselves to be seduced by female demons, poses a threat to Jews and to the balance of the divine realm. Yet Ishmael and Hagar are far less threatening than Edom, and on a supernal level achieve a quasi legitimized, albeit inferior, status as concubine or handmaid to the masculine divine. I would suggest that this difference reflects attitudes within broader European Jewish cultures in which Christianity was the most defiling and dangerous of all, whereas Islam, while wrong, was admirable because of its victories against Christianity and its relatively more "tolerant" treatment of Jews.

Conclusions

While the specific symbolic identifications may differ from text to text, what should now be clear is that impure bodily fluids were integral to a number of thirteenth-century kabbalists' constructions of non-Jews. Fundamental to this polemic of uncleanness is divine menstruation from which demons and non-Jews either gain their origin or their pollution. Yet we are not dealing with a simple binary of feminine/impure/outsider/demonic vs. masculine/pure/Jew/divine. Hierarchies of otherness were created in which Islam was more redeemable than Christianity; indeed it was given quasi legitimacy as "concubine" to the divine in some texts, and assured a place in the world to come.

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holder" against Christianity until Palestine is given to the Jews very much accords with Wolfson's observations that Islam occupied an intermediate place between Christianity and Judaism within the *Zohar*. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 160. Legal writers such Moses b. Maimon (Maimonides) treated Islam in a similar fashion. David Novak, "The Treatment of Islam and Muslims in the Legal Writings of Maimonides," in *Studies in Islamic and Judaic traditions: papers presented at the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies* (Atlanta, 1986), 233–250.

[105] See Wolfson's discussion of the ontological status of Gentiles in Abulafia, *Venturing Beyond*, 58–73.

Despite such relatively "inclusive" status, *all* "others" are depicted as impure and dangerous in their own right and producers of threatening, polluted progeny.

Various scholars have linked warnings against intercourse with non-Jewish women to the Iberian Jewish practice of keeping Muslim women servants as concubines even after polygamy was officially forbidden within the Jewish community.[106] While I would agree that this was a factor both in concern about liaisons with non-Jewish women and in the increasing anxiety about community boundaries, I suggest that other factors were at work as well. Polemical remarks about Christianity and Islam in the *Zohar* and the works of Abulafia and Gikatilla, not surprisingly reflect overall arguments and concerns by Jews writing more explicit polemic against either of these two faiths. Thus concerns about Christian violence, the cosmological implications of the crusades, and the arguments over the nature of Jesus and Mary's bodies all find expression in these kabbalists' writings. Christianity was emphasized more and treated more harshly precisely because it was more immediately threatening to Jews living under Christian rule.

Inappropriate ejaculation seems to have been as worrisome to the writers of the *Zohar* and Joseph Gikatilla as intercourse with a non-Jewish

[106] Koren, "Woman from Whom God Wanders," 287–294. Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 118; Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond*, 163. On this legislation and increased sexual contact across religious communities in medieval Iberia see Yom Tov Assis, "Sexual Behavior in Medieval Hispano-Jewish Society," in *Jewish History: Essays in Honor of Chamen Abramsky*, ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert and S.J. Zipperstein (London, 1988); David Nirenberg, "Religious and Sexual Boundaries in the Medieval Crown of Aragon," in *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Mark Meyerson and Edward English (Notre Dame, 1999), 141–160; idem, "Conversion, Sex, and Segregation: Jews and Christians in Medieval Spain," *American Historical Review* 107:4 (2002), 1065–1093; idem, "Love Between Muslim and Jew in Medieval Spain: A Triangular Affair," in *Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Crown of Aragon: Essays in honor of Professor Elena Lourie*, ed. Harvey James (Leiden, 2004), 127–155; Grossman, *Pious and Rebellious*, 78–87. Idel, in exploring the theme of the divine concubine from the thirteenth-century onward, draws from kabbalists such as David b. Yehudah ha-Hasid and Joseph Hamadan, Idel sees this trend as part of an effort to create a kind of national myth or identity, and suggests that the "concubine" is firmly part of the demonic realm and signifies the gentiles as a whole. He does not link her to Islam in particular. In the writings of the thirteenth-century kabbalist, Joseph Hamadan, he argues the "concubine" is merely another seducing demon rather than a symbolic representative of Islam. However, this difference in Joseph Hamadan may be traced to his own origins in the Islamic world from which he is believed to have emigrated. Idel, *Kabbalah and Eros*, 106–121.

woman.[107] Those Jewish men who engaged in either masturbation or intercourse with a non-Jew were given a status akin to a menstruating woman in their ability to pollute their families, the Jewish community and the divine. Thus, I would suggest that these discussions of illicit male sexuality and impurity serve as a symbolic platform to express other concerns. Anthropologist Mary Douglas and those who have followed her lead have suggested that many cultures perceive menstrual bleeding as especially impure and dangerous because it is an uncontrolled bodily process, representing uncontrollable and feared elements in the world and society. Semen, the blood of circumcision or other wounds, while potentially impure or dangerous, are usually controllable, and therefore less polluting.[108] In these mystical texts, the semen in question is not controlled, either because the sleeping men cannot resist demonic seduction or, in the case of willful masturbation or inadvertent handling of the penis, do not choose spirituality over lustful inclinations. Kabbalists thus used uncontrolled masculine fluids to signify Muslims, bad Jews, and Christians' uncontrollable and therefore threatening relation to righteous Jews, and to divine balance and redemption. That they remain masculine, rather than being entirely feminized, reflects both their participation or potential reincorporation into the divine and a broader understanding of violence and lust as markers of masculinity "gone wrong."

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[107] It is not always clear that the non-Jews with whom these "bad" Jews were having intercourse were Muslims, though Koren argues very reasonably that it would have been more dangerous to have intercourse with a Christian. However, both were possible, especially via prostitution, and were a concern to the leaders of all communities. See notes on this above.

[108] Mary Douglas, *Purity and danger: an analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo* (London, 1966), 3–6, 114–139; idem, *Natural symbols: explorations in cosmology*, 1st American ed. (New York, 1970), 70–71; idem, *Implicit meanings: essays in anthropology* (London and Boston, 1975) 53–56, 60–71; Eilberg-Schwartz, *Savage*, 177–194; Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve/The Wound of the Hero: blood, gender, and medieval literature* (Philadelphia, 2003).

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